

**TITLE 27
LEGISLATIVE RULE
BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN COUNSELING**

**SERIES 1
LICENSING RULE**

§27-1-1. General.

1.1. Scope. -- This rule establishes standards for professional counselors to follow in applying, qualifying, and maintaining licensure as a counselor.

1.2. Authority. -- W. Va. Code §§30-31-5(19) and 30-31-6.

1.3. Filing Date. -- April 14, 2026.

1.4. Effective Date. -- April 14, 2026.

1.5. Sunset Provision -- This rule will terminate and have no further force or effect on August 1, 2031.

§27-1-2. Definitions.

2.1. The following definitions apply to all rules promulgated by the Board of Examiners in counseling unless the word or term is explicitly defined or used in a different manner.

2.2. "Application" means an application providing all required information via a modality approved by the Board and filed with the Board as instructed.

2.3. "Counseling experience" means the applicant's primary professional responsibility was in direct provision of counseling services or such indirect services, including direct or indirect counselor supervision, approved by the Board.

2.4. "Direct counselor supervision" means face to face or secured interactive contact such as telephone, video, or other contact that clearly addresses the required specialty areas as cited in subsection 6.1.b. of this rule.

2.5. "Indirect counselor supervision" means review of written reports, case notes, test data and/or any review of representation of a supervised counselor's work.

2.6. "Endorsement Licensure for Independent Clinical Practice" means being fully licensed at the highest level in a state or jurisdiction, whereby the licensee's scope of practice includes the ability to assess, diagnose and treat mental and emotional disorders without being under the direct supervision of another licensed mental health professional.

2.7. "Licensed Professional Counselor-Associate (LPCA)"-- a Licensed Professional Counselor Associate, is qualified to conduct the assessment, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental, emotional or addiction disorders through the application of clinical counseling procedures, which

includes the use of psychotherapy, assessment instruments, counseling, consultation, treatment planning and supervision in the delivery of services to individuals, couples, families and groups while under the supervision of a Board qualified supervisor.

§27-1-3. Application of Rule.

This legislative rule applies to all people practicing or making applications to practice as a licensed professional counselor.

§27-1-4. Requirements for Application.

4.1. The applicant shall submit a licensure application containing the following information before the Board considers the applicant for licensure:

4.1.1. An application completed within six (6) months prior to submission via a modality approved by the Board;

4.1.2. A non-refundable application fee pursuant to 27CSR2 by credit/debit card, check or money order payable to West Virginia Board of Examiners in Counseling (WVBEC);

4.1.3. Official graduate transcripts sent directly from a college, university, or clearinghouse;

4.1.4. A completed transcript review sheet on a form provided by the board;

4.1.5. Two (2) completed professional recommendation forms from Master or Doctoral level individuals licensed as professional counselors, psychologists, social workers, or psychiatrists on a form provided by the Board. The forms must be dated within six (6) months prior to the submission of the application. Persons with a temporary license cannot complete the recommendation form;

4.1.6. Three (3) personal reference letters to satisfy the Board that the applicant is of good moral character and merits public trust. The letter's author may not be the same person completing a recommendation form. The letters must be dated within six (6) months prior to submission of the application. The Board does not provide a form for this purpose;

4.1.7. A supervisor's registration contract on a form provided by the Board. The proposed professional supervisor must meet the requirements of subsection 6.2 of this rule; and

4.1.8. Verification of supervision forms. These forms shall document the supervised counseling experience, including quarterly reports, the supervisor's midpoint and a final verification and assessment form (SVA). These forms are provided by the Board.

4.2. Fees associated with the application process are non-refundable.

4.3. Applicants who have passed an examination shall submit proof of a passing score for approval by the Board. A passing score is valid for five (5) years from the date of examination. An applicant may submit a licensure application prior to obtaining a passing score on certification exam.

4.4. For applicants who have not passed an examination, they shall file a completed licensure application with the Board prior to taking the Board approved exam/s. The exam/s may be taken only after the Board determines that the applicant is eligible for licensure.

4.5. Documentation more than three (3) years or older, to include supervision, shall not be considered towards current licensing efforts. Up to 500 supervision hours completed in another state or jurisdiction may be considered for licensing with proof provided at the time of application.

§27-1-5. Requirements for Endorsement Licensure.

5.1. An individual may apply for endorsement review if the individual is currently fully licensed in another state or jurisdiction. The licensing requirements of the endorsing state shall be greater than or equal to the requirements in this rule as determined by the Board.

