

# Certification Guidelines: Credential Standards and Requirements Table

Mental Health America National Certified  
Peer Specialist (NCPS)



*Define Yourself as a Professional  
through Certification.*

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# MHA NCPS STANDARDS & REQUIREMENTS

## TABLES

The Florida Certification Board (FCB) is pleased to offer the Mental Health America (MHA) National Certified Peer Specialist (NCPS) credential, which is the first national certification program recognizing mental health peer specialists who are qualified to work in both private and public whole health practices. The MHA NCPS credential is specifically designed to recognize peers with the lived experience, content-specific training and on-the-job experience necessary to provide peer support specialist services as an effective adjunct to the individual’s physical and behavioral health care team(s) with the express purpose of assisting the individual to achieve recovery and activate self-management goals.

This document details the MHA NCPS specific certification requirements and policies. Unless otherwise specified herein, all FCB applicants and certified professionals are subject to FCB certification application, examination, award, and maintenance/renewal policies, which are posted on the FCB website. Should there be a discrepancy between published FCB policy and this document, contact the FCB for clarification.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the FCB’s overall administrative requirements that are detailed in the following FCB Candidate Guides:

- [Candidate Guide: Application Process](#)
- [Candidate Guide: Examination Process & Credential Award](#)
- [Candidate Guide: Maintenance and Renewal Process](#)

Applicants are responsible to read, understand and follow the information in the FCB’s Candidate Guides, this document, and the FCB’s [Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#). All documents are posted online. Please contact the FCB at 850-222-6314 if you have any questions.

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## MHA NATIONAL CERTIFIED PEER SPECIALIST (MHA NCPS)

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The MHA NCPS designation is a professional, advanced-level peer support credential for persons who have the lived experience, training, and job experience to work alongside healthcare teams in a peer support role. The MHA NCPS requires a minimum of a high school diploma or general equivalency degree and applicants have demonstrated competency through training and experience in the performance domains of:

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

Individuals holding the MHA NCPS credential have met all MHA and FCB administrative requirements and all credential specific standards and eligibility requirements that have been established for the credential.

## MHA NCPS STANDARDS AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

TOPIC	MINIMUM REQUIREMENT
<i>Please review the <b>Candidate Guide: Application Process</b> and the following MHA NCPS standards and eligibility requirements for application.</i>	
<b>Application Fee</b>	\$225.00
<b>Formal Education</b>	High School Diploma or General Equivalency Degree
<b>Content Specific Training</b>	<p>Hold current state certification with a minimum training requirement of 40 hours.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Hold a certificate of completion of a MHA approved training program.</p> <p>Approved training programs are posted on the MHA NCPS website at <a href="http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/mha-national-certified-peer-specialist-ncps-training-partners">http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/mha-national-certified-peer-specialist-ncps-training-partners</a></p> <p>All training must have been completed within the last 10 years. Applicants who completed required training more than 10 years ago and have been consistently working in the field may appeal for a waiver of the timeframe requirement.</p>
<b>Related Work Experience</b>	<p>3,000 hours of work and/or volunteer experience providing peer mental health support services.</p> <p>Eligible work experience occurred within the last 6 years.</p> <p>All work experience, paid or volunteer, must be supervised.</p> <p>Individuals claiming volunteer work for certification purposes must average 20 hours of volunteer work per week.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>One (1) supervisory letter of recommendation for certification</p> <p>One (1) professional letter of recommendation for certification</p>
<i>Please review the <b>Candidate Guide: Examination and Credential Award</b> and the following MHA NCPS exam requirements.</i>	
<b>Exam</b>	MHA NCPS Exam – Exam fee \$200.00
<i>Please review the <b>Candidate Guide: Credential Maintenance and Renewal</b> and the following MHA NCPS requirements.</i>	

TOPIC	MINIMUM REQUIREMENT
<b>Continuing Education</b>	<p>10 hours per year (total of 20 CEUS per two-year renewal period). Training content must be related to at least one of the MHA NCPS performance domains.</p> <p>CEU hours must be non-repetitive (i.e., the same course cannot be claimed more than one time during each credentialed period, even if the course is taken annually).</p>
<b>Renewal</b>	<p>Biennial (every two years), on October 31<sup>st</sup> of the renewal year. The first renewal for the MHA NCPS credential will be 10/31/2020. After that period, depending on the initial certification award date, first time credential holders may be certified for slightly more or less than a standard 2-year period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credentials earned in the first 21-month period (November-July) will renew for the first time on the upcoming October 31<sup>st</sup>.</li> <li>• Credentials earned during the last three months of the 24-month period (August-October) will renew the following October.</li> </ul> <p>The full 2-year renewal cycle will start after the credential is renewed for the first time.</p>

## ELECTRONIC APPLICATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

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All applicants **MUST** first establish an online account with the FCB. After establishing the online account, complete the National Certified Peer Specialist (NCPS) electronic application. Hard copy applications are only available for applicants who meet ADA requirements related to accommodations for using computers and related technologies. Please contact the FCB for additional assistance. All other applicants, please go to our website at [www.flcertificationboard.org](http://www.flcertificationboard.org) and click on My Account to access the portal.

