



Virginia Department of  
**Health Professions**  
Board of Counseling

# LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR (LPC) LICENSURE PROCESS HANDBOOK

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*The DHP mission is to ensure safe and competent patient care by licensing health professionals, enforcing standards of practice, and providing information to health care practitioners and the public.*

PERIMETER CENTER  
9960 MAYLAND DRIVE, SUITE 300  
HENRICO, VA 23233-1463

Tele: (804) 367-4610  
e-Fax: (804) 767-6225  
EMAIL: [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov)

**NOTE:**

The information contained in this handbook is subject to change at any time. All current information can be found at: <https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/Boards/Counseling/>

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# INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Department of Health Professions (DHP) is to ensure safe and competent patient care by licensing health professionals, enforcing standards of practice, and providing information to health care practitioners and the public.

The Department licenses, certifies or registers over 500,000 health care practitioners and facilities, and through its health regulatory Boards, enforces the laws and regulations pertaining to the conduct and practices of health care professionals. The Department performs the following functions:

- Issues licenses, registrations, certifications and permits to applicants that meet qualifications established by law.
- Investigates complaints of potential violations of law and regulation.
- Inspects facilities for compliance with laws and regulations.
- Enforces standards to ensure safety and integrity of drugs and medical devices.
- Conducts studies and makes recommendations regarding the regulation of health care professionals and provides this information to the public.

An Executive Branch agency in the Health and Human Resources Secretariat, DHP is composed of Virginia's 13 health regulatory Boards, the Board of Health Professions, the Prescription Monitoring Program, and the Health Practitioners' Monitoring Program. There are over eighty (80) different professions and over 6,800 facilities regulated by these Boards. The Boards are:

- Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology
- Dentistry
- Funeral Directors & Embalmers
- Long Term Care Administrators
- Medicine
- Nursing (includes the Nurse Aide Registry & Medication Aide Registry)
- Optometry
- Pharmacy
- Physical Therapy
- Counseling
- Psychology
- Social Work
- Veterinary Medicine

Professions regulated by the Board of Counseling are:

<b>Current Professions</b>	
Behavioral Health Technicians	Licensed Substances Abuse Treatment Practitioners
Behavioral Health Technician Assistants	Qualified Mental Health Professionals
Certified Rehabilitation Providers	Registered Peer Recovery Specialists
Certified Substance Abuse Counselors	Resident in Counseling
Certified Substance Abuse Counseling Assistants	Resident in Marriage and Family Therapy
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists	Resident in Substance Abuse Treatment
Licensed Professional Counselors	
<b>Upcoming Professions in the Regulatory Process</b>	
Licensed Art Therapists	Art Therapy Associates

The Board of Counseling currently has approximately 40,000 health care practitioners licensed, certified or registered.

# NOTES AND GUIDELINES FOR ALL LICENSE TYPES

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## Communication with the Board

The Board primarily communicates through email. Be sure to add the Board's email address ([coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov)) to your safe recipient list to ensure that you receive all email communication.

## Uploading Documents

To expedite the processing of online applications for licensure, certification, or registration, applicants can now [Apply Online](#) and upload required supporting documents (except transcripts & exam scores) required to apply for licensure, certification, or registration by using the documents upload feature in the online application portal.

- Ensure you upload **all** the necessary documents as indicated in the Application Checklist for the license type and application method.
- PDF file format preferred.
- **IMPORTANT:** Please ensure you upload **all** documents **prior** to submitting the online application fee. You cannot upload additional documents after you have paid the fee and submitted your online application. If you do forget a document, you can email it to the Board of Counseling, however it may cause delays in the review of your application.

## Checking Application Status

Your [online checklist](#) will be your primary source of application status. As documentation is received and reviewed, your checklist will be updated and an automated email will be sent to you before noon the following day at the email address of record from [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov) (check your junk email frequently). The Board will complete a full review of your application once **all** your required documentation is received.

The automated emails will have additional details about the status of your application and the actions you need to take. The status definitions are:

Status	Meaning	Required Action
Unchecked	The item is required and has not been received.	Provide this missing item to the Board.
Completed	The item has been received and added to your file. Please Note: this does not mean that the item is accepted or approved. It is possible that this item could be marked as Incomplete upon further review by the Board.	Nothing unless you are contacted by the Board.
Incomplete	The item submitted has been received but information may be missing or incorrect.	Respond to emails from the Board and provide additional information or corrections as required.
Not Applicable	The item is not applicable to your application.	None.
Waived	The requirement for this item has been met under another requirement.	None.

## Incomplete Applications

Before submitting your application and documentation to the Board, we encourage you to verify that your application is complete, and you have all the required documents. A completed application provides the best opportunity to avoid delays in the review and approval processes.

Please become familiar with the [Regulations Governing the Practice of Professional Counseling](#) prior to submitting an application. Incomplete applications remain **active for one year** from the date of payment, after which incomplete application files are destroyed as outlined in the Library of Virginia records retention and disposition schedules. If your application is not completed in the one-year timeframe, you are required to re-apply by submitting a new application, new [fee](#), and new documentation to meet the requirements pursuant to the regulations in effect at that time.

## **Receiving and Verifying Your License**

The paper license you receive is a **final copy** of your license that contains no expiration date. You should maintain, carry, or post it in accordance with applicable laws and regulations for the duration of your practice. State health regulatory Boards, employers, insurance providers and citizens seeking verification of current licensure status in the Commonwealth of Virginia may obtain this information via [License Lookup](#). **This resource meets the accreditation standards for primary source verification from the top seven-accreditation organizations for healthcare professionals.**

## **Change in Contact Information**

Please ensure that you provide correct contact information at the time of application.

You are required to notify the Board within 60 days of any change to your contact information. If your address changes once you are licensed, please utilize the [Online Licensing](#) site to update your address. If your name changes once you are licensed, you must submit the [Name/Address Change Form](#) and provide the appropriate supporting documentation.

## **Grounds to Deny an Application**

The Board's [Regulations Governing the Practice of Professional Counseling](#) outlines the grounds to deny a license. If the Board is unable to approve your application, you will receive notification and be offered an opportunity to meet with a Special Conference Committee of the Board to determine if the license should be denied, issued, or issued conditionally. This process can take up to one year. Please see the [Credential Appeal](#) Frequently Asked Questions for more information.

# Which Application Do I Choose?

Review the following scenarios to determine which licensure application pathway to choose.

I have a graduate degree that prepares individuals to practice counseling.

**and**

I have not completed a residency in counseling.

**Submit**

Application for Temporary Licensure as a Resident in Counseling

I have a graduate degree that prepares individuals to practice counseling.

**and**

I have completed a residency in counseling

**and**

I have passed the NCMHCE or NCE exam.

**Submit**

Application for Licensure as a Professional Counselor by Examination

I hold an independent, equivalent professional counseling license in another jurisdiction.

