



FLORIDA HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

POLICY DOCUMENT

NURSE LICENSURE

ISSUE BRIEF

FEBRUARY 2023

Nurse Licensure

Summary and Requirements

The Florida Hospital Association (FHA) advocates for resources and policies that support an adequate, knowledgeable, competent, and healthy nursing workforce. These efforts include supporting legislation that removes barriers to enrollment in nursing programs, in-migration of nurses from out-of-state, and funding that supports strengthening the nursing pipeline to meet the future health care needs of Florida residents.

The Florida Board of Nursing (Board) licenses, monitors, educates, and disciplines licensees to assure their fitness and competence in providing health care services in the state. The Board is comprised of 13 members: seven RNs who have been engaged in the practice of professional nursing at least four years; three LPNs who have been engaged in the practice of practical nursing at least four years; and three consumer members who have never been connected with the practice of nursing. Board members and staff interact regularly with the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. The Legislature passed the Nurse Practice Act to ensure that every nurse practicing in Florida meets minimum requirements for safe practice.¹

The Florida Department of Health's Division of Medical Quality Assurance (MQA) works with the Board to regulate health care practitioners and facilities through professional licensure, facility permitting, and administrative enforcement. By law, there are three ways that an individual can be licensed in the state: examination, endorsement, or multi-state upgrade.

Licensure by Examination

The requirements for licensure by examination can be found in Section 464.008, Florida Statutes, and include:

- Graduation from a Florida-approved or accredited nursing education program as defined in Section 464.003, F.S.
- Graduation from an Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) or Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accredited nursing program that has been issued an NCLEX code by NCSBN.

¹ [Florida Nurse Practice Act, Chapter 464, Florida Statutes](#)

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- Graduation from a nursing education program that is approved or recognized by the jurisdiction in which it is based and that has been issued an NCLEX code by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN).
- Graduation from a military nursing education program that has been issued an NCLEX code by NCSBN.
- Graduation from a generic Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) or higher program that has been issued an NCLEX code by NCSBN.
- Graduation from a non-NCSBN jurisdiction, i.e., Puerto Rico, or international nursing education program that the board determines to be equivalent to an approved program.
- Canadian Registered Nurses who took the Canadian Nurses Association Testing Service (CNATS) Examination after August 8, 1995, must take the NCLEX Examination unless licensed in another state or territory. If test scores are in an acceptable range, Canadian Registered Nurse applicants who took the CNATS prior to August 8, 1995, may be eligible for endorsement.

Licensure by Endorsement

The requirements for Licensure by Endorsement are found in Section 464.009, Florida Statutes:

- Applicants are eligible for Licensure by Endorsement when they hold a valid license to practice professional or practical nursing in another state or territory of the United States obtained by one of the following measures.
- Applicants are eligible for Licensure by Endorsement when they have successfully completed an approved or accredited nursing education program as required in section 464.008, F.S. and the State Board Test Pool Examination (SBTPE) or the NCLEX.²

Alternatively, an applicant can meet one of the following criteria to qualify for Licensure by Endorsement.

- Applicants are eligible for Licensure by Endorsement when they have actively practiced nursing in another state, jurisdiction, or territory of the United States for 2 of the preceding 3 years without any criminal history or having his or her license acted against by the licensing authority of any jurisdiction.
- An applicant who has not been in active practice of nursing within the past 5 years is required to take a remedial course as specified in Rule 64B9-3.0025, F.A.C., prior to licensure.³

Licensure by Multistate Upgrade

Florida is a member of the multi-state Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) that allows nurses who hold this license upgrade to practice across state lines without having to obtain a new license in the partnering state. Florida law allows for a multistate upgrade to a current clear, active license. The requirements for a [multistate upgrade](#) are found in Section 464.0095, Florida Statutes:

- Hold a clear, active, Florida license.