All credential-specific requirements are documented on FCB forms. All forms are posted online, under the credential specific tab, at <https://flcertificationboard.org/certification/nationally-credentialed-peer-specialist/>.

Applicants must:

- If the certification you are applying for does not require an official transcript, save and upload a copy of your high school diploma, GED, unofficial college or university transcript, or diploma.
- Download and provide the following forms to the appropriate individual to complete and submit to the FCB: *Work Experience Verification Form* and *Recommendation for Certification Form*. See the [Hard Copy Application Documents and Submission Protocol](#) section of this document for additional details.

All applicants have a maximum of 12 months to earn the NCPS credential, starting from the date the application and the certification fee are received by the FCB.

When your fee has been processed and your application has been successfully submitted, you will receive a system email and, shortly thereafter, you will receive a personal email of introduction from your assigned Certification Specialist. This person will serve as your single-point-of-contact throughout the certification application, examination and award processes.

## ELECTRONIC APPLICATION COMPONENTS & SUBMISSION PROTOCOL

Applicants have up to 30 calendar days to complete the electronic application. Applications not submitted within 30 days will be automatically deleted, including all data and attachments.

An application is considered submitted when the applicant has progressed through all of the screens, providing all system required information, and making the application fee payment.

Once the application is submitted and the fee payment is received, the application is “locked.” This means that the applicant can no longer make changes to data entered into the application and cannot add additional files of supporting documentation. If changes need to be made to the application and/or additional documents need to be attached, please work directly with your assigned Certification Specialist, who will make the necessary changes/updates.

SECTION	REQUIRED DATA	REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS
<b>Other Certification or Licensure</b>	Enter the requested information for any non-FCB certification or license you may hold.  If you do not hold other credentials, select the “next” button.	No applicant-provided attachments are required. If you report another credential(s), please upload a copy of the credential.
<b>Formal Education/Degree</b>	Enter the requested information for the highest level degree you hold.	Upload a copy of your high school diploma/GED or college/university transcript.
<b>Content Specific Training</b>	You are not required to enter any fields of data.	If you are not certified within your state, upload copies of MHA-approved trainings.
<b>References</b>	You are required to identify the two individuals who will submit recommendations for certification on your behalf. One supervisory and one professional reference are required.	There is not an option to upload documents to this section of the application.  You must download the <i>Recommendation for Certification Form</i> from the FCB website and provide a copy to your references for completion & submission to the FCB.  <b>Note: Do not collect completed supervision or recommendation forms and submit them to the FCB yourself.</b>
<b>Current Employer</b>	Enter the requested information for your current employer AND each additional employer you will contact to document the required work experience hours.	There are no applicant-provided attachments in this section.  You must download the <i>Work Experience Verification Form</i> and provide a copy to each employer for completion & submission to the FCB.  <b>Note: Do not collect completed work verification forms and submit them to the FCB yourself.</b>
<b>Assurance and Release</b>	Read the agreements on this page as you are bound by FCB policy and procedure once you check the check box and select the “next” button.	There are no applicant-provided attachments in this section.

SECTION	REQUIRED DATA	REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS
<p><b>Final Review and Application Submission</b></p>	<p>Review all entered information. If any edits need to be made, make them at this time.</p> <p>Additional documents cannot be uploaded after you select the “submit” button.</p> <p>If you do not select the “submit” button with 30 days of starting the application, the system will delete the application, including all entered data and attachments.</p>	<p>There are no applicant-provided attachments in this section.</p> <p>When you submit your application, you will be taken to the fee payment screen.</p>
<p><b>Fee Payment</b></p>	<p>The certification fee is due at this time. The preferred method is to pay online by credit card.</p>	<p>Your application is not submitted until payment is made.</p> <p>Credit card payments made online are secure and have no additional fees. Payments may also be made by money order/check. Credit card payments made by phone will incur an additional \$5.00 convenience fee per transaction.</p> <p><b>All fees are non-refundable.</b></p>

## HARD COPY APPLICATION DOCUMENTS AND SUBMISSION PROTOCOL

Applicants must download the following forms from the FCB website and provide the forms to the appropriate people for completion and submission to the FCB.

- Work Experience Verification Form*
- Training Verification Form*
- Recommendation for Certification Form*

Your assigned Certification Specialist will upload all hard copy documents to your electronic application. You will be able to track the status of each requirement from your online account.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION	APPLICANT PROVIDED	NON-APPLICANT SOURCE
<b>Formal Education</b>	On application, report highest level degree(s) and upload a copy of High School Diploma/GED or higher.	No documentation required from a non-applicant source.
<b>Work Experience Verification</b>	On application, report employer(s) who will submit verification documentation.  Provide each employer with a <i>Work Experience Verification Form</i>	Employer will document and submit related work experience on the <i>Work Experience Verification Form</i> . Employers must attach a position description specifying all related duties
<b>Content Specific Training</b>	If you do not hold a state certification, upload copies of MHA-approved trainings.	No documentation required from a non-applicant source.
<b>Recommendation for Certification</b>	On application, report individuals who will submit a recommendation for certification.  Provide each individual with a <i>Recommendation for Certification Form</i> .	Individual providing the recommendation completes and submits the <i>Recommendation for Certification Form</i> directly to the FCB.

