



CAREER PLANNING FOR RESIDENTS, FELLOWS AND NEW GRADUATES:

# 10 Tips

from Experienced Professionals to  
Get You Started on Career-Building Basics



The healthcare landscape is changing, the demand for healthcare providers is at an all-time high, and is expected to steadily increase over the next decade. Several factors are contributing to the increasing need for more providers, including an aging population, growth in the industry and the increasing physician shortage.

Increased demand means increased opportunities for locum tenens providers to fill shortages and meet healthcare demands. VISTA Staffing Solutions is committed to helping you weigh your options when starting your professional career. We polled our experienced recruiters, scheduling directors, licensing specialists and credentials verification team to compile the following tips to help ease your transition from training to a professional career.



## Obtain Your First State License

Several factors are contributing to the increasing need for more providers, including an aging population, growth in the industry and the increasing physician shortage. They recommend physicians apply for their first state license while completing residency training.

Licensing is becoming increasingly complex as identity fraud and medical fraud become more common. The AMA reports that physicians and advanced practitioners should expect the process to take at least 60 days and should plan accordingly. Our licensing team has found that this process can take much longer and 60 days should be considered a minimum. They also note that the highest volume of licensure applications is received between the months of April and September when physicians with school-age children are making changes and residents who didn't plan ahead are applying for licenses.

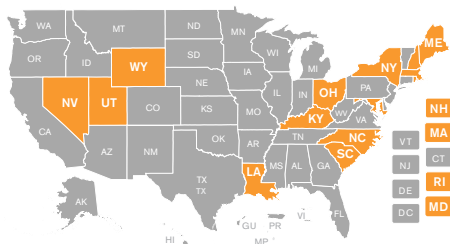
Having a permanent address during your residency also simplifies the process and makes other steps, like getting a DEA number, simpler. Keeping your state licenses active is also very important; it makes getting additional state licenses much easier which is important for locum tenens providers. Most state boards require verification of all licenses, regardless of status, before they will issue a new license. About half require you to submit a written statement explaining if licenses have been surrendered.

If you are interested in international work, it is very important that you secure an initial state license in the U.S. because you will need a letter of recommendation from a state licensing board to apply for registration (licensure) in New Zealand. Also, note that you cannot initiate the registration process in these countries until you have been offered a job there.

In addition, the Federation Credentials Verification Service (FCVS) offers a centralized process to obtain a verified, primary-source record of a physician's medical credentials. Once the FCVS has primary source verification of your credentials, you can submit a Subsequent Request and they will forward a copy of your profile to any entity with which they have an agreement. Some states require this to apply for permanent licensure. Those states include Maine — note that Maine only requires FCVS for the perm license for MDs.

### States that Require FCVS:

- KY → NH → SC
- LA → NY → UT
- ME (MD) → NC → WY
- MA → OH
- NV (DO) → RI



States included in the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) allow nurses to have one multistate license. This allows one state-based licensure to practice in your home state and other participating compact states. Currently, 25 states have enacted the NLC. Even if they have a compact license NPs still need to complete the APRN application to practice as a nurse practitioner.

## 2. **Get a DEA Number**

Unless you are a radiologist, you must have a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) number to practice medicine anywhere in the United States and in order to write prescriptions. Advanced practice providers will also need a DEA number, with a few exceptions. Your residency program may have a blanket hospital DEA license covering residents. This covers you during your training. However, you will eventually need a personal DEA number. Having a permanent address and specified worksite in the same state as your original medical license makes the process much simpler. Contact VISTA's credentialing team to find out whether or not you will need a DEA number and to get more information.

Once the application is submitted to the DEA, the process is expected to take 1-10 days, within reason. Keep in mind that you need to have your first state license and a controlled substance permit (if required in your state) before you apply for your DEA number. If you have decided to work locum tenens assignments with VISTA, our credentialing team will be happy to assist you with the process.

## 3. **Secure an NPI Number**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Administrative Simplification Standard requires providers to acquire a National Provider Identifier (NPI) — a unique identification number — that must be used in lieu of legacy provider identifiers in the HIPAA standards transactions.

According to HIPAA, “covered providers must also share their NPI with other providers, health plans, clearinghouses, and any entity that may need it for billing purposes.”

VISTA can provide assistance with securing an NPI number.

## 4. **Become Board-Certified**

As you well know, board-certification is evidence that you have successfully completed an approved U.S. educational and training program and passed a rigorous evaluation process. It demonstrates that you are prepared to provide quality patient care in your specialty. At VISTA, we are finding that more and more hospitals and practices will not consider non-board certified physicians for employment or partnership. This means it is increasingly difficult for us to find assignments for non-board certified physicians.