² [Licensure by Endorsement are found in section 464.009, Florida Statutes](#)

³ [Board of Nursing Approved Remedial Course](#)

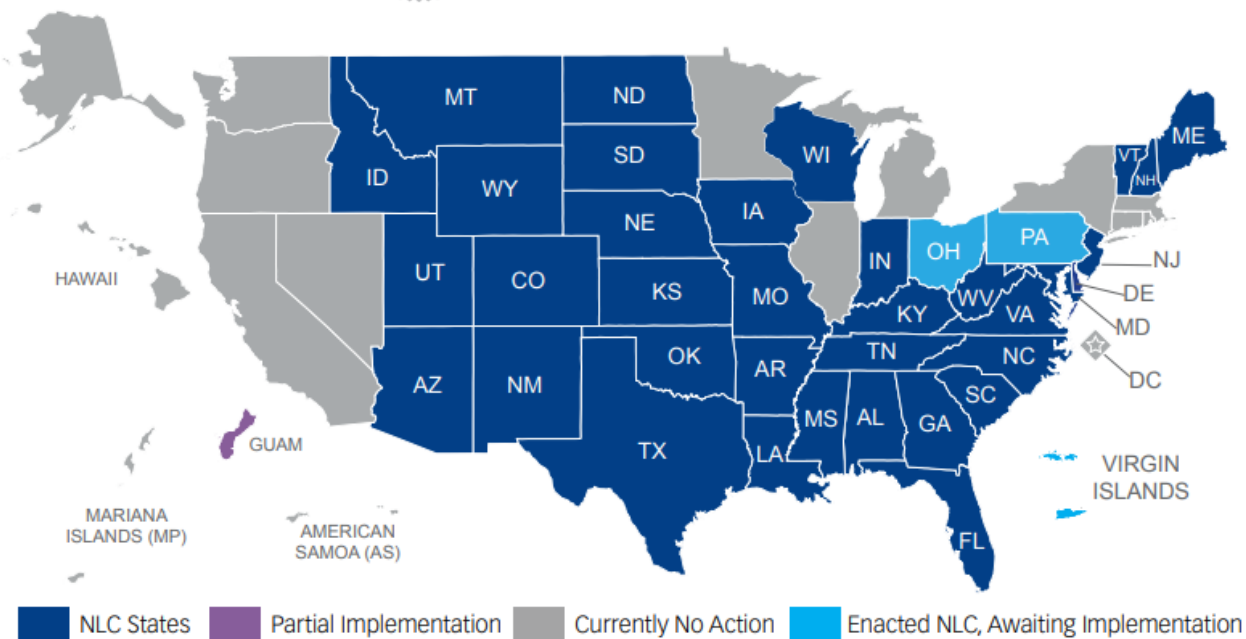
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- Declare Florida the primary state of residency. Proof of residence may include one of the following: driver's license, voter registration card, federal income tax return, or a W2.
- License status must be unencumbered ("Encumbrance" means a revocation or suspension of, or any limitation on, the full and unrestricted practice of nursing imposed by a licensing board.)
- Livescan results must be submitted no more than 90 days prior to the submission of the application and fees or anytime within a year of applying.
- Must not have a felony conviction.
- Must not have a misdemeanor related to the practice of nursing.
- Must not be enrolled with IPN or any other treatment program for the impaired.
- Must have a social security number.
- Must have passed the NCLEX.
- Foreign education must be evaluated by an independent credentials review agency.
- Foreign education not completed in English will require an English Competency exam.



NLC States

39 states have enacted the NLC



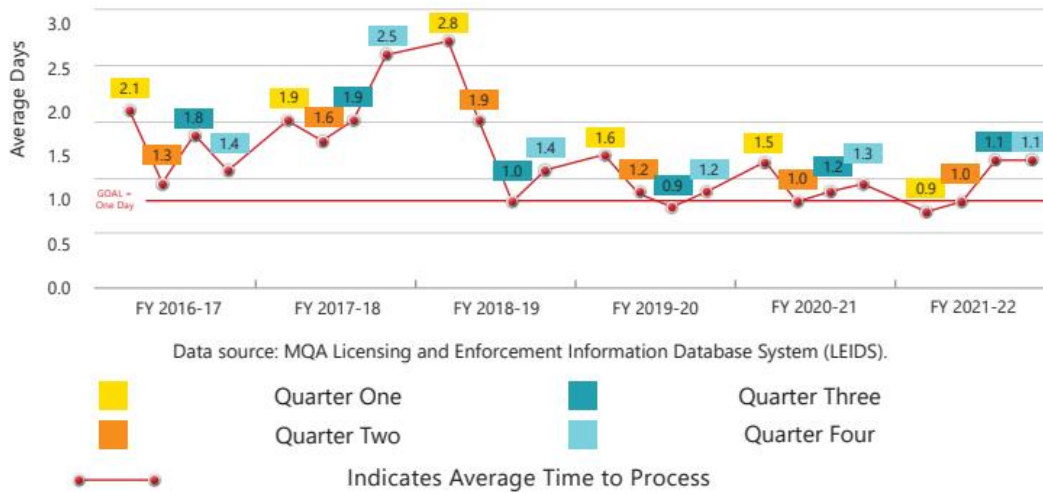
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Processing Timeline

