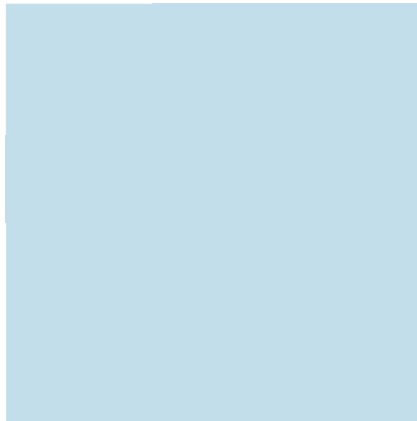


National Check Payments Certification Continuing Education Program Guide



2020



**NATIONAL CHECK PAYMENTS
CERTIFICATION
(NCPC)
CONTINUING EDUCATION
PROGRAM GUIDE**

VERSION 8.0 – 2020

ECCHO, a Service of The Clearing House Payments Company L.L.C.
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www.eccho.org

NOTICE

ECCHO may amend this Program Guide and other NCPC program guidelines at any time and amended Program Guide and/or guidelines shall be effective upon the posting of the amended information to the ECCHO or NCP program informational webpages.

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NATIONAL CHECK PROFESSIONALS (NCPs)

A. CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- ECCHO, a service of The Clearing House Payments Company L.L.C. (“ECCHO”), is the certifying agent for the program and manages the NCP program and the annual NCP examination in conformance with policies as outlined in the NCP Policies and Procedures manual.
- The National Check Payments Certification (NCP) program is open and available to all individuals and is not limited to those affiliated with ECCHO. The program is intended, in part, to recognize an elevated level of knowledge among payments professionals. Individuals with such professional experience who pass the program exam will become an accredited payments professional earning the designation of National Check Professional (NCP).
- The NCP must follow all policies and procedures as outlined in the Policies and Procedures manual which can be viewed on the [ECCHO website](#).
- Once the NCP exam (Exam) has been taken and passed, the resulting NCP certification (Certification) is good for five years (Certification Period) and may be extended indefinitely by meeting the continuing certification requirements (Continuing Education) in each five-year Certification Period.
 - After passing the exam, the NCPs certification period begins the year in which the certification is earned and the five full years following the year in which the certification is earned. See **End of Certification Period / Filing Deadlines** below for examples.
 - To extend Certification for another five-year period, the NCP must complete both:
 - 50 NCP Continuing Education Credits (Credits), aligned to the Exam blueprint topics (subject to approval) **AND**
 - Any three mandatory ECCHO-hosted NCP CE workshops (Workshops) within the 5-year Certification Period.

B. NCP CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE) CREDITS (Credits)

- Credits are calculated based on a standard of 50 minutes of education equaling 1.0 CE Credits.
 - Fractional Credits are allowed (e.g.; one hour = 1.2 Credits).
 - Education time calculation must exclude any breaks and similar non-educational activities.
- Maximum of 30 Credits is permissible in any calendar year. Should more than 30 Credits be taken in any one calendar year, the Credits over 30 cannot be carried over into the next year.
 - Example: If 40 Credits are earned in a calendar year, the 10 Credits above the maximum may not be used to meet Credits requirements in the next year(s).
- Any Credits taken over the total of 50 required to continue the Certification for another Certification Period are not carried over into the next five-year Certification Period.
 - Example: If a total of 60 Credits are earned in a 5-year Certification period, the 10 Credits above the maximum required may not be used to meet Credits requirements in the next 5-year Certification period.

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- Credits can be earned as early as April 1st of the year in which the Exam is passed.
 - Generally, this date will be prior to the testing window dates of the annual Exam.
- Credits are available from several sources. Please see **Sources for NCP Continuing Education Credits (Credits)** in the next section below.