5.2. To be eligible for licensure for independent practice in the state of West Virginia as a Licensed Professional Counselor by Endorsement, an applicant must be currently licensed at the highest level of licensure for independent clinical practice regardless of the criteria at the time of initial licensure in the originating state.

5.2.1. The following documentation is required for the Board to consider the applicant for endorsement in subsection 5.2 of this rule:

5.2.2. A completed West Virginia application,

5.2.3. The appropriate fee as required in the Licensed Professional Counselor Fee Rule, 27CSR2.

5.3. Applicants applying as an endorsement applicant, shall provide the following:

5.3.1. Proof of good standing in all jurisdictions where licensed, current, or otherwise, with proof of no discipline in any of these jurisdictions for an act that would have constituted grounds for refusal, suspension, or revocation of a license to practice mental health counseling in the state of West Virginia at the time the act was committed, to include pending actions or investigations; and

5.3.2. Verification of licensure standing from all states or jurisdictions where currently licensed.

5.4. Fees pursuant to 27CSR2, associated with the application process, are non-refundable

5.5. After an application is voided, an applicant may submit a new application and all required documentation and the applicable fee.

§27-1-6. Qualifications for New Applicants.

6.1. Education: The education requirements for the licensure of applicants are set forth in W. Va. Code §30-31-8. To meet those requirements, an applicant shall have one of the following degrees:

6.1.1. A master's or doctoral degree from an institution with a program accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council for the Accreditation for Education Preparation (CAEP), the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

(NCACS), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), or a comparable accrediting body. Acceptable graduate degrees include a specialization in clinical mental health counseling, marriage and family counseling, pastoral counseling, rehabilitation counseling, school counseling, and substance abuse or addictions counseling.

6.1.2. Applicants shall complete a minimum of sixty (60) semester hours or ninety (90) quarter hours of graduate coursework inclusive of a master's or doctoral degree in counseling with a minimum of three (3) semester hours or the quarterly equivalent in each of the following areas or their equivalent, as determined by the Board:

(1) Counseling theories: includes a study of basic theories and principles of counseling and philosophic basis of the helping relationship;

(2) Counseling techniques: includes individual counseling practices, methods, facilitative skills, and the application of these skills;

(3) Human growth and development: includes the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels, following psychological, sociological and physiological approaches. It includes human behavior (normal and abnormal), personality theory, learning theory, dynamics of stress, and medical/functional implications of disability;

(4) Social and cultural foundations: includes studies of social change, ethnic groups, subcultures, mores, urban and rural societies, population patterns, use of leisure time, work, and differing life patterns;

(5) Individual appraisal: includes individual differences, methods of data gathering and interpretation, individual and group testing, and case study;

(6) Professional responsibilities: includes goals and objectives of professional counseling organizations, codes of ethics, legal considerations, standards of preparation, certification and licensing, advocacy, confidentiality, and the role identity of counselors;

(7) Principles of etiology, assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, and prevention of mental and emotional disorders and dysfunctional behavior;

(8) Addictions counseling: includes the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of addictive disorders;

(9) Group dynamics, processes, counseling and consulting: includes theories, practices, methods, dynamics, facilitative skills, and supervised practice;

(10) Lifestyle and career development: includes vocational-choice theory, the relationship between career choice and lifestyle, occupational and educational information, career decision-making processes, career development exploration and placement techniques;

(11) Relational or family, and/or family counseling/therapy;

(12) Research and evaluation: includes statistics, research design, research proposals and evaluation;

(13) Supervised practicum: includes the provision of counseling to real not simulated clients and groups seeking services from counselors under the direction of a graduate faculty member who is a licensed professional counselor or related mental health professional and includes critiquing of counseling either observed or recorded on audio or video.

(14) Supervised internship: includes actual on-the-job counseling experience under the tutelage of a supervisor who is a licensed professional counselor or related mental health professional;

6.1.3. The applicant shall have sufficient semester credit hours or quarterly equivalent courses in any of the following counseling related elective subjects to equal the semester credit hour requirements as outlined in 6.1.b. subdivision of this rule:

(1) Human Sexuality;

(2) Psychopharmacology;

(3) Crisis intervention;

(4) Biological basis of behavior;

(5) Counseling special populations, including but not limited to forensic populations, sex offenders, children and adolescents, adults, elderly, gender specific populations, seriously mentally ill individuals, and individuals affected by domestic violence, dual diagnosis, co-morbidity or co-occurring disorders;

(6) Rehabilitation counseling;

(7) Counseling interventions; or

(8) Tele behavioral health and other technologically assisted services;

(9) Additional or advanced courses in any required curriculum category listed in paragraphs 6.1.2. through 14; and of this rule.

