

OCHIN+ Training and Workforce Development Frequently Asked Questions

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At OCHIN, we believe the path to a more just and equitable health care system starts with expanded access to quality, affordable care and workforce development opportunities. With the nation's largest collection of community health data and more than 20 years of practice-based expertise, we offer a comprehensive OCHIN+ portfolio of training solutions reflecting our robust technology platform, our health equity focus, our proven technology training capabilities, and the collaborative insights of OCHIN's coast-to-coast provider network.

OCHIN+ is the training and workforce development arm of OCHIN. Our affordable OCHIN+ courses are accessible to students of any background with desire and aptitude; and our training portfolio continues expanding to reflect the skills and roles in greatest industry demand. Our offerings will keep evolving over time to encompass recruitment, learning, mentoring, training, and job placement. Visit [ochin.plus](https://ochin.org) for the latest updates.

Public Health AmeriCorps Training Program

Q: How does OCHIN's teaming up with Public Health AmeriCorps help students take advantage of OCHIN+ learning opportunities?

OCHIN and our OCHIN+ learning and workforce development program have teamed up with Public Health AmeriCorps—the new national service program sponsored by AmeriCorps and the CDC—to help interested students create promising career paths and support resilient communities. The program makes rewarding careers in community health more attainable for students of any background with interest and aptitude. [Visit our program page](#) for specific details and registration information.

Q: Which training tracks are available to individuals interested in applying for this Public Health AmeriCorps program?

During the application window, several applicants are chosen to undergo training in one of two training tracks, **Community Health Worker** or **Data and Clinical Quality Analyst**. After successfully completing virtual coursework, applicants participate in an on-site, full-time practicum with [select OCHIN member health centers](#) located in Oregon, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio, North Carolina, and Massachusetts.

Q: Can applicants choose which training track they sign up for?

Yes. Provided they apply by the stated deadline date, applicants can choose either the Community Health Worker or Data and Clinical Quality Analyst training track. [Visit our Public Health AmeriCorps program page](#) to see application deadlines and program parameters.

Q: Are there any specific requirements or physical capabilities applicants need to be aware of?

The intent of the program is to make rewarding careers in community health care more accessible, so anyone is invited to apply. To help facilitate successful completion of virtual training and a productive on-site practicum, the following are strongly desired:

- High school diploma or GED
- Passing of background check
- Current/updated COVID 19 vaccination
- Ability to sit/stand for long periods, use a computer, and interpret documents in English
- Bilingual/Spanish preferred (but not required)

Q: What is the application deadline, and is additional program information available?

[Visit our Public Health AmeriCorps program page](#) to see specific program deadlines for this year. Additional training cohorts will also be added in the future, so keep checking back for the latest announcements and deadlines.

Medical Billing/Coding Course Fees and Pricing

Q: What do OCHIN’s AAPC-certified medical billing and coding courses cost?

Our courses are designed to put world-class educational health IT insights within easy and affordable reach for almost anyone wishing to start, transition, or advance their career. One flat fee includes all materials and content necessary to complete each course. The table below provides an overview:

Course Title/Focus	End Result Pending Course Completion and Passed Exam	Course Fee
AAPC-Certified Medical Billing	AAPC-certified medical biller status	\$2,500
AAPC-Certified Medical Coding	AAPC-certified medical coder status	\$2,500
AAPC-Certified Medical Billing and Coding	Dual AAPC certification in both medical billing and coding	\$4,000

Q: Does my course fee include all the materials I need to support course completion and certification?

Yes. The mission of our OCHIN+ learning and workforce development program is to expand opportunities for those seeking a new or specialized career in health IT. We accomplish this by providing access to a range of comprehensive yet affordable certifications. Since many talented candidates often find traditional courses prohibitively expensive, we strive to share our OCHIN values, principles, and professional insights in a more cost-effective way. This is why our fees are structured to include all materials and content a student would need to complete a given course and pursue AAPC certification via the final course exam. The table below provides an overview:

Course Title/Focus	Course Fee	What’s Included
AAPC-Certified Medical Billing	\$2,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAPC membership (12 months) • AAPC certification exam • All required textbooks (hard copy) • Medical Billing Training: CPB™ (current year); AAPC; AAPC publisher • CPT® Professional Edition code book (current year); AMA publisher • ICD-10-CM code book (current year) • HCPCS Level II Professional code book (current year)
AAPC-Certified Medical Coding	\$2,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAPC membership (12 months) • AAPC certification exam • All required textbooks (hard copy) • Medical Coding Training and Practical Application combo: CPC™ (current year); AAPC; AAPC publisher • CPT® Professional Edition code book (current year); AMA publisher • ICD-10-CM code book (current year) • HCPCS Level II Professional code book (current year)
AAPC-Certified Medical Billing and Coding	\$4,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAPC membership (12 months) • AAPC certification exams

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All required textbooks (hard copy) • Medical Billing Training: CPB™ (current year); AAPC; AAPC publisher • Medical Coding Training and Practical Application combo: CPC™ current year; AAPC; AAPC publisher • CPT® Professional Edition code book (current year); AMA publisher • ICD-10-CM code book (current year) • HCPCS Level II Professional code book (current year)
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General Course Information

Q: What is the duration of each course? Once I sign up, do I need to take the entire course immediately?