C. SOURCES FOR NCP CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS (Credits)

- Conferences, industry group meetings, user group meetings, exam prep training and many other options (Educational Sessions) may be counted for Credits based on factors outlined in this section.
 - Formats of acceptable Educational Sessions may include in-person meetings, lunch-and-learn sessions, webinars, teleconference training and video and/or audio on-demand self-paced study.
 - Credits are based on the inclusion of subject matter elements aligned with the approved program exam Blueprint which may be updated from time to time.
 - Upcoming and past Credits that have been pre-approved by ECCHO can be found on the [ECCHO website](#).
 - Pre-approved Credits are posted as they are accepted into the program.
 - Pre-approved providers and options are discussed in the next section.
 - Credits from sources without pre-approval by ECCHO may also be filed.
 - Filing of Credits for sessions not previously approved by ECCHO is based on the honor system and subject to review retroactively for Credit applicability.
 - Each NCP must maintain documentation for a period of two years from the date of submission to ECCHO to support each Credit that is submitted to ECCHO.
 - Documentation must include:
 - Date of activity
 - Name of Credits provider or source/organization
 - Provider contact information
 - Type of activity (e.g.; conference, webinar, volunteer activity, etc.)
 - Session title
 - Session Description and/or Pre-approved Course ID (if applicable)
 - Name of instructor/speaker
 - Number of Credits provided/earned
 - ECCHO will perform random audits of submitted Credits
 - See below for **Audit Process**
- Examples of sessions eligible for Credits are listed below (not all-inclusive listing). All maximums listed are for a calendar year.
- Unless otherwise stated, a “live” training session or a recording of a training session, may be claimed for CE Credits only once per view in any calendar year within the standard 5-year renewal cycle. This includes, but may not be limited to:
 - ECCHO Rules training
 - NCP Exam Prep training – 1.8 CE credits each
 - ECCHOED complimentary presentations

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- ECCHO-hosted NCP Workshops: “Live” session or recorded Workshop:
 - Workshop may be used for CE Credit after required minimum of one (1) purchased and completed NCP Workshop has been met in the current year or a prior year within the 5-year renewal cycle
 - See additional requirements outlined in section **ECCHO NCP WORKSHOPS** below
- Other Educational Sessions as defined from time to time
 - May include either in-person or webinar-based Educational Sessions.
- Instructors/Speakers: Receive **double Credits** for each session taught that aligns to an NCP Exam Blueprint topic and that meets the following criteria:
 - Session must include at least three other individuals and
 - Must be a minimum of 50-min. duration – Max. 15 Credits per year
- Publications – one Credit per 500 words published
 - Must be on an NCP Exam Blueprint topic – Max. 10 Credits per year
 - Fractional credits not permitted for publications
- ECCHO volunteer services eligible for Credits include:
 - In-person meetings including the ECCHO Business Committee, Operations Committee and any in-person Working Group meetings – 6 Credits per meeting, unless otherwise specified
 - Additional credit(s) may be given for Round Table discussions or other related meeting activities at ECCHO’s sole discretion
 - ECCHO Working Group Conference calls – 1 Credit per call up to a maximum of 12 Credits per calendar year
 - ECCHO Business Committee Officers – 3 Credits per year
 - ECCHO Operations Committee Chairperson – 3 Credits per year
 - ECCHO NCP Class Instructor Certification (“Train the trainer” workshops for NCP Educational Partners) – maximum 15 Credits per year
 - Credits given for program participation whether seeking certification or attending to audit the Class Instructor program
- Examples of ineligible programs include, but are not limited to:
 - Sales presentations
 - Product specific presentations (including NCP product/program overviews)
 - Career advancement training
 - Software training
 - Exhibit booth duty

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D. PROGRAM FEES AND COSTS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS

- Cost of eligible Credits will vary with the Credits source/provider.
 - Check with each providing source of Credits about fees related to its available options.
- Credits are awarded based on content that is submitted to ECCHO for review
 - Approved content must be aligned to the NCP Exam blueprint [available here](#).
- See complete list of program fees [posted here](#).
 - NCP program fees may be revised at ECCHO's discretion.

