



COLORADO
PHARMACISTS
SOCIETY

**Colorado Pharmacists Society
Academy of New Practitioners
(CPS-ANP)**

New Grad Survival Kit

You just graduated from pharmacy school?
First off, CONGRATULATIONS! You are officially a Doctor of
Pharmacy! Now what? You've got the knowledge. You've got the
skills. You've got the degree. But how do you get started?

Here is a guide to help navigate the licensing process and other
big life changes ahead.

Licensing and Examination

1. Review the [CO State Board of Pharmacy Application Checklist](#). This document reviews the necessary steps to obtain licensure in Colorado.
 - a. Note that you must pass both the MPJE and NAPLEX examinations before starting the application for your pharmacist license (this differs from other states!).
2. Review the [MPJE/NAPLEX application](#) bulletin from the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP). This contains everything you need to know about registering for your tests.
 - a. NABP determines your eligibility to take the NAPLEX and MPJE on behalf of the Colorado Board of Pharmacy.
3. Ask your school to send your official transcripts to NABP.
 - a. Official transcripts can be sent electronically to transcripts@nabp.pharmacy (preferred) using electronic transcript services like Parchment, or mailed to NABP (takes much longer). The process for ordering official transcripts may vary between schools of pharmacy, so make sure to check with your specific institution.
 - b. Transcripts can be ordered as soon as your degree is conferred. Refer to your school of pharmacy for the date this occurs.
 - c. NABP requires several business days to “process” your transcript. In some cases, their process can take up to three weeks. This can lead to delays in exam scheduling, so send transcript orders early and allow plenty of time.
4. Attend the review courses for NAPLEX and/or MPJE offered at each school of pharmacy or utilize a self-study program/book:
 - a. A free [Colorado MPJE study guide](#) is available under “Jurisprudence Exam Guide” at the Colorado State Board of Pharmacy [Individual Applications website](#).
 - b. You can purchase a [NAPLEX practice exam](#) (contains 100 practice questions with a scaled score report for \$75) and a [Colorado MPJE practice exam](#) (contains 40 practice questions for \$75) from the NABP website.
 - c. [Pharmacyexam.com](#) also has NAPLEX and MPJE practice exams available for purchase.
 - d. [This book](#) on Amazon has 225 practice questions covering federal and state law with full explanations of the answers.
 - e. A Colorado MPJE review course is held each spring through Colorado Pharmacy Law Review (complete with study guide and 100 practice questions for \$115, or study guide only for \$125): <https://corxlawreview.com>
 - f. Tip: if studying for MPJE on websites like Quizlet, ensure that they have been updated for the year you take your exam, as law information is subject to change.

5. Registering with NABP for NAPLEX and NABP exam services

a. [NABP dashboard](#)

- i. Create an e-profile including your full, legal name, maiden name (if applicable), social security number, date of birth, email address, password, address, and phone number
- ii. Notify the Colorado State Board of Pharmacy directly that you have registered with NABP if you do not receive notification of your registration within one week.

b. Name changes/updates:

- i. Ensure your name on two separate forms of identification match the name on your Authorization to Test (ATT) email. Acceptable examples are listed in the [NAPLEX-MPJE Bulletin](#).

Name on ATT	Name on ID	Acceptable?
John D. Smith	John David Smith	Yes
John David Smith	John D. Smith	Yes
John D. Smith, Jr	John David Smith, Jr	Yes
John David Smith, Jr	John D. Smith, Jr	Yes
John David James Smith	John D. J. Smith	Yes
John D. Smith Cooper	John David Smith Cooper	Yes
John D. Smith	John J. Smith, Jr	No
John David Smith, Jr	John David Smith	No
John Smith	John David Smith	No
John D. Smith	John Smith	No
John David Smith	John Smith	No
John D. Smith	John D. Smith Cooper	No

- ii. If you change your name during this process, submit a [name change request](#) through NABP. You will not get a new ATT via email after you submit the name change, so you must ensure that your two forms of identification match your NABP profile.
- iii. The registration process will take a few days, so do this with ample time before your exam.