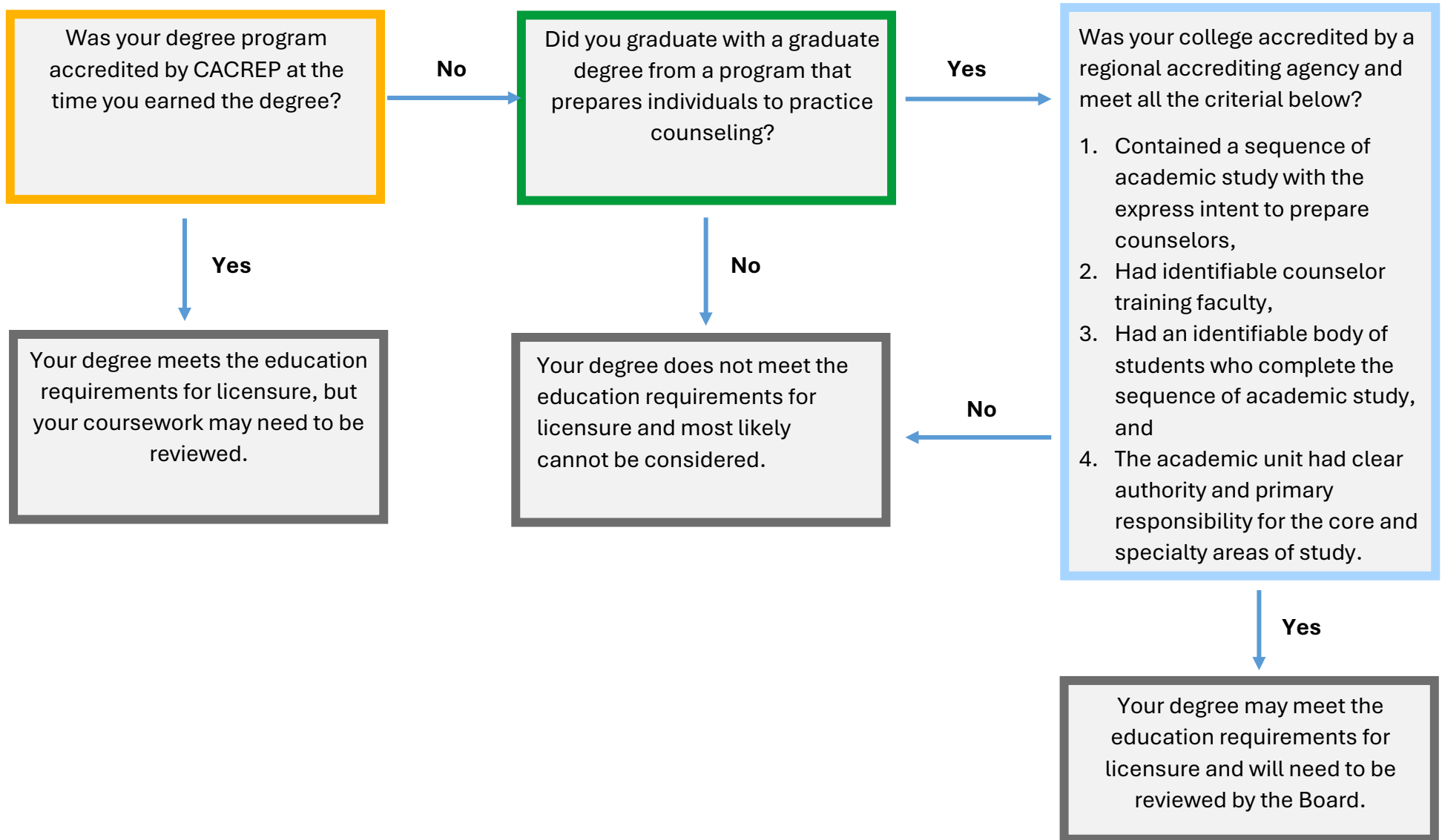
**and**

I have met the endorsement requirements outlined in [18VAC115-20-45](#). See the [Pathways](#) for Endorsement.

**Submit**

Application for Licensure as a [Professional Counselor by Endorsement](#)

# Does My Education Meet the Requirements for Licensure?



# Registration of Residency Process

Check your email for any messages received from [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov) for important information that might be sent to you during the process.

1

## Education

Graduate with a graduate degree from a [CACREP](#) accredited program **or** from a program that prepares individuals to practice counseling

### Requirements

- Graduate with a graduate degree from a [CACREP](#) accredited program **or** from a program that prepares individuals to practice counseling.
- Complete graduate coursework requirements in the 13 core content areas.
- Complete a 600-hour supervised internship with at least 240 hours of face-to-face directly client contact.

2

## Residency Application

[Apply online](#) for Temporary Licensure as a Resident in Counseling and submit all required supporting documentation.

### Required Documents

- Official transcript
  - [Verification of Required Coursework](#) form
  - [Verification of Degree and Internship](#) form
  - [Supervisory Contract](#)
  - [NPDB](#) Self-Query report
- If Applicable:**
- Verification of Supervisor's Training
  - Degree Program Information
  - License Verification
  - Proof of Name Change
  - Ethics Documentation

3

## Experience

After receiving Board approval of your Temporary Licensure as a Resident in Counseling, gain post-degree **supervised experience** in the delivery of clinical counseling services in no less than 21 months.

### Required Experience

- Meet with clients a minimum of 2,000 hours while providing clinical counseling services.
- Meet with your supervisor for 1-4 hours per 40 hours of work and for a total of 200 hours of supervision.
- Maintain supervision records.
- Supervisor to complete [Quarterly Evaluation](#) forms each 3 months.
- Have your supervisor complete the [Verification of Supervision](#) form (Notarized signature required).

4

## Renew License Annually

Renew your Resident in Counseling temporary license annually.

### Requirements

- Complete three hours in continuing education courses that emphasize the ethics, standards of practice, or laws governing behavioral science professions in Virginia.
- [Renew online](#) each year on or before your June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The annual renewal fee is \$30.00.

5

## Next Steps

Complete supervised experience, take and pass the [NCMHCE](#) or [NCE](#) examination, and submit the Examination Application.

### Requirements

- When ready, register and take the [NCMHCE](#) or [NCE](#) examination administered through the NBCC.
- After you pass the exam, and complete your required supervised experience, submit your application for Licensure as a Professional Counselor by Examination.

# LPC Licensing Process by Examination

Check your email for any messages received from [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov) for important information that might be sent to you during the process.

1

## Register, Take & Pass Examination

During your residency, you must register with NBCC and take and pass either the [NCMHCE](#) or [NCE](#) exam.

### Requirements

- Complete registration with NBCC to take either the [NCMHCE](#) or [NCE](#) exam
- Schedule the exam
- Note: Testing Accommodation Requests can be made to the Board.
- Take and Pass the Exam
- NBCC will automatically forward your exam results to the Board

2

## Submit Application & Documentation

[Apply online](#) for Licensed Professional Counselor by Examination and submit all required supporting documentation after you have completed the required supervised experience and pass the NCE or NCMHCE examination.

### Required Documents

- [Verification of Supervision](#) form
  - [Quarterly Evaluation](#) forms
  - [Supervision Summary](#) Form
  - Exam Scores
  - [NPDB](#) Self-Query report
- If Applicable:**
- Official Transcripts
  - [Verification of Required Coursework](#)
  - [Verification of Degree and Internship](#)
  - Licensure Verification of Out-of-State Supervisor
  - Degree Program Information
  - License Verification
  - Proof of Name Change
  - Ethics Documentation

3

## Receive Your Virginia License

If the Board approve you for licensure, you will receive an email from the Board regarding your new license.

### Next Steps

- Continue to monitor the [Regulations Governing the Practice of Professional Counseling](#) for any updates or changes to the laws and regulations.
- Please register as a public user on the [Virginia Regulatory Townhall](#) website to receive updates on regulatory actions.
- Board staff will mail your paper license and certificate to you within 30 days to the address on record with the Board.

**BEST WISHES FOR  
YOUR SUCCESS!**

# LPC Licensing Process by Endorsement

**Endorsement is used for those who held or hold an independent, equivalent professional counseling license in another jurisdiction.**

**Note:**

- Virginia does not have reciprocity with any jurisdiction.
- A Virginia address is not required to apply for licensure.
- Virginia allows individuals to hold multiple states licenses.
- [Regulations Governing the Practice of Professional Counseling.](#)
- **See Page 26** for the detailed instructions to apply for [Licensure as a Professional Counselor by Endorsement](#)

**1**

## Endorsement Criteria

Holds an independent, equivalent professional counseling license in another jurisdiction.

### Pathway 1

- Has more than 24 months active practice

### Pathway 2

- Has less than 24 months active practice and meets the education and experience requirements.

### Pathway 3

- Holds a current Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor (CCMHC) Credential.

**2**

## Submit Documentation

[Apply online](#) for Licensure as a Professional Counselor by Endorsement and submit all required supporting documentation required for the appropriate pathway.

### Pathway 1

#### Required Documents

- [NPDB Self-Query report](#)
- License Verification(s)
- Clinical Scores
- Official Transcripts
- Original Application
- Verification of Clinical Active Practice Form

**If Applicable:**

- Proof of Name Change
- Ethics Documentation

### Pathway 2

#### Required Documents

- [NPDB Self-Query report](#)
- License Verification(s)
- Clinical Scores
- Official Transcripts
- [Verification of Supervision form](#)
- [Verification of Required Coursework](#)
- [Verification of Degree and Internship](#)
- License Verification of Out-of-State Supervisor

**If Applicable:**

- Degree Program Information
- Proof of Name Change
- Ethics Documentation

### Pathway 3

#### Required Documents

- [NPDB Self-Query report](#)
- License Verification(s)
- Clinical Scores
- Verification of CCMHC Credential

**If Applicable:**

- Proof of Name Change
- Ethics Documentation

**3**

## Receive Your Virginia License

If the Board approve you for licensure, you will receive an email from the Board regarding your new license.

### Next Steps

- Continue to monitor the [Regulations Governing the Practice of Professional Counseling](#) for any updates or changes to the laws and regulations.
- Please register as a public user on the [Virginia Regulatory Townhall](#) website to receive updates on regulatory actions.
- Board staff will mail your paper license and certificate to you within 30 days to the address on record with the Board.

**BEST WISHES FOR YOUR SUCCESS!**

A Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) is a counselor who, by education and experience, is a person trained in the application of principles, standards, and methods of the counseling profession, including counseling interventions designed to facilitate an individual's achievement of human development goals and remediating mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders and associated distresses that interfere with mental health and development.

You must hold the Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) credential in Virginia to practice professional counseling in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

There are two avenues to obtain this credential:

- A. [Licensure by Examination](#) (Begins on **Page 13**)
  - a. This application process is for those who have never held a professional counseling license.
- B. [Licensure by Endorsement](#) (Begins on **Page 26**)
  - a. This process may be applicable to those who have held or hold an independent, equivalent professional counseling license in another jurisdiction.

# A. LPC SUPERVISION AND EXAMINATION LICENSURE PROCESS

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Any person pursuing licensure as a professional counselor (LPC) by Examination in Virginia will need the following:

1. **Education:**
  - a. Graduate with a graduate degree from a [CACREP](#) accredited program **or** from a program that prepares individuals to practice counseling, as defined in [§54.1-3500](#) of the Code of Virginia, and
  - b. Completed the graduate coursework requirements in the 13 core content areas.
2. **Temporary Licensure as a Resident in Counseling:** Apply for Temporary Licensure as a Resident in Counseling and submit all required supporting documentation.
3. **Experience:** Gain supervised residency experience in the delivery of clinical services in professional counseling.
4. **Renew:** Complete continuing education and renew your temporary License as a Resident in Counseling each year as required.
5. **Examination:** Take and pass the [NCMHCE](#) or [NCE](#) examination.
6. **Licensure By Examination Application:** Apply for LPC Licensure by Examination and submit all required supporting documentation.

These criteria are elaborated in the sections that follow.

## 1. EDUCATION

To become a LPC or Resident in Counseling in Virginia, you must meet the degree program requirements of [18VAC115-20-49](#) and the coursework requirements of [18VAC115-20-51](#). **It is the applicant's responsibility to stay aware of all regulatory changes.** Applicants should consider registering with [Virginia Regulatory Town Hall](#) to keep up to date on proposed changes to the Board's regulations, meetings and Board minutes.

### 1.1 Degree Program Requirements

According to the requirements of [18VAC115-20-49](#), you must have completed a graduate degree that:

1. Prepares individuals to practice counseling, as defined in [§54.1-3500](#) of the Code of Virginia, and
2. Is from a college or university accredited by [CACREP](#),
3. Is from a college or university that has all the following:
  - a. A documented academic study with the expressed intent to prepare counselors,
  - b. Identifiable counselor training faculty\*,
  - c. An identifiable body of students who complete the academic study that prepares counselors, and
  - d. Clear authority and primary responsibility for the core and specialty coursework areas.

\*The Board considers identifiable counselor training faculty as:

- Core counselor education program faculty that holds a doctorate degree in counselor education; or
- holds a LPC or comparable license.

### 1.2 Coursework Requirements

In addition to the degree requirements, regulation [18VAC115-20-51](#) requires that you to complete 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours of graduate study **that must include** three (3) semester hours or four (4) quarter hours of graduate coursework in each of the 13 core content areas below. One course may count for one content area only.

1. **Professional counseling identity, function and ethics** -This course provides a foundation in professional counselor identity and ethical practice, including the study of the history and philosophy of the counseling profession, professional counselor function and credentialing and ethical standards for practice in the counseling profession.

2. **Theories of counseling & psychotherapy** - This course provides an overview of the basic tenets and applications of currently preferred theories of counseling and psychotherapy including the study of humanistic, cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic and post-modern theoretical orientations.
3. **Counseling & psychotherapy techniques** - This course provides a didactic and experiential overview of basic techniques used in the counseling process including establishing the counseling relationship, setting treatment goals, applying listening and interviewing skills, initiating termination and referral, and recognizing parameters and limitations of the treatment process.
4. **Human growth & development** - This course provides an overview of contemporary theoretical perspectives regarding the nature of developmental needs and tasks from infancy through late adulthood, the influences of development on mental health and dysfunction and the promotion of healthy development across human life span.
5. **Group counseling and psychotherapy, theories and techniques** - This course provides a didactic and experiential overview of group counseling process and dynamics, contemporary group counseling theories, and group counseling leadership skills including group selection, group formation, group interventions and group evaluation.
6. **Career counseling and development theories and techniques** - This course provides an overview of career development and counseling including study of factors influencing career development, contemporary theories of career decision-making, career assessment and group and individual career counseling techniques.
7. **Appraisal, evaluation & diagnostic procedures** - This course introduces students to the selection, administration; scoring and interpretation of contemporary psychological assessments used by professional counselors and includes the study of formal and information assessment procedures, basic test statistics, test validity and reliability, and the use of test findings in the counseling process.
8. **Abnormal behavior and psychopathology** - This course provides students with an overview of the major categories of mental disorders including study of their etiology and progression, their prevalence and impact on individuals and society, their diagnosis according to the DSM-V and the use of diagnosis in treatment planning and counseling intervention.
9. **Multicultural counseling, theories and techniques** - This course provides students with an overview of the diverse social and cultural contexts that influence counseling relationships (e.g., culture, race, ethnicity, age, gender, SES, sexual orientation) including the study of current issues and trends in a multicultural society, contemporary theories of multicultural counseling, the impact of oppression and privilege on individuals and groups and personal awareness of cultural assumptions and biases.
10. **Research** - This course provides students with an overview of the principles and processes of performing counseling research including the study of quantitative and qualitative research designs and methods, methods of statistical analysis used in research, and reading and interpreting research results.
11. **Diagnosis and treatment of addictive disorders** - This course provides students with an overview of addictive disorders including the study of contemporary theories of addictive behavior, pharmacological classification of addictive substances, assessment of addictive disorders and currently preferred models of addictions treatment.
12. **Marriage and family systems theory** - This course provides students with an overview of counseling with couples and families include the study of the rationale for family therapy intervention, the dynamics of general systems theory, the states of family life-cycle development, and contemporary theories of family therapy intervention.
13. **Supervised internship** of at least 600 hours to include 240 hours of face-to-face direct client contact.

### 1.3 Foreign Degrees:

Graduates of institutions outside of the United States or Canada must provide proof from an acceptable credential evaluation service verifying the equivalency of their education. Organizations such as [World Education Services](#) may offer services to assist with verification of equivalency.

### 1.4 Pre-Review of Education toward LPC Licensure:

If you are uncertain if your degree or coursework meets the minimum education requirements, you can submit the online [Pre-Review of Education](#) application for review. The Pre-Review of Education application is only to provide education guidance and is **NOT** an application for licensure with the Board nor is the application a pre-requisite for licensure. Any guidance provided during the pre-review education process is not a case decision under the Virginia Administrative Process Act and cannot be appealed. There is a \$75.00 fee for this service.

To apply for Pre-Review of Education, you will need to complete the online [Pre-Review of Education](#) application, pay the application fee, and submit the required supporting documentation.

Specifically, you will have to submit the following:

1. Complete the online [Pre-Review of Education](#) application
2. Pay the \$75 application fee
3. **Official College Transcript(s)**
  - a. Official transcript(s) must be electronically sent directly to the Board at [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov) via a secured electronic transcript service used by the school (for example: eScript or Parchment).
  - b. The transcripts must show that you graduated with a graduate degree from a program that prepares individuals to practice counseling.
  - c. Mailed, photocopied or scanned copies of transcripts will not be accepted.
4. **Verification of Required Coursework Form**
  - a. Provide a completed copy of the [Verification of Required Coursework](#) form to demonstrate the courses you took to obtain the three (3) semester hours or four (4) quarter hours of graduate coursework in each of the 13 core content areas of [18VAC115-20-51](#).
  - b. One course may count for one content area only.
  - c. This form should be completed by the school or completed by the applicant and reviewed by the school for accuracy.
5. **Verification of Degree and Internship Form**
  - a. Provide a completed copy of the [Verification of Degree and Internship](#) form signed by your graduate school verifying that your degree and internship meets the requirements of [18VAC115-20-49](#) and [18VAC115-20-51](#).
6. **Degree Program Information** (if applicable)
  - a. If your degree was not [CACREP accredited at the time you graduated](#), or your degree is not specifically in the practice of counseling, you must provide the following information for review:
    - i. A letter on official university letterhead or printed from the university website that your degree program has the express intent to prepare counselors.
    - ii. Evidence that your degree program has an identifiable Licensed Professional Counselor faculty with an identifiable body of students.
      1. The Board considers identifiable counselor training faculty as core counselor education program faculty that holds a doctorate degree in counselor education; or holds a LPC or comparable license.
    - iii. Degree program has clear authority and primary responsibility for the core and specialty areas as required by [18VAC115-20-51](#).

## 2. TEMPORARY LICENSE AS A RESIDENT IN COUNSELING

Once you meet the education requirements as outlined above, you must apply for, and be licensed as, a Resident in Counseling prior to counting hours toward LPC licensure. Supervised residency experience in all settings obtained in

Virginia, without holding a Resident in Counseling License, will NOT be accepted toward LPC licensure. The application review process can take up to 60 days once your application is considered complete.

## 2.1 Find a Supervisor

### **Finding a Supervisor**

In accordance with [§54.1-3505\(8\)](#), the Board of Counseling has posted an [Approved Supervisor Registry](#) of persons who meet the requirements for supervision of residents. This list should be used as a tool to assist with your search for a supervisor. Please note that the [Approved Supervisor Registry](#) is updated regularly. It is your responsibility to ensure that the supervisor has an active, unrestricted LPC or LMFT license. If your proposed supervisor is not on the registry, the supervisor can apply to be added by submitting the [Supervisor Approval Application](#).

### **Supervisor Requirements**

In accordance with [18VAC115-20-52](#), a licensee who provides supervision for a Licensed Resident in Counseling must:

1. Document two years of post-licensure clinical experience;
2. Have received professional training in supervision, consisting of three (3) credit hours or four (4) quarter hours in graduate-level coursework in supervision or at least 20 hours of continuing education in supervision offered by a provider approved under [18VAC115-20-106](#); and
3. Hold an active, unrestricted license as a **professional counselor (LPC)** or **marriage and family therapist (LMFT)** in the jurisdiction where the supervision is being provided. Please note that at least 100 of the 200 hours of supervision must be with an LPC.

**NOTE:** LCSWs or Psychologists cannot supervise a Resident in Counseling toward licensure.

## 2.2 Apply to be a Licensed Resident in Counseling

### 2.2.1 Gather Documentation

#### **Gaining Board Approval as a Licensed Resident in Counseling**

Once you have identified a supervisor and a worksite, you will need to complete and submit the online Resident in Counseling Temporary License application, pay the application fee, and submit the required supporting documentation. Specifically, you will have to submit the following:

1. Complete the [online application](#) for Resident in Counseling
2. Pay the \$65 application fee
3. **Official College Transcript(s)**
  - a. Official transcript(s) must be electronically sent directly to the Board at [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov) via a secured electronic transcript service used by the school (for example: eScript or Parchment).
  - b. The transcripts must show that you graduated with a graduate degree from a program that prepares individuals to practice counseling.
  - c. Mailed, photocopied or scanned copies of transcripts will not be accepted.
4. **Verification of Required Coursework Form**
  - a. Provide a completed copy of the [Verification of Required Coursework](#) form to demonstrate the courses you took to obtain the three (3) semester hours or four (4) quarter hours of graduate coursework in each of the 13 core content areas of [18VAC115-20-51](#).
  - b. One course may count for one content area only.
  - c. This form should be completed by the school, or completed by the applicant and reviewed by the school for accuracy.
5. **Verification of Degree and Internship Form**
  - a. Provide a completed copy of the [Verification of Degree and Internship](#) form signed by your graduate school verifying that your degree and internship meets the requirements of [18VAC115-20-49](#) and [18VAC115-20-51](#).
6. **Supervisory Contract**

- a. A copy of a signed contract between you and your supervisor outlining the expectations and responsibilities during your residency.
  - b. A [sample supervisory contract](#) to use as a template is available on the Board's website.
7. A **National Practitioners Data Bank (NPDB)** Self-Query report.
- a. The report must be **digitally certified**, current and generated no more than 30 days prior to submitting your application for licensure. A certified PDF ensures the self-query is exactly as issued by the NPDB.
  - b. After your self-query request has been processed, [sign in](#) to your Self-Query order to download your digitally certified response.
  - c. Need help submitting a NPDB self-query? Check out NPDB's video: [How to Order a Self-Query video](#).
  - d. Printed copies or non-certified self-query results will not be accepted.
8. **Verification of Supervisor's Training** (if applicable)
- a. If your supervisor is not listed on the [Approved Supervisor Registry](#) you must submit a copy of their completed training certificate as evidence that your supervisor has received the required supervisory training as outlined in [18VAC115-20-52\(C\)](#).
  - b. The training certificate must show the following:
    - i. Training Content: Supervision,
    - ii. Provider: Listed in [18VAC115-20-106](#)
    - iii. Hours: 20 hours of continuing education or 3 credit-hours or 4.0 quarter hours in graduate-level coursework in supervision.
9. **Degree Program Information** (if applicable)
- a. If your degree is not [CACREP accredited at the time you graduated](#), or your degree is not specifically in the practice of counseling, you must provide the following information for review:
    - i. A letter on official university letterhead or printed from the university website that your degree program has the express intent to prepare counselors.
    - ii. Evidence that your degree program has an identifiable Licensed Professional Counselor faculty with an identifiable body of students.
      - 1. The Board considers identifiable counselor training faculty as core counselor education program faculty that holds a doctorate degree in counselor education; or holds a LPC or comparable license.
    - iii. Degree program has clear authority and primary responsibility for the core and specialty areas as required by [18VAC115-20-51](#).
10. **License Verification** (if applicable)
- a. If you have ever held, or currently hold, a health or mental health license, certification, or registration, in Virginia or in any other jurisdiction, whether current, inactive, or expired, you must submit an online license verification.
    - i. The online license verification can be printed directly from the licensing jurisdiction's website.
      - 1. To submit to the Board in the online application portal, you can print to PDF or scan the printed online verification.
    - ii. The verification must include the following information: licensee name, license number, license title, issue date, expiration date, and whether disciplinary action has ever occurred against your license, certification, or registration.
    - iii. Submitting a copy of your license certificate is **not** considered license verification.
    - iv. If the jurisdiction does not provide online verification, you must contact the jurisdiction directly to obtain license verification. Please see the Board's [Applicant Out-of-State Licensure Verification](#) form.
11. **Proof of Name Change** (if applicable)
- a. You must provide documentation if your name has ever been legally changed from the time you attended school or were licensed, certified, or registered in another jurisdiction or is other than what is listed on your application.
  - b. Acceptable forms of documentation are copies of a:
    - i. Marriage certificate,
    - ii. Court order, or
    - iii. Divorce decree.

## 12. Criminal Convictions, Past Actions, or Possible Impairments (if applicable)

- a. If you answered “YES” to any of the criminal convictions, past actions, or possible impairment questions on the application, you must include a detailed explanation and supporting documentation.
- b. Please refer to Guidance Document [115-2](#) for a list of required documentation and further information. Examples of supporting documentation that may be required include:
  - i. Certified copies of court orders, orders for disciplinary action or denials.
  - ii. Evidence that court ordered, or disciplinary action requirements have been met.
  - iii. Evidence of past treatment, such as a discharge summary.
  - iv. Letter from the applicant’s current healthcare provider(s).
  - v. Letter from the applicant explaining the factual circumstances of the criminal offense, disciplinary action, denial, or condition or impairment.
  - vi. Letters from employers concerning work performance.
- c. All applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

### 2.2.2 Submit Required Documents within the Online Application

**Prior to paying your online application fee**, we strongly encourage you to verify that you have obtained or requested all the documents that are necessary for your application. After you pay the application fee, you can no longer upload documents in the online application portal. Failing to upload documents in the online application portal will cause a delay in the review of your application.

Once you have verified that you have all the necessary documents to apply for licensure:

- Upload all the documents by using the **upload** feature in the online application portal **prior to submitting your online application fee**.
- Documents such as transcripts and exam scores cannot be uploaded in the online application portal, they must be sent directly to the Board from the university or testing organization.
- If you forget to submit a document after you have paid the application fee, you can email these documents to the Board at: [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov).

### Application Status

After you have uploaded your documents and paid the application fee, you can check the status of your application by visiting your [online checklist](#). As documentation is received and reviewed by the Board, your online checklist will be updated, and an automated email will be sent to you before noon the following day at the email address of record. The email will be sent from [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov), please check your junk email. The automated emails will have additional details about the status of your application and any additional actions you may need to take. Please refer to the chart on page 5 of this handbook for the status definitions.

Once **all** your required documentation is received, the Board will complete a full review of your application.

### 2.2.3 Receive Approval to Begin Residency

When all your documents are received, complete, reviewed, and your Resident in Counseling license is approved by the Board, you and your supervisor will receive an email from the Board that you are approved to begin your residency.

#### **Important Supervision Notice!**

Once your residency is approved, your supervisor is responsible for your counseling activities at the location indicated on your supervisory contract.

You are not allowed to practice counseling prior to receiving approval to begin your residency.

**NOTE:** While working in their residency, residents may not call themselves professional counselors, directly bill for services rendered, or in any way represent themselves as independent, autonomous practitioners or professional counselors.

- During the residency, residents shall use their names and the initials of their degree, their resident license number, and the title "**Resident in Counseling**" in all written communications.
- Clients shall be informed in writing that the resident does not have authority for independent practice and is under supervision and shall provide the supervisor's name, professional address, and phone number.
- Residents cannot supervise the provision of counseling services provided by another person.
- While providing counseling services, a resident must remain under Board approved supervision until licensed in Virginia as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC).
- Providing clinical counseling services without an active license in Virginia is unlawful, unless you are exempt from licensure as indicated in [§ 54.1-3501](#) of the Code of Virginia. Any hours accrued when a license has expired will not be considered.
- Using designations such as "LPC-R" may violate [§ 54.1-111](#) of the Code of Virginia and the regulations and could result in disciplinary actions.
- Once you receive your resident license, you must post a copy of your license in a conspicuous place as stated in section [§ 54.1-3506.1](#) of the Code of Virginia.

### **2.3 Adding or Changing Supervisor or Worksite:**

Once your temporary resident license has been issued, you are NOT required to submit an application, pay a fee, or notify the Board when you add or change a supervisor or worksite.

However, before you begin providing clinical counseling services or counting hours toward licensure, you must:

- Have a signed [supervisory contract](#) in place for each supervisor and worksite.
- Keep a copy of each contract for your records and ensure your supervisor does the same.
  - Confirm that your supervisor meets the qualifications outlined in 18VAC115-20-52 which include:
    - Holding a current LPC or LMFT license with at least two years of post-licensure experience;
    - Completing the required 20 hours of supervision training; and
    - Is listed on the [Approved Supervisor Registry](#).

You are responsible for ensuring that all supervisory requirements are met. The supervisory contract should not be submitted to the Board but must be maintained and available if requested.

### **2.4 Termination of Supervision:**

If supervision terminates, you or your supervisor will be responsible for notifying the Board office by completing and submitting the [Termination of Supervision form](#) to the Board. The Termination of Supervision form must also be maintained in both the supervisor's and the resident's records in case of an audit or complaint. Your supervisor must also complete the last [Quarterly Evaluation form](#) and the [Verification of Supervision form](#) and have it notarized at the end of your supervised experience. You must keep both forms in your records until you are ready to apply for LPC licensure. The Verification of Supervision and Quarterly Evaluation forms are necessary pieces of your application and serves as documentation of your supervision and residency hours.