Our international clients also require board-certified doctors so plan on sitting for those boards. If you are coming right out of residency, many locations recognize that you are board-prepared and understand that you are in the process of board-certification.



## 5. Recertify When It's Time

Keep your certification(s) current. All certificates issued by members of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) and the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) are time-limited. The limits range from six to ten years, depending on the board and specialty.

If you are board-prepared, you can begin working locum tenens assignments before you take your exams. In fact, it's a great way to earn an income while ensuring you'll have the time and flexibility to study.

## 6. Keep These Documents On Hand

Wherever you choose to work, you will have to provide a comprehensive CV and documents for licensing, credentialing and privileging. Physicians and advanced practice providers who work locum tenens assignments go through an initial credentials review process with VISTA. We assist you in obtaining licenses in additional states or countries based on your interests and the assignments you accept. We coordinate credentialing and help you get privileges at each assignment location. Our experienced, in-house credentials verification and licensing team recommends that you keep pertinent documents in a safe place.

### DOCUMENTS:

- Birth certificate (U.S. born), naturalization papers or proof of U.S. employment eligibility
- Six (6) legal passport photos for licensing and staff privilege applications
- Legal documentation of any name changes

### COPY OF:

- Undergraduate diploma
- Medical school diploma
- Initial licensing exam scores
- All post-graduate training certificates: Internship, Residency and Fellowship (if applicable)
- Specialty board-certification(s) and recertification(s), if applicable
- Current DEA registration
- All state licenses — active and inactive — wall certificates and wallet cards
- State-controlled substance registrations (if applicable)
- ECFMG certificate (if applicable)
- ACLS/ATLS/BLS/NALS/PALS/NRP/MQSA certificates (as applicable)
- Immunization records
- Military separation papers (i.e., DD214) (if applicable)
- NPI email/letter
- Court documents for any malpractice or personal legal charges

Our convenient document checklist can assist you with the process.

## 7. Secure References

Throughout your medical career, it is important to secure and maintain professional references who can speak to your clinical and interpersonal skills. References are used not only for selection, but also for hospital privileges, state licenses and other credentials verification processes. Be sure to have four to six colleagues who can be called on for verbal references or written letters of recommendation. Keep references current, typically within six months to one year.

On a CV, it is common to state “references available upon request.” This is helpful for two reasons. First, if a potential employer requests your references, it shows that there is interest, and second, you will then have a chance to contact your references and inform them of an incoming call. You should ALWAYS speak with your colleagues prior to listing them as a reference.

Letters of recommendation should be on letterhead and addressed: “To Whom it May Concern” and mention the length of your association and give an assessment of your clinical and interpersonal skills.

## 8. Acquire Insurance And Other Resources

Transitioning from your program to a job requires some advance planning. Many providers, including locum tenens providers, work as independent contractors. This gives you the benefit of complete control over your schedule and the locations in which you choose to work. It also presents you with the challenge of coordinating things — such as insurance — that are usually taken care of by an employer or group when you accept a full-time job.

As a self-employed independent contractor, it is your responsibility to secure healthcare coverage for yourself and your dependents. There are several options available to you as a locum tenens provider:

1. Join a professional group such as church or alumni associations where group health insurance plans are sometimes offered. If you are over age 50, consider joining AARP. You can also check with the National Association for the Self-Employed (NASE) for insurance plan options.
2. Browse your state insurance exchange (Affordable Care Act) to compare plans.
3. Check private insurance exchange websites to compare plans and options.
4. Enroll with your spouse's employer-sponsored health insurance if you are married.
5. Purchase COBRA if you have left an employer who offers this carry-over insurance. It is available for use for up to 18 months after you leave your job.

Life, disability and long-term care insurance and retirement planning are other considerations, as well.

## 9. Build a Powerful CV

Create a CV that will make a significant impact on future employers. The following guidelines and our pre-formatted template can help get you started:

### Be Thorough

As a general rule, list your most current activity first. Include month/year for all dates. Be aware that any gap in time must be explained. If you backpacked through Europe for three months, spell it out in your CV. Otherwise, it will generate a red flag in the mind of the reviewer and you will have to provide an explanation. It can slow things down or potentially hurt your chances for a position.

### Keep It Short and to the Point

Your CV should be short and compact, not to exceed two pages. Give your full name and make sure you can be reached at the address, telephone number and email address you include; keep your contact information up-to-date. Finally, break the information into sections with clear title headings.

People who review large numbers of CVs — including organizations that are regular users of locum tenens — are used to seeing the information in the following order. We recommend that you follow it.

