NORTHEND

NEW JERSEY AGENCY PATH INSIGHT

How to Choose the Right New Jersey Agency Path

New Jersey separates Health Care Service Firm registration from Department of Health licensure for Home Health Agencies and Hospice Care Programs. The right path depends on the services, workforce model, clinical scope, payer, and Certificate of Need status.

Health Care Service Firm (HCSF)

An HCSF places or arranges personnel to provide health care, companion care, or personal care in the private residence of a person with a disability or someone age 60 or older. It is registered through the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs, not licensed as a Home Health Agency by the Department of Health.

This is the common pathway for nonmedical companion care and hands-on home care using Certified Homemaker-Home Health Aides. Companion services are not an unlicensed alternative: New Jersey limits them to registered HCSFs. CHHAs must hold active certification through the Board of Nursing and may only perform tasks within their authorized scope.

HCSF Clinical and Operational Structure

An HCSF must employ an appropriately licensed health care practitioner supervisor, maintain required insurance and records, verify caregiver licenses or certifications and work history, and match personnel qualifications to the client's needs. When a client receives nursing or CHHA services, the firm needs a compliant plan of care and required supervisory reviews and in-home evaluations.

Registration is completed through the Regulated Business Online Registration Portal. Accreditation by a state-recognized accrediting organization is part of the ongoing HCSF framework. Registration renews annually and currently expires September 30.

Licensed Home Health Agency (HHA)

A New Jersey HHA is licensed by the Department of Health under N.J.A.C. 8:42 to provide preventive, rehabilitative, and therapeutic services in the patient's home. Every HHA must provide nursing, homemaker-home health aide, and physical therapy services, with additional disciplines added as permitted.

The agency needs qualified governance and administration, a director of nursing and clinical supervision, policies, personnel systems, patient assessments and care plans, infection-control and emergency systems, quality assurance, clinical records, an operational office, and readiness for state and federal surveys. Medicare certification and Medicaid enrollment are separate approvals.

Hospice Care Program

A Hospice Care Program is separately licensed by the Department of Health under N.J.A.C. 8:42C. It provides coordinated palliative services to terminally ill patients in their homes or residences, including medical, nursing, social work, counseling, volunteer, bereavement, spiritual, and other interdisciplinary services.

New Jersey recognizes a main Hospice Care Program, licensed branches, and inpatient hospice care units. Each model must meet the applicable leadership, 24-hour availability, staffing, patient-care, facility, quality, record, emergency, and survey requirements. Medicare certification and payer enrollment remain separate.

Other Staffing or Registry Models

A business structured as a nurses' registry, employment agency, or temporary staffing firm may fall under a different personnel-services category. The employer relationship, who pays the worker, where personnel are placed, services performed, and fees charged must be reviewed before selecting the application type.

Questions to consider

- Will the business provide companion care, personal care, CHHA services, skilled home health, hospice, or staffing only?
- Will caregivers be agency employees, independent contractors, referrals, or personnel assigned to another organization?
- Will the agency pursue private pay, long-term-care insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, managed care, or another payer?
- Does the plan require a Certificate of Need, state licensure, accreditation, certification, or several separate approvals?

Registration is not HHA licensure

An HCSF registration authorizes the firm's personnel-placement and in-home service model; it does not turn the business into a Department of Health-licensed HHA. An HHA license authorizes the broader clinical service organization required by N.J.A.C. 8:42. Advertising, contracts, staff, policies, and care delivery must match the chosen path.

HCSF accreditation and renewal

HCSFs must plan for recognized accreditation and annual renewal. Under current 2026 guidance, firms must submit the required financial statement, but the Division has suspended the separate financial audit or report requirement while regulations are updated. Requirements should be rechecked before every renewal.

Home health has a CON barrier

New home health services are subject to New Jersey's full Certificate of Need review process. The Department's July 1, 2025 call for home health applications was postponed while it evaluated statewide need. Confirm whether a new call or another authorized transaction pathway is available before investing in an HHA application.

Licensure and survey readiness

HHA and hospice licensure is handled through the Department of Health's licensing process and facility-services portal. State inspections evaluate the premises, personnel, policies, records, patient care, infection control, emergency systems, quality oversight, and other evidence. Federal certification may require an additional or coordinated survey.

The office must be operational

The registered or licensed business address must support real operations and record access. HCSFs are subject to compliance inspections and must make required books and records available. Licensed agencies must also be prepared for Department of Health surveys. A mailbox or virtual address alone does not create a survey-ready agency.

Financial requirements are evolving

New Jersey changed HCSF financial-registration requirements in 2026 and is updating its regulations. Build the application from the current portal instructions and agency notices rather than relying on an older checklist or policy manual.

Build the agency in the right order

Define the services, employment model, and payer first. Then confirm the correct registration or license, CON availability, entity and office, ownership and leadership, accreditation, staffing, policies, financial documents, application, inspection or survey, certification, and enrollment requirements.

Planning a New Jersey agency?

NorthEnd Consulting helps owners define the correct service scope and prepare the registration or licensing documents and operational structure that match the New Jersey agency plan.

Visit northendconsultants.com to discuss your agency plan

Current as of November 2026. Requirements, forms, fees, financial reporting, accreditation, CON availability, survey procedures, and federal or payer requirements may change. Registration, licensure, certification, accreditation, enrollment, and payer contracting are separate decisions controlled by the applicable authorities. This is a general planning resource. NorthEnd Consulting does not guarantee approval.