

National Counselor Licensure Endorsement Process

NCLEP 2.0

Endorsed by the American Association of State Counseling Boards (AASCB), Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA), & the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC)

Counseling regulatory boards will determine the future of license portability for mental health counselors. Creating uniform standards across state lines has never been more important or more possible. The four organizations that comprise the National Portability Taskforce – AASCB, ACES, AMHCA, and NBCC – are dedicated to serving licensing boards by continuing to seek an endorsement process that meets your needs.

In April of 2017, the National Portability Taskforce released the National Counselor Licensure Endorsement Process (also called NCLEP 1.0) and received a positive response from licensure boards and professional organizations. Additionally, the taskforce received feedback regarding revisions that would align NCLEP even more strongly with state licensure requirements and board administrative processes. This feedback from state boards, practicing mental health counselors, and stakeholders, was integrated into NCLEP, resulting in a revised version that is even better positioned to meet the needs of the counseling regulatory community and public.

State Counseling Board laws and regulations are aimed at protecting the public by setting basic standards of qualification, education, training, experience, and professional competence for persons who engage in the practice of these professional services. We recognize that no portability process is a “silver bullet” that resolves all concerns related to portability. Each state has different needs and NCLEP 2.0 is intended to be a starting point to address these needs, limit administrative overhead, and protect the public.

The implementation of NCLEP 2.0 to facilitate the portability process will significantly benefit mental health consumers by increasing access to services and by creating a vibrant workforce of licensed counselors. The benefits offered by NCLEP are particularly powerful during a time of changing regulatory standards and an increasing need for united advocacy efforts.

NCLEP 2.0 is designed with the intent of honoring the work and practices already adopted by state regulatory boards while developing a portability process that may be applied to facilitate efficient review of licensure requirements and the mobility of licensed professionals. Thus, there are two pathway options articulated within NCLEP 2.0.

Option 1 supports the continuation of the complete review process currently utilized by a state.

Option 2 offers a streamlined version of review, accepting evidence of required experience previously reviewed by another licensure board and educational requirements previously

reviewed by another recognized professional organization. With Option 2, regulatory boards are assured that the experience and education requirements have already been subject to stringent review by another responsible party, providing critical protections for the public. Additionally, Option 2 clearly indicates that applicants through the streamlined process are still subject to any jurisprudence assessment and/or criminal background check requirements a state may require.

With either option, the goal of encouraging and supporting the mobility of counselors and the work of the regulatory boards may be achieved.

The National Portability Taskforce intends that NCLEP 2.0 is reflective of the new portability landscape in a way that best meets the needs of state boards. We ask your state counseling boards to consider adopting NCLEP 2.0, and we remain committed to listening to the wishes and concerns of state boards to ensure licensure portability becomes a reality.

NCLEP 2.0

Any counselor licensed as a mental health counselor at the highest level of licensure for independent practice available in his or her state may obtain licensure in any other state or territory of the U.S. if the applicant **meets the requirements of Option 1 OR Option 2 below:**

Option 1

The applicant meets current standards for endorsement adopted by the receiving state counseling licensure board.

Option 2

The applicant has been actively licensed as a mental health counselor for **at least three (3) years** prior to the date of application for licensure endorsement, is currently in good standing with no pending disciplinary action, and has completed a jurisprudence or equivalent exam and background checks as required by the state regulatory body (if required by the originating state).

In addition, the applicant **must comply** with **ONE** of the following under Option 2:

- (a) Has maintained a license to practice independently that was awarded on or before December 31, 2014.
- (b) Possesses the National Certified Counselor (NCC) credential as issued by the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC).
- (c) Possesses a graduate-level degree in counseling from a regionally accredited program (if the degree is awarded on or after January 1, 2025, then possesses a graduate level degree from a program accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP).