



North Carolina Board of Licensed Professional Counselors

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NCBLPC Professional Brief

Content Area: Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)

Brief Overview/Description:

A Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) has an unrestricted license to practice counseling in North Carolina which means the individual may practice counseling without supervision, although continued peer supervision can be a great way to continue to grow professionally. North Carolina General Statute § 90-330 provides a definition of counseling and what services constitute the practice of counseling in our state. [Procedures and requirements](#) for applying to become an LPC can be found at the Board website.

There are several settings in which a professional is exempt from being required to be licensed and these are outlined in North Carolina General Statute § 90-332.1. Among those exempt settings described include counselor interns enrolled in a regionally accredited program practicing counseling as part of their practicum and internship; State Board of Education certified school counselors who are practicing counseling in the school setting (this does not mean they can practice unsupervised counseling in a private setting without the LPC license); any person employed by State, federal, county, or municipal government while counseling within the scope of employment; any ordained minister or other member of the clergy while acting in a ministerial capacity who does not charge a fee for the service (if fees are charged, the individual must have a license to practice counseling); and counselors employed at colleges and universities practicing counseling within their scope of employment or job description (this does not mean they can practice unsupervised counseling in a private setting without the LPC license). Please note that Qualified Professionals are no longer exempt from licensure and must be licensed to provide counseling. Likewise, hospitals are no longer an exempt setting. Refer to the statute for all exemptions from licensure.

Once granted a license, LPCs must maintain ongoing professional development and continuing education for a total of 40 continuing education hours from approved providers during each biannual renewal cycle. Approved providers are:

- (1) American Counseling Association;
- (2) American Association of State Counseling Boards;
- (3) National Board for Certified Counselors; and
- (4) Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification.

Continuing education training provided by one of the following national organizations, their affiliate or by a vendor approved by one of the following organizations shall be approved for no more than 15 contact hours for any given renewal period as defined in Rule .0601 of this same Chapter.

- (1) American Association of Christian Counselors;
- (2) National Association of Pastoral Counselors;
- (3) National Rehabilitation Association;
- (4) National Association of Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Counselors;
- (5) National Association of Social Workers;
- (6) American Association Marriage and Family Therapy;
- (7) National Area Health Education Center Organization;
- (8) American Psychological Association;

The information contained herein is an overview of North Carolina laws, federal laws, and regulations. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all laws or regulations that govern the practice of counseling. The material is not to be taken as legal advice. Any interpretation of a statute or regulation expressed in the materials is created for educational purposes only. The NCBLPC does not issue advisory opinions, and the materials are not to be construed as such.

- (9) International Employee Assistance Professional Association; and
- (10) Employee Assistance Certification Commission.

Additionally, publishing activities, graduate coursework unique from degree requirements, counseling leadership, and obtaining supervision can be considered for up to 10 hours of continuing education credit, as long as they meet the requirements and are documented in ways specified by the board in **21 NCAC 53 .0603**.

Resources:

NC General Statutes Article 24: Licensed Professional Counselors Act; CHAPTER 53 - BOARD OF LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS; www.ncblpc.org

Key Legal Factors:

A counselor with the LPC Associate (LPCA) license must continue to practice counseling under supervision until he or she receives notice from the Board that they have been given the LPC license. Finishing the 3,000 hours of supervised professional counseling experience as an LPCA and applying to become an LPC does not mean that one can use the LPC designation. The applicant must receive notification from the Board that the LPC application has been approved and the license has been issued.

It is against the law to put one's self forward in a professional disclosure statement, on a website or other marketing/promotional materials, or in any other manner as an LPC before the Board has provide official documentation that the license has been issued.

Catch 22:

LPCAs who apply to become an LPC must continue to be supervised by his or her Board approved supervisor at the minimum frequency of 1 hour of supervision for every 40 hours of work. The LPCA still may not work more than 40 hours without having a supervision session until he or she receives notification that you are an LPC.

Summary Statement:

A Licensed Professional Counselor License is an unrestricted licensed to practice counseling, that is, without supervision. Completing the 3,000 hours of supervised professional practice as an LPCA does not immediately make one an LPC and supervision must continue until the LPC license is officially issued by the Board and notification is received by the counselor.