



PATHWAYS

TO MIDWIFERY

A guide exploring the diverse routes to
becoming a midwife.

WELCOME

Hi There!

I am delighted to extend a warm welcome to each of you as you begin to explore the possibility of embarking on the rewarding journey of becoming a midwife.

As you consider this path, I encourage you to embrace the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of women around the world.

Midwifery is not just a career choice, it is a calling—a calling to provide compassionate, woman-centered care that honors the inherent strength and wisdom of each individual.

Throughout your journey, you will have the privilege of witnessing the miracle of birth and supporting women through one of life's most transformative experiences. Whether you envision yourself attending home births, working in a hospital setting, or advocating for maternal health on a global scale, the possibilities within midwifery are vast and unending.

I invite you to embark on this journey with an open heart and mind, ready to learn, grow, and advocate for the rights and choices of women worldwide. Your journey to becoming a midwife will be challenging, but it will also be deeply rewarding, fulfilling, and purpose-driven.

Once again, welcome to the world of midwifery and childbirth. I am honored to support and guide you as you explore this extraordinary path.

Let's get started!

Amy Kirby

PATHWAYS TO MIDWIFERY



The field of midwifery offers a diverse array of pathways for individuals aspiring to become skilled and compassionate birth attendants. From traditional midwifery education programs to alternative certification routes, there are numerous avenues through which one can pursue a career in midwifery. Whether you are drawn to the intimacy of home births, the rigor of hospital settings, or the opportunity to serve marginalized communities, each pathway offers unique opportunities for growth, learning, and professional development. This guide will explore the various routes to midwifery and provide insights into educational requirements, licensing processes, and career prospects for aspiring midwives. Whether you are a passionate advocate for women's health or a seasoned healthcare professional seeking a new path, there is a route to midwifery that aligns with your interests, goals, and values.

CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL MIDWIFE (CPM)



A Certified Professional Midwife (CPM) is a nationally recognized and credentialed healthcare provider who specializes in providing care to women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period, primarily in out-of-hospital settings such as homes and birth centers. CPMs are trained to provide comprehensive, holistic, and woman-centered care to low-risk individuals and their families.

There are several routes to earning the Certified Professional Midwife (CPM) credential:

1. **Direct Entry Midwifery Programs:** Some individuals pursue midwifery education through direct-entry midwifery programs, which typically offer a combination of didactic coursework, clinical experience, and apprenticeship training. These programs may vary in length and structure but are designed to prepare students for the CPM certification exam administered by the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM). GoMidwife is a direct entry midwifery program following the PEP process.

CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL MIDWIFE (CPM)

continued



2. Apprenticeship Training: Another route to becoming a CPM is through apprenticeship training with an experienced midwife. Apprenticeship programs provide hands-on experience and mentorship under the guidance of a seasoned midwife who is a registered preceptor with NARM, allowing students to gain practical skills and knowledge in real-world birth settings. Apprenticeship training is often combined with self-study and completion of required coursework to meet the educational requirements for CPM certification.

3. Bridge Programs: Some midwives who have completed training and certification in the United Kingdom may pursue CPM certification through bridge programs designed to facilitate the transition to the U.S. midwifery system. These programs typically include assessment of prior learning and experience, additional coursework or training as needed, and preparation for the CPM certification exam. Similarly, those that hold a CNM designation can apply for certification as a CPM using a NARM approved process.

Upon completion of the educational and clinical requirements, aspiring midwives must pass the CPM certification exam administered by NARM to become a Certified Professional Midwife. Once certified, CPMs are qualified to practice independently and provide comprehensive midwifery care to individuals and families in a variety of settings.

LICENSED MIDWIFE (LM)



A Licensed Midwife (LM) is a healthcare professional who is licensed by the state they practice in to provide comprehensive midwifery care to women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. LMs are trained to provide holistic, woman-centered care with an emphasis on supporting normal physiological processes and promoting informed decision-making. The routes to licensure for Licensed Midwives may vary depending on the state or jurisdiction in which they practice. However, common pathways to becoming a Licensed Midwife include:

