

# Occupational Authorizations

## Arkansas Board of Hearing Instrument Dispensers

**Arkansas Board of Hearing Instrument Dispensers****ARKANSAS BOARD OF HEARING INSTRUMENT DISPENSER**

Authorization Type:	Licensure	# of Individuals Regulated: <input style="width: 80px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text" value="9"/>
Entity Division Name:	Arkansas Department of Health	
Scope of Practice:	<p>17-84-304. Qualifications for licensure and internship.</p> <p>(a) An applicant for a license by examination or for an internship shall:</p> <p>(1) Submit an application on the form and within the time prescribed by the Arkansas Board of Hearing Instrument Dispensers;</p> <p>(2) Pay an application fee in the amount prescribed by the board; and</p> <p>(3) Show to the satisfaction of the Arkansas Board of Hearing Instrument Dispensers that he or she:</p> <p>(A) Is twenty (20) years of age or older; and</p> <p>(B) Has an education equivalent of two (2) or more years of accredited college-level course work from a regionally accredited college or university.</p> <p>(b) An applicant who meets the qualifications set out in subsection (a) of this section shall meet at least one (1) of the following criteria:</p> <p>(1)(A) Complete a valid one-year employment internship during which he or she is under the direct personal and physical supervision of a sponsor who has continuously held in good standing for a period of not less than three (3) years either a valid Arkansas hearing instrument dispenser's license or a valid Arkansas audiology license.</p> <p>(B) The board shall determine by rule what constitutes a valid one-year employment internship;</p> <p>(2) Hold a National Board for Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences certificate;</p> <p>(3) Be registered as a hearing instrument dispenser in good standing in another state whose licensing requirements meet or exceed the licensing requirements of the State of Arkansas at the time of his or her application;</p> <p>(4) Be a graduate of an American Conference of Audioprosthology program; or</p> <p>(5) Hold an Associate of Applied Science degree in Hearing Healthcare Practitioner or a similar degree from a regionally accredited college or university.</p> <p>(c) Before the beginning of the internship period, the applicant shall:</p> <p>(1) Receive board approval of the application and training schedule; and</p> <p>(2) Pay the internship fee prescribed by the board under this chapter.</p> <p>(d)(1) A person participating in a valid internship program as determined by the board under subdivision (b)(1)(B) of this section may take the licensing examination, written or practicum, or both, upon written recommendation of his or her sponsor after successfully completing six (6) months in the internship program.</p> <p>(2) If the person successfully passes the examination, he or she may complete the one-year internship program under the oversight of the sponsor without direct personal and physical supervision if he or she works out of the same place of business as the sponsor.</p> <p>(3) If the person fails any part of the examination, he or she shall complete the full one-year internship before reexamination.</p> <p>(4)(A) Any examination taken during an internship shall be considered as one (1) of three (3) attempts to pass the examination allowed under § 17-84-305(d).</p> <p>(B) After three (3) failed attempts to pass the examination allowed under § 17-84-305(d), the person shall repeat the internship application.</p> <p>(5) It is a violation of this chapter for any person during the course of his or her internship to practice the dispensing of hearing instruments except under:</p> <p>(A) The direct personal and physical supervision of his or her sponsor; or</p> <p>(B) The conditions set out in this subsection</p>	
Statutory Requirement(s):	<p>7-84-302. License or internship certificate required.</p> <p>No person shall engage in the sale of hearing instruments or display a sign or in any other way advertise or hold himself or herself out as a person who practices the dispensing of hearing instruments unless he or she is licensed under this chapter or is the holder of an internship as provided for in § 17-84-304 and has his or her license or internship certificate conspicuously posted in his or her office or place of business.</p>	

**ARKANSAS BOARD OF HEARING INSTRUMENT DISPENSER (Continued)**

Pursuant to Arkansas Code §17-4-104, do you provide an automatic licensure to a uniformed service member stationed in the State of Arkansas, a uniformed service veteran who resides in or establishes residency in the State of Arkansas; and the spouse of a uniformed service member who is stationed in, resides in, or establishes residency in the State of Arkansas; a uniformed service member who is assigned a tour of duty that excludes the uniformed service member’s spouse from accompanying the uniformed service member and the spouse relocates to this state; and a uniformed service member who is killed or succumbs to his or her injuries or illness in the line of duty if the spouse establishes residency in the state?

