NORTHEND

OHIO AGENCY PATH INSIGHT

How to Choose the Right Ohio Agency Path

Ohio separately licenses nonmedical home health services, skilled home health services, and hospice care programs. The right path depends on the services, workforce model, payer plan, accreditation or certification status, and operational structure.

Nonmedical Home Health Services

This Ohio Department of Health license is generally the home care pathway for agencies providing hands-on assistance and support in a person's home. Covered services include home health aide tasks, personal care, assistance with activities of daily living, medication self-administration support, qualifying homemaker services, respite, and health-and-safety errands.

The application framework includes entity documents, the primary owner's fingerprint impressions, a notarized identity affidavit, operating days and hours, service descriptions and related policies, criminal-record-check policies, the primary place of business, and the geographic service area. A new applicant that was not providing direct care on or immediately before September 30, 2021 generally needs a $20,000 surety bond. The current application fee is $250.

Skilled Home Health Services

A skilled home health services license is required when the agency will provide or hold itself out as providing skilled nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, medical social services, or other services classified as skilled home health services.

The applicant must support the skilled pathway through Medicare certification, qualifying accreditation, Ohio Department of Aging certification, or evidence that it otherwise meets Medicare Conditions of Participation. A new applicant generally needs a $50,000 surety bond, and the current application fee is $250. A skilled license also authorizes the agency to provide nonmedical home health services without obtaining a separate nonmedical license.

Hospice Care Program

Hospice is licensed separately under Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3712 and Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 3701-19. A hospice care program provides an organized, interdisciplinary program for terminally ill patients and families, with required clinical, psychosocial, spiritual, bereavement, volunteer, medication, emergency, quality, and record systems.

The initial application includes ownership and leadership information, services provided directly or by contract, contractors, service area, operating date, locations, and any inpatient-facility materials. Current rules require a $600 nonrefundable license fee and submission at least 60 days before the requested initial inspection. ODH conducts an announced inspection before initial licensure. A hospice license is generally valid for three years.

Nonagency Provider Path

Ohio also applies the home health licensing chapter to certain self-employed individuals who provide direct care without employing or contracting others. Whether an individual is excluded or must obtain a nonagency-provider license depends on the number of people served, the relationship to the individuals, the services, and other certifications. This is not the same structure as an agency with employees.

Questions to consider

- Will the business provide companionship or homemaker support, hands-on personal care, skilled nursing or therapy, hospice, or a combination?
- Will services be delivered by agency employees, contractors, or a self-employed individual working without staff?
- Will the agency remain private pay, or pursue Medicaid, Medicare, managed care, waiver, or other payer enrollment?
- Does the selected path require state licensure, accreditation, Medicare certification, payer enrollment, or several separate approvals?

Nonmedical and skilled are not interchangeable

A nonmedical license does not authorize skilled nursing or therapy. A skilled home health services license can cover both skilled and nonmedical home health services. Service descriptions, advertising, contracts, personnel, policies, and care delivery must stay within the authority of the license held.

Accreditation may be part of the skilled path

Ohio's skilled application requires evidence of a qualifying pathway, such as Medicare certification, recognized accreditation, Department of Aging certification, or proof of meeting Medicare Conditions of Participation. ODH states that it does not perform initial Medicare certification surveys for HHAs; agencies seeking Medicare certification must work with a CMS-approved accrediting organization.

State license and payer approval are separate

An Ohio license authorizes the applicable service category. It does not automatically create Medicare certification, Medicaid enrollment, waiver participation, managed-care contracts, or reimbursement eligibility. Build each approval into the business plan, timeline, staffing model, and budget.

The operating location matters

Ohio defines an operating location as the place where business and operational functions occur, including records, central staffing, and general business operations. The application identifies the operating location or primary place of business. An out-of-state home health agency or hospice seeking to serve Ohio patients must establish an administrative office in Ohio before licensure.

Licensure does not end at approval

Home health licenses renew on a three-year cycle and require continued compliance. Agencies need compliant screening and criminal-record-check systems, personnel files, policies, service records, complaint and incident processes, quality oversight, change notifications, and readiness to produce evidence when requested. Hospice programs also face inspection, correction, renewal, and ongoing operational requirements.

Build the agency in the right order

Define services and payers first. Then confirm the license category, entity and Ohio location, ownership and leadership, bond, accreditation or certification path, staffing, policies, application documents, inspection or survey readiness, and enrollment sequence. Do not buy a generic package before confirming which Ohio pathway applies.

Planning an Ohio agency?

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

Visit northendconsultants.com to discuss your agency plan

Current as of November 2026. Requirements, forms, fees, bonds, accreditation, certification, inspections, surveys, renewal procedures, and payer requirements may change. Licensure, accreditation, certification, enrollment, and contracting are separate approvals controlled by the applicable authorities. This is a general planning resource. NorthEnd Consulting does not guarantee approval.