

**INFORMATION FOR  
MIDWIVES EDUCATED ABROAD (MEAs)**



**American College of Nurse-Midwives**

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## INTRODUCTION

The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) is the professional association that represents certified midwives and certified nurse-midwives in the United States. This document is specifically designed for you if you are a midwife or nurse-midwife who was educated in another country and seek to practice as a certified midwife or certified nurse-midwife in the United States. In order to practice midwifery in the U.S. that includes birth in all settings including hospitals, you must first take and pass a national certification exam that is offered by the American Midwifery Certification Board ([AMCB](#)). Successful completion of this exam leads to the credential of Certified Nurse-Midwife (CNM) or Certified Midwife (CM). In order to be eligible to sit for the AMCB exam, and thus become a CNM or CM, you must have a graduate degree from an accredited US midwifery education program. This document will help you navigate that process.

## MIDWIFERY PRACTICE IN THE US

### Scope of Practice

Midwifery, as practiced by certified nurse-midwives (CNMs®) and certified midwives (CMs®), encompasses a full range of primary health care services for women from adolescence beyond menopause. These services include primary care, gynecologic and family planning services, preconception care, care during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period, care of the normal newborn during the first 28 days of life, and treatment of male partners for sexually transmitted infections. For our full definition and scope of practice document, please [click here](#).

Now that you have decided to become a midwife in the United States, you need to determine which credential is most appropriate for you to seek based upon your previous education, experience, and desired practice location.

### Credentials: CM vs. CNM

CNMs and CMs receive the same midwifery education and must pass the same AMCB certification exam. At this time, all midwifery education (for CMs and CNMs) is graduate level education and students earn either a Masters or Doctoral degree upon successful completion of a midwifery education program. CNMs and CMs both practice in hospitals, birth centers, clinics, home birth practices, and also provide primary care.

Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNM®) are educated in two disciplines: midwifery and nursing, and may be licensed to practice in all 50 states, Washington DC, US Territories, and globally.

Certified Midwives (CMs®) are educated in the discipline of midwifery and may be licensed to practice in New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Delaware, and Maine. Because legislation changes frequently, please [click here](#) for the most current list of states in which CMs can practice.

### Licensure: State Rules

Unlike in many other countries, a license to practice in the US is primarily a two-step process: you must first take the national certification exam offered by the AMCB, and then apply to the appropriate licensing agency in the state in which you intend to practice. The state in which you desire to practice may impact your choice of credential, CNM or CM. Each state has its own rules and laws regarding midwifery licensure. Please refer to the governing body of the state in which you desire to practice to determine whether you will want to practice as a CNM or CM. This decision will then determine the type and amount of additional education you must gain in order to practice in the US. [Click here](#) for information about state licensing regulations. In addition, prescriptive privileges vary by state. Please refer to your specific state regulatory body to determine what you must do to achieve prescriptive authority.

**\*\*Note\*\*** In California, Midwives Educated Abroad can contact the California Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) ([click here](#) to access). This agency has a mechanism to determine equivalency of foreign midwifery preparation with California BRN-approved nurse-midwifery education.

## MIDWIFERY EDUCATION

In order to be eligible to take the AMCB exam towards certification as a CNM or CM, you must complete a midwifery education program that is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME). [Click here](#) for a link to all ACME accredited programs. All ACME accredited midwifery education programs are based upon the same educational criteria, namely, the Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice. [Click here](#) to access those core competencies. All graduates must take the same certification exam offered by AMCB. [Click here](#) to go to the AMCB webpage.

Upon review of the ACME accredited midwifery education programs ([Click here](#) for list), you will note that each offers a Master's degree or Doctoral degree upon completion. While both levels of preparation teach the same Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice, and successful completion of each degree enables you to sit for the AMCB exam, there are separate educational competencies for a Master's degree versus a Doctoral degree in Midwifery. You may wish to choose a midwifery education program based upon the final degree that best meets your educational goals and plans.

### Competencies for Midwifery Education:

Master's Level: [Click here](#) to access.

Doctoral Level: [Click here](#) to access.

