

# COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

## BOARD OF COUNSELING



Virginia Department of  
**Health Professions**  
Board of Counseling

9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 300  
Henrico, VA 23233-1463  
[www.dhp.virginia.gov/counseling](http://www.dhp.virginia.gov/counseling)

Email: [coun@dhp.virginia.gov](mailto:coun@dhp.virginia.gov)  
(804) 367-3053 (Tel)  
(804) 527-4435 (Fax)

### **Registered Peer Recovery Specialists(RPRS) FAQs**

#### **Registered Peer Recovery Specialists (RPRS) Registration Requirements**

##### **How is a Registered Peer Recovery Specialist defined?**

“Registered peer recovery specialist” means a person who by education and experience is professionally qualified in accordance with 12VAC35-250 to provide collaborative services to assist individuals in achieving sustained recovery from the effects of mental illness, addiction, or both. A registered peer recovery specialist shall provide such services as an employee or independent contractor of DBHDS, a provider licensed by the DBHDS, a practitioner licensed by or holding a permit issued from the Department of Health Professions, or a facility licensed by the Department of Health.

##### **Why are the Peer Recovery Specialist required to register with the Board of Counseling?**

During the 2017 General Assembly House Bill 2095 was introduced and passed authorizing the Board of Counseling to register QMHPs and Peer Recovery Specialists. The registration of QMHPs and Peer Recovery Specialists through the Board of Counseling provides accountability and transparency.

##### **Do I need to continue to renew my Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) certificate with Virginia Certification Board (VCB) once I am approved by the Board of Counseling to be a Registered Peer Recovery Specialists?**

No. You are not required to hold the CPRS after you have been issued the RPRS through the Board of Counseling but you are not prohibited from holding both. You will need to renew your RPRS with the Board of Counseling each year in order to continue to be reimbursed for your services.

##### **At what date will persons be required to be registered with the Board of Counseling to provide services as a peer recovery services?**

Effective January 3, 2018, all Peer Recovery Specialists will be able to register with the Board of Counseling. Registration as a Peer Recovery Specialist is voluntary; however, you must be registered with the Board of Counseling in order to bill Medicaid on or after July 1, 2018. We urge RPRS to submit an application as soon as possible. Due to the anticipated volume of RPRS and QMHPs, the registration process will take time.

##### **What are the requirements to become a Registered Peer Recovery Specialist?**

In order to be considered, you will need to have one of the following certifications:

- Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) Certificate issued by the Virginia Certification Board (VCB); or,
- Nationally Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist (NCPRSS) Certificate issued by The Association for Addiction Professionals (NAADC) and completed DBHDS Peer Recovery Specialist Training; or,

- Current and valid Peer Recovery Specialist certification from a state whose certification process has been accepted by DBHDS and completed DBHDS Peer Recovery Specialist Training; or,
- Peer Recovery Specialist Certification from the Veterans Administration and completed the DBHDS Peer Recovery Specialist Training.

### **How to I apply to become a Registered Peer Recovery Specialist?**

The online application will be available on the Board of Counseling website under the [Applications and Forms](#) page once the regulations become effective.

### **What is the application fee?**

Application fees can be found on the [fees](#) page of the Board of Counseling website.

### **How long is my application valid?**

A pending application can be held for up to one year.

### **If I do not qualify for registration or change my mind about registering, can I receive a refund?**

No. All application fees are non-refundable.

### **Do the Verification of Internship/Practicum form and Verification of Supervised Experience form need to be mailed into the Board?**

Yes. All verification forms require an original signature.

### **What is the mailing address for the Board of Counseling?**

Our mailing address is: 9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 300, Henrico, Virginia 23233

### **How do I notify the board office of an address change and/or name change?**

Address changes must be made online through the [Online Licensing](#) website.

RPRS may submit a name change in writing using the [Name/Address Change Form](#). All name changes must be accompanied by a marriage license, divorce decree, or court order.

### **How may I obtain a duplicate copy of my registration?**

Duplicate copy of your registration can be ordered online through the [Online Licensing](#) website for a fee of \$10.00.

### **How do I check the status of my application?**

You may click on the Check Application link on the left hand side of the Counseling page to check the status of your pending application. You are able to download supporting documentation from this link and/or ensure that all documentation has been received by the Board. It will also provide information on the processing times for your application.

## **Timelines**

### **How long will it take for my application for registration to be approved?**

The Board of Counseling follows the Department of Health Professions' performance standards and processes complete applications within 30 business days. However, due to the initial number of anticipated applications the process might take longer.

## **Registered Peer Recovery Role and Scope of Practice**

### **Who are Registered Peer Recovery Specialists?**

*A person who by education and experience is professionally qualified in accordance with 12VAC35-250 to provide collaborative services to assist individuals in achieving sustained recovery from the effects of mental illness, addiction, or both. A registered peer recovery specialist shall provide such services as an employee or independent contractor of DBHDS, a provider licensed by the DBHDS, a practitioner licensed by or holding a permit issued from the Department of Health Professions, or a facility licensed by the Department of Health.*

According to DMAS, a RPRS is a person:

- Who provides peer support as a self-identified individual with lived experience with mental health or substance use disorders, or co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders;
- Who has the qualifications, education, and experience to provide collaborative services to assist individuals in achieving sustained recovery from the effects of mental illness, addiction, or both; and
- Who is trained to offer support and assistance in helping others in the recovery and community-integration process and has received certification as a PRS by a certifying body recognized by the Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and who is in good standing.

