

FPC study plan and fact sheet

Fact sheet

Credential	Fundamental Payroll Certification (FPC), PayrollOrg (formerly the American Payroll Association)
Cost	About \$359 to \$459. About \$359 for PayrollOrg members and \$459 for nonmembers in the US; PayrollOrg says members save more than 20 percent. Check the current schedule before applying.
Eligibility	None. No payroll experience is required.
Exam	150 questions in 3 hours.
Testing	Pearson VUE, in a fall window (testing September 5 to October 3, 2026) and a spring window (January 4 to April 17, 2027) in the US and Canada.
Pass rate	Not published
Recertification	60 recertification credit hours over 3 years, or retake the exam.
Renewal fee	Set by PayrollOrg; see the current fee schedule.

Your FPC 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	8 to 10 weeks

Preparation tips

- ☐ Master the FLSA rules on overtime and the regular rate. They show up throughout the exam.
- ☐ Practice gross-to-net calculations by hand until they're automatic.
- ☐ Review IRS Publication 15 (Circular E) for withholding rules.
- ☐ Register early: each testing window has a fixed registration deadline.

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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