## **3. COMPLETE THE SUPERVISED RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS**

Once the Board issues you a temporary License as a Resident in Counseling, you have achieved the status of "Resident in Counseling", and you can count your supervised residency experience hours towards LPC licensure. Supervision that is not concurrent with an approved residency will not be accepted, and residency hours may not be accumulated without approved supervision. Providing clinical professional counseling services without a current license in Virginia is unlawful, unless you are exempt from licensure as indicated in [§ 54.1-3501](#) of the Code of Virginia. Any hours obtained with an expired license will not be counted towards licensure.

You will need to meet the following requirements throughout your residency:

1. Complete a supervised residency in the role of a professional counselor working with various populations, clinical problems, and theoretical approaches.
2. Meet with clients face-to-face for a minimum of 2,000 hours while providing clinical counseling services.
  - a. Face-to-face provision of services is the physical presence of the Resident in Counseling and the client in the delivery of counseling services which may include the use of secured technology that maintains client confidentiality and provides real-time and visual contact.
  - b. Clinical counseling services are activities such as assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, and treatment implementation.
  - c. If you are providing clinical counseling services in a group therapy session, you are only allowed to count the time that you met with the group. For example, if you have 10 clients present for an in-person one hour group therapy session, you can only count one hour toward the 2,000 hours of face-to-face client contact requirement.
  - d. Complete at least 1,000 hours of face-to-face client contact during the two years immediately before submitting your application for licensure as a professional counselor.
3. Meet with your supervisor for a minimum of 200 hours of in-person supervisory sessions, occurring at a minimum of 1 hour and a maximum of 4 hours per 40 hours of work experience during the period of the residency.
  - a. A supervisor may be a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) or a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT), however, at least 100 of the 200 in-person supervisory hours must be obtained under board-approved supervision with an LPC.
    - i. Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW) and Clinical Psychologists are **NOT** allowed to supervise you for your residency.
  - b. Group supervision hours are equivalent to individual supervision hours, however, no more than half of the 200 required hours may be obtained in group supervision.
    - i. Group supervision is the process of clinical supervision of no more than six persons in a group setting provided by a qualified supervisor.
  - c. In-person supervision is the supervision between supervisor and resident in the consultation and review of clinical counseling services provided by a resident. In-person supervision may include the use of secured technology that maintains client confidentiality and provides real-time, visual contact between the supervisor and the resident. For more information on technology-assisted supervision please refer to [Guidance Document: 115-1.4](#).
  - d. Complete at least 100 hours of supervision during the two years immediately before submitting your application for licensure as a professional counselor.
  - e. Work experience refers to time spent delivering clinical counseling services, which may include activities such as assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, implementation, case management, recordkeeping, referrals, and coordination of services. This encompasses both direct services provided to clients and indirect (ancillary) tasks that support the delivery of clinical care.
4. Complete Required Documentation.
  - a. **Quarterly Evaluation Forms**
    - i. Your supervisor is required by [18VAC115-20-52](#) to complete and provide you with a [Quarterly Evaluation for LPC Licensure](#) form at the end of each three-month period during your residency.
    - ii. You must keep a copy of this form with your records until you have received your LPC license.
    - iii. If multiple supervisors are involved in your residency, **each** supervisor must complete their own Quarterly Evaluation Form for the time they supervised your residency.
  - b. **Verification of Supervision Forms (Notarized Signature Required)**
    - i. At the end of any supervision relationship, the supervisor must complete the [Verification of Supervision](#) form.
    - ii. You must keep a copy of this form with your records until you have received your LPC license.
    - iii. If multiple supervisors are involved in your residency **each** supervisor must complete their own Verification of Supervision Form.

5. Complete your residency in no fewer than 21 months. While there is no longer a maximum time limit to finish your residency, you must complete at least 1,000 hours of face-to-face client contact and 100 hours of supervision within the two years immediately before submitting your application for licensure as a professional counselor
6. Maintain copies of all records. The resident must retain copies of all Quarterly Evaluations and Verification of Supervision forms until they complete the residency requirements, pass the NCMHCE or NCE exam, and apply for LPC licensure by examination.

**Important Supervision Notice!**

Random audits will be conducted to verify the Licensed Resident in Counseling is meeting the minimum requirements which would include verification of a signed supervisory contract.

### **3.1 Out-of-State Supervision**

Supervision completed in another jurisdiction may count toward licensure if it meets the Virginia requirements. The Board will not review the application or approve this supervision until you have completed your supervised experience, pass the NCMHCE or NCE examination and apply for LPC licensure by examination. You must have your past supervisor(s) complete Virginia's [Verification of Supervision](#) form. Keep this information in your possession until you are ready to apply for LPC licensure by examination. Additionally, you will be required to submit your supervisor's license verification to verify that they meet the supervisor requirements.

### **3.2 Supervisor Responsibilities**

The supervisor of a resident assumes full responsibility for the clinical activities of the resident for the duration of the residency. Throughout the residency, the supervisor must:

1. Monitor the performance of the resident and provide regular, documented individual or group consultation, guidance, and instruction that is specific to the clinical counseling services being performed with respect to the clinical skills and competencies of the resident.
2. Hold a current, signed supervisory contract with the resident that outlines the responsibilities and expectations of each party.
3. Complete [Quarterly Evaluation](#) forms to be given to the resident at the end of each 3-month period.
4. Complete the [Verification of Supervision](#) form to document the resident's total residency hours and assess their competency, then provide the notarized form to the resident.
5. If supervision terminates, the supervisor or the resident must complete the [Termination of Supervision](#) form and submit it to the Board. Both the supervisor and the resident must retain a copy of this form for their records in the event of an audit or complaint.

**Important Supervision Notice!**

Supervision by any individual whose relationship to the resident compromises the objectivity of the supervisor is prohibited.

### **3.3 Residency Hours Accrued or Completed Under Previous Regulations.**

Residents approved for the resident in counseling licensure before December 18, 2025 may choose to meet **EITHER** the previous supervised residency requirements or the new requirements when applying for LPC licensure by examination, whichever is less burdensome. **Combining elements of the old and new requirements is not permitted.** To learn more about the regulation changes, please review [Key Regulation Changes Effective December 18, 2025](#), which includes FAQs and a copy of the [highlighted regulatory amendments](#).

## **4. RENEW YOUR RESIDENT IN COUNSELING LICENSE**

Your temporary license as a Resident in Counseling will expire on **June 30<sup>th</sup>** of each year. The Annual Renewal fee is \$30.00.

Approximately 45-60 days prior to the expiration date of your license, the Board will email you a renewal notice and Personal Identification Number (PIN). You will renew your license using the [Online Licensing](#) system. Be sure to renew your license no later than the expiration date to avoid a late fee.

If you did not receive your renewal notice and PIN 30 days prior to your expiration date, please email or call the Department of Health Professions Call Center [CallCenter@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:CallCenter@dhp.virginia.gov) or (804) 367-4444 or contact the Board of Counseling at [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov).

For each annual renewal, you must:

1. Attest that a supervisory contract is in effect with a board-approved supervisor for each of the locations at which you are currently providing clinical counseling services,
2. Complete three (3) hours in continuing education courses that emphasize the ethics, standards of practice, or laws governing behavioral science professions in Virginia.
  - a. The course must be provided by an approved provider as outlined in subsection B of [18VAC115-20-106](#).
3. Attest to the completion of three (3) hours of continuing education courses.

**NOTE:**

Residents providing clinical counseling services must remain in residency by holding a current active License as a Resident in Counseling and practicing under supervision until the resident has passed the licensure examination and been granted a license as a professional counselor (LPC). The only exception is meeting the exemptions from the requirements of licensure as outlined in [section 54.1-3501](#) of the Code of Virginia. Providing clinical counseling services with an expired license could lead to disciplinary actions. You may need to renew your resident license while you are waiting on the Board to receive your passing NCMHCE or NCE scores and process your application for licensure.

## 5. TAKE AND PASS THE EXAMINATION

To become licensed as an LPC by the Board, you must pass the [National Clinical Mental Health Counselors Examination](#) (NCMHCE) or the [National Counselor Examination](#) (NCE) unless you are applying for licensure by endorsement. Both examinations are administered by the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). The cost for either examination is \$275.00

You can take the examination at any point during your residency; Board pre-approval is not required to sit for the exam. To register for the examination, visit the [NBCC's Credentialing Gateway](#) and follow the instructions for registration. You will work directly with the testing agency until you pass the examination. You can take the examination every 90 days. Your scores will be forwarded to the Board office within four to six weeks following the examination.

**NOTE:** In order to qualify for reimbursement under TRICARE, a licensee must pass the NCMHCE exam. TRICARE will NOT reimburse a licensee who has only passed the NCE.

### 5.1 Special Examination Accommodations

All requests for special examination accommodations must be reviewed and approved by the Virginia Board of Counseling. To request accommodation, you must have the [Special Examination Accommodation Request Form](#) completed by a qualified professional who has recently evaluated and identified your disability(ies). Then submit the completed [Special Examination Accommodation Request Form](#) to the Board via email at: [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov).