6.1.4. The Credentialing Committee, composed of two (2) counselor educators, Executive Director and other Board staff, shall review all matters regarding education requirements. The Credentialing Committee may make a final determination regarding the sufficiency of the applicant's education or may refer the matter to the entire Board for determination. Any determination made by the Committee or Board may be appealed in accordance with the procedures set forth in §27-6-5 of the Board's rules.

6.2 Supervised counseling experience: The applicant shall have a minimum of 3000 hours of supervised counseling experience, after earning a master's degree in counseling as determined by the Board; or have earned a doctoral degree in counseling as determined by the Board and have a minimum of 1500 hours of supervised counseling experience after earning the degree. At least fifty percent (50%) of the supervised counseling experience shall be in the direct provision of counseling services to clients.

6.2.1. The applicant may receive up to 600 hours credit towards the 3000-hour minimum requirement under this subsection for the work completed during an internship in a master's program. The credentialing committee shall determine the number of hours that may be granted. There is no credit hours granted for the doctoral supervision hour requirement.

6.2.2. The applicant shall remain under professional supervision satisfactory to the Board, and may not be called a licensed professional counselor, or in any way be represented as a licensed professional counselor, until the applicant is duly licensed by the Board.

6.2.3. The professional supervisor shall determine the applicant's activities and the amount of supervision required. A minimum of one (1) hour of direct supervision is required for every twenty (20) hours of practice. When the professional supervisor is not a full-time employee of the same practice or agency as the applicant, supervision shall occur at least twice in each calendar month, while maintaining the minimum hourly requirement. The supervisor shall be reasonably available to the applicant for consultation. An approved professional supervisor may not supervise more than four (4) individual applicants but may have additional supervisees (no more than eight (8) total) with prior Board approval. Supervision can be conducted in-person or via any secured, encrypted telecommunication modality.

6.2.4. The professional supervisor shall be pre-approved by the Board and shall provide post-graduate degree supervision for applicants provided they are a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) or Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT). At a minimum, the professional supervisor shall have been licensed at the highest level for a period of two (2) years and shall have had five (5) years counseling experience. The professional supervisor shall provide documentation to the Board that they have a current license, has completed a Board approved training in counseling supervision that includes content and experiences relevant to the professional clinical supervision of counselors, and has completed the jurisprudence exam. The professional supervisor shall provide the Board with a statement detailing their counseling philosophy, supervision experience and counseling experience. The professional supervisor shall demonstrate a stable employment history, and skills necessary to address all core areas of practice as outlined in subdivision 6.1.b of this rule and the ACA Code of Ethics.

6.2.5. The applicant shall provide the Board with verification of completion of supervised counseling experience with successful endorsement from the ALPS (supervisor). If the ALPS does not endorse the applicant, additional supervision may be required.

6.3. Standardized certification examination in counseling: The applicant shall provide the Board with verification that they have attained a successful score on a certification examination in counseling approved by the Board. The successful score is valid for five (5) years from the date of examination.

§27-1-7. Licensed Professional Counselor-Associate.

7.1. An applicant shall obtain an associate license when the applicant begins the supervisory experience or continues a supervisory experience. Hours obtained by an unlicensed person in any setting shall not count toward the supervision requirements.

7.2. The Board shall issue license to an applicant who:

7.2.1. has filed a licensure application in accordance with subsection 4.1 of this rule;

7.2.2. has met all the licensure requirements, including the academic requirements in subsection 6.1 of this rule; and passed the required examination in subsection 6.3 of this rule;

7.2.3. has signed the statement, included in the licensure application, that the applicant has read and understands the ACA Code of Ethics and the Board rules as defined in this rule.

7.3. Any applicant with post-degree supervision hours completed and documented in another state may have those supervision hours considered by the Board toward the supervision requirements in this state if the supervisory requirements for licensure are equal to or greater than this Board's supervisory requirements and are provided at the time the application is submitted.

7.4. Supervision during the licensing period shall be continuous, and any interruption in supervision of more than six (6) weeks shall be reported to the Board, in writing, within 30 days of the interruption. Interruptions not reported in a timely manner may result in termination of the license or other disciplinary action or sanctions as determined appropriate by the Board.

7.5. The Board must be notified in writing of any changes in supervision, to include change of Board approved supervisor and/or job positions, and the changes approved before the change(s) occur. Failure to obtain approval of such changes will nullify any hours accrued between the termination of one supervisor and/or job change and the approval of the other.

