



NAC APPLICATION AND EXAM PROCESS

Washington State Board of Nursing (WABON)

Last Updated July 2026

Types of NAC Training Programs in WA State

- **Traditional NAC Programs**

Traditional programs provide a complete training program for nursing assistants and require no previous training.

- **Home Care Aide (HCA) Bridge**

HCA alternative training programs recognize prior training and current HCA certification. They provide a shorter training program intended to “bridge” students to nursing assistant certification (NAC).

- **Medical Assistant (MA) Bridge**

MA alternative training programs recognize prior training and current MA certification. They provide a shorter training program intended to “bridge” students to nursing assistant certification (NAC).

Part 1: In-Person Skills Test

Candidates who graduate from a Washington State Approved Nursing Assistant Training Program where the program provides skills testing.

- Schedule the skills exam with your training program
- Cost determined by your training program

Part 2: Online Knowledge Test

- The online knowledge test is completed through [Credentia](#)
 - The test is called the “NNAAP”
 - Cost of the test is \$55
 - You will need to create a Credentia Account
 - [Quick Reference - Washington - NNAAP Handbook](#)
 - Customer Service Support: 888-204-6249
- Prior to registering for the knowledge test, you will need to submit a credential application to WABON
 - You will need your pending credential number to register
 - **EXAMPLE: NC1234578**
 - NC will need to be added first, followed by your eight-digit number.
 - No spaces or dots between the NC and numbers.

Submit Your Application to WABON

- **Submit your online application while you are still enrolled in your training program. You will need a pending NAC credential number to register for the knowledge exam with Credentia.**
- **Follow online application instructions at:** [Guide to Applying, Reactivating, Renewing, and Maintaining Your Washington State Nursing License Online](#)
- **Create a Secure Access Washington Account at:** <https://secureaccess.wa.gov/myAccess/saw/select.do>
- To check the status of your application, please use your HELMS portal or the [Provider Credential Search](#)

Create or Login to your SAW Account

- To access the HELMS Portal, please first login/create your SecureAccess Washington (SAW) Account:
<https://secureaccess.wa.gov>
 - **Supported Browsers:** Microsoft Edge and Google Chrome work best with the DOH HELMS Portal. Online services are configured with PCs and PC-based laptops.
 - If you do not remember your username or password, select the option for “forgot username/password” and an email will be sent to you to reset your information.
 - Do not create a new SAW account if you already hold one.
- HELMS Instructional Video by the Department of Health:
[HELMS User Portal Demo](#)
- **SAW Customer Service:** 360-568-1000 or 855-928-3241

Add the Department of Health HELMS Service

- Once logged into your SAW account, select “Add a New Service”.
- To add the HELMS portal as a service, browse by “I would like to browse a list of services by agency” and select “Department of Health”.
- Click “Apply” on “Health Professional and Facility Licensing (HELMS)”

HEALTH PROFESSIONAL AND FACILITY LICENSING (HELMS)

Apply

User portal for DOH's Health Enforcement and Licensing Management System (HELMS). HELMS supports applications, licensing, payments, and renewals for health professional and facility licensees in the State of Washington.

HELMS Setup Continued

- Once the HELMS portal service has been added to your SAW account, select “Access Now”.
- For security purposes, you will then be asked to verify your account through Multi-Factor Authentication. Please complete this step to continue.

 **SAFETY FIRST!**
This service requires MFA.

SecureAccess by Washington [Help](#) [Español](#)

1 Choose Method 2 Enter Code 3 Remember Device 4 Access Service

Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)

This service requires additional verification beyond username and password to prevent fraud and identity theft. You will need to enter a verification code.