E. ECCHO NCP WORKSHOPS

- NCP Workshops ("Workshops") are designed to ensure the most current industry information is made available to all currently certified NCPs.
- Three ECCHO-hosted Workshops must be completed each 5-year renewal cycle.
 - Maximum of two Workshops will be recognized towards Certification maintenance during any calendar year.
- Workshops are offered annually, generally during the months of:
 - May, August, and November (subject to scheduling)
- At ECCHO's sole discretion, Workshop dates may be varied, and content may be varied or repeated within a given year
 - See [ECCHO website](#) for details on Workshop dates, times, fees and registration.
- Workshops are typically offered as single 90-minute webinars.
 - Workshop webinars are recorded with recordings available for purchase:
 - Purchase and completion of any "live" or recorded Workshop may be counted as a Workshop to meet these requirements.
- Workshops are tracked by ECCHO based on the NCP's registration, participation, and completion of each Workshop.
 - Workshops are separate from general CE Credits and therefore are *not* to be filed by the NCP as part of the annual Credit filing process unless using a Workshop specifically for CE Credits (See additional information below).
 - See **End of Certification Period / Filing Deadlines** regarding NCP courtesy notifications and completed Workshop information.
- Using a Workshop for CE Credit:
 - Workshops may be used for CE Credit after the required minimum of one (1) purchased and completed NCP Workshop has been met in the current year or a prior year within a given 5-year renewal cycle.
 - Workshops used for CE Credits may be:
 - Purchased directly by the NCP for that use following the guidelines outlined above; or

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- Purchased by another NCP (“piggy-backing”) and viewed by one or more NCPs for CE Credits only
 - Registered NCP (purchaser of the Workshop) must alert ECCHO within 10 days after the Workshop regarding all those that attended (piggy-backed) on the purchased Workshop for NCP CE Credits.
 - ECCHO will provide a Certification of Attendance for the NCP(s) to use when filing the Workshop for CE credits
- NCP must listen to at least 75% of the session to receive credit for attending the workshop.
 - Attendance will be validated via ECCHO reporting
- NCP must enter their information when accessing the workshop to validate attendance

F. FILING CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS

- Each NCP is responsible for completing, entering and filing Continuing Education (CE) Credits (“Credits”) and completing the required Workshops to meet CE requirements in each 5-year renewal cycle
- Annual CE Credit filing period: January 1 through March 31 the year immediately following the calendar year in which Credits are earned.
- Credit Entry vs Credit Filing
 - Credits earned during each year of the five-year Certification Period *must be filed* no earlier than January 1st of the next year
 - Pending CE Credits *may be entered* throughout the year to be held as “Pending” until filed during the standard annual CE Credit filing period
- CE Credit Entry
 - NCPs may access a self-service portal via NCP Connect [available here](#) to enter earned CE credits throughout the current calendar year
 - NCPs may enter completed CE sessions at any time which will be held in the system and display under the “Pending” area of the individual NCP’s record until they are filed.
- CE Credit Filing
 - Any new or “Pending” CE sessions previously entered are filed and become final upon payment of all filing fees during the regular filing period
 - Filing period: January 1st through March 31st of each year for any credits earned in the prior calendar year.
 - Once payment is received and credits are considered “filed”, the “CE Status” tab in each NCPs individual record will display their total CE Credits information
- Annual filing fee:
 - Fees must be paid at time of filing
 - Annual filing fees apply for all Credits when filed, not when Credits are entered and held as “Pending”
 - Lack of receipt of payment could cause Credits to be rejected.