## WHERE DO I START?

### APPLICATION AND ENTRANCE TO MIDWIFERY EDUCATION PROGRAM(S)

Begin by browsing midwifery education program application information and requirements linked to this website ([click here](#)). By narrowing down a list of schools to which you wish to apply, you will have a better sense of what requirements must be completed prior to midwifery program application. Some schools have course pre-requisites or require entrance exams while others do not. Pre-requisites are course that must be completed prior to application to a program. Each midwifery education selects their own pre-requisites and can answer questions about where and how those requirements may be fulfilled. Choose those midwifery education programs that seem to be the best fit for you after reviewing pertinent application information and talking to admission personnel.

## Language Requirements

If English is not your first language, some midwifery schools may require you to take the TOEFL exam. Refer to individual school websites or speak to admission personnel with questions. [Click here](#) to access the TOEFL website.

## Nursing Degree Requirements

If you wish to become a CNM, you must also have your Registered Nurse (RN) license. Some midwifery education programs require an RN license for application to the program, while others lead to RN licensure during the course of the midwifery education program.

If you are **NOT** already a nurse and wish to become a CNM you have a few options:

1. Complete a nursing education program and pass the NCLEX exam to be an RN. Many graduate-level midwifery education programs require a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. Lists of such nursing education programs may be found by [clicking here](#). Refer to specific midwifery education program application criteria.
2. If you have a Bachelor's degree in a field other than nursing, you may apply to attend one of the ACME accredited midwifery education programs that have a BA/BS to RN/CNM option as noted [here](#).

If you wish to become a CNM and **ARE** already a nurse in your former country of residence there is a 2-step process to obtain your RN license in the US. This process is separate from applying to midwifery school or obtaining a work visa. If you are applying to a midwifery education program that requires an RN license, this process must be completed *prior* to application to that midwifery education program. More details can be found [here](#):

1. Contact the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS). This agency prescreens nurses educated abroad, reviews nursing education, licensure in the home country, English language proficiency, and offers a predictor exam regarding the nurse's ability to pass the US national licensure exam for RNs (NCLEX).

Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS)

3600 Market Street, Suite 400

Philadelphia, PA 19104-2651

U.S.A.

Telephone: 215-222-8454

Fax: 215-662-0425

Web Site: [Click here](#)

2. In the U.S. every nurse must meet additional state requirements and take the NCLEX nursing licensure exam as established by the State Board of Nursing. Contact the State Board of Nursing for the state in which you seek to practice, as well as the state in which you seek to attend midwifery school. More information and contact information for specific state boards of nursing can be found at:
  - National Council of State Boards of Nursing
  - 676 N. St. Clair, Suite 550
  - Chicago, IL 60611-2921
  - U.S.A.
  - Telephone: 312-787-6555
  - Fax: 312-787-6898
  - Web Site: [Click here](#)
  
3. For more information about nursing education in the US, please contact the American Nurses Association by [clicking here](#), or by calling 1-800-274-4262.

### **NOW WHAT?**

Once you have graduated from an ACME accredited midwifery education program and passed your AMCB board, you are a CNM or CM. The following items may be helpful to you.

1. Maintaining your credential
  - a. Once you are a CNM or CM, you must maintain your certificate with the AMCB. Specific details can be found by [clicking here](#).
  
2. Find a job
  - a. Perhaps you located a job during your midwifery education program. If not, [click here](#) to find some employment opportunities around the US. Remember that you need to be licensed in the state in which you practice.
  
3. Join your professional organization, the American College of Nurse-Midwives ([ACNM](#))
  - a. The American College of Nurse-Midwives is an association whose members are certified nurse-midwives, certified midwives, midwifery students, and others interested in the profession.
  - b. There are numerous benefits to joining the ACNM including:
    - i. Reduced registration rates at the Annual Meeting
    - ii. Discounted online continuing education
    - iii. Individual advocacy assistance to help with your specific needs
    - iv. Student scholarships
    - v. ACNM promotes the profession of midwifery on the local, national and international level.
    - vi. Networking and job searches

- vii. The latest peer-reviewed research, clinical bulletins, issue briefs, quarterly newsletter, and weekly enews
- viii. And much, much more
- c. Become a member- join by [clicking here](#).

Revised and developed by the Education Policy section of the Division of Education of the ACNM: Megan Arbour (Chair), Elaine Germano (ACNM Staff), Katharine Green, Sharon Holley, Jane Houston, Kelly Walker, and Judie Wika

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