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Illinois Department of
Financial and Professional Regulation

Division of Professional Regulation

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JB PRITZKER
Governor

MARIO TRETO, JR.
Secretary

CAMILE LINDSAY
Director

Illinois APRN and FPA-APRN Continuing Education Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Department receives inquiries regarding continuing education requirements that are to be completed for Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurse – Full Practice Authority (FPA-APRN) license **renewal by May 31, 2026**. The questions and answers listed below will hopefully provide some clarification. Please note that a complete copy of the Nurse Practice Act and the Rules may be found on the Department's website

<https://idfpr.illinois.gov/profs/nursing.html> or on the Illinois Nursing Workforce Center's website
<https://nursing.illinois.gov/nursing-licensure/nursing-act-rules.htm>

0. What recent CE requirements are there for Illinois APRNs and FPA-APRNs?
 - a. Starting January 1, 2025 health care professionals who hold a professional license (including Illinois licensed nurses) listed in this Section shall complete a one-hour course in cultural competency. Cultural competency training includes development of a set of integrated attitudes, knowledge, and skills that enables a health care professional or organization to care effectively for patients from diverse cultures, groups and communities. Completion of this course shall be a condition of renewing a license. *The course shall be repeated once every six years*. If a licensee elects to repeat the course more often, the course shall count towards meeting the minimum credit hours required for continuing education for that licensee's profession but no more than one credit hour for any one renewal period. (Public Act 103-0531).
 - b. Pursuant to the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, 325 ILCS 5/4, nurses who work with children in their professional or official capacities *must complete mandated reporter training at least every 6 years*. Such personnel must attest at each time of licensure renewal on their renewal form that they understand that they are a mandated reporter of child abuse and neglect, that they are aware of the process for making a report, that they know how to respond to a child in a trauma informed manner, and that they are aware of the role of child protective services and the role of a reporter after a call has been made. Starting January 1, 2021, if a mandated reporter receives licensure from the Department, they can use the training towards meeting their required continuing education hours.
 - c. Illinois APRNs and FPA-APRNs who provide health care services to and have direct patient interaction with adults 26 years of age and older will be required to complete a one-hour course in diagnosis, treatment and care of Alzheimer's disease, along with other dementia types. CE Curriculum will involve how to identify and diagnose Alzheimer's, effective communication strategies and management and care planning. Starting January 1, 2023, this course may count toward the regular CE requirements (Public Act 102-0399).
 - d. Implicit bias awareness training CE requirement for Illinois APRNs and FPA-APRNs is a license renewal requirement. Implicit bias is a form of bias that occurs automatically and unintentionally, that nevertheless affects judgments, decisions and behaviors. Starting January 1, 2023, completion of this 1 hour CE course may count towards meeting the credit hours required for relicensure continuing education/CE. (Public Act 102-0004)

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<https://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/068/068011300E05000R.html>)

HB2517 provides that a course on maternal health risks for marginalized groups can count towards the one hour of implicit bias awareness CE required for license renewal.

- e. Sexual harassment prevention training CE requirement. Starting January 1, 2020, individuals with licenses issued by the Illinois Division of Professional Regulation (DPR) that require continuing education (CE) to renew their license, must also complete 1 hour of CE on the topic of sexual harassment prevention training.

The CE requirement for implicit bias awareness training, the CE requirement for sexual harassment prevention training and the CE requirement for cultural competency training may count towards the number of continuing education hours already required under the individual Acts and Rules and does not increase the number of hours required to renew a license.

1. What are the CE rules for APRNs and FPA-APRNs who are renewing their license by May 31, 2026?

A: Below is an excerpt from the official rules regarding continuing education:

Rules for the Administration of: The Nurse Practice Act: Section 1300.130 Continuing Education

- a) Continuing Education (CE) Requirements

- 1) As required by the Act, all nurses shall complete continuing education as follows:

C) All advanced practice registered nurses shall complete 80 hours of approved continuing education in the advanced practice registered nurse's specialty per 2-year license renewal cycle. Completion of the 80 hours under this subsection (a)(1)(C) shall satisfy the continuing education requirements for renewal of a registered professional nurse license. An APRN holding more than one APRN license is required to complete 80 hours of continuing education total per license renewal period. The 80 hours of continuing education required shall be completed as follows:

- i) A minimum of 50 hours of the continuing education shall be obtained in continuing education programs that shall include no less than 20 hours of pharmacotherapeutics, including 10 hours of opioid prescribing or substance abuse education.
- ii) A maximum of 30 hours of credit may be obtained by presentations in the APRN's clinical specialty, evidence-based practice, or quality improvement projects, publications, research projects, or preceptor hours.

2. During what time period must the Continuing Education (CE) be completed?
 - a. All CE courses must be completed in the 24 months preceding expiration of the license. For the upcoming 2026 APRN and FPA-APRN renewal, all CE must have been completed between June 1, 2024 and May 31, 2026.
3. This is my first time renewing my IL APRN or FPA-APRN license – do I need to complete 80 hours of CE prior to May 31, 2026?
 - a. No, a renewal applicant shall not be required to comply with CE requirements for the first renewal of an IL APRN or FPA-APRN license, Nurse Practice Act Rules: Section 1300.130 a) 4).
4. I completed continuing education hours for my nursing license in another state, will I be able to use those same completed courses for Illinois APRN or FPA-APRN re-licensure CE courses?

