



# National Certified Peer Specialist (NCPS) Credential Application & Examination Requirements

Peer support specialists provide hope and support to those seeking recovery from a mental health condition and/or substance use disorder. NCPS' have the lived experience as a person in recovery to engage and encourage others to build the skills necessary to achieve and maintain wellness.

The current high demand for peer support specialists across the nation highlights the need for certification. Accordingly, the National Certification Board for Behavioral Health Professionals (NCBBHP), a wholly owned subsidiary of the Florida Certification Board (FCB), is pleased to offer the National Certified Peer Specialist (NCPS) credential. NCPS credentialing was envisioned by Mental Health America (MHA) and processed through the FCB until 2022, when the two organizations agreed to transition administration of the credential to the newly-formed NCBBHP (the Board).

Until further notice, NCPS applications and exams will be processed using the FCB's credentialing and examination systems, while the NCPS wall certificate will be issued by the NCBBHP.

This document provides details about the scope of the NCPS credential, the education, training, and work experiences required to take the NCPS exam, the exam application process, and the credential award. **Please carefully review this document BEFORE applying for certification.**

## National Certified Peer Specialist (NCPS) Credential

The **National Certified Peer Specialist (NCPS)** is a professional, advanced-level peer support credential for people providing peer specialist services in behavioral, physical, and related healthcare settings. The NCPS credential requires a minimum of a high school diploma or general equivalency degree, as well as prior education, training, and work experiences that reflect the NCPS performance domains and core competencies specified by the Board.

The NCPS performance domains are:

- Foundations of Peer Support
- Foundations of Health Care Systems
- Mentoring, Shared Learning, and Relationship Building
- Activation and Self-Management
- Advocacy
- Professional and Ethical Responsibilities

# Applicant Eligibility and Fees

**Eligibility & Fees:** The NCPS credential is an advanced practice credential for peer specialists with the lived experience, education, training, and work experience requirements established for certification. In general, qualified applicants must: (1) currently hold a state-level peer support specialist credential that required a minimum of 40 hours of training or have previously completed an equivalent 40-hour training program, (2) have 3,000 hours of peer support specialist work experience in the six (6) years prior to application for certification, and (3) obtain three (3) professional letters of recommendation. Applicants who can provide documentation of these qualifications will be approved to sit for the NCPS exam, and will be awarded the NCPS credential after earning a passing score on the NCPS exam.

Fee Type	Fee Amount	Notes
Application Fee	\$150	One-time fee If NCPS credential is not earned within 12 months of application, a 12-month extension can be obtained with an extension fee
Exam Fee	\$125	Fee is due with each exam attempt
Proctoring Fee	\$35	Fee is due with each exam attempt
Biennial Renewal Fee	\$200	Fee is due every 24 months, on or before the NCPS expiration date
Application Extension Fee	\$150	Fee is assessed for each 12-month application extension request

# Application, Exam, and Certification Processes

Earning the NCPS is a multi-step process that enables the Board to validate the eligibility of applicants before allowing them to register for any certification exam. In general, applicants first complete an electronic application (electronic application), then, after the Board approves the application, applicants register and sit for the exam and, when the exam is passed, receive the credential. All steps occur online at [www.flcertificationboard.org](http://www.flcertificationboard.org).



**Application:** The first step is to apply for the NCPS, which requires:

- an online account
- an electronic application
- application fee payment
- supporting documents submitted by the applicant
- supporting documents submitted directly to the Board by others on your behalf



**Examination:** The second step is to register for the NCPS exam, which requires:

- official approval from the Board to register for the exam (sent via email)
- an electronic exam confidentiality agreement, testing month request, and exam fee payment
- an electronic exam registration & proctor fee payment



**Certification:** The NCPS credential is issued within seven (7) business days of passing the exam. Applicants who do not pass may re-take the exam; directions to retest will be provided if necessary.

## Application and Exam Timelines

Applicants have a maximum of 12 months from the date that their application and certification fee is received to earn the NCPS credential. Within this time, their application must be approved and the exam must be passed. Applicants who do not pass the exam may re-take it within this same 12-month period. After that, a 12-month extension can be obtained by paying a fee equal to the original application fee.

**It is important to understand the sequence and steps of each component of the certification process, as well as the individuals who will be involved.**

The length of time it takes for an application to be processed depends on the timeliness and quality of the documents submitted in support of the NCPS application. The persons involved in the processing of an application are the applicant, the individuals providing documentation and recommendations for the applicant, and the Board Certification Specialist, who process the application, supporting documents, and examination requirements, and issue the NCPS credential.