Once you sign up for an OCHIN AAPC-certified medical billing/coding course and pay the associated course fee, you obtain access to our virtual course content for a period of 12 consecutive months. You can complete the course at your own pace, any time before this 12-month interval expires. Many busy professionals find this flexible, on-demand approach particularly advantageous. Other students prefer to take the entire course immediately, in which case the following course durations generally apply:

Course Title/Focus	Course Duration	Course Units Included	Duration of On-Demand Access
AAPC-Certified Medical Billing	8 weeks	8 units	12 consecutive months from signup date/fee payment
AAPC-Certified Medical Coding	16 weeks	16 units	12 consecutive months from signup date/fee payment
AAPC-Certified Medical Billing and Coding	16 weeks	16 units	12 consecutive months from signup date/fee payment

Our courses are segmented into individual **units**, with each unit equating to one full week of course content. It generally takes 10-20 hours of study time to complete each unit. The course durations indicated above are therefore estimates, but please contact us at ochinworkforcedevelopment@ochin.org for additional insights and specific course unit topics.

Q: Am I guaranteed job placement after completing my chosen OCHIN+ course(s)?

Completion of our AAPC-certified medical billing and coding courses does *not* guarantee employment within the health care industry, or at any of OCHIN’s member organizations. However, students who successfully pass a final exam *do* earn AAPC certification in their area(s) of specialization (billing, coding, or both). This is a highly respected industry designation that prospective employers notice and value. The certification itself can help expand a student’s professional network and open new doors to potential employment. This is particularly true when it’s combined with optional paid or unpaid externship opportunities, where available. Please see the separate “externship” section for details.

Q: Do I earn automatic AAPC certification just by taking one of your OCHIN+ billing/coding courses?

No. You must take and pass a special exam at the end of each course to earn actual AAPC certification as a medical billing or coding professional. These exams align to your chosen topic of study and are administered as part of each respective course. Your course fee includes all necessary materials to support your success.

Q: Do these courses provide internship and/or externship opportunities—and are either of these actually required to complete any of the courses?

Our AAPC-certified medical billing and coding courses currently provide *externship* opportunities that help students continue to learn about advancing health equity. These paid or unpaid externships place students at an OCHIN member site to gain real-life experience in a health clinic setting as part of the

OCHIN+ program. All OCHIN member health centers serve diverse communities and are dedicated to providing quality, just, affordable care. While completing an externship is not formally required to complete a given course or become certified, it is considered an industry best practice that provides valuable experience. Interested students may also apply to explore pathways for paid *internships* within OCHIN as they become available.

Q: What are the *hardware requirements* for your AAPC-certified medical billing and coding courses?

These courses can be taken on a PC, Mac, or Chromebook.

Q: What are the *software requirements* for your AAPC-certified medical billing and coding courses?

All necessary software must be installed and fully operational before students can begin their coursework. Students must also have email capabilities, including access to a personal email account.

- **PC:** Windows 8 or later
- **Mac:** macOS 10.6 or later
- **Browser:** Latest version of Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox preferred; Microsoft Edge also compatible
- **Word processing software:** Microsoft Word or equivalent (not included with enrollment)
- **PDF management software:** Adobe Acrobat Reader

Q: What are the *instructional material requirements* for your AAPC-certified medical billing and coding courses?

All instructional materials required for these courses are included in enrollment. Textbooks, workbooks, and codebooks will ship to students approximately seven to 10 business days after enrollment.

Q: Where can I learn more about your course instructors?

You can view our instructor credentials [here](#).

Medical Coding Certification

Q: What are specific requirements to earn and maintain an AAPC *medical coding (CPC)* certification?

Students wishing to earn and maintain an AAPC medical coding certification must:

- **Maintain a yearly AAPC membership.** You must become an AAPC member *prior* to scheduling your CPC exam. Renewing professionals must have a current membership at the time of exam application, or when exam results are released.
- **Substantiate two years' worth of medical coding experience.** Full CPC designation requires two years or the equivalent of medical coding experience. Individuals who do not submit such proof can earn a CPC-A (apprenticeship) designation.
- **Complete 36 continuing education units (CEUs).** Once certified, this continuing education requirement applies every two years.