Yes

<b>Fees &amp; Penalties</b>			
Fee Type	Fee Description	Amount (\$)	Frequency
Fee	Internship Application Fee	\$5.00	Once
Fee	License Verification Request	\$1.00	Once
Fee	Examination Fees (each)	\$1.00	Once

<b>Administrative Rules Documents</b>	
Document Type	Document
Rules	<a href="#">ABHID_Rules_2-11-2022_06.23.2023.pdf</a>

**Supporting Evidence Documents**

*No Supporting Evidence Documents Provided*

**BOARD OF HEARING INSTRUMENT DISPENSER**

Authorization Type: Licensure # of Individuals Regulated:

Entity Division Name: Arkansas Department of Health

Scope of Practice: 17-84-304. Qualifications for licensure and internship.

(a) An applicant for a license by examination or for an internship shall:

- (1) Submit an application on the form and within the time prescribed by the Arkansas Board of Hearing Instrument Dispensers;
- (2) Pay an application fee in the amount prescribed by the board; and
- (3) Show to the satisfaction of the Arkansas Board of Hearing Instrument Dispensers that he or she:
  - (A) Is twenty (20) years of age or older; and
  - (B) Has an education equivalent of two (2) or more years of accredited college-level course work from a regionally accredited college or university.

(b) An applicant who meets the qualifications set out in subsection (a) of this section shall meet at least one (1) of the following criteria:

- (1)(A) Complete a valid one-year employment internship during which he or she is under the direct personal and physical supervision of a sponsor who has continuously held in good standing for a period of not less than three (3) years either a valid Arkansas hearing instrument dispenser's license or a valid Arkansas audiology license.
- (B) The board shall determine by rule what constitutes a valid one-year employment internship;
- (2) Hold a National Board for Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences certificate;
- (3) Be registered as a hearing instrument dispenser in good standing in another state whose licensing requirements meet or exceed the licensing requirements of the State of Arkansas at the time of his or her application;
- (4) Be a graduate of an American Conference of Audioprosthology program; or
- (5) Hold an Associate of Applied Science degree in Hearing Healthcare Practitioner or a similar degree from a regionally accredited college or university.

(c) Before the beginning of the internship period, the applicant shall:

- (1) Receive board approval of the application and training schedule; and
- (2) Pay the internship fee prescribed by the board under this chapter.

(d)(1) A person participating in a valid internship program as determined by the board under subdivision (b)(1)(B) of this section may take the licensing examination, written or practicum, or both, upon written recommendation of his or her sponsor after successfully completing six (6) months in the internship program.

(2) If the person successfully passes the examination, he or she may complete the one-year internship

**BOARD OF HEARING INSTRUMENT DISPENSER (Continued)**

program under the oversight of the sponsor without direct personal and physical supervision if he or she works out of the same place of business as the sponsor.

(3) If the person fails any part of the examination, he or she shall complete the full one-year internship before reexamination.

(4)(A) Any examination taken during an internship shall be considered as one (1) of three (3) attempts to pass the examination allowed under § 17-84-305(d).

(B) After three (3) failed attempts to pass the examination allowed under § 17-84-305(d), the person shall repeat the internship application.

(5) It is a violation of this chapter for any person during the course of his or her internship to practice the dispensing of hearing instruments except under:

(A) The direct personal and physical supervision of his or her sponsor; or

(B) The conditions set out in this subsection.

Statutory Requirement(s): 7-84-302. License or internship certificate required.

No person shall engage in the sale of hearing instruments or display a sign or in any other way advertise or hold himself or herself out as a person who practices the dispensing of hearing instruments unless he or she is licensed under this chapter or is the holder of an internship as provided for in § 17-84-304 and has his or her license or internship certificate conspicuously posted in his or her office or place of business.

Pursuant to Arkansas Code §17-4-104, do you provide an automatic licensure to a uniformed service member stationed in the State of Arkansas, a uniformed service veteran who resides in or establishes residency in the State of Arkansas; and the spouse of a uniformed service member who is stationed in, resides in, or establishes residency in the State of Arkansas; a uniformed service member who is assigned a tour of duty that excludes the uniformed service member’s spouse from accompanying the uniformed service member and the spouse relocates to this state; and a uniformed service member who is killed or succumbs to his or her injuries or illness in the line of duty if the spouse establishes residency in the state?