7.6. Licensed Professional Counselor-Associates may not own, operate or function as an independent contractor (1099) of a private practice and must practice only as part of their licensure supervisory requirement as outlined in subsection 6.2 of this rule.

7.7. An associate license is valid for 36 months. A licensee who does not complete the supervised counseling experience during the 36-month licensure period may renew their license once for an additional 24 months by written request and payment of a fee in pursuant to 27CSR2, equal to the current initial application fee.

§27-1-8. Examination Failure.

8.1. An applicant may sit for an approved examination within a twelve-month period, making three (3) attempts without requiring additional permission from the Board.

8.2. An applicant who fails the examination three (3) times must reapply for licensure in accordance with §27-1-4 qualifications.

§27-1-9. Issuance of License.

9.1. The Board shall issue a license authorizing the holder to engage in the practice of counseling to each successful applicant for licensure as a licensed professional counselor.

9.2. Each license issued by the Board shall contain the licensee's name, license number, the date of issuance and a statement indicating the license expiration date of June 30.

9.3. The Chairperson and Secretary of the Board shall sign official licenses, in person or electronically, and affixed with the official seal of the Board.

9.4. All licenses issued by the Board remain the property of the Board and the licensee shall surrender their license upon demand.

9.5. Once all requirements for licensure have been determined, the Board shall send notification of the license to the applicant's last known email address.

§27-1-10. Professional Disclosure.

10.1. A licensee shall display a professional disclosure statement at the place where they perform services and make a copy of the statement available to clients upon request. The Board shall provide the professional disclosure statement form when a license is originally issued. A licensee may obtain additional forms through the Board website.

10.2. The following information shall be included in the professional disclosure statement:

10.2.1. The name, title, business address, and business phone number of the licensee performing the service;

10.2.2. The formal professional education of the licensee, including academic degrees, the institutions awarding those degrees and the dates they were received.

(1) Formal professional education means the licensee's academic training related to counseling which meets the educational requirements for licensure as a counselor; and,

(2) Academic degrees that do not meet the requirements for licensure are not formal professional education as defined in this Rule and shall not be listed;

10.2.3. The licensee's areas of competence in counseling and the services provided, based on training and experience, from the following list, as is appropriate: career counseling, consultation, diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders, employee assistance counseling, family counseling, human resources counseling, marriage counseling, clinical mental health counseling, trauma counseling, grief and loss counseling, rehabilitation counseling, school counseling, substance abuse and addictions counseling, supervision, and vocational counseling; and other services the licensee can justify through training and supervision.

10.2.4. The Board's name, current address, and telephone number. The following statement shall appear just above the Board's information: Any questions, concerns or complaints relating to the delivery of service by the counselor listed above, may be directed to:

10.3. The following legal and ethical principles apply to the licensee in providing this disclosure statement:

10.3.1. The provision of the professional disclosure statement is the sole responsibility of the licensee. The licensee shall submit a copy of the professional disclosure statement to the Board;

10.3.2. The purpose of professional disclosure is to provide sufficient information to aid the consumer public in making informed judgments and choices on matters that concern it; and,

10.3.3. Areas of competence and services provided listed on the professional disclosure statement shall not exceed those professional qualifications possessed.

10.4. In listing areas of competence and services provided on the professional disclosure statement, the licensee shall adhere to the scope of practice of professional counseling and delivery of services as defined in W. Va. Code, §30-31-3 and as cited in Section 10 of this rule.

§27-1-11. Code of Ethics.

11.1. The Board adopts the 2014 version of the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics, as part of this rule and all provisions of the Code of Ethics have the effect as if it were a specifically promulgated rule of the Board.

11.2. The Board may take disciplinary action against a licensee who fails to comply with the Code of Ethics cited in subsection 11.1. of this rule.

§27-1-12. Responsibilities of Licensees.

12.1. Licensees shall familiarize themselves with the most current provisions of Chapter 30 Article 31 of W. Va. Code §30-31-1 et seq, the Code of Ethics of the American Counseling Association and practice counseling in accordance with the law and all rules promulgated by the Board.

12.2. A licensee shall notify the Board within thirty (30) days of any change of his or her legal name, primary address, telephone number, email address or similar change of location or status, via a modality approved by the Board.

12.3. A licensee shall notify the Board in writing within thirty (30) days of witnessing what may constitute, in his or her best judgment, professional misconduct by another licensed professional counselor.