1. **Completion of a Midwifery Education Program:** Many Licensed Midwives graduate from accredited midwifery education programs, which may include direct-entry midwifery programs, nurse-midwifery programs, or other formal midwifery education pathways. These programs typically include didactic coursework, clinical experience, and hands-on training in midwifery skills and competencies.
2. **Certification by a Recognized Credentialing Organization:** In some states, individuals may become Licensed Midwives by obtaining certification through a recognized credentialing organization, such as the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM). Certification typically requires completion of an accredited midwifery education program, passing a certification exam, and meeting other eligibility criteria established by the credentialing organization.
3. **State Licensure Requirements:** Many states have specific licensure requirements that individuals must meet to become Licensed Midwives. These requirements may include completion of an approved midwifery education program, passing a state licensure exam, obtaining CPR certification, and meeting other state-specific criteria related to education, training, and clinical experience.
4. **Apprenticeship Training:** Some aspiring Licensed Midwives may pursue apprenticeship training with experienced midwives as a pathway to licensure. Apprenticeship programs provide hands-on experience and mentorship under the guidance of a licensed midwife, allowing individuals to gain practical skills and competencies in midwifery practice.

Overall, the routes to licensure for Licensed Midwives are designed to ensure that individuals meet rigorous standards of education, training, and competency to provide safe and competent care to women and families during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period within a particular state.

CERTIFIED NURSE MIDWIFE (CNM)



A Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM) is an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) who specializes in providing comprehensive healthcare services to women across the lifespan, with a focus on pregnancy, childbirth, and reproductive health. CNMs are trained to provide a wide range of services, including prenatal care, labor and delivery support, postpartum care, gynecological exams, family planning services, and menopausal care. They are licensed healthcare providers who work collaboratively with other members of the healthcare team to ensure safe and holistic care for their clients.

To become a Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM), individuals must first complete a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree from an accredited nursing program. After obtaining their BSN, they must pass the NCLEX-RN exam to become a registered nurse (RN). Following RN licensure, aspiring CNMs must pursue additional education and training through a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) or Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program with a specialization in midwifery. These graduate programs typically include coursework in midwifery theory and practice, clinical rotations in various healthcare settings, and preparation for the national certification exam administered by the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB). Upon successful completion of their education and certification exam, graduates are eligible to become Certified Nurse Midwives and practice autonomously in a variety of healthcare settings, but primarily hospitals.

NORTH AMERICAN REGISTRY OF MIDWIVES (NARM)



The North American Registry of Midwives (NARM) is a nonprofit organization that oversees the certification and regulation of out-of-hospital (OOH) midwives in the United States. NARM is responsible for administering certification exams, establishing standards of practice, and maintaining a registry of Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs). CPM certification through NARM ensures that midwives have met the education, training, and competency requirements necessary to provide safe and competent care to individuals during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. NARM plays a crucial role in promoting and upholding the integrity and professionalism of midwifery practice in North America.

PORTFOLIO EVALUATION PROCESS (PEP)



The Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) offered by the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM) is an alternative pathway to becoming a Certified Professional Midwife (CPM). PEP is designed for midwives who have gained knowledge and experience through informal or non-traditional routes, such as self-study, apprenticeship, or international training.

To become a CPM through the PEP pathway, candidates compile a portfolio that documents their education, clinical experience, skills, and competencies related to midwifery practice. The portfolio typically includes transcripts, letters of recommendation, case logs, skills assessments, and other evidence of learning and experience.

Once the portfolio is completed, candidates submit it to NARM for evaluation. NARM-appointed evaluators review the portfolio to assess whether the candidate's education, training, and experience meet the standards set forth by NARM for CPM certification. If the portfolio meets the criteria, the candidate may be eligible to sit for the NARM certification exam.

The PEP process offers flexibility and recognition for midwives who have gained knowledge and skills through diverse pathways. It allows individuals to demonstrate their competency and readiness for certification based on their unique educational and experiential background. However, candidates must ensure that their portfolio provides comprehensive documentation of their qualifications and meets the requirements outlined by NARM for CPM certification.

PORTFOLIO EVALUATION PROCESS (PEP)

Continued

The Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) administered by the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM) is a comprehensive pathway to Certified Professional Midwife (CPM) certification for individuals who have gained midwifery knowledge and skills through non-traditional routes. The PEP consists of four distinct phases:

1. Application and Phase One: In this initial phase, candidates submit the Phase One Observed Births as their application entry to NARM along with supporting documentation, if necessary, such as transcripts or other requested materials. The application is reviewed to ensure that the candidate meets the eligibility requirements for participation in the PEP and has completed the initial 10 observed births.
2. Portfolio Evaluation Phase Two-Four: In the Portfolio Evaluation Phase, NARM-appointed evaluators review the candidate's four submitted phases to ensure they meet the established criteria for CPM certification. These phases will include births attended, newborn exams, postpartum visits, and many other specific requirements. Evaluators carefully examine the documentation provided, looking for evidence of the candidate's knowledge, skills, and competencies in key areas of midwifery practice. Currently there are four phases, but this may be changed in 2025.
3. Certification Examination: If the candidate's portfolio is deemed satisfactory by the evaluators, they move on to the final phase of the PEP, which involves sitting for the NARM certification examination. The examination assesses the candidate's knowledge and understanding of midwifery theory, practice, and ethics. Upon successful completion of the examination, candidates are awarded CPM certification by NARM.

