

Locum Tenens – Where Do I Start?



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Whether you're looking for a flexible schedule, an opportunity to travel, or a variety of practice options, locum tenens practice may be right for you. "Locum tenens" is Latin for "holding one's place," and locum tenens CRNAs work temporary assignments that may vary from a few shifts to a few months, or longer. If you're considering this option for the first time, here are some tips and considerations:

Licensure

There is no different state license for CRNAs who do locums work. In any state where you want to practice as a CRNA, you need to

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meet that state's licensure requirements. When to obtain a given state license depends on your preferences. Be mindful that the licensure processing time varies from days to months, depending on the state. CRNAs should consider whether to accept a job on short notice in a state where they are not licensed, as it may not be possible to obtain a license in time to start the position. If you are focusing on working in a particular state or states, consider obtaining the appropriate state licenses in advance. There is, of course, a cost involved in doing so (both in terms of time and money). In addition, it's important to keep track of your licenses, and when they expire, so that you can renew or inactivate them as appropriate. Links to every state board of nursing website, which include application forms and contact information, are at <https://www.ncsbn.org/contactbon.htm>.

Finding Jobs

Some locums CRNAs act on their own, seeking out jobs where and when they want to work. Other CRNAs use locums agencies. Locums agencies may also help CRNAs obtain licensure forms, remind them to renew licenses, or handle other logistical details or administrative tasks. The AANA site <http://www.crnacareers.com/> includes links to

specific job listings, as well as listings by national and regional locums agencies. The listings for locums agencies at this site often include a website for the agency as well. The agency websites typically provide some information regarding what assistance the agency provides, such as malpractice coverage options, licensure information, or assistance with housing. For members who attend the AANA 2014 Nurse Anesthesia Annual Congress (<http://www.aana.com/naac>) in Orlando in September, there are a number of locums agencies that exhibit in the AANA exhibit hall that can answer your questions.

Insurance Coverage

CRNAs who have malpractice insurance issues or questions should contact AANA Insurance Services at (800) 343-1368 or visit <http://www.aana.com/insurance/Pages/Contact-Us.aspx>. AANA Insurance Services staff is happy to discuss your issues and needs, even if you do not have a policy with the agency and are not necessarily seeking coverage at this time.

Another consideration for CRNAs who work locum tenens may be the need to obtain some of their own "employee benefits," such as health, disability, or life insurance, or financial advice for retirement. The AANA provides members access to related programs and services at <http://www.aana.com/aboutus/Pages/AANA-Affinity-Program-Partners.aspx>.

Financial and Legal Advice

For information concerning state licensure or scope of practice, contact the AANA's State Government Affairs Division at sga@aana.com or (847) 655-1130. For specific financial or legal advice related to employment or business matters, it's wise to contact local professionals in your state, such as accountants or attorneys, as needed. These professionals are able to provide you with advice that is specific to the state(s) where you work, such as recommendations for the legal structure of your business (e.g., options such as a partnership or incorporation), or tax implications of various practice scenarios.

Any CRNA who runs a business, manages any aspect of their business practice, or may consider doing so in the future, would benefit from attending the AANA's Business of Anesthesia Conference. This conference includes knowledgeable, experienced speakers on such topics as negotiating contracts, reimbursement issues, billing and coding, and legal issues. For more information on the July 2014 Business of Anesthesia Conference in Chicago, and for future conference dates and locations, see <http://www.aana.com/meetings/Pages/default.aspx> under "AANA Conferences."

Locum tenens practice provides a variety of options and opportunities for CRNAs. Keep these resources in mind if you choose to pursue a locum tenens practice. ■