

Healthcare Practitioners and Technicians

Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses

Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) and Licensed Vocational Nurses work under the supervision of physicians and registered nurses caring for people who are sick, injured, convalescent or disabled. They measure and record height, weight, temperature, blood pressure, heart rate, respiration rate, prepare and give injections, dress wounds, monitor catheters, assist in personal hygiene, feeding, bed mobility, standing, and walking. Licensed practical nurses and licensed vocational nurses often collect laboratory samples and perform routine tests, report the patient's health history, and provide documentation on their daily condition.

Licensed practical nurses and licensed vocational nurses have different responsibilities depending on the setting that they work in. Those who work in nursing facilities help to evaluate the patient's needs, develop a plan of care, and supervise nursing aids. In private doctor's offices licensed practical nurses may help in making appointments and keeping patient records, and those working in a patient's home may help prepare meals and teach family members how to perform basic nursing tasks.

License practical nurses and licensed vocational nurses typically work in any area of healthcare and do not specialize. If one wishes, however, to specialize, there are specializations available in IV therapy, gerontology (working with the elderly), long-term care, and pharmacology. They can advance in their field by overseeing the works of other licensed practical nurses and nursing aides, or completing a Licensed Practical Nurse to Registered Nurse (LPN-RN) degree program.

Most LPNs or licensed vocational nurses work 40 hours a week, but some who work in facilities where patients need 24 hour care may have to work nights, weekends, and holidays. The job involves standing for long periods of time, helping to move patients, exposure to chemicals, radiation and infectious diseases, and working with patients who may be confused, agitated, or uncooperative.

Education/Training

How to Obtain:

To be eligible for licensure as a licensed practical nurse a state approved training program must be completed. Training programs are offered by vocational schools, community colleges, and some high schools. A high school diploma is typically required for entry into a program unless the program is part of the high school curriculum. Most training programs take 1 year to complete.

Once a training program has been completed one is eligible to take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-PN) which is administered by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. Re-certification and continuing education requirements vary by state. In the state of New York once one is licensed they are licensed for life and do not have to recertify.

To become a licensed practical nurse in New York state one must have:

- Good moral character
- Minimum of seventeen years of age
- A high school graduate diploma or the equivalent
- Met education requirements (completion of one of the three points below)
 - Be a graduate from at least a nine-month program in practical nursing registered by the New York State Education Department as licensure qualifying or recognized as preparatory for practice as a licensed practical nurse by the licensing authority or appropriate governmental agency in the jurisdiction where the school is located.
 - Complete at least a nine-month program of study that is satisfactory to the New York State Education Department in a program conducted by the armed forces of the United States.
 - Be a graduate from an approved program in general professional nursing.
- Passing scores on the NCLEX-PN.

Additionally, there are many optional national certifications for Licensed Practical Nurses to expand their knowledge in specific areas and become more marketable to employers, which make them useful for advancement. The National Association for Practical Nurse Education and Service, Inc. (NAPNES) provides certification in Pharmacology and Long-Term Care. The National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses (NFLPN) offers certification in IV Therapy and Gerontology.

National Association for Practical Nurse Education & Service Pharmacology Certificate:

- Available to any Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse, or someone who meets the educational requirements to pass the National Council Licensure Examination (program director's signature required).
- Receives a passing grade on the NAPNES Pharmacology Certification Examination.
- Recertification must occur every three years.

National Association for Practical Nurse Education & Service Long-Term Care Certificate:

- Available to any Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse who documents 2,000 hours of long-term care practice within the previous 3 years, and receives a passing grade on the long-term care certification examination.
- Passing scores on the certification test.
- Recertification must occur every three years.

National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses IV Therapy or Gerontology Certification:

- Available to any Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse
- Application must include letter of endorsement that vouches for the candidate's clinical training and experience signed by a nursing supervisor.
- Exam is sent to the candidate's sponsoring institution while test preparation materials are sent to the candidate
- Candidates review the materials and the sponsoring institution administers the test, which is returned to Educational Resources Inc. who scores the exam.
- Candidates who earn the credential must recertify every 2 years. The renewal candidate must provide proof of 20 continuing education credits related to IV therapy or gerontology, or they have to retake the examination.

More Information on Licensing and Certification:

- New York State Licensing and Certification:
<http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/nurse/np.htm>
- National Council of Licensure:
<https://www.ncsbn.org/index.htm>
- National Association for Practical Nurse Education and Service Certifications:
<http://www.napnes.org/>
- National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses Certification:
<http://www.nflpn.org/>
- National Certifications Directory:
http://www.testprepreview.com/nursing_certifications.htm

Average Costs:

Average cost of licensure varies by state. New York State Licensure Fee: \$343 plus the cost of any exam study aids.

The National Association for Practical Nurse Education and Service, Inc. certifications: \$160 each, plus the cost of any exam study aids.

The National Association for Practical Nurse Education and Service Recertification Fee: \$150.

The National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses Certifications: \$175 plus the cost of any exam study aids.

The National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses Recertification Fee: \$150.

Costs of continuing education vary.

* Note: This figure does not include federal, state, or university financial aid resources such as grants, fellowships, scholarships or work study. It also does not include vocational rehabilitation or other state resources available specifically to people with disabilities. The out-of-pocket expense may be significantly less.