## NCPS Credential Requirements

Application Requirements		
Topic	Requirement or Standard	Notes
Application Fee	\$150	Applicants are assigned a dedicated Certification Specialist for a 12-month period to process the application, supporting documents, and examination requirements, and issue the NCPS credential.
Formal Education	High School Diploma, General Equivalence Degree (GED), or higher degree	Applicants enter information about the highest level of formal education completed and upload a copy of the diploma, certificate, or university transcript into their electronic application.
Content Specific Training	40 hours of training related to the NCPS core competencies. This requirement can be met in one of multiple ways, including: (1) holding a state or other jurisdictional peer credential that requires a minimum of 40 hours of training, or (2) completing a Board approved 40-hour peer support/peer specialist training program, or (3) documenting a combined total of 40 hours of training relevant to the NCPS core competencies.	Applicants enter information about their content specific training and upload supporting documentation into their electronic application.
Related Work Experience	3,000 hours of work experience providing peer support/peer specialist services within the six (6) years prior to application for NCPS certification.	Applicants document their eligible work experience by providing current and/or former employers with the NCPS forms and asking them to complete the forms and return them directly to the Board.  Work experience submitted by the applicant is not eligible for certification application purposes.

<b>Application Requirements</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Requirement or Standard</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Recommendation for Certification	Three (3) professional letters of recommendation for certification.	Applicants obtain Recommendations for Certification by providing recommenders with the NCPS form and asking them to complete the forms and return them directly to the Board.  Recommendations submitted by the applicant are not eligible for certification application purposes.
<b>Examination Requirements</b>		
Exam Registration	Agree to follow exam confidentiality policies and identify the requested testing month.	When the application is approved in the system, an automatic email is sent to the applicant, directing them to complete the Exam Pre-Registration activities. Do not pay the exam fee until the pre-registration actions are complete.
Exam Fee	\$125	An exam fee is required for each exam attempt. <b>DO NOT PAY THE EXAM FEE WITHOUT COMPLETING THE PRE-REGISTRATION STEPS.</b>
Proctoring Fee	No more than \$35	A proctoring fee is required for each exam attempt. The Board collects the fee from the applicant and directly pays the remote proctor.
Exam Registration and Preparation	Take the exam using the Board's remote proctoring software.  Download Exam ID/Exam Monitor 24 hours before the scheduled exam time. The vendor provides free technical support 24 hours, 7 days a week.	When the exam pre-registration is processed and the exam/proctoring fees are paid, the Board will send an email with EXAM INSTRUCTIONS in the subject line. This email will provide directions to download the software and prepare for exam administration.
Exam	Earn a passing score on the 125-item multiple-choice test.	NCPS applicants will log on at the appointed testing time to meet the remote proctor. The remote proctor will guide the remainder of the testing process.
Retest	Decide if you wish to request a re-test if you fail the exam.	Applicants who fail the exam may re-test every 30 calendar days. Please contact your Certification Specialist for re-testing directions and fees.
<b>When a passing score is earned on the exam, the NCPS credential is awarded.</b>		

# Credentialing Checklist

- Online account opened
- Electronic application for certification created
  - Formal education documentation uploaded into electronic application
  - Content Specific Training documentation uploaded into electronic application
  - NCPS Work Experience Verification Form* downloaded and provided to employers to submit to the Board
  - NCPS Recommendation for Certification Form* downloaded and provided to references to submit to the Board
- Application fee paid
- Exam registration information submitted online
- Exam fee paid
- Exam proctoring fee paid
- Exam registration complete
- Take the exam
- Request a retest, if necessary

Once you earn your NCPS, you should keep certain responsibilities in mind. NCPS credential holders are expected to ...

- Comply with NCPS continuing education requirements
- Follow the Board's Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct
- Renew the NCPS prior to expiration

# Credential Award, Maintenance, and Renewal

The NCPS credential is awarded within seven (7) business days of passing the NCPS exam. Generally, the NCPS credential is issued for a two-year period. Because credentials renew on October 31<sup>st</sup> of the renewal year, (versus two years from the date of award), the first expiration date will be pro-rated as follows. After the first renewal, the credential will be issued for a 2-year period, expiring on October 31<sup>st</sup> of every other year.

Two-Year Credentials – October Renewal		
Issue Date	First Expiration Date	Ongoing Expiration Date
November 1 <sup>st</sup> – July 31 <sup>st</sup>	October 30 <sup>th</sup> of the year following the current renewal period	October 31 <sup>st</sup> , every other year
August 1 <sup>st</sup> – October 30 <sup>th</sup>	October 30 <sup>th</sup> two years following the current renewal period	October 31 <sup>st</sup> , every other year

NCPS credential holders must complete at least ten (10) continuing education (CE) credits every 12 months after earning the credential, with 20 CE units due each renewal period. Payment of renewal fees carries an attestation that CEs are complete and documentation is available in case of audit. The Board will conduct a CE audit the quarter after the renewal period closes to verify compliance with CE requirements. The Board does not dictate CE content; credential holders are expected to ensure that their training is directly linked to one or more of the NCPS competencies.

Credential holders are subject to the Board Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct. The Board accepts and investigates allegations of misconduct by certified professionals. Failure to follow the Code may result in disciplinary action.