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- a. Yes, Section 1300.130 a) 6): CE hours used to satisfy the CE requirements of another jurisdiction may be applied to fulfill the CE requirements of the State of Illinois for APRN or FPA-APRN re-licensure pursuant to the provisions set forth in subsection (c).
5. Will completion of a skills certification course be used towards Illinois APRN and FPA-APRN re-licensure in 2026?
 - a. Up to 5 CE hours may be earned for completion of skills certification courses. A maximum of 2 hours in cardiopulmonary resuscitation certified by the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, Health and Safety Institute (HIS), or other qualified organization may be accepted, while a maximum of 3 hours may be accepted for certification or recertification of Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers (BLS), Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), or Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) or their equivalent (Section 1300.130 b) 6))..
 6. Are there equivalencies for Continuing Education CE?
 - a. 1 contact hour = 1 CE
 - b. 1 contact hour = 60 minutes
 - c. 1 academic semester hour = 15 contact hours/15 CE
 - d. 1 academic quarter hour = 12.5 contact hours/12.5 CE
 - e. 1 CME = 1 contact hour/1 CE
 - f. 1 CNE = 1 contact hour/1 CE
 - g. 1 AMA = 1 contact hour/CE
 7. How do I know if the sponsor is approved or licensed? Is there a list of approved CE Sponsors and Programs for Illinois APRN and FPA-APRN re-licensure in 2026?

CE sponsors must either be pre-approved per Rule 1300.130 or must have a CE Sponsor license. There is no single list of valid CE sponsors.

- a. The list of pre-approved CE Sponsors and Programs is in the Rules for the Administration of the Nurse Practice, Section 1300.130: c) Approved CE Sponsors and Programs
 - 1) Sponsor, as used in this Section, shall mean:
 - A) Approved providers of recognized certification bodies as outlined in Section 1300.400(a).
 - B) Any conference that provides approved Continuing Medical Education (CME) as authorized by the Illinois Medical Practice Act.
 - C) American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) accredited or approved providers.
 - D) Illinois Society for Advanced Practice Nursing (ISAPN).
 - E) American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP).
 - F) Nurse Practitioner Association for Continuing Education (NPACE).
 - G) American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) or National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCNA).
 - H) National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS).
 - I) American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM).
 - J) American Nurses Association-Illinois (ANA-Illinois)
 - K) Illinois Nurse Association or its affiliates
 - L) Providers approved by another state's board of nursing

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- M) Nursing education programs approved under Section 1300.230 or 1300.340 wishing to offer CE courses or programs.
 - N) Employers licensed under the Hospital Licensing Act [210 ILCS 85] or the Ambulatory Surgical Treatment Center Act [210 ILCS 5].
 - O) Any other accredited school, college or university, or State agency, federal agency, county agency or municipality that provides CE in a form and manner consistent with this Section.
- b. To look up whether an organization holds a license as an Illinois Nursing CE Sponsor, go to the IDFPR website, License Look Up: type in: Nurse CE Sponsor: <https://online-dfpr.micropact.com/lookup/licenselookup.aspx> , then type in the name of the organization.
- 8. Presenter/lecturer presentations made to other health professionals on topics related to the certification area may be used for CE credit. Each different individual, non-repetitive 60- minute lecture may be used for 5 CE hours. Full-time educators may not use presentations/lectures that are part of their job expectations- but may use guest lectures and other presentations made outside the duties of their job.
- 9. CE hours may be earned for authoring papers, publications, articles, dissertations, book chapters or research projects. These must be applicable to the practice area. The research project must be completed during the prerenewal period. Authoring a paper or publishing articles may be used for 10 CE hours. Authoring a book chapter, dissertation or research project may be used for 20 CE hours. APRNs and FPA-APRNs may obtain a maximum of 30 CE hours earned under this subsection (b)(5).
- 10. CE hours may be earned through preceptorship of an APRN student. Preceptors must provide clinical supervision and education to the APRN student. Documentation must be provided from the school of nursing in which the student is enrolled. Precepting one student for an academic semester or quarter may be used for 10 CE hours. Not more than 30 CE hours in each renewal period may come from precepting.
- 11. Successful completion, during the prerenewal period, of a recertification exam in the APRN's or FPA-APRN's area of specialty as recognized in Section 1300.10 may be used for 60 CE hours.
- 12. Is there a safe opioid prescribing practices continuing education (CE) requirement in effect for all prescribers renewing in 2026?
 - a. Yes, prescribers with Controlled Substances Registrations are required to complete 3 hours of continuing education (CE) on safe opioid prescribing practices to renew their Controlled Substances Registration. This requirement can be included in the total number of hours required to renew a professional license. This requirement will be in effect for all Controlled Substances Registration renewals in 2020 and after. For additional information regarding this license renewal requirement <https://www.idfpr.com/FAQ/DPR/Safe%20Opioid%20RX%20CE%20FAQ.pdf>
- 13. Will I have to provide copies of CE course completion documents for Illinois APRNs and FPA-APRNs re-licensure in 2026?
 - a. Each licensee is responsible for maintaining records of completion of continuing education and shall be prepared to produce the records if requested by the Department.

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