



American Counseling Association

School Counselor Connection

Tips for School Counselors Seeking LPC Licensure

Many School Counselors choose to pursue licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) to become more knowledgeable about mental health disorders, as well as to set up a private practice.

Quick Facts About Licensure

- “Certification” is not the same thing as “licensure” in most states.
- Some states refer to LPCs as LCPCs (Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors) or use other credential names.
- School counselors can pursue licensure while still attending graduate school or at most other points in their school counseling career.
- Each state sets its own policies and regulations related to licensures.
- The American Counseling Association (ACA) supports a licensure portability model that would enable counselors to seamlessly transfer their licensure from one state to the next.
- A minimum of a master’s degree is usually required for licensure.
- The path to licensure in most states usually involves the completion of state-specific educational requirements in core areas, thousands of hours of supervised clinical experience (typically a minimum of 3,000 hours of post-master’s degree experience), successful completion of a national counseling exam (typically the National Counselor Examination (NCE)) and passing a state-specific jurisprudence exam.
- Fees are involved for most steps of the licensure process.
- Some states will count all hours worked in a school toward licensure; others may count only the hours of direct contact with students; some will not count any hours worked in a school setting.
- Some states mandate that all coursework be completed in a program accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP).
- Licensure requirements may change over time.
- The definition of an “approved” supervisor may vary from state to state.
- Many states offer provisional licensure until all hours of supervised clinical experience have been fulfilled.
- Most states require some face-to-face supervision hours.
- Many states have laws and regulations regarding the practice of distance counseling.
- ACA maintains a current list of contact information for each state Mental Health Licensure Board at the following link: www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/licensure-requirements/state-professional-counselor-licensure-boards
- No one knows the answers to your licensure questions better than your state’s Mental Health Licensure Board.
- You don’t have to do this alone! Consider connecting with other school counselors who may be going through the licensure process. ACA members may join the ACA Connect Community for school counselors, grad students and counselor educators. Go to www.counseling.org, click on “Log in” on the top blue menu bar, go to “ACA Community,” go to “ACA Connect,” go to “All Communities,” and scroll down to the seventh entry, “ACA Professional School Counselors.”