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- Late Filing:
 - Credits may be filed after March 31 and prior to April 30 for credits earned in the prior calendar year.
 - Both the normal annual *filing fee and the late filing fee must be paid when filing.*
- Extension Filing (Credits earned after year end):
 - To earn and file Credits after the normal December 31st deadline for earning Credits, an application for extension for that year's Credits must be filed no later than April 15th to extend a prior year's earning period.
 - Credits under this option must be earned and filed no later than June 30th
 - An Extension Request fee will be assessed that is *in addition* to the normal annual filing fee.
 - Extension filing *fee must be paid when requesting the extension.*
 - Standard annual *filing fee must be paid when the Credits are filed.*
 - Forms to apply for filing an extension to earn CE credits are available at www.eccho.org/ncpc_cont_edu.
- Documentation is not to be included when entering or filing Credits
 - NCP must retain documentation for audit purposes as outlined below.
 - Any documentation provided with filing of Credits will not preclude ECCHO from requesting documentation in a subsequent Audit (See **Audit Process** below).
 - Each NCP must retain supporting Credits documentation for a period of two years from the date Credits are filed.
 - See above **Sources for NCP Continuing Education Credits (Credits)** for required documentation.
- ECCHO reserves the right to review any Credits entered or filed and may request additional information to determine eligibility.
 - An operational support request such as this would be separate from any normal audit process.
- For additional information on how to both *enter and file* Credits with ECCHO, see the guidelines to online [NCP CE credit filing here](#), where a description of the process and filing instructions are available
- Questions or concerns? Please contact the program administration office via NCP Connection at: ncpc@eccho.org for assistance.

G. END OF CERTIFICATION PERIOD / FILING DEADLINES

- Filing CE credits earned and participating in NCP Workshops during each 5-year renewal cycle is critical to maintaining the NCP.
- Eligible credits may be entered throughout the year and will be held as “pending” in the individual NCP’s record until each annual credit filing period.
- CE Credit Filing Period: January 1 through March 31 each year
 - Credits earned in the prior calendar year and/or already entered as “pending” may be filed with appropriate fee during this period.

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- Term of each Certification Period
 - Five (5) calendar years with expiration on December 31 of the 5th year.
- NCP Continuing Education Communications
 - Below is a list of courtesy NCP notifications:
 - November/December: Each NCP is sent an email courtesy reminder regarding the filing of Credits.
 - May/June: Each NCP is sent a summary of Credits. It is the NCPs responsibility to review and notify ECCHO of any discrepancy within 30 days of receipt of this summary.
 - Note: ECCHO is under no obligation to send or to ensure receipt of courtesy notification(s) and may revise at their discretion.
 - Throughout the year, each NCP may receive additional notifications of upcoming CE-eligible webinars and/or reminders to register.
 - Lack of receipt of any reminder has no impact on the NCPs obligation to submit Credits within the parameters of the NCP program guidelines.

H. AUDIT PROCESS

- Each year ECCHO randomly selects NCPs whose prior year submission of Credits will be audited.
- Audit communications are sent based on contact information provided and maintained by the NCP in NCP Connect.
- Timing: No response within 120 days of original notification results in:
 - Certified letter mailed from ECCHO and a final request email.
- NCPs chosen must participate in the audit and must complete the process within the timeframe specified and as instructed.
 - Failing to meet all audit requirements may result in the loss of NCP designation.
- Documentation: NCP must maintain documentation for a two-year period for all Credits submitted and must provide required documentation supporting any audited Credits.
 - NCP is notified that any non-validated credits will be dropped 60 days from notice date if valid documentation is not received by end of the outlined 60-day notice period.
- Unsubstantiated Credits will be disqualified if:
 - Sufficient documentation is not provided; or
 - Inappropriate or ineligible content is submitted; or
 - Content does not meet requirements, in ECCHO's assessment, for relationship to the exam Blueprint.
- Determination regarding viability or applicability of Credits is at sole discretion of ECCHO.
- Loss of NCP designation due to rejection of CE Credits:

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- Should an audit result in rejected credits that would cause the NCP to fall short and risk losing their certification, the NCP will have **until December 31st of the Audit year** to fulfill the Credit requirement gap for NCP retention.
- Credits earned to fulfill a requirement gap only apply retroactively to year audited.
- Audit Appeals: Should an NCP dispute the results of a given Audit the NCP may initiate an appeal by contacting ECCHO as follows:
 - Written request by contacting the NCP Program Administrator at ncpc@eccho.org.

I. CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENT: CLASS INSTRUCTORS

Background: ECCHO established trusted partner relationships early in the NCP program for exam training delivery

- Class Instructor Program was established in 2012 and is designed to:
 - ensure the NCP program has a pool of qualified trainers to aid exam candidates in preparing to sit for the exam;
 - ensure each group of certified trainers develops a mastery of the program's Core Training materials to successfully deliver exam prep training.
- Annual workshops established and delivered by ECCHO staff to certify new trainers as Class Instructors
- Class Instructor Maintenance Requirements (for NCP certified trainers only)
 - Requirement effective January 2021: All certified Class Instructors must attend the Class Instructor workshop hosted by ECCHO at least **once every two years**
 - Maintenance requirement is similar to other professional certifications
 - Class Instructors are required to:
 - refresh knowledge of check payments generally; and
 - specifically demonstrate understanding of and expertise in delivery of the NCP Core Training materials
 - Each annual Class Instructor Workshop may be delivered in-person or as a series of webinars
 - For planning purposes, notice of scheduling will be provided in advance of each annual Workshop to all currently active NCP Class Instructors
 - NCP program administration will track attendance and provide related reporting
- Credit for attendance and participation:
 - Each Class Instructor has the option to apply attendance at each Workshop as either:
 - CE credits: 15 credits max. for full attendance
 - Credits given for program participation whether seeking certification or attending to audit the Class Instructor program
 - One (1) NCP CE Workshop
 - Counted towards the NCP certification requirement of three (3) NCP Workshops in each 5-year NCP renewal cycle

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- Class Instructor Status Dropped
 - If maintenance requirement is not met, trainer will be listed as “inactive” until re-certified by ECCHO
 - Note: Only active certified Class Instructors are authorized to individually deliver NCP exam prep training
- Re-certifying Class Instructor:
 - Must attend a future program and meet the current requirements to be certified as an NCP Class Instructor

PROVIDERS OF NCP CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS (Credits)

A. OVERVIEW OF PROVIDERS OF NCP CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS (Credits)

- Sources of Credits are generally organizations that provide conferences, user group meetings, various training sessions and other similar options, collectively referred to as Educational Sessions, where individuals can receive Credits related to NCP Blueprint content.
- Several core sources of Credits include those from NCP Continuing Education Providers, or “Approved Providers”, as well as other providers that seek pre-approval of Credits. These include:
 - NCP Educational Partners with prior approval of Credits
 - ECCHO Full and Participating Members with prior approval of Credits
 - ECCHO Sponsoring Organizations with prior approval of Credits
 - Other Providers of Credits with prior approval of Credits
- Other sources may provide eligible credits but have not submitted those credits to ECCHO for review and prior approval.

B. USE OF NCP NAME AND / OR LOGO

- NCP Educational Partners have been approved to use the NCP name and logo.
- ECCHO Full and Participating Members are approved to use the NCP name and logo for intra-bank training sessions.
- Approved Providers of Credits, including ECCHO Sponsoring Organizations, will be granted authority to use the NCP name and logo for their sessions when the session(s) are approved for CE Credits.
 - Approved NCP Continuing Education Providers that plan to present the same session more than once *within a given year* need apply only once for approval of Credits.
- Approval is required each year, even if the same session is repeated.
 - Year is determined based on approval date.
- Approved Providers must provide each NCP with a confirmation of completion of each session that has taken and include:
 - Approved session title and date
 - Number of NCP CE Credits approved
 - Other information as may be required by ECCHO.
- Must provide NCP with this or similar language in any acceptable format:
 - “Approved for (# Credits) NCP CE Credits by ECCHO”
- Organizations that do not have prior approval of Credits from ECCHO are **not authorized** to use the NCP name or logo and may not imply availability of Credits.