Q: For those pursuing *medical coding* certification, what is a CPC-A designation?

Passing your initial CPC exam results in a CPC-A credential, with the "A" signifying *apprenticeship*. This apprenticeship standing is maintained until your two-year experience requirement is satisfied. Once you can submit proof of meeting this two-year requirement, the "A" is removed from your CPC certification. Here are various ways to work toward and fulfill this two-year requirement:

1. **Demonstrate two years of on-the-job experience using CPT®, ICD-10-CM, or HCPCS Level II code sets.**
 - Obtain and submit two letters of recommendation substantiating the above.
 - One letter must be from your employer on company letterhead.
 - The second letter may come from a colleague or a previous employer.
 - Experience coding for a previous employer *prior to certification* also counts toward this two-year requirement.
 - You can also earn one year of on-the-job experience as outlined above and combine this with one of the measures noted below.
2. **Complete at least 80 contact hours of a coding preparation course, which equates to one year of coding experience.**
 - Submit a letter from an instructor on school letterhead, a certificate/diploma, or an unofficial school transcript substantiating the above.
3. **Complete the CPC-A Practicode online curriculum, which equates to one year of coding experience.**
 - This online program is comprised of three modules, each containing 200 cases.
 - The program may be completed while training for your certification exam or afterward.

To satisfy the two-year requirement, Option 1 may suffice alone. Alternatively, Option 2 may be combined with Option 3—or, as mentioned above, a single year of on-the-job experience may be combined with Option 2 or Option 3. Proof of education and/or on-the-job experience should *only* be submitted once your full two-year requirement has been satisfied. Submit all documentation via scanned email attachment or fax.

Additional Course Considerations

Q: I'm hard-of-hearing or deaf. Would I still be able to take your AAPC-certified medical billing and coding courses?

Yes. All our on-demand virtual courses are closed captioned, making them accessible for students who are unable to hear audio instruction.

Q: I'm worried I can't succeed at an online course. What happens if I have questions about assignments or specific course content?

We understand your concerns, and we've designed our courses to specifically address them. Here are some key points to keep in mind:

- Our instructors are AAPC-certified, and AAPC medical billing/coding programs currently have the highest pass rate in the industry.
- You can take advantage of periodic instructor office hours when you have questions or need clarification on course content.
- We help you learn how to mark your books, get answers to frequently missed exam questions, adopt expert time management tips, and more.
- Our interactive virtual lectures are specifically designed to keep you engaged and fully connected throughout the course duration.
- We help you get ready for your certification exam with practice exams that mimic the real-life test.

Q: Is it common these days for practicing clinicians to transition into the billing/coding arena?

Yes, this practice is steadily becoming much more commonplace. In recent years, health care professionals have increasingly sought out specialized training that allows them to shift into academia or the field of health care technology. [According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics](#), the medical billing and coding arena in particular is expected to grow roughly 15% between now and 2024. This rewarding field attracts considerable interest, while providing abundant opportunities to support patient-centered care and advance health equity.

Q: Are OCHIN’s AAPC-certified medical billing and coding courses a good entry path into the data analytics field?

Our medical billing and coding courses are an ideal way to enter the fast-growing field of medical billing and coding. Because our on-demand virtual courses are certified by the American Academy of Professional Coders (AAPC), they address everything other medical billing and coding institutions teach—and we *also* share specifics related to the unique needs of federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and FQHC look-alikes. However, our program is *not* intended as a pathway into the field of data analytics. We are currently developing a separate OCHIN+ reporting program that may create specialized data science opportunities. Please check our ochin.plus website periodically for the latest updates.

Q: Are OCHIN’s AAPC-certified medical billing and coding courses a good entry path to becoming an EHR Support Analyst (formerly Site Specialist)?

Our medical billing and coding program is *not* intended as an immediate path to becoming an EHR Support Analyst. That designation typically requires a bachelor's degree in computer science, information technology, or a similar field. Experience with general health care organization responsibilities and electronic health records (EHR) is also extremely beneficial for the EHR Support Analyst role.

Q: Do these medical billing and coding courses represent a good industry networking opportunity?

Potentially; however, please keep in mind that many non-industry professionals also take our courses as a way to transition into the field of health IT. We strongly discourage taking our courses as a primary vehicle for making new industry connections.

Q: Who should I contact if I have additional questions?

If you have additional questions not addressed in this FAQ document or at ochin.plus, please reach out to ochinworkforcedevelopment@ochin.org