Overall, the Portfolio Evaluation Process offers a flexible pathway to CPM certification for individuals who have pursued midwifery education and training through a non-traditional route. It allows candidates to demonstrate their competency and readiness for certification based on their unique educational background and experiential learning coupled with an apprenticeship.

[Print the Portfolio Evaluation Process \(PEP\) application here.](#)

[Print the Candidate Information Booklet \(CIB\) here.](#)

MIDWIFERY EDUCATION ACCREDITATION COUNCIL (MEAC)



The Midwifery Education Accreditation Council (MEAC) is an independent accrediting agency that evaluates and accredits midwifery education programs in the United States. MEAC's primary role is to ensure that midwifery education programs meet established standards of quality and rigor, thereby ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to practice midwifery competently and safely.

MEAC accreditation is voluntary for midwifery education programs, but it is highly regarded within the midwifery community and may be required for licensure or certification in some states. Programs seeking accreditation undergo a thorough review process, which includes an examination of their curriculum, faculty qualifications, clinical training opportunities, and student outcomes.

MEAC-accredited programs are designed to provide comprehensive education and training in midwifery theory and practice, with a focus on evidence-based care, cultural competency, and professional ethics. Graduates of MEAC-accredited programs are eligible to sit for national certification exams, such as those administered by the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM), and may also be eligible for licensure in states that require graduation from an accredited program. Overall, MEAC plays a critical role in shaping the landscape of midwifery education in the United States by promoting high standards of education and training for future midwives. Its accreditation process ensures that midwifery education programs adhere to best practices and provide students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to excel in the field of midwifery and provide quality care to women and families throughout the childbearing cycle.

WHAT IS AN APPRENTICESHIP



A midwifery apprenticeship is a structured educational program in which aspiring midwives receive hands-on training and mentorship from experienced midwives who have qualified as preceptors. Apprenticeships provide an opportunity for students to gain practical experience in midwifery care by participating in prenatal visits, attending births, providing postpartum care, and assisting with other aspects of midwifery practice.

A preceptor is an experienced midwife who serves as a mentor and teacher to apprentices, guiding them through their education and training in midwifery. Preceptors share their knowledge and expertise, provide clinical supervision and feedback, and help apprentices develop the skills and competencies necessary to become competent and confident midwives.

The duration of a midwifery apprenticeship can vary depending on the program and individual circumstances, but apprenticeships typically last for no less than two years and an average of three. During the apprenticeship, students learn about prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum care, newborn care, lactation support, and other aspects of midwifery practice. They also develop skills in communication, assessment, critical thinking, and decision-making, and gain practical experience in providing compassionate and evidence-based care to women and families.