PROVIDERS OF NCP CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS (Credits)

C. APPROVAL OF NCP CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS (Credits)

- To become an Approved Provider, contact the NCP Program Administrator at ncpc@eccho.org
- To obtain pre-approval for Credits:
 - NCPCE Educational Partners, ECCHO Full and Participating Members and ECCHO Sponsoring Organizations:
 - Complete the NCP CE Application online via the NCP Partner portal
 - Other Approved Provider organizations
 - Complete the NCP CE Application online via the NCP Partner portal, *and*
 - Pay the appropriate per Credit fee
 - Submission of sessions generates an email for ECCHO’s review
 - Approved sessions are considered for Credits only after payment is received.
- Approval of Credits will be based on the inclusion of subject matter elements of the approved Blueprint (see www.eccho.org/ncpc_exam_blueprint).
- ECCHO will provide a link from its website to the website of the Approved Providers showing the approved sessions.
- Credits that have been pre-approved by ECCHO can be found at www.eccho.org/ncpc_pre_approved_ce?2 and will follow these guidelines:
 - Pre-approved Credits will be posted as they are accepted in the program.
 - Credits will be provided based on 50 minutes of education = 1 Credit.
 - Fractional Credits allowed (e.g., 1 hour of approved education = 1.2 Credits).
 - Education time calculation must *exclude* breaks, lunch and similar non-educational activities.
- Any organization that seeks to provide Credits must complete and submit an online application for each program, course, presentation, session, etc. for ECCHO’s review.
 - Each application must be, accompanied with the applicable fee (see below) *“Fees for Use of NCP Name / Logo and Pre-approval Fee for NCPCE Continuing Education Credits (Credits)”*
 - Any modifications to the approved session must be submitted to ECCHO for further evaluation.
- Applications for Credits should be submitted as soon as the program has been established to enable any pre-program or preview marketing to include information on approved NCP CE Credits.
 - ECCHO will respond to all requests within 3 weeks of submission of all required information.
 - Applications that are incomplete or not accompanied with the applicable fee will be delayed and the 3-week timeframe will not begin until all the requirements have been met.
- NOTICE: Approved Providers using the NCP name and logo will not imply an endorsement by ECCHO for the program regarding either content or accuracy of information provided.

PROVIDERS OF NCP CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS (Credits)

D. FEES FOR USE OF NCP NAME / LOGO AND PREAPPROVAL FEES FOR NCP CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS (Credits)

- For each of the following groups, there are no pre-approval fees:
 - NCP Educational Partners;
 - ECCHO Full Members;
 - ECCHO Participating Members
 - ECCHO Sponsoring Organizations
- For other organizations that request to become an Approved Provider, the current Credit fee is \$100 per approved Credit.
- Application fees must accompany the application when it is filed.
 - Fees will be reimbursed if application is not approved.
- All fees can be found at: https://www.eccho.org/ncp_exam_details

CONTACTS

A. FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- ECCHO, a service of The Clearing House Payments Company L.L.C, is the certifying agent for the NCP program.
- Current ECCHO contacts include:
 - Jackie Pagan, Vice President and Program Manager
 - For program questions, email at either jpagan@eccho.org or jackie.pagan@theclearinghouse.org or call 214.273.3200.
 - Nicole Hanlin, Senior Membership and NCP Operations Coordinator
 - For all NCP support questions, email at either nhanlin@eccho.org or nicole.hanlin@theclearinghouse.org or call 214-273-3218.
 - Support questions may include assistance with:
 - access to the NCP Connect portal;
 - questions regarding CE Credits filing;
 - extension filing requests;
 - general Audit questions;
 - information on how to become an NCP;
 - a listing of Continuing Education providers;
 - use of the NCP brand including name and/or logo.
 - Scott Miller, Director
 - For information on how to join ECCHO to take advantage of available Member discounts, please contact Scott Miller at either smiller@eccho.org or scott.miller@theclearinghouse.org or call 406-442-4994.

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