

CPP study plan and fact sheet

Fact sheet

Credential	Certified Payroll Professional (CPP), PayrollOrg (formerly the American Payroll Association)
Cost	\$419 to \$609. \$419 for PayrollOrg members and \$609 for nonmembers in North America, per the 2025 to 2026 candidate handbook. Members save about 30 percent.
Eligibility	One of: 3 years of payroll practice in the 5 years before applying; 24 months of payroll practice plus approved PayrollOrg coursework; or the FPC, 18 months of payroll practice, and approved coursework.
Exam	190 questions in 4 hours.
Testing	Pearson VUE, in the fall and spring windows in the US and Canada.
Pass rate	Not published
Recertification	120 recertification credit hours over 5 years, or retake the exam.
Renewal fee	Set by PayrollOrg; see the current fee schedule.

Your CPP study plan

Week 1	Download the official exam outline or handbook, confirm eligibility, and set your exam date.
Weeks 2 to 3	Take a baseline practice test and list your three weakest areas.
Weeks 4 to 7	Study one content area per week, starting with the heaviest weighted.
Weeks 8 to 9	Review weak areas and do timed question sets every other day.
Week 10	Take a full-length timed practice exam under test conditions.
Final week	Light review only. Confirm your appointment, ID, and test center or remote setup.
Typical total	12 to 16 weeks

Preparation tips

- ☐ Confirm your eligibility path first. Coursework must be completed in the qualifying period.
- ☐ Study multistate taxation and reciprocity, a common weak spot.
- ☐ Use the PayrollOrg CPP Boot Camp or Payroll 201 if you're taking the coursework route.
- ☐ Build stamina with full-length timed practice tests. Four hours is a long exam.

Exam day checklist

- ☐ Government-issued ID that matches your application name exactly.
- ☐ Arrive 30 minutes early, or test your remote setup the day before.
- ☐ Know the rescheduling deadline in case something comes up.
- ☐ Plan your renewal: note your cycle end date and credit requirements.

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