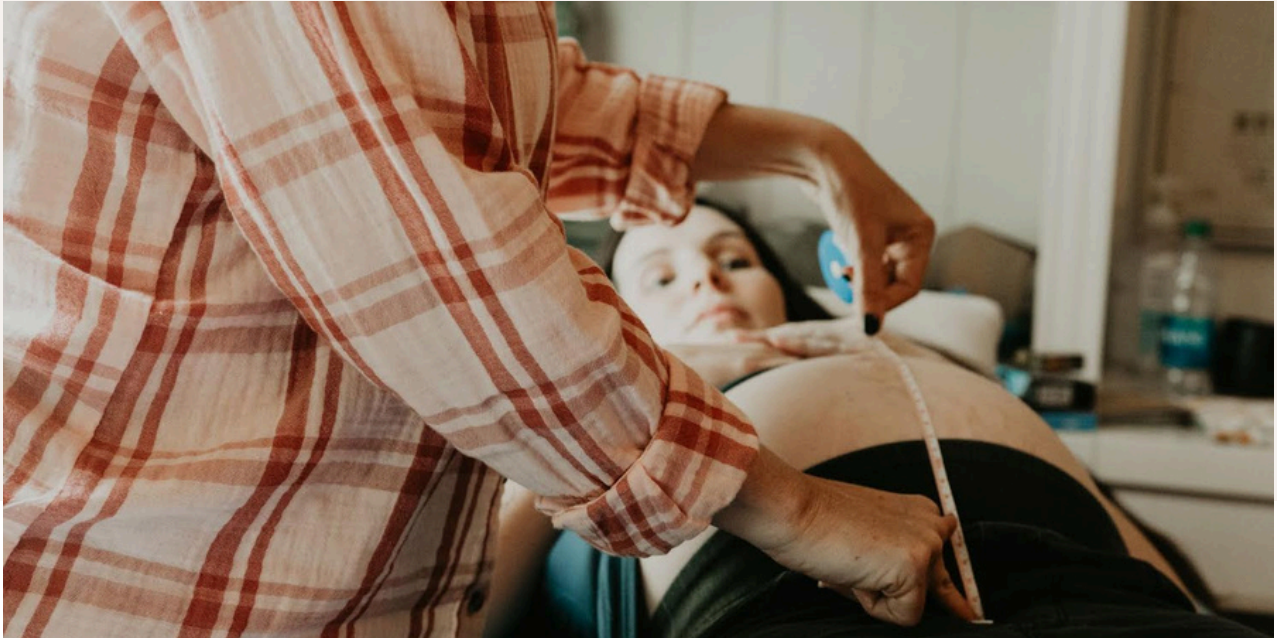
Overall, a midwifery apprenticeship provides a comprehensive and immersive learning experience that prepares students for a career in midwifery. It offers the opportunity to learn from experienced practitioners, gain practical skills and knowledge, and develop the confidence and competence needed to practice midwifery independently.

FINDING AN APPRENTICESHIP



1. **Research Apprenticeship Opportunities:** Begin by researching apprenticeship opportunities with experienced Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) or other qualified midwives in your area. Look for midwives who are willing to take on apprentices and provide hands-on training and mentorship.
2. **Contact Potential Preceptors:** Reach out to potential preceptors to inquire about apprenticeship opportunities and discuss their requirements, expectations, and availability. Ask about their experience as preceptors, their approach to midwifery care, and the structure of their apprenticeship program. Please note, a qualified midwife is not necessarily a registered preceptor. All preceptors must be officially registered with NARM.
3. **Apply for our Apprenticeship Management (AMP) program** and we will help you both find an apprenticeship and help you navigate all aspects of the apprenticeship process and NARM exam.
4. **Complete Prerequisites:** Before beginning an apprenticeship, you may need to complete certain prerequisites, such as basic healthcare training (e.g., CPR certification), background checks, and immunizations. Ensure that you meet any requirements set forth by your preceptor and state regulatory agencies.
5. **Secure an Apprenticeship Agreement:** Once you have found a preceptor and completed any necessary prerequisites, work with your preceptor to formalize an apprenticeship agreement. This agreement should outline the terms and conditions of the apprenticeship, including expectations for attendance, clinical responsibilities, and duration of training.
6. **Begin Clinical Training:** Start your clinical training under the guidance of your preceptor. This will involve observing and assisting with prenatal visits, attending births, providing postpartum care, and participating in other aspects of midwifery practice. Take advantage of opportunities to learn from your preceptor and gain hands-on experience in a variety of birth settings.
7. **Document Your Learning:** Throughout your apprenticeship, keep detailed records of your clinical experiences, skills development, and educational activities. Maintain a log of the births attended, prenatal and postpartum visits conducted, skills practiced, and any relevant coursework or readings completed. These records will be valuable when applying for certification as a Certified Professional Midwife (CPM) through the apprenticeship pathway.

MODULES OF MIDWIFERY



Although we hope to have both a MEAC and PEP track in the future, currently GoMidwife's Modules of Midwifery Program is an independent study program providing the didactic materials for direct entry midwives utilizing the NARM PEP program. Comprised of 25 courses that are taken over 8 quarters, the independent study program not only prepares students for the NARM exam but also provides valuable education students need during their apprenticeship. The program is geared for those that need to work at a distance, staying in their own community as they progress through their education. All coursework, including live teaching sessions, assignments, and exams are conducted virtually and allow students the flexibility they need to work full-time as a student and apprentice or, if desired, a slower paced educational experience.



WANT TO LEARN MORE?



Welcome to the transformative journey of midwifery! As you embark on this path, prepare to be inspired, challenged, and deeply fulfilled.
Let's get started!



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