Florida law requires that an initial application for a nurse license be reviewed within 30 days.⁴

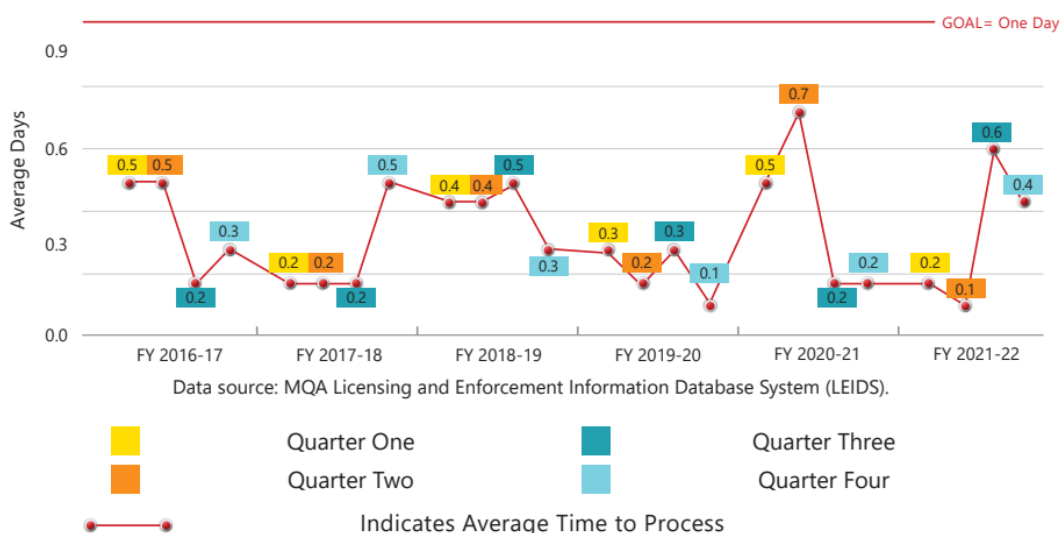
Days to Process	
Profession	Number of Days
Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN)	1 - 3 Days
Certified Nursing Assistant	1 - 3 Days
CNA Programs	1 - 3 Days
Licensed Practical Nurse	11 - 13 Days
Nurse Continuing Education Provider	1 - 3 Days
Nursing Education Program- PN	1 - 3 Days
Nursing Education Program- RN	1 - 3 Days
Registered Nurse (RN)	11 - 13 Days

Figure 1.1: Average Days to Process an Initial Application



⁴ Board of Nursing Processing Timelines, October 14, 2022

Figure 2.2: Average Days to Process a Renewal Application



Electronic Fingerprinting

Applicants for initial licensure must use a Livescan service provider to have their fingerprints submitted electronically to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) for conducting a search for any Florida and national criminal history records that may pertain to the applicant. The results will be returned to the Care Provider Background Screening Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse) and made available to the board office for consideration during the licensure process.

The Livescan fingerprints submitted by the applicant will be retained by FDLE and the Clearinghouse. All costs for conducting a criminal history background screening are borne by the applicant. All results must be submitted electronically from a Livescan service provider.

All applications are reviewed for completeness within 30 days of receipt of the application.

1. Applicant must submit application with the appropriate fees to the Board of Nursing.
2. Applicant schedules an electronic fingerprint appointment with a Livescan service provider and is fingerprinted.
3. Applicant must contact licensing board where their initial and active licenses are held, and request verification be sent to the Florida Board of Nursing.
4. Once all materials are submitted, an application specialist will review them. It may be necessary for the application specialist to request additional information.
5. When all requirements are met the license will be issued.

Fees

\$110.00 Application and Licensing Fee to Board of Nursing

Fee varies for Livescan Service Provider and License Verification

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Florida Statutes and Rules

[Chapter 464, Part I](#): Nursing

[Chapter 456](#): Health Professions and Occupations: General Provisions

[Chapter 64B9](#): Board of Nursing

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