



**Continuing Education
And
License/Certification Renewal** (Rev. 12/19)

Purpose.

The Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists has established regulations for continuing education. When a counselor or therapist applies for the renewal of a license or certificate, that licensee or certificate holder shall be required to certify to the Board the completion of continuing education activities in counseling/therapy theory and practice and to provide documentation to that effect upon the Board's request.

Scope.

The objectives of continuing education are:

1. Maintenance of professional competency in counseling and therapy;
2. Improvement of professional skills and knowledge in counseling and therapy;
3. Preparation for new roles or responsibilities in the practice of counseling or therapy;
4. Expansion of the science of counseling and therapy theory, method, or practice; and
5. Assurance of completion of continuing education requirements before license and certification renewal.

Continuing Education Requirements for Renewal.

- ***What if I do not complete the required number of CEUs before my license/certificate expiration date?***

If the licensee/certificate holder does not complete the required number of CE hours by the expiration date, the licensee/certificate holder will not be able to renew the license/certificate. The license/certificate will expire and will remain expired until the licensee/certificate holder completes the requirements and applies for reinstatement.

****IMPORTANT**** It is a violation of the Practice Act and the regulations to practice under an expired license/certificate and may subject the licensee/certificate holder to disciplinary action including suspension or revocation.

- ***Is it possible to retain my license/certificate without completing CEUs?***

Before the expiration of a license/certificate, a licensee/certificate holder may submit a request to the Board to be placed on “inactive status”.

The licensee/certificate holder **cannot** practice in Maryland while the license/certificate is inactive. One may place their license/certificate on inactive status for a **maximum of 5 years**. An annual fee applies per the regulations. If one would like to place their license/certificate on active status within 5 years, they must complete an application for reinstatement, pay the required fees and provide evidence of completion of the required CEUs.

If the license/certificate has been on inactive or non-renewed status for more than 5 years, you must re-apply for the license/certificate and meet current educational and experiential requirements.

- ***How do I or my organization become an Approved Sponsor?***

Some programs are automatically approved to sponsor Category A CEUs.

COMAR 10.58.05.07 provides,

(2) A program sponsored by the American Counseling Association, the National Board for Certified Counselors, the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, the National Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors, the International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium/Alcohol & Other Drug Abuse, any other national or international organization, or their regional or state affiliates is automatically approved by the Board for Category A unless otherwise excluded.

(3) A program sponsored by an accredited institution of higher education and state departments of health is automatically approved by the Board for Category A unless otherwise excluded.

If you or your organization are not mentioned in the regulations above, you must complete an application to be approved to sponsor Category A CEUs. *See*, COMAR 10.58.05.07(4).

Other requirements and information regarding Approved Sponsors can be found in COMAR 10.58.05.07.

- ***How do I know if a CE program is approved by the Board?***

If a program that you intend to take is sponsored by one of the organizations that is automatically approved for Category A (listed above), then the course is acceptable. If the program is not offered by a sponsor that is on the approved list, the provider should indicate that its program has been approved by this Board. If it does not, you should ask the provider directly if it has obtained approval under this Board.

Please note that approval by another health occupation board (e.g., Board of Social Work Examiners) does NOT mean that it is automatically approved by this Board.

Also note that if you proceed to take a course that you have not confirmed has been approved by this Board, you may not receive CEU credit. Approval is not given retroactively. In other words, one should confirm approval before paying for a program.

- ***I am interested in a CE program but it is not offered by an “Approved Sponsor”. May I still take the program and use the CE credit toward license/certificate renewal?***

If the program in which you are interested has not been approved by this Board, you should complete the Approval for Individual Program form. Once approved, you may attend the program. Approval is not guaranteed and will not be granted retroactively.

- ***Does the Board audit CEUs? How long must I retain my record of attendance for CEUs.***

The Board audits a percentage of renewal applications selected at random. You will be notified by the Board, in writing, if your renewal is subject to audit.

You must retain certificates of attendance/completion for CEUs for 5 years after the date of renewal.

Please refer to COMAR 10.58.05 for complete information regarding continuing education requirements.

If you have questions, please contact the Board at (410) 764-4732 and ask to speak with the Licensing Coordinator for your license/certificate.