

CAREER SERIES

# CRC Certification & Licensure: What You Should Know

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## **Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC)**

The world's largest rehabilitation counseling organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities, CRCC sets the standard for competent delivery of quality rehabilitation counseling services through its nationally accredited and internationally recognized Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification program.

## CRC Certification & Licensure: What You Should Know

Certification and licensure are two different types of professional credentials, both of which benefit rehabilitation counselors, but in different ways.

### Certification

Professional certification signifies that an individual has met certain standards of practice as set forth by an independent certifying organization and thus professional certification assures that an individual is qualified to perform a specific job and/or provide specific services. **Certification programs are typically national in scope and are established in order to apply professional standards, elevate levels of practice, and to protect the public.** Certifying organizations may be accredited, which ensures their certification programs have met established standards. The Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) is a U.S.-based organization that sets rigorous standards for accreditation of certification programs.

A certification credential, such as Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC), is attained by individuals who have met eligibility criteria and who have successfully passed a requisite examination. Certification credentials are typically valid for a specific period of time, upon which they must be renewed. As part of the renewal process, it is common for the certified individual to show evidence of continued learning or continuing education.

While certification is generally not mandatory for professional practice, it may be required by employers for hiring and promotion.

### Licensure

Professional licensure also signifies that an individual has met certain standards of practice; however, professional licensure is state specific in that it is governed by state law and administered by a state licensing board. **Professional licensure indicates that an individual is legally able to work or practice within a specified job title, area of practice, or profession within the state in which the license is issued.**

A counselor license, such as Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), is attained by individuals who have met eligibility criteria and who have successfully

passed a state's requisite examination. Counselor licenses are typically valid for a specific period of time, upon which they must be renewed; however, renewal criteria varies from state to state.

In most states, a license is mandatory for practice within certain professions and under a particular scope of practice or title for that profession. It is important to investigate and understand licensing requirements specific to the state or states in which one desires to practice.

### Certification & Licensure

While both are important credentials, the need for and benefits of certification and licensure can be confusing. Licensure is a government-regulated, mandatory credential. In the context of professional counselor licensure, all states have adopted licensure laws that are based most often on a professional scope of practice, although a smaller number of states base their law instead on use of a title such as Licensed Professional Counselor, or LPC. This means if you are practicing within the scope of practice as defined by the state – or are using the title defined by the state – you must be licensed in that state.

Certification, on the other hand, is a peer-regulated, voluntary credential where the profession itself establishes the expectations for its certified professionals.

In the case of CRC certification, the profession of rehabilitation counseling has established the CRC credential as the highest level of professional credentialing for rehabilitation counselors. This is not to diminish the importance of counselor licensure. Rather, CRC certification establishes professional identity as a rehabilitation counselor providing services within the *Scope of Practice for Rehabilitation Counseling* and, when doing so, being held to practice in accordance with the *Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors*. CRCs, Certified Rehabilitation Counselors, have demonstrated their distinct knowledge in working with individuals across a broad range of disabling conditions, assisting them in returning to productive and meaningful work or, depending on the severity of their disability, assisting them in gaining the skills and resources necessary for the fullest possible independence and inclusion within society.

## A Powerful Combination – CRC Certification *PLUS* a State-Based License

While CRCC is the entity providing the CRC certification, a peer-regulated, voluntary credential, CRCC also recognizes the importance of a state-based, mandatory license for those practicing counseling as defined within state regulation. **In fact, CRCC advocates that rehabilitation counselors obtain both the CRC credential and a state-based counselor license.** Having both may open many doors along one's career path. A counselor license may be mandatory and provide access to certain reimbursement streams while the CRC certification sets one apart with its **distinctive focus on rehabilitation and disability.** In some instances, licensure will be required or preferred and in others, CRC certification will be what employers look for in a candidate. Still in other instances, the candidate with both may further set themselves apart from the competition, both to employers and to clients.

## Resources

**CRC Certification** – learn more at [www.crccertification.com](http://www.crccertification.com).

**Scope of Practice for Rehabilitation Counselors** – view at [www.crccertification.com/scope-of-practice](http://www.crccertification.com/scope-of-practice).

**State Professional Counselor Licensure Boards** – get contact information to access the laws and regulations for counselor licensure in each state at [www.crccertification.com/state-licensure-boards](http://www.crccertification.com/state-licensure-boards).