## 6. SUBMIT APPLICATION FOR LPC LICENSURE BY EXAMINATION

Once residency hours are completed and you have passed either the NCMHCE or NCE examination, you will need to complete and submit the online [LPC by Examination](#) application, pay the [fee](#), and submit the required supporting documentation. Specifically, at this stage, submit the following:

1. Complete the [online application](#) for a license professional counselor by examination

2. Pay the \$175.00 application fee
3. **Verification of Supervision for LPC Licensure Form** (Notarized Signature Required)
  - a. You must submit a [Verification of Supervision for LPC Licensure Form](#) with your application. A separate form must be submitted for each supervisor.
  - b. Have your supervisor(s) complete the entire form to verify that you have completed the residency requirements for licensure as required by [18VAC115-20-52](#).
  - c. Your supervisor's signature must be notarized.
4. **Quarterly Evaluation forms**
  - a. You must submit a copy of ALL your [Quarterly Evaluation](#) forms.
  - b. If multiple supervisors are involved in your residency, you must submit your Quarterly Evaluations from **each** supervisor for the time they supervised your residency.
5. A **National Practitioners Data Bank (NPDB)** Self-Query report.
  - a. The report must be **digitally certified**, current and generated no more than 30 days prior to submitting your application for licensure. A certified PDF ensures the self-query is exactly as issued by the NPDB.
  - b. After your self-query request has been processed, [sign in](#) to your Self-Query order to download your digitally certified response.
  - c. Need help submitting a NPDB self-query? Check out NPDB's video: [How to Order a Self-Query video](#).
  - d. Printed copies or non-certified self-query results will not be accepted.
6. **Supervision Summary Form**
  - a. You must submit a [Supervision Summary Form](#) with your application.
  - b. The total hours from your Verification of Supervision form(s) and Quarterly Evaluation forms should match the total hours on the Supervision Summary Form.
7. **Clinical Scores**
  - a. Your official passing score verification for the [NCMHCE](#) or [NCE](#) must be sent directly to the Board from NBCC.
  - b. Score reports will automatically be transferred to the Board if you chose Virginia as your state.
  - c. It will take up to 6 weeks for NBCC to transfer your scores to the Board.
8. **Official College Transcript(s)** (if applicable)
  - a. If you provided your Official Transcript as part of your Resident in Counseling temporary license application, you do not need to resubmit it to the Board.
  - b. Official transcript(s) must be electronically sent directly to the Board at [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov) via a secured electronic transcript service used by the school (for example: eScript or Parchment).
  - c. The transcripts must show that you graduated with a graduate degree from a program that prepares individuals to practice counseling.
  - d. Mailed, photocopied or scanned copies of transcripts will not be accepted.
9. **Verification of Required Coursework Form** (if applicable)
  - a. If you provided the Verification of Required Coursework form as part of your Resident in Counseling temporary license application, you do not need to resubmit it to the Board.
  - b. Provide a completed copy of the [Verification of Required Coursework](#) form to demonstrate the courses you took to obtain the three (3) semester hours or four (4) quarter hours of graduate coursework in each of the 13 core content areas of [18VAC115-20-51](#).
  - c. One course may count for one content area only.
  - d. This form should be completed by the school, or completed by the applicant and reviewed by the school for accuracy.
10. **Verification of Degree and Internship Form** (if applicable)
  - a. If you provided the Verification of Degree and Internship for LPC Licensure form as part of your Resident in Counseling temporary license application, you do not need to resubmit it to the Board.
  - b. Provide a completed copy of the [Verification of Degree and Internship](#) form signed by your graduate school verifying that your degree and internship meets the requirements of [18VAC115-20-49](#) and [18VAC115-20-51](#).
11. **Degree Program Information** (if applicable)
  - a. If you provided your degree information as part of your Resident in Counseling temporary license application, you do not need to resubmit this information to the Board.

- b. If your degree was not [CACREP accredited at the time you graduated](#), or your degree is not specifically in the practice of counseling, you must provide the following information for review:
    - i. A letter on official university letterhead or printed from the university website that your degree program has the express intent to prepare counselors.
    - ii. Evidence that your degree program has an identifiable Licensed Professional Counselor faculty with an identifiable body of students.
      - 1. The Board considers identifiable counselor training faculty as core counselor education program faculty that holds a doctorate degree in counselor education; or holds a LPC or comparable license.
    - iii. Degree program has clear authority and primary responsibility for the core and specialty areas as required by [18VAC115-20-51](#).
12. **Licensure Verification of Out-of-State Supervisor** (if applicable)
- a. If your residency did not take place in Virginia, you must submit an online license verification for your supervisor.
    - i. The online verification can be printed directly from the licensing jurisdiction’s website.
    - ii. If the jurisdiction does not provide online verification, you must contact the jurisdiction directly to obtain license verification.
13. **License Verification** (if applicable)
- a. If you have ever held, or currently hold, a health or mental health license, certification, or registration, in Virginia or in any other jurisdiction, whether current, inactive, or expired, you must submit an online license verification.
    - i. The online license verification can be printed directly from the licensing jurisdiction’s website.
      - 1. You can print to PDF or scan the printed online verification to include it with your online application.
    - ii. The verification must include the following information: licensee name, license number, license title, issue date, expiration date, **and** whether disciplinary action has ever occurred against your license, certification, or registration.
    - iii. Submitting a copy of your license certificate is **not** considered license verification.
    - iv. If the jurisdiction does not provide online verification, you must contact the jurisdiction directly to obtain license verification. Please see the Board’s [Applicant Out-of-State Licensure Verification](#) form.
14. **Proof of Name Change** (if applicable)
- a. You must provide documentation if your name has ever been legally changed from the time you attended school or were licensed, certified, or registered in another jurisdiction or is other than what is listed on your application.
  - b. Acceptable forms of documentation are copies of a:
    - i. Marriage certificate,
    - ii. Court order, or
    - iii. Divorce decree.
15. **Criminal Convictions, Past Actions, or Possible Impairments** (if applicable)
- a. If you answered “YES” to any of the criminal convictions, past actions, or possible impairment questions on the application, you must include a detailed explanation and supporting documentation.
  - b. Please refer to Guidance Document [115-2](#) for a list of required documentation and further information. Examples of supporting documentation that may be required include:
    - i. Certified copies of court orders, orders for disciplinary action or denials.
    - ii. Evidence that court ordered, or disciplinary action requirements have been met.
    - iii. Evidence of past treatment, such as a discharge summary.
    - iv. Letter from the applicant’s current healthcare provider(s).
    - v. Letter from the applicant explaining the factual circumstances of the criminal offense, disciplinary action, denial, or condition or impairment.
    - vi. Letters from employers concerning work performance.
  - c. All applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## 6.1 Submit Required Documents within the Online Application

**Prior to paying your online application fee**, we strongly encourage you to verify that you have obtained or requested all the documents that are necessary for your application. After you pay the application fee, you can no longer upload documents in the online application portal. Failing to upload documents in the online application portal will cause a delay in the review of your application.

Once you have verified that you have all the necessary documents to apply for licensure:

- Upload all the documents by using the **upload** feature in the online application portal **prior to submitting your online application fee**.
- Documents such as transcripts and exam scores cannot be uploaded in the online application portal, they must be sent directly to the Board from the university or testing organization.
- If you forget to submit a document after you have paid the application fee, you can email these documents to the Board at: [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov)

### Application Status

After you have uploaded your documents and paid the application fee, you can check the status of your application by visiting your [online checklist](#). As documentation is received and reviewed by the Board, your online checklist will be updated, and an automated email will be sent to you before noon the following day at the email address of record. The email will be sent from [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov), please check your junk email. The automated emails will have additional details about the status of your application and any additional actions you may need to take. Please refer to the chart on page 5 of this handbook for the status definitions.

Once **all** your required documentation is received, the Board will complete a full review of your application.

## 7. RECEIVE LPC LICENSE

When all your documents are received, complete, and reviewed, you will receive an email from the Board that you are licensed as a professional counselor. The email will contain helpful information regarding your license. Board staff will also mail your paper license and wall certificate to you within 30 days to the address on record with the Board.

You will be required to renew your license on or before June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year and complete 20 hours of continuing education for each annual license renewal. A minimum of two (2) of these continuing education hours must be in courses that emphasize ethics, standards of practice, or laws governing behavioral science professions in Virginia. A LPC who was licensed by examination is exempt from meeting continuing competency requirements for the first renewal following initial licensure.

## B. LPC ENDORSEMENT LICENSURE PROCESS

Virginia does not have reciprocity with any jurisdiction. All applicants must complete the application process. A Virginia address is not a requirement to apply for licensure. Virginia allows individuals to hold multiple state licenses.

A person applying to be a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) by endorsement in Virginia can apply using 1 of 3 Endorsement Pathways depending upon their post-licensure experience. Please review each option in the table below to determine which Endorsement Pathway is applicable to you, and then follow the detailed licensure process steps for that option to apply for licensure by endorsement using that pathway.