Choose Method

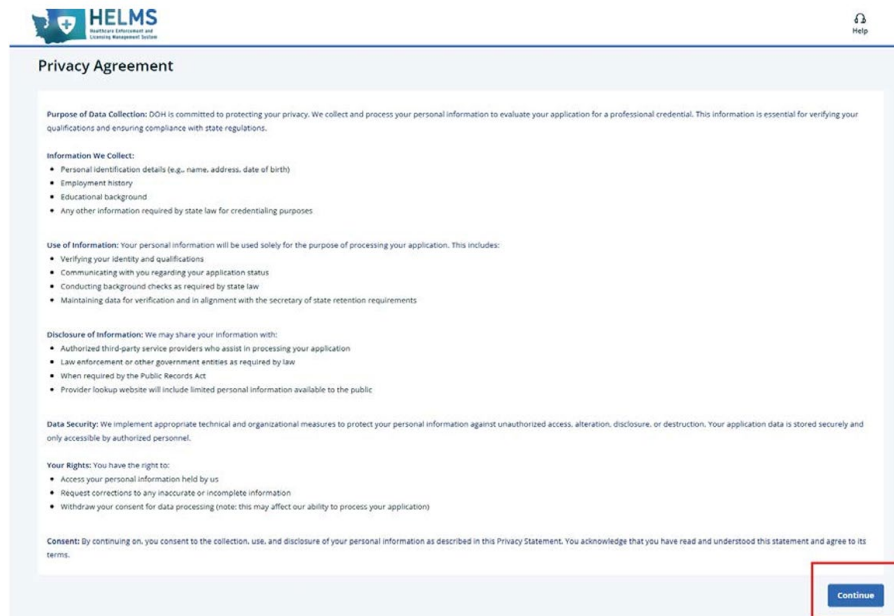
How would you like to receive your verification code?

 Receive the code in an email and enter it on the next screen.

 Receive the code in a text message and enter it on the next screen.

HELMS Setup Continued

- If this is your first time accessing your HELMS Portal, you will be asked to complete a **Privacy Agreement** with the Department of Health. Please read the information on screen and select “continue”.



The screenshot shows the HELMS Privacy Agreement page. At the top left is the HELMS logo with the text "HELMS" and "Healthcare Employment and Licensing Management System" below it. At the top right is a "Help" icon. The main heading is "Privacy Agreement". The page contains several sections of text and bulleted lists:

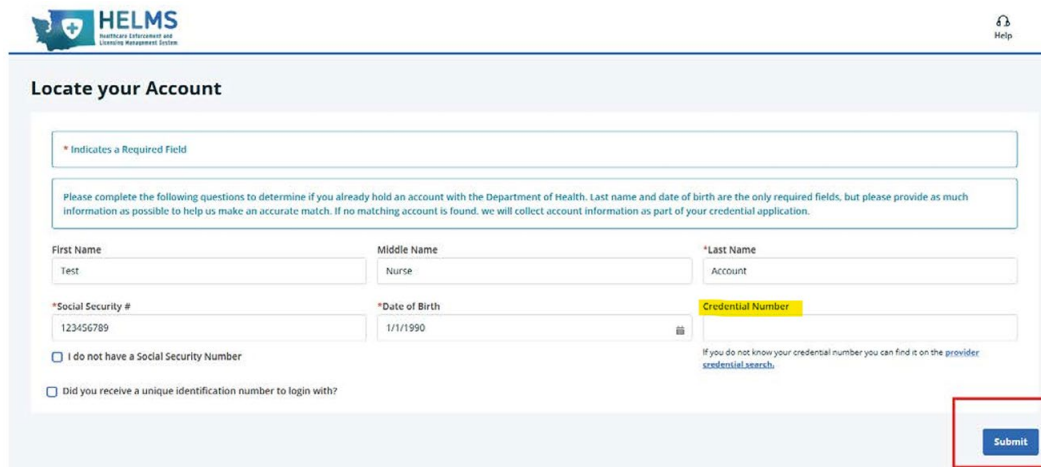
- Purpose of Data Collection:** DOH is committed to protecting your privacy. We collect and process your personal information to evaluate your application for a professional credential. This information is essential for verifying your qualifications and ensuring compliance with state regulations.
- Information We Collect:**
 - Personal identification details (e.g., name, address, date of birth)
 - Employment history
 - Educational background
 - Any other information required by state law for credentialing purposes
- Use of Information:** Your personal information will be used solely for the purpose of processing your application. This includes:
 - Verifying your identity and qualifications
 - Communicating with you regarding your application status
 - Conducting background checks as required by state law
 - Maintaining data for verification and in alignment with the secretary of state retention requirements
- Disclosure of Information:** We may share your information with:
 - Authorized third-party service providers who assist in processing your application
 - Law enforcement or other government entities as required by law
 - When required by the Public Records Act
 - Provider lookup website will include limited personal information available to the public
- Data Security:** We implement appropriate technical and organizational measures to protect your personal information against unauthorized access, alteration, disclosure, or destruction. Your application data is stored securely and only accessible by authorized personnel.
- Your Rights:** You have the right to:
 - Access your personal information held by us
 - Request corrections to any inaccurate or incomplete information
 - Withdraw your consent for data processing (note: this may affect our ability to process your application)
- Consent:** By continuing on, you consent to the collection, use, and disclosure of your personal information as described in this Privacy Statement. You acknowledge that you have read and understood this statement and agree to its terms.