- ➔ Personal information (Full name, address, phone numbers, email address)
- ➔ Chronological dates of employment in a month/yr format
- ➔ Professional work (practice specifics, hospital affiliations, locum tenens companies, hospitals/clinics.)
- ➔ Military service
- ➔ Academic history (graduate training, internship, medical school, undergraduate training)
- ➔ Licensure
- ➔ Certifications (recertification dates)
- ➔ Professional associations
- ➔ Honors
- ➔ Volunteer work, community service or additional accomplishments
- ➔ Publications, presentations or research

### What NOT to Include in Your CV:

- ➔ Social security number
- ➔ Licensure numbers
- ➔ Examination scores
- ➔ Your social networking or blog sites

### Use an All-Purpose Font

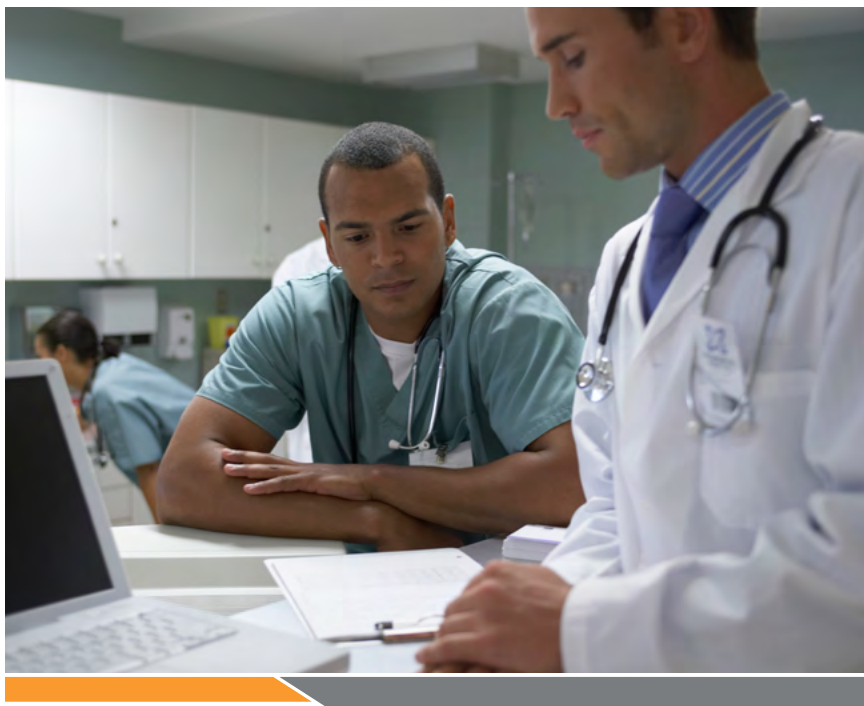
Use a traditional font that is easy to read and legible when faxed. Arial and Times New Roman are good choices, in 12-point type if possible and never smaller than 10.



Non-standard fonts may not be loaded on all computers, so a person who has received an electronic copy of your CV may not be able to read it. The computer may substitute another font and mess up your formatting. Avoid the use of all capital letters and excessive bold, italic or underlining. Use a familiar document format such as Word® or PDF. Saving a Word® document in PDF format is easy and will keep your CV secure and formatted the way you intended.

### **Update and Customize for Each Opportunity**

Updating your CV and adding a few details to address the specific job you are applying for should be quick and easy once you format your CV. This is especially critical if you are applying for a permanent position. Recruiters always look for “BLTs” in a CV, so if you were born, licensed or trained in an area and are applying for a position there, make sure to highlight it. If you choose to work as a locum tenens physician with VISTA, we can help you create a CV specific to locum tenens that won't require constant changes. We'll also help you keep it up to date as you gain experiences, new licenses and new certifications.



## 10. Call VISTA!

We would love to help you shape the next phase of your professional life. VISTA offers a full range of work options. When you are ready, we offer permanent placement in clinical, clinical academic and clinical executive positions.

We also cover practical, tactical steps that ease your transition from training into practice, including tips on licensure, preparing and maintaining your credentials and more.

**To schedule a presentation at your residency or fellowship program call a VISTA representative at 800-366-1884, or email us at [facts@vistastaff.com](mailto:facts@vistastaff.com).**

# Why Work with VISTA?

**VISTA OFFERS YOU THE FOLLOWING  
SERVICES AND EXPERTISE:**



Travel & housing

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Transportation

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Professional  
liability Insurance

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Licensing support  
& guidance

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Credentials  
verification

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Expert provider &  
facility matching

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24/7 assistance

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Award winning  
service

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## Contact Us

**800-366-1884**

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