

## **SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONSE via NCRA Facebook page:**

As a membership organization, NCRA always appreciates feedback from its members. The Board is receiving feedback and questions on the upcoming deadline for those who have not passed all finishing legs of testing in the allotted three-year period. This discussion, and Board vote over four-plus years ago, has been ongoing for more than five years, with progressive implementation taking place from 2016, so there is a long history of thoughtful and vetted steps regarding these actions.

Please keep these foundational issues in mind:

- CAPR (Council of the Academy of Professional Reporters, an NCRA volunteer committee established in our Bylaws and comprised of NCRA members who have attained the designation of Fellow), after research and consultation, made a recommendation to codify and better manage our certification process. The lack of an established policy regarding accepted length of testing and expiration of exam scores falls well outside certification best practices of any accrediting body.
- To that end, in 2016, CAPR recommended an exam expiration policy of three years from passage of one leg to completion. The 2017 Board adopted CAPR's recommendation. By 2018, the program was in place and announced publicly to the membership. The original deadline of November 1, 2021, for completion of test legs passed in 2018 was subsequently extended to December 15, 2021.
- It is unusual for a certification body to allow test-taking, from beginning to ultimate passing, to extend as long as three years. And it is to the NCRA tester's advantage that multiple testing opportunities are offered throughout those three years. For instance, over that time a tester has 24 discrete occasions to take and pass all legs of the RPR, an unusually high number of opportunities in the certification world.
- NCRA has messaged this approved change in multiple instances since 2018. At least 22 separate individual announcements have been made to our members about the policy since its inception, via articles on *TheJCR.com*, in the *JCR Weekly*, in the *JCR* print magazine, and since January 2021, as a standing notice under News from NCRA in the *Monthly Matters* email that is sent to state leaders. NCRA's design team also created a one-page chart to assist members with determining if they will be affected by this change and what steps they need to take to avoid being impacted by it. This one-page chart has appeared numerous times in the *JCR* print and was posted on the NCRA testing webpages. A link to this chart was also attached to a number of the ads that have run online. Additionally, footers about the policy change and deadline were

included at the bottom of all emails sent to membership since January 2021, to further ensure this change was on people's radar. NCRA also posted numerous ads in the *JCR Weekly*, as well as on *TheJCR.com* and the Association's social media sites. In early 2021, postcards also were sent to the tester database from 2000 forward, reminding them of these time limits. Finally, the front page of NCRA's website has featured a countdown regarding the exam retention policy since January 2021.

Certification has a much broader purpose than the ability to put initials after a name. It is affirmation to our peers, to our clients and customers, and to the public at large who depend on us for record protection and hearing access, that our practitioners meet baseline qualifications or have shown proficiency in their knowledge and abilities. We must have standards in place to support and confirm that trust placed in us. This high level of accountability for NCRA's certifications helps decision makers at the state, federal, and civil levels in determining who is the best choice for taking the record. Our certifications matter to those who hire our members.

This change in policy is the direct result of NCRA's desire to strengthen and bring even greater respect to the profession by ensuring those certified are the very best in their field while protecting our members' investment in their future and the future of the profession.

In our profession's legacy, we have had many decades of certification testing in which testers were allowed only two opportunities per year, at given and limited physical locations across the nation, to take and pass the basic skills test in one sitting. Times and technology have evolved. Now multiples instances exist during the year, even in the tester's home, to pass the test one leg at a time, if needed. The opportunities for certification have never before existed in greater number or convenience. But with that convenience, we must adopt reasonable and accepted standards for our protocols.

The Board always entertains ideas and suggestions for improvement. If NCRA was not open to such things, we would still be mired to those physical locations, twice a year, with all-or-nothing requirements in place.