6. Applying for the exams:
 - a. Apply for eligibility through [NABP](#)
 - i. You must have your school send your official transcript to NABP (transcripts@nabp.pharmacy) and pay the \$85 fee before eligibility will be granted. Apply for your Authorization to Test (ATT) as soon as you have your official transcripts submitted! It takes some time for NABP to process your application.
 - b. Once approved by NABP, you can purchase your test.
 - c. After purchasing your test(s), NABP will email your ATT.
 - i. Make sure your ID matches exactly with your name used to register (including your middle name), otherwise you will not be able to take the test.
 - ii. Your ATT will NOT be given out via phone or fax. If you do not receive your ATT within the time frame quoted by NABP during application, or misplace it, call 1-888-709-2679.
 - d. Once you have your ATT, you can schedule your exam through Pearson Vue either online at www.pearsonvue.com/nabp or by calling 1-888-709-2679.
 - i. Scheduling your MPJE is often easier than NAPLEX as it is a shorter test and therefore there are generally more time slots available to take it.
 - ii. Note: your registration number for NABP is different than your ATT number.
 - iii. Once scheduled, you will receive an email from Pearson Vue confirming your testing date, time, testing location, instructions for the test, and information about rescheduling if needed. If you do not receive this confirmation email, you have not registered for a test.
 - iv. Review testing information and requirements to sit for exam prior to arrival.
7. Does it matter what state I choose for my “original” license?
 - a. Yes!
 - b. If you plan to be in the same state for your entire duration of practice, then it does not matter, and you only need to pursue licensure in that state.
 - c. However, if you plan to practice in a state more permanently, but will be in a different state for a short period (e.g. residency training), you may want to have your “original license” in the state you plan to be in long term and can then reciprocate to another state.
 - i. Note: some states will not allow you to reciprocate off your reciprocated license, so it may be beneficial to keep your original license active if you may move between states for work.
 - d. You may also register for your NAPLEX score to be sent to multiple states at time of testing. This could be advantageous for pharmacists (e.g. residents who will move shortly after residency) who want multiple original licenses (as opposed to reciprocating later) if they expect to move eventually. It is important to remember that there are increased costs upfront and yearly to maintain multiple licenses.
 - e. See the [Licensure Transfer](#) section of the NABP website for more information.

8. Scoring:
 - a. NAPLEX and MPJE are both pass/fail as of 2021.
 - b. It takes several business days to receive results. Your pass/fail score will be updated under “Exam Services” on your NABP profile.
 - c. If you do not pass, you will receive a scaled score report to inform your re-take.
 - d. Mandatory waiting period to re-take the exam:
 - i. NAPLEX cannot be re-scheduled for 45 days after EXAM date
 - ii. MPJE cannot be re-scheduled for 30 days after EXAM date
9. How much does everything cost? (2022 information below, subject to change)
 - a. NAPLEX: \$475.00
 - i. When you submit your application to NABP you will pay a \$100 non-refundable application fee. There is an additional \$85 non-refundable fee for candidates who select Colorado, Maine, Michigan, Nebraska, Oregon, and/or Utah as their primary state of eligibility as NABP confirms eligibility to test for those jurisdictions.
 - ii. Additional states: \$75 each
 - b. MPJE (Colorado law exam): \$150.00
 - i. \$100 non-refundable application fee (per jurisdiction)
 - c. License Processing Fee: \$247.00
 - d. Payment requirements: Mastercard, Visa, or American Express
 - e. Be aware of rescheduling and cancellation fees if you change your mind!
 - i. Re-scheduling fee is \$50.00 each time
 - ii. Pro-tip: you can cancel (rather than selecting “reschedule”) a current examination appointment and then schedule the exam for no additional cost. This will help to avoid the \$50, just make sure there are multiple dates available in the event those time slots are filled before you schedule the new appointment.
10. Miscellaneous information:
 - a. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) [accommodation requests](#) must be submitted to the SBOP for every exam attempt.
 - b. You cannot change an answer once you have confirmed an answer choice. You cannot go back to review a question once you have moved on to the next question.
 - c. You must answer all questions in the order in which they are presented, and you may not skip a question.
11. After taking the NAPLEX
 - a. You can have your NAPLEX score transferred to another state within 89 days of the test date. This is a good option if you are trying to get licensed in multiple states.

- b. It is cheaper to have your NAPLEX score transferred to another state than it is to transfer your pharmacist license later down the road. If there is even a remote possibility you will be practicing in another state in the near future, this may be worth looking into. Please keep in mind, however, that some states have a window of time after score transfer in which you must also pass the MPJE or apply for licensure in order to be licensed through examination rather than reciprocity or license transfer.

Getting Hired

Apply to positions with a similar practice philosophy and goals as yourself.

As a new practitioner, it may be difficult to know what exactly you want from a position, let alone where to find a position that fits you best. There are many resources out there, depending on the type of position you are looking for:

- [APhA Career Center](#)
 - Attend the APhA Annual Meeting and Expo to network, distribute your business card, and make connections. You never know who you might meet!
- Local state organizations: most state pharmacy organizations will offer job postings via their state website.
 - [CPS career center](#) and job search page
 - Pro Tip: Subscribe to “Job Flash” alerts if offered
- ACCP's [Career Page](#)
- ASHP [CareerPharm](#) and PPS (Personal Placement Services) at Midyear
- LinkedIn
- Word of mouth: networking is your best friend

Apply directly to the healthcare or business entity.

This is more effective with the current volume of new grad job searching, as opposed to posting your CV or resumé on ‘head hunter’ websites and waiting for them to contact you (e.g., RPh-on-the-Go, Indeed.com, RxCareerCenter.com, Monster.com)

- Prepare a detailed CV (curriculum vitae) highlighting your strengths and experiences.
 - Ask a colleague or mentor to review your CV prior to submitting for the application.
- Some positions may require a succinct resumé rather than a full-length CV. Supplemental material such as a letter of intent or cover letter may also be required. Be prepared to update your application as required by specific job posts.
- Complete the online application, and then contact the human resources representative or district/division manager directly to introduce yourself.

Be a good pharmacist! Pharmacy is a small world; work hard and your name will be more likely to come up when an opening is available.