At the bottom right, there is a blue "Continue" button highlighted with a red rectangle.

HELMS Setup Continued

You will then be asked to “**Locate your Account**”. This is to determine if you already have an existing account created with the DOH associated with a past application, expired or active credential, or a current pending application.

- **It is important that you do not create a new account if you already have a credential with the DOH.**
- Enter an existing credential that you hold to locate your existing HELMS account.



The screenshot shows the 'Locate your Account' form in the HELMS system. The form includes a header with the HELMS logo and a 'Help' link. A legend indicates that an asterisk (*) denotes a required field. A note instructs users to complete the questions to determine if they already hold an account with the Department of Health, noting that last name and date of birth are the only required fields, but more information is helpful for an accurate match. The form contains several input fields: 'First Name' (with 'Test' entered), 'Middle Name' (with 'Nurse' entered), 'Last Name' (with 'Account' entered), '*Social Security #' (with '123456789' entered), and '*Date of Birth' (with '1/1/1990' entered). There is also a 'Credential Number' field, which is highlighted in yellow. Below these fields are two checkboxes: 'I do not have a Social Security Number' and 'Did you receive a unique identification number to login with?'. A 'Submit' button is located at the bottom right of the form, enclosed in a red rectangular box.

Guide to Using Your HELMS Portal

The screenshot shows the HELMS Portal interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the HELMS logo, user profile (Nurse Applicant), and links for Help, Cart, and My Communications. Below the navigation bar, there are tabs for Profession Credentialing and Surveys. The main content area is titled 'Welcome to HELMS Portal' and features three main sections: Professional Credentials, Requests, and Payments. Each section has a list of items with circular icons indicating counts. A 'Start Application' button is located in the top right of the main content area. Below these sections, there are tabs for 'All Credentials' and 'Applications'. A message box states: 'Please see the list below for all of your credentials and use the three dots to take actions on your credentials.' A note below this states: 'Note: Credentials eligible for renewal will display in red font.' A table lists credentials with columns: Credential Number, Credential Name, Enforcement Action, Effective Date, Expiration Date, Status, CE Due Date, and Actions. The table contains two rows: one for a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and one for a Registered Nurse License (RNL). The LPN row has a 'Download Credentials' button and a three-dot menu icon. The RNL row has a 'Request WA Single State Lic.' button. A 'View All' link is at the bottom right of the table.

1. To request an update to your personal information or contact information.

2. To apply for a new license, license renewal, or reactivation of an expired license.

3. To access payment history and print a receipt for your records.

4. To request a license status change (military, retired active, or inactive).

5. To request verification of your license to a Non-Nursys entity (\$25 fee).

6. To request a mailed duplicate copy of your license (\$20 fee).

7. To upgrade/Convert to a multistate license (MSL) or request to return to a single state license.

HELMS Portal Resources

- To access the HELMS Portal, please first login/create your SecureAccess Washington (SAW) Account: <https://secureaccess.wa.gov>
- If you need additional information on how to access SAW, visit the WABON website: <https://nursing.wa.gov/licensing/apply-license>
- Be sure to add the Health Professional and Facility Licensing (HELMS) service code once in SAW to access your HELMS account.



NAC Application Requirements

- NAC initial application and \$85 application fee
 - If you are re-training and re-testing to reactivate an expired NAC credential, your reactivation application fee will be \$197.
- Updated Demographic Data
 - Include name change documentation (if applicable)
- Personal Data Questions (within the application)
 - Provide supporting documentation for any “Yes” answer to include a written statement and copies of court records.
- Pass skills and knowledge tests (prior to issuance of NAC credential)

Helpful Hints

- Please always keep your contact information current with WABON.
- Make sure to use your personal email address when creating your Secure Access Washington (SAW) account and write down your login information somewhere safe. SAW is used for licensure renewal after you are licensed.
- Your initial application will show a “pending” status within the HELMS portal upon submission of a NAC application.

