

§ 58-89A-60. License application.

(a) Every applicant for licensure shall file with the Commissioner, on a form prescribed by the Commissioner, the following information:

- (1) The name, organizational structure, and date of organization of the applicant, the addresses of the principal office and of all offices in this State, the name of the contact person, the type of operations within this State, and the taxpayer or employer identification number.
- (2) A list by jurisdiction of each name under which the applicant has operated in the preceding five years, including any alternative names, names of predecessors, and, if known, names of successor business entities. The list required by this subdivision shall include the parent company name and any trade name, trademark, or service mark of the applicant.
- (3) A list of all officers and controlling persons of the applicant, their biographical information, including their management background, and an affidavit from each attesting to his or her good moral character and management competence.
- (4) The location of the business records of the applicant.
- (5) An attestation, executed by the chief financial officer and chief executive officer of the applicant, that the applicant is current as of the date the application is submitted with respect to all of its obligations for payroll, payroll-related taxes, workers' compensation insurance, and employee benefits. If any such obligations are in dispute with a client as of the date the application is submitted and the disputed amount is material when considered in the context of the applicant's most recent audited financial statement, then the applicant shall disclose the nature of the dispute causing the obligations to be unpaid and the amount of money in controversy.
- (6) Any other information the Commissioner deems necessary and requires by rule to establish that the applicant and the officers and controlling persons are of good moral character, have business integrity, and have financial responsibility.

(b) Every applicant shall file with the Commissioner an audited GAAP financial statement, prepared as of a date not more than 90 days before the date of application that demonstrates that the applicant or licensee's current assets exceed current liabilities and attached to which is a separate document signed by the chief executive and the chief financial officer certifying that (i) each has reviewed the financial statement; (ii) based on each signatory's knowledge, the financial statement does not contain any untrue or misleading statement of material fact or omit a fact with respect to the period covered by the financial statement; and (iii) based on each signatory's knowledge, the financial statement fairly presents in all material respects the financial condition of the licensee as of, and for, the period presented in the financial statement.

Notwithstanding the requirements of this subsection, the Commissioner may, in the Commissioner's discretion, accept an audited GAAP financial statement that has been prepared more than 90 days before submission to the Commissioner if the Commissioner deems such acceptance appropriate. The Commissioner may, in the Commissioner's discretion, impose conditions upon such acceptance of financial statements prepared more than 90 days prior to submission.

The audited GAAP financial statement shall be prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and audited by an independent certified public accountant licensed to practice in the jurisdiction in which such accountant is located and shall be without qualification as to the going concern status of the PEO. A PEO group may submit combined or

consolidated audited financial statements to meet the requirements of this section, except that a PEO that has not had sufficient operating history to have audited financial statements based upon at least 12 months of operating history must meet the financial capacity requirements of this subsection and present financial statements reviewed by a certified public accountant.

(c) Every applicant shall submit to the Commissioner the application fee pursuant to G.S. 58-89A-65.

(d) Every applicant shall furnish the Commissioner a complete set of fingerprints of each officer, director, and controlling person in a form prescribed by the Commissioner. Each set of fingerprints shall be certified by an authorized law enforcement officer.

Upon request by the Department, the State Bureau of Investigation shall provide to the Department from the State and National Repositories of Criminal Histories the criminal history of any applicant and the officer, director, and controlling person of any applicant. Along with the request, the Department shall provide to the State Bureau of Investigation the fingerprints of the person that is the subject of the request, a form signed by the person that is the subject of the request consenting to the criminal record check and use of fingerprints and other identifying information required by the State and National Repositories, and any additional information required by the State Bureau of Investigation. The person's fingerprints shall be used by the State Bureau of Investigation for a search of the State's criminal history record file, and the State Bureau of Investigation may forward a set of fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a national criminal history record check. The Department shall keep all information obtained pursuant to this subsection confidential. The State Bureau of Investigation may charge a fee to offset the cost incurred by it to conduct a criminal record check under this section. The fee shall not exceed the actual cost of locating, editing, researching, and retrieving the information.

In the event that an applicant has secured a professional employer organization license in another state in which the professional employer organization's controlling persons have completed a criminal background investigation within 12 months of this application, a certified copy of the report from the appropriate authority of that state may satisfy the requirement of this subsection. This subsection also applies to a change in a controlling party of a professional employer organization. For purposes of investigation under this subsection, the Commissioner shall have all the power conferred by G.S. 58-2-50 and other applicable provisions of this Chapter.

(e) An application for licensure of a professional employer organization group shall contain the information and submissions required by this section for each member of the group.

(f) No application is complete until the Commissioner has received all information and submissions required under subsections (a) through (e) of this section. Subsections (a) through (e) of this section do not apply to persons who are licensed pursuant to the alternative licensing procedures set forth in G.S. 58-89A-76.

(g) The Commissioner may deny the license of an applicant under this Article if, after notice to the applicant and an opportunity for a hearing, the Commissioner finds that a controlling person has:

- (1) Made any untrue material statement regarding the background or experience of any controlling person;
- (2) Violated, or failed to comply with, any professional employer services law or any rule or order of the Commissioner or of any other State official responsible for the regulation of professional employer services;
- (3) Obtained or attempted to obtain the license through misrepresentation or fraud;
- (4) Been convicted of a felony;
- (5) Been found in a final judgment or administrative proceeding to have committed fraud or an unfair trade practice; or

- (6) Been a controlling person in another professional employer organization that has had its license or registration suspended, terminated, or revoked by any state.

(h) If the Commissioner finds that the applicant has not fully met the requirements for licensure, the Commissioner shall refuse to issue the license and shall notify the applicant in writing of the denial, stating the grounds for the denial. The application may also be denied for any reason for which a license may be suspended or terminated under G.S. 58-89A-155. To obtain a review to determine the reasonableness of the Commissioner's denial, the applicant shall make written demand upon the Commissioner within 30 days after notice is given under G.S. 150B-38(c). The review shall be completed without undue delay, and the applicant shall be notified promptly in writing as to the outcome of the review. If the applicant disagrees with the outcome of the review and seeks a hearing, under Article 3A of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, on the outcome of the review, the applicant shall make a written demand upon the Commissioner for the hearing within 30 days after notice of the outcome of the review is given under G.S. 150B-38(c).

(i) Removal, demotion, or discharge of a controlling person in response to an order of the Commissioner of the alleged unsuitability of that person is an affirmative defense to any claim by that individual based on the removal, demotion, or discharge.

(j) The Commissioner may, in the Commissioner's discretion, waive the required evaluation of an officer, director or controlling person if that officer, director or controlling person has been evaluated previously under this Article.

(k) After denial, suspension, or termination of a license, and before issuing a new license or reinstating a license, the Commissioner shall review and consider:

- (1) The extent to which the applicant or licensee has adequately corrected any problems; and
- (2) Whether the applicant or licensee has demonstrated that the applicant or licensee had exercised due diligence to avoid the reason or reasons for the denial or termination.

The applicant or licensee bears the burden of proof with respect to subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection. (2002-168, s.8; 2004-162, s. 1; 2013-413, s. 11.1(c); 2014-100, s. 17.1(o); 2015-281, s. 6; 2023-134, s. 19F.4(uu).)