### Choose Your Endorsement Pathway

License	Active Practice	Education	Supervised Experience	Pathway to Choose
I have an active, unrestricted, independent counseling license in another state.	I have provided post-licensure active clinical practice* for 24 of the last 60 months.	I met the licensing state's education requirements for licensure.	I met the licensing state's supervised experience for licensure.	<a href="#">Pathway #1</a>
I have an active, unrestricted, independent counseling license in another state.	I have <b>NOT</b> provided post-licensure active clinical practice* for 24 of the last 60 months.	I have verified that my education meets the requirements of <a href="#">18VAC-115-20-49</a> and <a href="#">18VAC115-20-51</a> **	I have verified that my supervised experience meets the requirements of <a href="#">18VAC-115-20-52</a> **	<a href="#">Pathway #2</a>
I have an active, unrestricted, independent counseling license in another state.	I met the active practice, education, and supervised experience requirements to obtain a Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor (CCMHC) credential from NBCC and hold a current CCMHC credential.			<a href="#">Pathway #3</a>

\*Clinical practice means the rendering of direct clinical counseling services or clinical supervision of counseling services. Experience obtained during a residency or internship does not count towards the 24 months. The experience must be post-licensure.

\*\*You will be required to show evidence that your education and supervised experience meets the requirements of [18VAC-115-20-49](#), [18VAC115-20-51](#), and [18VAC-115-20-52](#)

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Please read the [Regulations Governing the Practice of Professional Counseling](#) to ensure you have met the requirements for licensure by endorsement prior to submitting an application and fee, as **all fees submitted to the Board are nonrefundable.**

## 1a. Pathway #1 Required Documents for Application

Pathway #1 is for individuals who have an active, unrestricted, independent clinical counseling license **AND** have provided post-licensure active clinical practice for 24 of the last 60 months.

- Clinical practice means the rendering of direct clinical counseling services or clinical supervision of counseling services.
- Experience obtained during a residency or internship does not count towards the 24 months. The experience must be post-licensure.

Once you believe that you are eligible to apply for licensure as a Professional Counselor by Endorsement, you will need to complete and submit the online [Professional Counselor by Endorsement application](#), pay the application fee, and submit the required supporting documentation. Specifically, at this stage, submit the following:

1. Complete the [online application](#) form for Professional Counselor by Endorsement,
2. Pay the \$175 processing fee,
3. A **National Practitioners Data Bank (NPDB)** Self-Query report.
  - a. The report must be **digitally certified**, current and generated no more than 30 days prior to submitting your application for licensure. A certified PDF ensures the self-query is exactly as issued by the NPDB.
  - b. After your self-query request has been processed, [sign in](#) to your Self-Query order to download your digitally certified response.
  - c. Need help submitting a NPDB self-query? Check out NPDB's video: [How to Order a Self-Query video](#).
  - d. Printed copies or non-certified self-query results will not be accepted.
4. **License Verification(s)**
  - a. If you have ever held, or currently hold, a health or mental health license, certification, or registration, in Virginia or in any other jurisdiction, whether current, inactive, or expired, you must submit an online license verification.
    - i. The online license verification can be printed directly from the licensing jurisdiction's website.
      1. You can print to PDF or scan the printed online verification to include it with your online application.
    - ii. The verification must include the following information: licensee name, license number, license title, issue date, expiration date, and whether disciplinary action has ever occurred against your license, certification, or registration.
    - iii. Submitting a copy of your license certificate is **not** considered license verification.
    - iv. If the jurisdiction does not provide online verification, you must contact the jurisdiction directly to obtain license verification. Please see the Board's [Applicant Out-of-State Licensure Verification](#) form.
5. **Clinical Scores**
  - a. You must provide verification of a passing score on an examination required for counseling licensure in the jurisdiction where you obtained your license.
  - b. If your jurisdiction required the NCMHCE or NCE exam, contact NBCC to have your NCMHCE or NCE passing exam scores transferred directly to the Virginia Board. The scores must be sent directly from NBCC to the Board. You cannot provide a copy of your scores to the Board.
    - i. To avoid delays in processing your application, please request this transfer from NBCC prior to completing your online application for LPC by Endorsement.
  - c. If you took a state constructed exam to receive your professional counselor license, you must contact your licensing state and request to have your scores provided directly to the Board.
  - d. You cannot provide a copy of your scores to the Board.
6. **Official College Transcript(s)**
  - a. Official transcript(s) must be electronically sent directly to the Board at [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov) via a secured electronic transcript service used by the school (for example: eScript or Parchment).
  - b. The transcripts must show that you graduated with a graduate degree from a program that prepares individuals to practice counseling.
  - c. Mailed, photocopied or scanned copies of transcripts will not be accepted.

**7. Original Application**

- a. Provide a certified copy of your application materials from the jurisdiction where you were originally licensed.
- b. If you are unable to provide a certified copy of your application materials, you can provide a copy of the regulations that were in effect at the time you were licensed.

**8. Verification of Clinical Active Practice Form**

- a. Provide a completed copy of the [Verification of Clinical Active Practice](#) form that is signed by the reference who can certify your active practice.
- b. Examples of individuals who can be a reference to verify your active practice are:
  - i. Present employers,
  - ii. Past employers, and
  - iii. Business or Professional Colleagues.

**9. Proof of Name Change (if applicable)**

- a. You must provide documentation if your name has ever been legally changed from the time you attended school or were licensed, certified, or registered in another jurisdiction or is other than what is listed on your application.
- b. Acceptable forms of documentation are copies of a:
  - i. Marriage certificate,
  - ii. Court order, or
  - iii. Divorce decree.

**10. Criminal Convictions, Past Actions, or Possible Impairments (if applicable)**

- a. If you answered “YES” to any of the criminal convictions, past actions, or possible impairment questions on the application, you must include a detailed explanation and supporting documentation.
- b. Please refer to Guidance Document [115-2](#) for a list of required documentation and further information. Examples of supporting documentation that may be required include:
  - i. Certified copies of court orders, orders for disciplinary action or denials.
  - ii. Evidence that court ordered, or disciplinary action requirements have been met.
  - iii. Evidence of past treatment, such as a discharge summary.
  - iv. Letter from the applicant’s current healthcare provider(s).
  - v. Letter from the applicant explaining the factual circumstances of the criminal offense, disciplinary action, denial, or condition or impairment.
  - vi. Letters from employers concerning work performance.
- c. All applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Please see [Page 33](#) for the instructions to submit the required documents within the online application.

## 1b. Pathway #2 Required Documents for Application

Pathway #2 is for individuals who:

1. Hold an active, unrestricted, independent clinical counseling license in another state,
2. Have **NOT** provided post-licensure active practice for 24 of the last 60 months,
  - Clinical practice means the rendering of direct clinical counseling services or clinical supervision of counseling services.
3. Have education that meets with the requirements of [18VAC-115-20-49](#) and [18VAC115-20-51](#), and
4. Have supervised experience that meets with the requirements [18VAC-115-20-52](#).

Once you believe that you are eligible to apply for licensure as a Professional Counselor by Endorsement, you will need to complete and submit the online [Professional Counselor by Endorsement application](#), pay the application fee, and submit the required supporting documentation. Specifically, at this stage, submit the following:

1. Complete the [online application](#) form for Professional Counselor by Endorsement,
2. Pay the \$175 processing fee,
3. A **National Practitioners Data Bank (NPDB)** Self-Query report.
  - a. The report must be **digitally certified**, current and generated no more than 30 days prior to submitting your application for licensure. A certified PDF ensures the self-query is exactly as issued by the NPDB.
  - b. After your self-query request has been processed, [sign in](#) to your Self-Query order to download your digitally certified response.
  - c. Need help submitting a NPDB self-query? Check out NPDB's video: [How to Order a Self-Query video](#).
  - d. Printed copies or non-certified self-query results will not be accepted.
3. **License Verification(s)**
  - a. If you have ever held, or currently hold, a health or mental health license, certification, or registration, in Virginia or in any other jurisdiction, whether current, inactive, or expired, you must submit an online license verification.
    - i. The online license verification can be printed directly from the licensing jurisdiction's website.
      1. You can print to PDF or scan the printed online verification to include it with your online application.
    - ii. The verification must include the following information: licensee name, license number, license title, issue date, expiration date, and whether disciplinary action has ever occurred against your license, certification, or registration.
    - iii. Submitting a copy of your license certificate is **not** considered license verification.
    - iv. If the jurisdiction does not provide online verification, you must contact the jurisdiction directly to obtain license verification. Please see the Board's [Applicant Out-of-State Licensure Verification](#) form.
4. **Clinical Scores**
  - a. You must provide verification of a passing score on an examination required for counseling licensure in the jurisdiction where you obtained your license.
  - b. If your jurisdiction required the NCMHCE or NCE exam, contact NBCC to have your NCMHCE or NCE passing exam scores transferred directly to the Virginia Board. The scores must be sent directly from NBCC to the Board. You cannot provide a copy of your scores to the Board.
    - i. To avoid delays in processing your application, please request this transfer from NBCC prior to completing your online application for LPC by Endorsement.
  - c. If you took a state constructed exam to receive your professional counselor license, you must contact your licensing state and request to have your scores provided directly to the Board.
  - d. You cannot provide a copy of your scores to the Board.
5. **Official College Transcript(s)**
  - a. Official transcript(s) must be electronically sent directly to the Board at [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov) via a secured electronic transcript service used by the school (for example: eScript or Parchment).
  - b. The transcripts must show that you graduated with a graduate degree from a program that prepares individuals to practice counseling.

