

CNS State-By-State Practice Rights

In 46 U.S. states and territories, CNSs can legally practice some level of personalized nutrition counseling.

In 19 of those jurisdictions, CNSs are typically eligible for state licensure or certification because the state requirements closely align with the education, experience, and exam requirements for the CNS credential. In most of these jurisdictions, an applicant must submit evidence of their education, experience, and examination to the state, not simply proof of their CNS credential.

**Note: Jurisdictions include the 50 US states + DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico for a total of 53 jurisdictions.*

State Listings

20 jurisdictions (17 states + 3 territories) where CNSs are recognized; in 19, they are typically eligible for licensure or certification. (Note: Not all jurisdictions define MNT, though it may be included in the definition of the practice of nutrition and dietetics or similar language. Also, state definitions of MNT vary.)

1. [Alaska](#) (Licensure; title protection/no exclusive scope)
2. [Connecticut](#) (Certification; title protection/no exclusive scope)
3. [Delaware](#) (Licensure; exclusive scope, license reqd. for “practice of dietetics and nutrition therapy”, no specific mention of MNT)
4. [District of Columbia](#) (Licensure; exclusive scope, licensed reqd. for MNT)
5. [Florida](#) (Licensure; exclusive scope, licensed reqd. for MNT)
6. [Guam](#) (Licensure; exclusive scope, licensed reqd. for MNT)
7. [Illinois](#) (Licensure; exclusive scope, licensed reqd. for MNT)
8. [Kentucky](#) (Licensure for dietitians, certification for nutritionists; title protection/exclusive scope *with VERY broad exceptions*)
9. [Maryland](#) (Licensure; exclusive scope, licensed reqd. for MNT)
10. [Massachusetts](#) (Licensure; title protection/no exclusive scope)
11. [Minnesota](#) (Licensure; exclusive scope to engage in “dietetics or nutrition practice”, no mention of MNT; broad exemption for alternative and complementary care providers)
12. [New Jersey](#) (Licensure; exclusive scope, licensed reqd. for MNT *once licenses are available. Bill implementation in progress; as of April 2024, the board is in rules and regulations stage*)
13. [New Mexico](#)* (Licensure; exclusive scope for “nutrition or dietetics practice”, no mention of MNT; broad exemptions + Unlicensed Health Care Practice Act)
 - ∄ **For those with master’s or doctoral degree titles of “human nutrition, nutrition education, foods and nutrition or public health nutrition”*
14. [New York](#) (Certification; title protection/no exclusive scope)
15. [North Carolina](#) (Licensure; exclusive scope, licensed reqd. for MNT)
16. [North Dakota](#) (Licensure; exclusive scope, licensed reqd. for MNT)

17. [Pennsylvania](#) (Licensure; title protection/no exclusive scope)
18. [Puerto Rico](#) (Licensure; exclusive scope, licensed reqd. for MNT)
19. [Washington](#) (Certification; title protection/no exclusive scope)
20. [Virginia](#) (title protection/no exclusive scope; *NO BOARD/recognition in statute only*)

46 US Jurisdictions (41 states + DC + 2 territories) where CNSs can legally practice.

The highlighted areas include 20 jurisdictions where Clinical Nutrition Specialists (CNSs) can obtain licensure or certification, plus Virginia, where CNSs are recognized through title protection. Not all states offer licensure or formal recognition for CNSs. However, in some of these states, licensure or recognition is optional, allowing CNSs to practice personalized nutrition (excluding Medical Nutrition Therapy or MNT). MNT typically refers to nutrition care services aimed at managing diseases or medical conditions, and its definition varies by state. Additionally, some states may limit the practice of MNT or permit CNSs to work under specific exemptions.

1. Alaska
2. Arizona
3. Arkansas
4. California
5. Colorado
6. Connecticut
7. Delaware
8. District of Columbia
9. Florida
10. Georgia (*exclusive scope state for RDs, but individuals with a masters degree or higher in human nutrition, food and nutrition, dietetics, food systems management, or nutrition education, or who have a doctorate in nutritional biochemistry are exempt from the law and may provide nutrition services without a license)
11. Guam
12. Hawaii
13. Idaho
14. Illinois
15. Indiana
16. Kentucky
17. Louisiana
18. Maine
19. Maryland
20. Massachusetts
21. Michigan
22. Minnesota

23. Mississippi (*exclusive scope state and CNSs cannot be licensed, so still red on map; BUT rules revised in 2022, CNSs can practice all but MNT, with disclosures)
24. Missouri (*exclusive scope state and CNSs cannot be licensed, so still red on map; BUT an exemption passed in 2021 allows CNSs to practice all but MNT, with disclosures)
25. Nevada
26. New Hampshire
27. New Jersey
28. New Mexico
29. New York
30. North Carolina
31. North Dakota
32. Ohio – currently, licenses can only be issued via reciprocity
33. Oklahoma
34. Oregon
35. Pennsylvania
36. Puerto Rico
37. Rhode Island
38. South Carolina
39. Texas
40. Utah
41. Vermont
42. Virginia
43. Washington
44. West Virginia
45. Wisconsin
46. Wyoming

7 states where CNSs cannot practice individualized nutrition counseling:

1. Alabama
2. Iowa
3. Kansas
4. Montana
5. Nebraska
6. South Dakota
7. Tennessee