

Certification Guidelines: Credential Standards and Requirements Table

National Certified Peer Specialist (NCPS)



*Define Yourself as a Professional
through Certification.*

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NCPS STANDARDS & REQUIREMENTS TABLES

The Florida Certification Board (FCB), in partnership with Mental Health America (MHA), is pleased to offer the 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 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 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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NATIONAL CERTIFIED PEER SPECIALIST (NCPS)

The 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 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 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.

APPLICATION PROCESS OVERVIEW

There are two distinct phases to earning the NCPS credential

- Phase 1: Apply for, submit required supporting documentation and be approved to test for the credential. Please see the [NCPS Standards and Eligibility Requirements](#) section and the [NCPS Online Application Components and Submission Protocol](#) section of this document for additional details
- Phase 2: Once your application file has been approved, you will sit for the credential exam. Upon passing the exam, your certification will be issued. Please see the [Candidate Guide: Examination Process Credential Award](#) for additional details.

This document provides you with the program requirements and the process steps to apply for and hold the credential through the two-phase process.

ACCOUNT AND ONLINE APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

There are several process steps involved in applying for certification.

To apply for the NCPS credential, applicants are responsible to:

1. Establish an online account in the FCB online system. This is a one-time activity.
2. Create an online National Certified Peer Specialist application for certification. This is the official application and payment pathway. However, there are additional forms and supporting documentation that must also be submitted to the FCB.
3. Save a copy of your state peer certification or MHA approved training documents. The certification or MHA training documents can be uploaded to the online application or emailed to your Certification Specialist, once assigned.
4. Save a copy of your high school diploma or GED, or transcript.
5. Download the *Work Experience Verification*, and *Letters of Recommendation Forms*; complete Part 1 of each form; provide the form to the appropriate person(s) to complete and submit directly to the FCB on your behalf. **DO NOT** collect these forms back and submit them yourself. The FCB **WILL NOT** accept these forms or supporting documentation from an applicant.

The NCPS application is considered to be successfully submitted when you have progressed through all screens and your fee has been processed. This will generate a system email notifying you that your application has been received and the initial review is underway.

Approximately 3-4 weeks later, you will receive a personal email of introduction from your assigned Certification Specialist, along with the results of the initial review of your application and supporting forms/documentation. This person will serve as your single-point-of-contact throughout the certification application, examination and award processes.

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

The length of time for an application to be approved depends on the timeliness and quality of the documents received by the FCB. We strongly recommend that you ensure you understand the certification process and create a plan to complete all steps before completing/submitting either of the online applications.

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.

CREATE AN ONLINE ACCOUNT

All applicants MUST first establish an online account with the FCB. Please go to our website at www.flcertificationboard.org and click on My Account to access the portal.

- If you have an account, simply login.
- If this is your first time working with the FCB, click on the My Account link to create a new account.
- If you have forgotten your login or password, please call the office. **DO NOT CREATE MULTIPLE ACCOUNTS.**

CREATE AN ONLINE APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION

Applicants will be required to complete an online application.

NCPS Application: Once you have access to your online account, select the “Apply for New Certification” button and then select the **Certified National Peer Specialist** application. See the [NCPS Online Application Components and Submission Protocol](#) section of this document for additional details.

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.

- You can access the application for a maximum of 45 days. Applications not submitted within 45 days will be automatically deleted, including all data and attachments.
- 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. Please work directly with your assigned Certification Specialist, who will make the necessary changes/updates.

DOWNLOAD AND DISTRIBUTE/COMPLETE REQUIRED FORMS

All credential-specific requirements are documented on FCB forms. All forms are posted online, under the credential specific tab, at <https://flcertificationboard.org/certification/case-management-credentials/>. 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 to (850) 222-6247.

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.