- c. Mailed, photocopied or scanned copies of transcripts will not be accepted.
- 6. Verification of Supervision Form (Notarized Signature Required)**
- a. You must provide documentation that you completed supervised experience in your licensing jurisdiction. The best way for you to provide this documentation is to complete the Virginia [Verification of Supervision](#) form and include it with your application. Your supervisor’s signature must be notarized on this form.
    - i. If you had more than one supervisor during your residency, you must provide a separate Verification of Supervision form from each supervisor.
  - b. If you are unable to have the Virginia [Verification of Supervision](#) form completed, the Board may consider supervised experience documentation from another jurisdiction if it demonstrates that you have met the supervised experience requirements.
  - c. Your supervised experience must meet Virginia requirements as outlined in [18VAC115-20-52](#).
- 7. Verification of Required Coursework Form**
- a. Provide a completed copy of the [Verification of Required Coursework](#) form to demonstrate the courses you took to obtain the three (3) semester hours or four (4) quarter hours of graduate coursework in each of the 13 core content areas of [18VAC115-20-51](#).
  - b. One course may count for one content area only.
  - c. This form should be completed by the school, or completed by the applicant and reviewed by the school for accuracy.
- 8. Verification of Degree and Internship Form**
- a. Provide a completed copy of the [Verification of Degree and Internship](#) form signed by your graduate school verifying that your degree and internship meets the requirements of [18VAC115-20-49](#) and [18VAC115-20-51](#).
- 9. Licensure Verification of Out-of-State Supervisor(s)**
- a. Submit an online license verification for your supervisor.
    - ii. The online verification can be printed directly from the licensing jurisdiction’s website.
    - iii. If the jurisdiction does not provide online verification, you must contact the jurisdiction directly to obtain license verification.
- 10. Degree Program Information (if applicable)**
- a. If you do not have 24 of the last 60 months of post licensure active practice and your degree is not [CACREP accredited](#), or your degree is not specifically in the practice of counseling, you must provide the following information for review:
    - i. A letter on official university letterhead or printed from the university website that your degree program has the express intent to prepare counselors.
    - ii. Evidence that your degree program has an identifiable Licensed Professional Counselor faculty with an identifiable body of students.
      - 1. The Board considers identifiable counselor training faculty as core counselor education program faculty that holds a doctorate degree in counselor education; or holds a LPC or comparable license.
    - iii. Degree program has clear authority and primary responsibility for the core and specialty areas as required by [18VAC115-20-51](#).
- 11. Proof of Name Change (if applicable)**
- a. You must provide documentation if your name has ever been legally changed from the time you attended school or were licensed, certified, or registered in another jurisdiction or is other than what is listed on your application.
  - b. Acceptable forms of documentation are copies of a:
    - i. Marriage certificate,
    - ii. Court order, or
    - iii. Divorce decree.
- 12. Criminal Convictions, Past Actions, or Possible Impairments (if applicable)**
- a. If you answered “YES” to any of the criminal convictions, past actions, or possible impairment questions on the application, you must include a detailed explanation and supporting documentation.
  - b. Please refer to Guidance Document [115-2](#) for a list of required documentation and further information. Examples of supporting documentation that may be required include:

- i. Certified copies of court orders, orders for disciplinary action or denials.
  - ii. Evidence that court ordered, or disciplinary action requirements have been met.
  - iii. Evidence of past treatment, such as a discharge summary.
  - iv. Letter from the applicant's current healthcare provider(s).
  - v. Letter from the applicant explaining the factual circumstances of the criminal offense, disciplinary action, denial, or condition or impairment.
  - vi. Letters from employers concerning work performance.
- c. All applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Please see [Page 33](#) for the instructions to submit the required documents within the online application.

## 1c. Pathway #3 Required Documents for Application

Pathway #3 is for individuals who hold an active, unrestricted, independent clinical counseling license **AND** a current Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor ([CCMHC](#)) credential from the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC).

- If you do not meet the Active Practice or education and experience requirements from Option 1 or Option 2, please review the requirements to obtain a [CCMHC certification](#) to see if you qualify for the credential.
- Once you have obtained the CCMHC, you can apply for licensure by endorsement in Virginia.

Once you believe that you are eligible to apply for licensure as a Professional Counselor by Endorsement, you will need to complete and submit the online [Professional Counselor by Endorsement application](#), pay the application fee, and submit the required supporting documentation. Specifically, at this stage, submit the following:

1. Complete the [online application](#) form for Professional Counselor by Endorsement
2. Pay the \$175 processing fee,
3. A **National Practitioners Data Bank (NPDB)** Self-Query report.
  - a. The report must be **digitally certified**, current and generated no more than 30 days prior to submitting your application for licensure. A certified PDF ensures the self-query is exactly as issued by the NPDB.
  - b. After your self-query request has been processed, [sign in](#) to your Self-Query order to download your digitally certified response.
  - c. Need help submitting a NPDB self-query? Check out NPDB's video: [How to Order a Self-Query video](#).
  - d. Printed copies or non-certified self-query results will not be accepted.
4. **License Verification(s)**
  - a. If you have ever held, or currently hold, a health or mental health license, certification, or registration, in Virginia or in any other jurisdiction, whether current, inactive, or expired, you must submit an online license verification.
    - i. The online license verification can be printed directly from the licensing jurisdiction's website.
      1. You can print to PDF or scan the printed online verification to include it with your online application.
    - ii. The verification must include the following information: licensee name, license number, license title, issue date, expiration date, and whether disciplinary action has ever occurred against your license, certification, or registration.
    - iii. Submitting a copy of your license certificate is **not** considered license verification.
    - iv. If the jurisdiction does not provide online verification, you must contact the jurisdiction directly to obtain license verification. Please see the Board's [Applicant Out-of-State Licensure Verification](#) form.
5. **Clinical Scores**
  - a. You must provide verification of a passing score on an examination required for counseling licensure in the jurisdiction where you obtained your license.
  - b. If your jurisdiction required the NCMHCE or NCE exam, contact NBCC to have your NCMHCE or NCE passing exam scores transferred directly to the Virginia Board. The scores must be sent directly from NBCC to the Board. You cannot provide a copy of your scores to the Board.
    - i. To avoid delays in processing your application, please request this transfer from NBCC prior to completing your online application for LPC by Endorsement.
  - c. If you took a state constructed exam to receive your professional counselor license, you must contact your licensing state and request to have your scores provided directly to the Board.
  - d. You cannot provide a copy of your scores to the Board.
6. **Verification of CCMHC Credential**
  - a. You must submit an online verification of your current Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor ([CCMHC](#)) credential from the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC).
    - i. The online verification can be printed directly from the [NBCC website](#). You can print to PDF or scan the printed online verification to include with your online application.
7. **Proof of Name Change (if applicable)**

- a. You must provide documentation if your name has ever been legally changed from the time you attended school or were licensed, certified, or registered in another jurisdiction or is other than what is listed on your application.
  - b. Acceptable forms of documentation are copies of a:
    - i. Marriage certificate,
    - ii. Court order, or
    - iii. Divorce decree.
- 8. Criminal Convictions, Past Actions, or Possible Impairments** (if applicable)
- a. If you answered “YES” to any of the criminal convictions, past actions, or possible impairment questions on the application, you must include a detailed explanation and supporting documentation.
  - b. Please refer to Guidance Document [115-2](#) for a list of required documentation and further information. Examples of supporting documentation that may be required include:
    - i. Certified copies of court orders, orders for disciplinary action or denials.
    - ii. Evidence that court ordered, or disciplinary action requirements have been met.
    - iii. Evidence of past treatment, such as a discharge summary.
    - iv. Letter from the applicant’s current healthcare provider(s).
    - v. Letter from the applicant explaining the factual circumstances of the criminal offense, disciplinary action, denial, or condition or impairment.
    - vi. Letters from employers concerning work performance.
  - c. All applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## 2. Submit Required Documents within the Online Application

**Prior to paying your online application fee**, we strongly encourage you to verify that you have obtained or requested all the documents that are necessary for your application. After you pay the application fee, you can no longer upload documents in the online application portal. Failing to upload documents in the online application portal will cause a delay in the review of your application.

Once you have verified that you have all the necessary documents to apply for licensure:

- Upload all the documents by using the **upload** feature in the online application portal **prior to submitting your online application fee**.
- Documents such as transcripts and exam scores cannot be uploaded in the online application portal, they must be sent directly to the Board from the university or testing organization.
- If you forget to submit a document after you have paid the application fee, you can email these documents to the Board at: [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov).

### Application Status

After you have uploaded your documents and paid the application fee, you can check the status of your application by visiting your [online checklist](#). As documentation is received and reviewed by the Board, your online checklist will be updated, and an automated email will be sent to you before noon the following day at the email address of record. The email will be sent from [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov), please check your junk email. The automated emails will have additional details about the status of your application and any additional actions you may need to take. Please refer to the chart on page 5 of this handbook for the status definitions.

Once **all** your required documentation is received, the Board will complete a full review of your application.

## 3. Receive Your License

When all your documents are received, complete, and reviewed, you will receive an email from the Board that you are licensed as a professional counselor. The email will contain helpful information regarding your license. Board staff will also mail your paper license and wall certificate to you within 30 days to the address on record with the Board.

You will be required to renew your license on or before June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year and complete 20 hours of continuing education for each annual license renewal. A minimum of two (2) of these continuing education hours must be in courses that emphasize ethics, standards of practice, or laws governing behavioral science professions in Virginia.