

South Carolina Cosmetology License Reciprocity Guide

☐

Oct 1, 2026 · @Doug Robinson

At a glance

South Carolina has **no formal reciprocity agreement with any state or territory**. Instead, every out-of-state cosmetologist, esthetician, or nail technician applies through **licensure by endorsement**, and the same rules apply no matter which U.S. state, territory, or the District of Columbia issued the license.

The SC Board of Cosmetology, part of the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (LLR), reviews each application individually. South Carolina is a member of the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC), so passing the NIC exam is the fastest route in.

Endorsement pathways

Applicants must hold an **active license in good standing** in another state, territory, or DC, and meet one of two pathways:

Pathway	Requirement	Exam needed?
A: NIC exam	Passed the NIC theory and practical exams	No further skills exam
B: Experience	Licensed at least 2 years in another jurisdiction and completed 4 hours of SC Board-approved continuing education	Exempt from the NIC exam

If the license verification shows the applicant has not passed the NIC exam and they do not qualify under Pathway B, the Board sends instructions for taking the NIC exam through South Carolina.

Applies to: Cosmetologist, Esthetician, and Nail Technician licenses. Instructor licenses have separate requirements.

Fee: \$60, non-refundable, payable to the SC Board of Cosmetology.

Expired out-of-state license: Not eligible for endorsement. These applicants follow the exam route instead (SC requires 1,500 training hours for cosmetology).

Status by state and territory

Every jurisdiction below is treated the same: no reciprocity agreement, but an active license in good standing qualifies for SC endorsement under Pathway A or B. Nail technician licenses follow the same rule.

Jurisdiction	Type	Reciprocity agreement with SC	Eligible for SC endorsement
Alabama	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Alaska	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Arizona	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Arkansas	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
California	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Colorado	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Connecticut	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Delaware	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Florida	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Georgia	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Hawaii	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Idaho	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Illinois	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Indiana	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Iowa	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B

Jurisdiction	Type	Reciprocity agreement with SC	Eligible for SC endorsement
Kansas	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Kentucky	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Louisiana	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Maine	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Maryland	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Massachusetts	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Michigan	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Minnesota	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Mississippi	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Missouri	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Montana	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Nebraska	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Nevada	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
New Hampshire	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
New Jersey	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
New Mexico	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
New York	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
North Carolina	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
North Dakota	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Ohio	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Oklahoma	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Oregon	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Pennsylvania	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Rhode Island	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B

Jurisdiction	Type	Reciprocity agreement with SC	Eligible for SC endorsement
South Dakota	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Tennessee	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Texas	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Utah	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Vermont	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Virginia	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Washington	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
West Virginia	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Wisconsin	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Wyoming	State	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
District of Columbia	Federal district	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
American Samoa	Territory	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Guam	Territory	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Northern Mariana Islands	Territory	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
Puerto Rico	Territory	No	Yes, Pathway A or B
U.S. Virgin Islands	Territory	No	Yes, Pathway A or B

Tip: Pathway A depends on the NIC exam. Applicants licensed in a state that uses its own exam instead of NIC should plan on Pathway B (2 years licensed + 4 CE hours).

How to apply

1. Request a **license verification** from every state where you are or have been licensed. It must be sent directly from that board to the SC Board, carry the state seal, and show how you were licensed.
2. If using Pathway B, complete **4 hours of SC Board-approved continuing education**.

3. Gather your documents:

- 2x2 passport-style photo
- Copy of your Social Security card
- Copy of a valid government-issued photo ID
- Notarized Verification of Lawful Presence
- Copy of your current out-of-state license
- Proof of legal name (birth certificate, passport, marriage certificate, or court order) if it differs

4. Apply online through the LLR eService portal and pay the **\$60** fee.

5. Answer the personal history questions. Any criminal conviction requires a state background check sent directly to the Board.

Contact

SC Board of Cosmetology, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

- Email: boardinfo@llr.sc.gov
- Phone: (803) 896-4588
- Website: llr.sc.gov/cosmo

Requirements can change. Confirm with the Board before applying.

Sources

- [SC LLR Cosmetology Board: Applications and Forms](#)
- [SC Board of Cosmetology Endorsement Application](#)
- [SC Board of Cosmetology FAQ](#)
- [Endorsement Online Application Forms](#)
- [Out-of-State Applicants notice \(Jan 2025\)](#)