



Event Service Professional Certification (ESPC)

A program of the Event Service Professionals Association (ESPA)

The following describes the steps, qualifications, and process for achieving the **ESPC**.

Step one: Application

Prior to applying, we recommend that you review this [entire document](#) so that you understand the eligibility requirements such as Training or a Waiver for the training, proof of Continuing Education pre-requisites, and the fees, as well as what is involved with the certification Capstone Project.

We also recommend that you compile your list of continuing education courses (20 hours over the last 3 years) to ensure they meet the subject and source requirements listed below.

1. Pay the **Application fee** in the online My ESPA Portal. Application fee is non-refundable. Please be sure to pay the appropriate fee based on your preferred Option (see point 2 below). NOTE: Your application cannot be reviewed until the fee is paid.

Candidates for Option 1, with participation in the online Foundational Training Program:	ESPA Member	Non-Member
Application Fee <i>*Note: Training Program is a separate fee.</i>	\$175	\$250
Candidates for Option 2, with a Waiver Request to bypass the Training Program:		
Application Fee	\$325	\$450

2. Download and submit the **Application** with the required documents as outlined below.

- a. **Event Service Training or Breadth of Work Experience**

- i. Option 1: If you are applying under Option 1, which requires taking the [Event Service Professional Foundational Training Program](#) to meet the eligibility requirement, you should complete the Training Program and submit the Evaluation/Attestation Form with your ESPC Application to demonstrate that you have completed the Training.

- ii. Option 2: Candidates with a minimum of 10 years of event service experience can apply by submitting a **Foundational Training Waiver Request** form. If you are submitting a Waiver Request to bypass the Event Service Professional Foundational Training Program, you **must** include the Waiver Request form with your ESPC Application, and you must pay the fee level for Option 2 which includes a Waiver review. Experience and comprehension of services in various areas or settings must be demonstrated on the Waiver Request form and are subject to approval by the Review Board.

b. Event Service Education/Professional Development

Candidate must have completed a minimum of 20 education hours specifically in Event Service topics within the past 3 years.

i. ESPA education

ESPA education is pre-approved except for topics that are strictly on **personal** development such as wellness or work/life balance. ESPA on-demand webinar or virtual conference content is acceptable (and reporting of these programs as education requirements is currently on the honor system). Annual Conference education can be reported as one collective # of qualified hours which are listed on the Application. For any individual Webinars or Leader programs, candidates must list the courses they took including the date. Your course history can be found in the *My Continuing Education* section of your profile in My ESPA Portal.

Below are example scenarios of how a candidate can meet this requirement over 3 years through ESPA:

Example: 2020 Conference: 12 hours, 2022 Conference: 9 hours

Example: 2021 Virtual Conference: 6 hours, Webinars: 9 hours over 3 years, Leader programs: 5 hours over 3 years

ii. Education from other sources

A maximum of 8 hours can be from sources outside of ESPA and must be by nationally recognized organizations (*as examples, but not limited to EIC, PCMA, MPI, IAEE, IAVM, DI, publications such as Northstar Meetings Group, Meetings Today, Smart Meetings*). Courses taken with associations or education providers must be demonstrated to be specifically on Event Servicing topics as listed in the outline below. For education received from other sources, you must include proof of taking the course with your application and indicate which topic from the list below applies to each session.

Event Servicing Topics:

- 2. Event Management and Logistics
- 3. Technology
 - a. Registration/housing/event management
 - b. Mobile apps
 - c. Virtual/hybrid presentations

4. Marketing
 - a. City/venue promotion
 - b. Social media engagement
5. Risk Management
 - a. Safety and security needs
6. Sustainability
7. F&B (Trends, costs, dietary needs)
8. Service and Engagement
 - a. Client management and best practices
 - b. Attendee experience
 - c. Vendor/contractor
 - d. Staff/volunteer management

Questions on education applicability will be evaluated by the ESPA Review Board.

3. Program acceleration (optional)

To accelerate your certification timeline, you may also submit your written **Challenge** at the same time as you submit your application and optional Foundational Training Waiver Request (see step two below regarding the written **Challenge** step of the process). This gives the ESPA Review Board the opportunity to review both documents together.

ESPA will notify a candidate when their application is approved or if additional information is needed.

Applications for candidates that take the Event Service Professional Foundational Training should be approved within 14 days; applications requiring review of a Training Waiver Request are expected to take up to 21 days.

Step two: Capstone Project: Demonstrate skills and knowledge

The Capstone Project is designed to evaluate a candidate's skills, knowledge, and expertise in the role of Event Servicing. Both elements of the Capstone (Challenge and Response) will be evaluated by the ESPA Review Board.

1. Pay the Certification Fee in My ESPA Portal

- Fees are \$525 Members/\$600 Non-Members
- The fee is non-refundable
- The Capstone Project must be completed within 1 year of ESPC application.

2. Start the project which will consist of two parts to be completed by the candidate:

Part 1: Write and Submit an Event Service Challenge Scenario

Develop and describe a hypothetical or real-world scenario which requires a solution that engages an event service professional within one of the subject areas listed below. Detailed context about the challenge should be included:

- What is the **overall** impact of the challenge? [Explain the significance; consider the financial, operational, reputational, and strategic consequences of the challenge.]

- Does the challenge impact the CVB, venues, hotels or attractions? [Explain the significance to these entities]
- Who is impacted by the challenge? The group, employees, visitors, locals, others? [List and describe]
- Identify the root causes of the challenge. [Focusing on contributing factors rather than surface-level symptoms.]
- Is this a challenge that an Event Service Professional can help to solve? [i.e., the purpose of this exercise.]