Mandatory Background Checks

- A Washington State Patrol (WSP) background check and National Practitioner Database (NPDB) are conducted on all applicants.
- FBI fingerprint background checks are required for all applicants who apply with an out-of-state address. You will receive emailed instructions on this process.

Applicant Legal Name

- Please be sure your legal name is on file with the Department of Health and Washington State Board of Nursing.
- Your training program should have your legal name and birth date entered to match your application and Credentia account.
 - If you have a legal name change (marriage, divorce, or legal court ordered name change) occur during the application process, please be sure to send in legal name change documentation along with your application.
 - If you have more than one last legal name, please be sure your training program is aware, and your legal name is provided on all documents.

WABON Internal Review Process

Now that the WABON has your application, this is what happens in our office:

- We complete the intake of your application
- We complete the internal background checks
- We send you an email outlining the FBI fingerprint process, if applicable (out of state addresses only)
- We send you an initial email indicating if anything is missing from your pending application

Credentia Testing Accommodations

Testing accommodations for the knowledge test are reviewed and approved by Credentia.

For additional information, please see Credentia's NNAAP Handbook: [Online Registration and Scheduling - Washington - NNAAP Handbook](#)

NA Testing Attempt Limits

Skills Testing- If an individual fails the skills test four times, they will need to re-train and re-test prior to moving forward with the credentialing process.

Written Exam- If an individual fails the knowledge test four times, they will need to re-train and re-test prior to moving forward with the credentialing process.

Active Credential

- Licenses are issued after WABON receives the last requirement (most of the time this is notification of passing written exam results).
- HELMS will send an automated email notification to you upon issuance of your credential.
- View your active credentials at www.doh.wa.gov
 - Search “[Provider Credential Search](#)”
 - Search by your first and last name only

Maintaining Your Credential

- *Your name will automatically be added to the OBRA Registry upon issuance of your credential.*
- *Upon issuance of your NAC, you are no longer required to continue to renew your Washington state NAR (Nursing Assistant Registration).*
- *The Washington State Board of Nursing does not require continuing education for NAC credentials. Your employer may require continuing education.*

Maintaining Your Credential

- Credential renewals are due every year by your birthday and should be completed in the HELMS Online Portal
 - *If your birthday is within 90 days of your **initial** licensure your expiration date will be extended to your next birthday.*
 - *If you have re-trained/re-tested for **reactivation of an expired credential**, you will need to renew on your next birthday (no exceptions).*
- Use our website as a resource for FAQs, scope of practice, and information on new requirements

Tips: How to avoid licensure delays



Tip #1

Ensure your application is **COMPLETE** and all supporting documentation is uploaded with your application.



Tip #2

Check with your program to ensure **all necessary paperwork** is complete.



Tip #3

Make sure to indicate your **current training program** and graduation date under the education section of the application.

Stay Connected with WABON

- Please subscribe to the **GovDelivery** email list for updates from the WABON regarding many topics including licensure, rules, education, business meetings, etc.
https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WADOH/subscriber/new?qsp=WADOH_4
- **Check out the WABON's Website:** <https://nursing.wa.gov/>
- **Follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram**
(Washington State Board of Nursing)



Facebook



Instagram



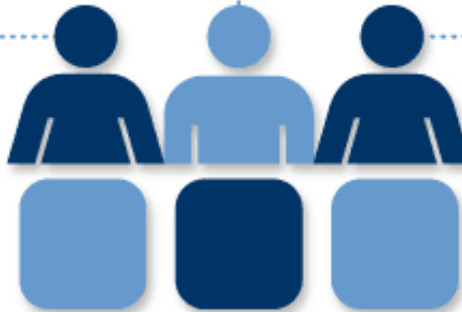
LinkedIn

WABON Licensing Unit

Phone: 360-236-4703

Email for Questions: nursing@doh.wa.gov

Email for Supporting Documentation:
NACapplications@doh.wa.gov



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