- Create your own systematic processes to prevent error and limit distractions.
- Double check (look up) everything you might be questioning. It is better to be safe than sorry.
- Stay focused on offering excellent patient care.

- Prevent burnout by practicing resiliency strategies such as making time for hobbies, connecting with others, and taking adequate time off to recover.
- Create your long-term 'Professional Development' plan. There is still a lot to learn after completing pharmacy school. Develop your personal strategy for engaging in lifelong learning as a pharmacist.
 - Consider organizing your resources such as landmark trials and figures from disease state guidelines to have readily accessible.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help from your fellow pharmacists and technicians.
- Develop a Peripheral Brain – a collection of helpful resources and reference materials that you can quickly access. This is especially helpful when learning systematic processes and operational information.

Professional Development

Advanced Training Programs / Certifications:

- Make yourself a more competitive applicant
 - Residency/Fellowship training
 - Board certification with the Board of Pharmacy Specialties (BPS) – variety of specialties available
 - APhA Certificate Programs: Pharmacy-Based Immunization Delivery, Pharmacist and Patient-Centered Diabetes Care, Delivering Medication Therapy Management Services
 - Certified Asthma Educator (AE-C)
 - Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE)
 - Board Certified Advanced Diabetes Management (BC-ADE)
 - Medication Therapy Management (MTM) certification – offered through the schools of pharmacy and through APhA

Stay Involved:

- Many pharmacy organizations you can join on the state and national level
 - CPS Academy of New Practitioners has the following positions available each year: Chair, Chair-Elect, Ex-Officio, Member at Large, Representative to the Board of Directors, Student Liaison, CE Chair, Residency Showcase Coordinators (2)
 - Your first year of CPS membership is free as a new graduate! Just use the code “NewGrad2022” when you join.
- Gives you networking advantages that may help you find the right career.
- Makes you a more qualified candidate for advanced positions (i.e. manager, specialist).

Show Me the Money!

Student Loans:

- Federal loan payments are set to begin six months after graduation. Due to changes throughout the COVID19 pandemic, work with your direct loan manager to determine current, expected repayment timelines.
 - Check here for the most current updates: <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/coronavirus>
 - You can apply for forbearance if you are completing a residency/fellowship. However, forbearance means you are still accruing interest; you just don't have to make payments until the day residency/fellowship ends!
- Student loans are non-dischargeable – they will follow you even through bankruptcy.
- If you are planning on pursuing loan forgiveness (such as the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, or PSLF), get organized early:
 - Make sure your loans are eligible for forgiveness, your employer is “qualified”, and you submit the proper paperwork in a timely manner.
 - Sign up for the right type of repayment plan – must be income driven
 - Consider making payments early – don't wait until the end of your six-month forbearance period (under an income-driven repayment plan, your first payments are probably much cheaper than they will be later and you will need to make 120 qualifying payments to be eligible for loan forgiveness).
 - You must submit a PSLF application form yearly and upon changing employers. For more information, visit: <https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/public-service>
 - Colorado offers additional loan forgiveness programs for pharmacists working in medically underserved communities (visit the following website for more information: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/health-professional-loan-repayment>)
- Consult with your banker or tax advisor before accepting an offer to consolidate loans.
 - CAUTION: If you are pursuing loan forgiveness under the PSLF program and you decide to consolidate your loans, your 120 qualifying payments resets to ZERO unless submitting the limited-PSLF waiver by October 31, 2022.
 - Be sure to weigh the pros and cons of refinancing based on your individual situation. You will not be eligible for programs only available with a federal loan, such as income-driven repayment plans or options like deferment or forbearance if you experience financial hardship.
 - Laurel Road is the CPS preferred student loan refinancing provider – you can get an additional 0.125% discount when you mention that you are a CPS member:

<https://copharm.memberclicks.net/student-loan-refinance-information?servId=8767?servId=8767&servId=8767>

- Some employers offer to pay your school loans. Make sure you are aware of the terms prior to making this agreement.

Finances and Retirement Planning:

- Start saving as soon as you can.
- Visit Your Financial Pharmacist for great resources: <https://yourfinancialpharmacist.com/>
- Consider having your taxes prepared by a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) who understands your career, applicable deductions, and savings and retirement goals.
- Know your options for retirement saving: Roth IRA vs. traditional IRA, simple 401-K vs. safe harbor 401-K
 - <https://www.irs.gov/retirement-plans/plan-sponsor/types-of-retirement-plans>
 - Optimize your retirement savings through your employer. Work directly with the benefits manager to determine the right options for you.

Liability Insurance:

- Many employers will provide liability insurance. Be sure to ask about the policy and feel free to purchase further coverage if you are concerned.
- CPS supports Pharmacists Mutual as the preferred provider, and you may sign up here: <https://www.phmic.com/forms/>
 - Get more information at the following link: <https://www.phmic.com/pharmacy-professional-liability/>
- Consider if you would like additional coverage for educational services, such as precepting students and providing CE sessions.
- Most professional liability insurance plans also cover volunteer services (e.g. health fairs, working at free clinics), so if this is something that applies to you, see how many hours your plan covers.