

Navigating through North Carolina LPC-A Process

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(For people going through the process to become licensed as an LPC in North Carolina)

1. The NCE must be taken and passed for your application to be considered complete by the North Carolina Board of Licensed Professional Counselors (NCBLPC). It took me two months to study for the exam. There are a lot of career and group counseling questions on the exam. Make sure you apply to the NCE and walk through their process for taking this exam. Website: www.nbcc.org.
2. Along with the application, you will need to do a disclosure form.
3. While studying for the NCE, find your supervisors. They must be a LPC-S supervisor or equivalent approved by NCBLPC. Get the appropriate paperwork signed by them so you can start accruing your hours after you pass the NCE. (There are forms found on the website under “Forms.”) There is about a three-week time frame between sending in the paper work and your approval date. You can find the approval date when NCBLPC gives you a login code. (It will come up as a PDF.) Website: www.ncblpc.org
4. You must have 1 supervision hour for every 40 hours worked. You cannot count more than 40 hours in a given week. You must turn in quarterly reports. In a given quarter there are either 12 or 13 weeks. So this means the most hours you can receive per quarter is 480 or 520, depending on the number of weeks in that quarter. NCBLPC will not credit hours over that amount.
5. The NC requires 100 hours of supervision. However, it will only take 75 hours to fulfill 3000 hours. (75 supervision hours for each 40 hours worked = 3000). Also, if you would like to have group supervision, note that you can only have 25 group supervision hours. So you must have at least 75 individual sessions.
6. You can have more than one supervisor. If you work 40 hours a week, the minimum supervision hours would be 12 or 13 hours (depending on if there are 12 or 13 weeks in the quarter). However, you can have more supervision hours in a given quarter than the minimum.
7. Keep track of your hours. Although some supervisors will do this as well, don't rely on your supervisor only. These are your hours. Make sure you know what you are doing.

8. If you have more than one supervisor, make sure that the hours are divided out according to the amount of supervision hours per supervisor. For example, you have completed a 13 week quarter of 520 hours and have two supervisors. You saw Supervisor Jan for 6 times and Supervisor Bob for 7 times. You also have 300 direct hours and 220 indirect hours. (Remember it is 1 hour for every 40 hours worked.) You would record your hours as follows:

Jan	6 hours	Direct = 150	Indirect = 90	Total = 240
Bob	7 hours	Direct = 150	Indirect = 130	Total = 280
Total	13 hours	300	220	520

9. You will complete your 1000 indirect hours before you will complete your 2000 direct or face-to-face hours. However, you must still account for them and report them until you have completed the process. Also, remember that you will need to have all your paper work signed off and to the board one month before their meeting. Check the calendar on the website for their dates.
10. Also, during your first year as an LPCA, you will need to complete 40 CEU's. Please see the website for information on this because they will only accept CEU from certain places. Don't wait until the last minute to earn them. McLeod Center in Charlotte does free trainings every month that count for LPC CEU's. You can also find them on-line as well.
11. If you desire to go into private practice, you can apply for Sole Proprietor status as an LPCA and open a practice. However, there needs to be caution here. First, a Sole Proprietorship does not separate your personal property and business property. So if you are to be sued, a person can sue your business as well as your personal worth. Secondly, it is wiser to have some experience being under others first while you learn. Furthermore, you need to make sure you have malpractice insurance before you begin any counseling, even if you are working under an agency,
12. When you finish your hours, there are two forms that need to be sent into the board:
- A final supervision report which includes your evaluation
 - A final hours report which has the total hours from each supervisor.
- (Make sure these all match the record on the NCBLPC)

Make sure you keep and make copies of everything you send to the board. Keep contact information on your supervisors for reference if you need it in the future.

OTHER TIPS AND CAUTIONS

1. If you are going to do contract work, make sure you have a business contract, with dates of payment and type of payment. Most contract work is 1099 (which means you take out the taxes) versus a W-2 (which means a corporation takes out taxes.) If they are unwilling to offer or sign a contract, do not work for them.
2. If they are a LPC or LPC-S and claim to be operating their own private practice, they must have a certification from the NCBLPC and articles of incorporation approved by the Secretary of State. For those who live in Mecklenburg County, the county requires a business license (Although that may be changing as of July 2014). Please check with your county to see if this is required. If you don't see the proper document, ask to see them. If they don't have them, then they are operating illegally and unethically in the state of North Carolina. Don't work for them - you could compromise your license

Note: Some counselors work with or in churches. If they are charging a fee to clients through an outside organization, then check with the licensing board to make sure they are operating legally. Again, if they are an LPC, they must have the authorization of the NCBLPC to operate ethically and legally.

There is also a difference between Pastoral Counselors and Professional Counselors. So make sure you know their particular licensing. Normally, Pastoral Counselors are ordained, have accountability to a particular church, and are paid by the denomination/church.

3. If you want to open up your own practice as a PLLC or Sole Proprietor, as of 2012 this is the process for an LPC:
 - a. Fill out articles of incorporation for the NCBLPC and send it to them with a \$50.00 fee.
 - b. They will return it with a certification letter.
 - c. Send this original certification letter and articles of incorporation (Go to the Secretary of State web site and download the forms) and send a \$100.00 fee to the Secretary of State.
 - d. They will return this to you with the Secretary of State Seal.
 - e. Make a copy of the document with the Seal and send to the NCBLPC.
 - f. The NCBLPC will send you a certificate stating that you are certified to operate.
 - g. If you are in Mecklenburg, go to the City of Charlotte business office and get a business license. This will cost you a total of \$185.00. (You don't need the NCBLPC certificate to get the business license.) If you are living in other cities, you can check with their municipal business offices for specific procedures and costs.