NCPS STANDARDS AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

TOPIC	MINIMUM REQUIREMENT
<i>Please review the Candidate Guide: Application Process and the following NCPS standards and eligibility requirements for application.</i>	
Application Fee	\$225.00
Formal Education	High School Diploma or General Equivalency Degree
Content Specific Training	<p>Hold current state certification with a minimum training requirement of 40 hours.</p> <p><u>OR</u></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 http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/mha-national-certified-peer-specialist-ncps-training-partners</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>
Related Work Experience	<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>
Recommendations	<p>One (1) supervisory letter of recommendation for certification</p> <p>One (1) professional letter of recommendation for certification</p>
<i>Please review the Candidate Guide: Examination and Credential Award and the following NCPS exam requirements.</i>	
Exam	NCPS Exam – Exam fee \$200.00
<i>Please review the Candidate Guide: Credential Maintenance and Renewal and the following NCPS requirements.</i>	
Continuing Education	<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 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>
Renewal	<p>Biennial (every two years), on October 31st of the renewal year. The first renewal for the 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"> • Credentials earned in the first 21-month period (November-July) will renew for the first time on the upcoming October 31st.

TOPIC	MINIMUM REQUIREMENT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="451 176 1477 239">• Credentials earned during the last three months of the 24-month period (August-October) will renew the following October. <p data-bbox="354 260 1295 294">The full 2-year renewal cycle will start after the credential is renewed for the first time.</p>

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION COMPONENTS & SUBMISSION PROTOCOL

SECTION	REQUIRED DATA	REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS
Other Certification or Licensure	<p>Enter the requested information for any non-FCB certification or license you may hold.</p> <p>If you do not hold other credentials, select the “next” button.</p>	<p>No applicant-provided attachments are required. If you report another credential(s), please upload a copy of the credential.</p>
Formal Education/Degree	<p>Enter the requested information for the highest level degree you hold.</p>	<p>Upload a copy of your high school diploma/GED or college/university transcript.</p>
Content Specific Training	<p>You are not required to enter any fields of data.</p>	<p>If you are not certified within your state, upload copies of MHA-approved trainings.</p>
References	<p>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.</p>	<p>There is not an option to upload documents to this section of the application.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Note: Do not collect completed supervision or recommendation forms and submit them to the FCB yourself.</p>
Current Employer	<p>Enter the requested information for your current employer AND each additional employer you will contact to document the required work experience hours.</p>	<p>There are no applicant-provided attachments in this section.</p> <p>You must download the <i>Work Experience Verification Form</i> and provide a copy to each employer for completion & submission to the FCB.</p> <p>Note: Do not collect completed work verification forms and submit them to the FCB yourself.</p>
Assurance and Release	<p>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.</p>	<p>There are no applicant-provided attachments in this section.</p>
Final Review and Application Submission	<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 45 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>

SECTION	REQUIRED DATA	REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS
Fee Payment	The certification fee is due at this time. The preferred method is to pay online by credit card.	<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>All fees are non-refundable.</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.

The following are submitted by those completing the form on behalf of the applicant:

- Work Experience 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
Formal Education	Online Application: Report highest level degree(s) and upload a copy of High School Diploma/GED or higher.	Hard Copy Document: No documentation required from a non-applicant source.
Work Experience Verification	Online Application: Report employer(s) who will submit verification documentation. Hard Copy Document: Provide each employer with a <i>Work Experience Verification Form</i>	Hard Copy Document: Employer completes and submits related work experience on the <i>Work Experience Verification Form</i> . Employers must attach a position description on agency letterhead specifying all related duties
Content Specific Training	Online Application: If you do not hold a state certification, upload copies of MHA-approved trainings.	Hard Copy Document: No documentation required from a non-applicant source.
Recommendation for Certification	Online Application: Report individuals who will submit a recommendation for certification. Hard Copy Document: Provide each individual with a <i>Recommendation for Certification Form</i> .	Hard Copy Document: 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.

FAX: 850-222-6247

CERTIFICATION PROCESS CHECKLIST

By submitting the 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, if held. 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 current and/or past employers who will submit *Work Experience Verification Form(s)*. 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).

NCPS EXAM PROCESS

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 \$25.00 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 NCPS exam, please refer to the *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 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 NCPS exam will vary slightly from other FCB exams however information regarding test processes and procedures remains the same.