

# Counselling licensing requirements per state



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## Licensing Requirements Per State

In United States, each state has established the need for professional counseling. For this reason, each state has accredited institutions that offer courses for developing and leading to the creation of competent professional counselors. The final phase of each institution is obtaining a professional counseling license, and each state has a defined approach and needs that must be met by an individual to be approved as a qualified professional counselor. Some of the needs are academic qualification, the number and the nature of the elective courses that act as a cut of for minimum qualification, industrial attachment hours, and, more specifically, the minimum number of hours with active one on one sit in sessions with clients under supervision. With relevance to the states of Arizona and Colorado, this article will identify the main similarities and differences in the requirements for obtaining a professional counseling license between the two states.

From the academic qualification's standpoint, most of the foundational requirements for obtaining PCL are more or less the same. In both the states, the license can only be obtained by a master's degree holder, from an accredited institution, with much emphasis on counseling from a Council for Accreditation of Counselling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) or more relevantly, Council of Rehabilitation Education (CORE) recognized institution (Boyd, Hattauer, Brandel, & Buckles, 2003). Supporting the qualification, the state of Colorado requires that accompanying the master's degree, the applicant must have completed at least 700 hours of supervised fieldwork. The state of Arizona on the other hand, is rather more specific. In addition to the basic 700 hours of supervised fieldwork, 240 hours of the 700

hours must have been spent directly on clients. As part of the minimum academic qualifications, both the states require applicants to demonstrate their proofs of competency by taking and passing the National Board of Counselors National Counselor Examination. In the state of Colorado, an additional jurisprudence exam is a fundamental necessity as a proof of familiarity with the state laws and cultures.

In addition to the academic qualifications, the applicant is required to have spent a substantial amount of time in practicum and internship in post master's practice. The time spent in internship is not part of the aforementioned 700 hours. In the state of Arizona, the PCL applicant is required to spend 3200 hours of post master's practice that is subject to supervision, which can be interpreted as two years dedicated work experience. As part of the work experience time, at least 1600 hours of the time should have been spent on direct client interaction and 100 hours of clinical supervision (O'Brien, 2016). As a core component of the work experience, it must include the treatments offered during the time, the assessments deduced, and the diagnosis developed. In the state of Colorado, the hours spent on internship are 2000 hours, which is post-masters counseling practice that is extended over two years and is subjected to broad supervision throughout the time.

With relevance to the freedom of movement, every American citizen has the right to move and settle in any state and work within the state. With relevance to becoming a licensed professional counselor with a license from a different state, the validity of the license must be first established. In both the states, the out of state counselor's application process is similar (Hipolito-Delgado, Estrada, & Garcia, 2017). The primary element beyond

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the academic qualifications is that they must meet the specific state qualifications. That is, the main practice and culture that uniquely identifies the state. The basic requirements in Colorado is that the PCL applicant must be at least 21 years of age and must be a holder of a valid professional counseling practice from the previous state. Besides having a master's degree, they can have a Ph. D. in any of the relevant fields of counseling accompanied by a year of post-doctoral broadly supervised practice. The other must-have requirement is having a passing grade for the jurisprudence exams, that examines the applicant's familiarity with the state laws and cultures.

In Arizona, the out of state practitioners can apply for the PCL through endorsements. The biggest difference lies in the fact that the applicant must be applying for the same practice level or practice as the one he or she practiced in the previous state and is actively practicing within the level for a minimum of three years. The out of state applicants that have been in the same level of practice for a minimum period of three years and cannot apply for the same position of practice by endorsement (Zack, 2011). However, they can apply for the PCL through examination. The primary requirements for the examinations are education, work experience and the scores of the exams. Just like Colorado, all the applicants must complete the Arizona statutes, which is in familiarity with the regulations, the laws, and the cultures of the state.

Once the applicants have acquired the PCL, they can venture into private practice or be employed by the state. However, the license is only valid for two years, in both the states. The practitioner is expected to renew and

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maintain the license if they are planning to maintain their practice (Olson, Brown-Rice, & Gerodias, 2018). In Arizona, the counselor's practice license is renewed every two years. The renewal process is subject to the condition that the practitioner has dedicated 30 hours to continuing education. The 30 hours includes 3 hours of advancements in behavioral health ethics, diversity and cultural competencies (Writers, 2019). Additionally, the renewal process can be done online at a fee. In the states of Colorado, on the other hand, a counseling license is valid for four years, the counselors can renew their license online, and they can also apply for renewal six weeks after the expiration dates of the previous license (Lessem, 2018). However, for a renewal to be validated, the applicant must complete 40 hours of professional development every two years, the professional development programs are limited to 20 hours for each type of program.

In summation, the foundational framework for becoming a licensed professional counselor is the same for the states. The identifiable difference is presented by the uniqueness of practicing in the states. Most of the primary differences are in time, and the experiences exposures, most of which is subject to change depending on its relevance to the functionality of the qualified practitioners and the needs of the industry. Otherwise, the foundational framework defines the academic qualifications, the exposure to experienced practice, out of state practice and maintaining and renewing practice.

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