Subject Areas for your challenge scenario:

- Connecting Events to the Local Business Economy (Intellectual Capital)
- Corporate Social Responsibility and Giving Back to the Community
- Sustainability
- Customer Service
- Emerging Trends in Event Services
- Event Design
- Technology
- Food & Beverage
- Risk Management/Health & Safety
- Measuring Event Success
- Promoting and Marketing Your Destination or Venue
- Servicing by Market Segment

In conclusion, you should craft a final written statement in the form of an open-ended question that clearly summarizes the key challenge your upcoming Response Paper—*featuring a solution led by an Event Service Professional*—will address.

Instructions:

Use the **ESPC Challenge Outline** found on the ESPA web site to submit your challenge scenario. Candidates must first submit the Challenge for review and approval by the ESPA Review Board before proceeding to the written Response. Candidates have the option to submit their Challenge at the same time as their application in order to expedite the review process. Please allow 21 days for response on waiver and challenge reviews.

Part 2: Written Response

Once your Challenge scenario is approved, the next step is to develop a written solution in response to the developed challenge scenario with a minimum of 1,000 words and 5 cited sources (*sources can be from published work or through personnel or client interviews*).

The solution must include hotel, facility/venue and DMO related elements to demonstrate your understanding of all segments of Event Servicing. Additionally, candidate should consider the following when writing their Response:

- MUST show evidence of the impact of the Event Service Professional in the outcome of the challenge
- Demonstrates collaboration across all segments
- Describes resources or relationships involved to achieve the outcome
- Describes measurable outcomes or achievements

Instructions:

Write and submit your Response to certification@espaonline.org. Include at the top of the document:

- Name
- Company
- Email Address
- Phone number
- Date of submittal
- We also ask that you include or paste in your Challenge at the top of the Response document

Reviews of Challenge Responses will be conducted quarterly by the ESPA Review Board. Certifications will therefore be awarded quarterly. Written Responses will be evaluated and determined to be 1. Approved or 2. Needs further clarification or information for completion. If further information is needed, candidates are expected to submit their revision by the next quarterly review date.

Candidates have up to one year to complete their Capstone Project once their application has been approved. After one year, a new application and fee must be submitted.

Step three: Certification

Upon successful evaluation and approval of a candidate's Capstone Project, the certification is awarded for a 5-year period. Candidate may use the ESPC designation until their recertification date.

Candidate's certification will be announced in the ESPA newsletter, on social media, and may be maintained on a list on the ESPA web site.

Designates should be familiar with recertification requirements in order to maintain the education and professional engagement needed to achieve recertification upon their 5-year recertification date.

Step four: Recertification

Certification is good for 5 years. To recertify, an application must be submitted which shows your continuing education and leadership activities. The recertification fee must also be paid on the My ESPA Portal.

Recertification Fee (Member/Non-Member): \$300/\$500

Recertification requires the following: *(Proof must be submitted with recertification application.)*

1. Continuing Education – 20 credit hours over the 5-year period
 **Refer to the initial certification Application for education criteria; the same requirements for event-service related education apply for Recertification.
2. Industry Participation/Leadership through ESPA involvement – 5 credits

- a. Active participation on an ESPA board, committee, or task force (*earns 1 credit per year*)
(*Note: active engagement for one year is required to earn credit, meaning regular participation on calls, volunteer support with committee activities*)
- b. Published author of an ESPA article or blog (*1 credit per article*)
- c. Presenter or panelist on ESPA webinar or conference session (*1 credit per webinar or session*)
- d. Initiate and plan a Celebrate Services Week event (*1 credit per event; must be the person reporting the event details*)
- e. Serve as Mentor in ESPA's mentor program (*1 credit per year of participation*)

Instructions:

Designates pay the recertification fee in the My ESPA Portal to coincide with submitting a Recertification Application. Recertification Applications are due by the end of the calendar year that is 5 years from your certification date. Alternatively, applications submitted by the 5th **anniversary date** of your actual certification issuance are eligible for an early submittal discount of 15%.

Example:

Certification earned April 1, 2023

Recertification application due no later than December 31, 2028

Early discount if submitted on or before your anniversary date, i.e., by April 1, 2028

If a recertification application is not received and approved by the stated deadline, the designate's certification is expired, and designate should no longer reference themselves as certified.

ESPA Review Board

The ESPC program is governed by a volunteer ESPA Review Board, with ultimate oversight by the ESPA Board of Directors. The ESPA Review Board consists of Event Service Professionals who possess a passion for industry leadership and engagement, as well as for our profession. You must be an ESPA member to be on the ESPA Review Board. Terms for Review Board members are one year. Members interested in serving should contact Lynn McCullough, Executive Director, at Lmccullough@espaonline.org.

Candidates for ESPC may raise any questions or concerns through the Headquarters office who will help to answer or facilitate a response by ESPA leadership: Certification@espaonline.org or 609-799-3712.

Participation Parameters

Participation in the ESPC program is voluntary. The program is meant to raise awareness of the value of professional development for Event Service Professionals in the Events industry, and to provide an avenue for recognizing ESP achievement, and therefore is accessible to both ESPA member and non-member Event Service Professionals. By participating, candidates agree to ESPA's use of their challenge/response for ESPA educational purposes.

Candidates are expected to provide information that is true, complete, correct, and made in good faith. ESPA reserves the right to verify any or all information submitted as part of this process and any incorrect or misleading information may constitute grounds for revocation of a certification. By applying for the ESPC certification, candidates will be asked to have read the full program information and confirm their understanding of the information as described, as well as agree to the terms and conditions outlined.

Candidates who are successfully awarded the ESPC designation will be announced through ESPA public platforms such as its web site and social media, unless the candidate specifically requests otherwise.

For questions, please contact:

ESPA Headquarters
Certification@espaonline.org
609-799-3712