All forms must be filled out electronically – handwritten forms will be denied.

All forms and supporting documentation must be submitted to the FCB by the individual signing off on the form/submitting supporting documentation. Forms and documents provided by the applicant will be denied.

All hard copy documents and fee payments may be made to the FCB via mail, email or fax.

**US Mail:** FCB ♦ 1715 South Gadsden Street ♦ Tallahassee, Florida, 32301

**Email:** Applicants are assigned a Certification Specialist when their application has been received at the FCB. Please ask the applicant for their Certification Specialist’s name and email address. In the absence of a specified person, FCB accepts email at [admin\\_assist@flcertificationboard.org](mailto:admin_assist@flcertificationboard.org).

**FAX:** 850-222-6247

**Fee Payment:** The preferred method of fee payment is online, using your secure certification account. You can make payments and receive immediate electronic receipts when using the online payment system. Credit card payments made



over the phone (850-222-6314) incur a \$5 convenience fee per transaction. **Fees are non-refundable and non-transferable. DO NOT MAKE A FEE PAYMENT UNLESS YOU ARE SURE YOU ARE READY TO MOVE FORWARD.**

## UPDATING THE APPLICATION/ADDING FILES

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Once you submit your electronic application, you are “locked out” of it and cannot make any changes or upload additional documents. If this needs to happen, please work directly with your assigned Certification Specialist, who will update your application as necessary.

# CERTIFICATION PROCESS CHECKLIST

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By submitting the MHA NCPS application, you are stating/agreeing that you, the applicant, have read all the required policy and procedures covered in the following documents:

- [Candidate Guide: Application Process](#)
- [Candidate Guide: Examination Process & Credential Award](#)
- [Credential Specific Standards Table](#)
- [Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#)

## FCB System Registration and Application

- Online account created
- Online application submitted
  - Identify current or prior licenses/certifications. Save and upload copy of license/certifications.
  - Identify highest level of education completed. Save and upload copy of diploma or transcript.
  - Identify individuals who will submit *Recommendation for Certification Forms*. Download and distribute the required form to each individual for completion & submission.
  - Identify individuals who will submit *Work Experience Verification Form*. Download and distribute the required form to each individual for completion & submission.
- Fee payment made. All fees are non-refundable.

## Exams

- Receive approval to register for the exam(s).
- Exam Fee Payment Made
- Register for the exam(s)
- Take the exam(s)

## MHA NCPS EXAM PROCESS

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Once all required documentation has been submitted and approved by your Certification Specialist, your status will be changed to “Exam Registered”. You will receive an automated email notifying you that you are approved to test. An invoice will be generated for the test fee. You will also receive an email from your Certification Specialist with an *Exam Pre-Registration Form* for completion. This will be the first step in selecting your test location, date and time. Following are general procedures and information for the exam process:

- Unless otherwise specified, all credentials require applicants to earn a passing score on a multiple-choice exam of core competency.
- All exams are administered online, at testing centers approved by FCB. There are NO paper and pencil exam administrations available.
- Each test site sets up its own calendar of the days and times that are open and available to administer the test. When you are approved to test, you will be provided with the available days and times via email.
- A test site may charge a proctor fee of up to \$20.00 for each exam taken. This fee is paid directly to the test site. FCB does not pay or reimburse the proctor fee.
- Applicants receive unofficial test scores immediately; official test scores are provided to the applicant by FCB approximately 72 hours after the test date. Official certification documents will be sent to the applicant from MHA.
- Applicants may retest as many times as they choose. There is a 10-calendar day time period between retests.
- The full exam fee must be paid for each test attempt.
- The passing score for the MHA NCPS exam is 76%.

FCB does not have or maintain a study guide for the exam. For additional information regarding the MHA NCPS exam, please refer to the *MHA National Certified Peer Specialist Training Self-Assessment Checklist and Test Preparation* guide.

Please note that test locations are still being determined across the country and are being added daily. For an updated list of available MHA NCPS approved testing locations, please see the Testing Locations section of the FCB website at <https://flcertificationboard.org/certification/nationally-credentialed-peer-specialist/>. **Do not go to a test center for testing without prior approval and confirmation that you are approved to test from FCB. Test center staff will be unable to assist you.**

For additional information regarding the exam process, please refer to the [Candidate Guide: Examination Process & Credential Award](#). The process for registering for the MHA NCPS exam will vary slightly from other FCB exams however information regarding test processes and procedures remains the same.