§27-1-13. Expired License.

13.1 A person whose license has expired and who continues to hold themselves out as a licensed counselor or who engages in counseling without a license is in violation of W. Va. Code §30-31-1.

§27-1-14. Relations with the Public and Other Professions.

14.1. A licensee shall neither misrepresent nor accept misrepresentation by other persons of the efficacy of their professional services.

14.2. A licensee shall not, under normal circumstances, offer professional services to clients already receiving services from another professional, unless agreed upon by all parties.

14.3. A licensee shall not distribute advertisements, announcements, or information that is false, inaccurate, misleading, partial, out of context, or deceptive.

14.4. A licensee shall clearly state his or her licensure status by using the title "Licensed Professional Counselor or "LPC" in all professional correspondence, documents, advertisements and announcements.

14.5. A licensee shall display their original current license certificate and disclosure statement in a prominent place in the primary location of their practice.

14.6. A licensee shall distinguish between public statements made as a private citizen and those made as a representative of the profession and be aware that any statement he or she makes may be interpreted as being representative of his or her profession.

14.7. A licensee shall not give or accept a commission, rebate, or other form of remuneration for referral of clients for professional services.

§27-1-15. Violations of Child Support.

15.1. The Board shall revoke or suspend the license of a licensee or impose other sanctions against a licensee or refuse to renew a license or approve an application for license, after receiving a valid circuit court order indicating that the licensee has violated a child support ruling and, as a result, has endangered his or her professional license.

15.2. The Board shall reinstate, remove sanctions against or allow renewal of or application for a license after receiving a valid circuit court order to reinstate or renew a license previously suspended, revoked or sanctioned because of a similar order of the court.

§27-1-16. Retirement Status.

16.1. Before the Board considers the licensee for retirement status, the licensee shall submit, no sooner than two (2) weeks prior to June 30 of every odd numbered year, a retirement application packet, in a format designated by the Board, containing all the following information:

16.1.1. A completed retirement status application on a form provided by the Board;

16.1.2. A copy of the recording form documenting all the individual continuing education offerings completed by the licensee on a form provided by the Board;

16.1.3. Copies of all certificates of completion corresponding with the documentation provided on the recording form; and,

16.1.4. The appropriate fee, as set forth in 27CSR2, LPC Fee Rules.

16.2. Upon approval for the retirement status designation, the LPC in Retirement Status (LPC-R) shall only work in a voluntary position and shall abide by the following requirements for renewal of the LPC-R:

16.2.1. Shall complete twenty (20) contact hours each renewal;

16.2.2. Shall complete three (3) of the twenty (20) contact hours in ethics based on the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics;

16.2.3. Shall complete two (2) of the twenty (20) contact hours in mental health conditions specific to veterans and family members of veterans as cited in Series 3, Renewal Rule section §27-3-4.1.b.;

16.2.4. May complete all twenty (20) contact hours in home study including ethics; and,

16.2.5. Shall pay the appropriate fee, as set forth in 27CSR2 LPC Fee Rules.

§27-1-17. Inactive Status.

17.1. The Board may only grant inactive status to licenses in good-standing and meeting additional requirements as outlined by the Board.

17.1.1. The licensee shall submit to the Board a completed inactive status application on a form provided by the board with fee, prior to June 16 of the year the application is being submitted;

17.1.2. A copy of the recording form documenting all individual continuing education offerings completed by the licensee on a form provided by the board when applicable.

17.1.3. Copies of all certificates of completion corresponding with the documentation provided on the recording form when applicable; and,

17.1.4. The appropriate fee, as set forth in, 27CSR2 LPC Fee Rules.

17.2. Upon approval of the inactive status designation, the LPC in inactive Status (LPC-I) may NOT provide counseling services of any kind.

17.2.1. The licensee is NOT required to obtain continuing education credits during approved inactive status period;

17.2.2. Shall complete 35 hours of continuing education credits in the two (2) years proceeding an application to return to active status

17.2.3. S hall complete three (3) of the thirty-five (35) continuing education credits in Ethics based on the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics;

17.2.4. Shall complete two (2) of the twenty (20) continuing education credits in mental health conditions specific to veterans and family members of veterans as cited in Series 3, Renewal Rule section §27-3-4.1.b.;

17.2.5. For a license that is inactive for more than five (5) years, to return to active status, you may be subject to additional continuing education hours, supervision and/or completion of additional course work, and;

17.2.6. Shall pay the appropriate fee, as set forth in, 27CSR2 LPC Fee Rules.