### **What is the scope of practice for a Registered Peer Recovery Specialist?**

Please refer to the [Practice Guidelines](#) issued by DBHDS.

### **What are some examples of the types of services a Registered Peer Recovery Specialist (RPRS) can provide?**

- Provide face to face interaction that supports an individual achieving their self-identified level of recovery, wellness, independence or personal strength.
- Provide trained peer-to-peer support in groups encouraging and supporting participation and self-directed participation
- Mentor community integration activities (one-to-one or in groups)
- Provide emotional support during the acquisition, exploration and sustaining of employment and/or educational services.
- Attend treatment team and program development meetings.

### **Renewal Requirements**

#### **Are RPRS required to renew their registrations?**

Yes, RPRS must renew their registration by June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year?

#### **Will RPRS who register between January 3, 2018 and December 31, 2018, be required to renew on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018?**

No, RPRS who register in 2018 will not be required to renew until June 30, 2019. All registrants will get at least one year of registration from the time they are approved, before they have to renew.

#### **What are the renewal requirements?**

A RPRS must submit the \$30 renewal fee and complete the required continued competency.

#### **How do I renew my registration?**

The Board emails renewal notices which contain a PIN number to your email address of record on file with the Board 45-60 days in advance of the June 30 expiration date. You should renew your registration online or return the renewal request by mail no later than June 30 to avoid a late fee. If mailing in your renewal, checks or money orders must be payable to the Treasurer of Virginia.

### How do I notify the board office of an address change and/or name change?

Address changes must be made online through the [Online Licensing](#) website.

RPRS may submit a name change in writing using the [Name/Address Change Form](#). All name changes must be accompanied by a marriage license, divorce decree, or court order.

Any change in the address of record or the public address, if different from the address of record, shall be furnished to the board within 60 days of such change in accordance with the Regulations Governing the Registration of Qualified Mental Health Professionals.

### What is my address of record?

Section 54.1-2400.02.B of the Code of Virginia requires the Department of Health Professions (DHP) to collect an official address of record from each health professional to be used by DHP for agency purposes. The Code also requires DHP to provide an opportunity for a health professional to provide a second address for the purpose of public dissemination. ***If there is no second (public) address provided, the official address of record will be used as the public address for the purpose of public dissemination.*** If the health professional would prefer that his/her address of record remain confidential, then an alternative public address must be provided to DHP. (Note: the License Lookup feature on the DHP public website does not contain the full address. However, public addresses are available by contacting Virginia Interactive Premium Service or the Board.) An individual is not required to submit a place of residence for either the official address of record or the public address. A post office box or a practice location is acceptable.

Changes to either address may be made at the time of renewal or at any time by written notification to the Board. Changes to the address of record may also be made at any time by accessing your licensure information through the online system. Any change that is made to one of the addresses does not automatically update the other address. Address information should be kept current for the address of record and the public address (if different from the address of record) at all times.

### What happens if I fail to renew my registration by the required renewal date?

If no payment is received by your expiration date, the registration status will automatically be reflected as EXPIRED. Renewals submitted after the expiration date and within one year will be required to pay a late fee. If you fail to renew your registration within one year of the expiration date, then you will be required apply for reinstatement, pay reinstatement fee and provide evidence of a current certification as a peer recovery specialist as prescribed by DBHDS in 12VAC35-250-30.

### Is there a “grace period” if I do not renew my registration by the 30th of June of the renewal year?

No

### Can I renew early?

A registration can only be updated within 60 days prior to the expiration date. Early renewal for military deployment may be considered by call (804) 367-4610.

### What are the continued competency requirements for renewal of registration?

A RPRS must complete a minimum of 8 contact hours of continuing education for each annual registration renewal. A minimum of one of these hours shall be in ethics.

### How do I know if my CEs are approved?

The Board staff cannot pre-approve any CE courses. Each registrant shall use their best and professional judgment to determine if the course meets the requirements outlined in the regulations.

**May I carry over hours of CE for the next renewal period?**

No.

**Do I need to submit my CE documentation to the Board for renewal?**

No, you must maintain this information in your records for a period of three years following renewal. The Board may conduct an audit of licensees to verify compliance with the requirement for that renewal period. If selected, you would be notified by mail that documentation is required and given a time frame within which to comply.

**Regulatory Process**

**How do I know when there is a change to the laws or regulations that may impact my registration?**

Make sure your email address remains up-to-date with the Board of Counseling. The Board uses email as its main form of communication, and will send out emails with important notifications regarding changes in the laws and regulations, and will also send out newsletters. Also, request to be added to the Board of Counseling Public Participation List (PPG List). Person on this list will receive email notifications of regulatory actions with the Board.

Additionally, please look to the Board of Counseling website for up to date information.

Finally, please, register with [Virginia Townhall](#). Upon doing this, you will receive notifications of Board meetings, posting of meeting minutes, regulatory changes, and opportunities for public comment.

**What if I disagree with, or see a problem with the Regulations?**

The current emergency regulations governing the registration of peer recovery specialists will go through the regulatory process to become permanent. As such, throughout this process, there will be ample time for public comment. Please register with [Virginia Townhall](#) to receive notifications of opportunities for public comment.

Additionally, you can always submit a Petition for Rulemaking with the Board of Counseling. To do this, please submit the form for a [Petition for Rule-making](#) for the Board to amend the current regulations. The Board is then required to address this petition at its next Board meeting.