Yes

**Fees & Penalties**

Fee Type	Fee Description	Amount (\$)	Frequency
Fee	Annual License Renewal	\$5.00	Annually
Fee	Dispenser Application Fee	\$5.00	Once
Fee	Internship Application Fee	\$5.00	Once
Fee	Examination Fees (per exam)	\$1.00	Once
Fee	Reciprocity Application Fee	\$5.00	Once
Penalty	Annual Renewal Late Fee	\$5.50	Once
Penalty	Dispenser License Reinstatement Fee	\$8.00	Once
Fee	License Verification Request	\$1.00	Once
Fee	Replacement/Duplicate License	\$1.00	Once
Fee	CEU Approval (per. Credit Hour)	\$3.00	Once
Fee	Annual License Renewal (Inactive)	\$3.00	Once

**Administrative Rules Documents**

Document Type	Document
Rules	<a href="#">ABHID_Rules_2-11-2022_06.23.2023.pdf</a>

**Supporting Evidence Documents**

*No Supporting Evidence Documents Provided*

## ALC – Occupational Licensing Review Subcommittee

### Occupational Entity Questionnaire

#### ADH Board of Hearing Instrument Dispensers

1. Would consumers be at risk of substantial harm if Arkansas did not have this occupational authorization? What instances of specific and substantial harm have been documented in the past year?

*An Arkansas Licensed Hearing Instrument Dispenser also known as Hearing Instrument Specialist conducts and interprets hearing tests for purposes of identifying the type and degree of hearing loss of individuals and make proper recommendations based on those results, select suitable hearing instruments, make earmolds or ear impressions, and provide counseling pertaining to the selling, renting, leasing, pricing, delivery, and warranty of hearing instruments. This license establishes the standards of practice for dispensers in the State of Arkansas. It requires not only the governance of licensees and interns but also the regulation, periodic inspection, and calibration of audiometric testing equipment and tympanometers as well as facilities of persons who practice the fitting or selling of hearing instruments.*

*Without this license there would be no governing body to ensure the safety of the equipment, that it meets national standards, or that individuals are receiving valid hearing tests. There would be no way to monitor that the dispensers were qualified in their scope of practice in identification of hearing loss and practical application of their competencies as well as knowledge of provisions of the Ark. Code Ann. Section 17-84-305 and the Rules of the Board of Hearing Instrument Dispensers. There would not be a stipulation that specialists continue to maintain their knowledge in their field by requiring annual continuing education credits including ethics. Last, there would not be a mechanism to file, follow-up and investigate complaints made by consumers regarding hearing dispensers and/or services. If a complaint is warranted the action is governed by the Administrative Procedures Act, Ark. Code Ann. Section 25-15-201, et. Seq.*

*The risk of not being evaluated by someone trained or licensed is missing someone with hearing loss or life-threatening diseases that can be detected first or early and referred on to the proper specialist such as an ENT or Otolaryngologist. There have been no documented cases of harm reported to the board in the past year.*

2. How many complaints were made to the occupational entity by consumers being harmed by unauthorized practitioners? What specific action was taken by the occupational entity?

*There were no complaints made to the Board by consumers on unauthorized practitioners or unlicensed dispensers or interns in the last year.*

3. How many complaints were made to the occupational entity by consumers being harmed by authorized practitioners? What specific action was taken by the occupational entity?

*There were 4 complaints in 2023 reported; two involved no harm to consumers and no action was taken. The third complaint could be a potential harm to consumer if the person presented with symptoms and wasn't referred to a specialist. The Board has requested additional information. The last complaint is still being investigated.*

4. Were any applicants who otherwise met authorization requirements denied an authorization in the past year? If so, why?

No.

5. How much does the occupational entity collect annually in fees, and what are annual expenses? How much money does the occupational entity have in reserves?

*The Board collected \$30,891 in fees in FY23. The FY23 Expenses for ARHID were \$23,443. At the end of FY23, the Board had \$90,567 in reserves.*

6. If the occupational entity has a positive amount in reserves, when was the last time reserve funds were used? For what purpose?

*There is a positive amount in reserves due to the amount accumulated before the fee structure was reduced in July 2023. In addition, this board was without an extra help position for 8 months in 2023. This accounts for no salary deducted for over half of the year in FY23. The Board has now hired an extra help position for its Board Administrator, which will account for additional expenditures in FY24.*

7. Does the occupational entity have any other sources of revenue? Could occupational authorization fees be reduced without causing the occupational entity to be underfunded?

*There are no other sources of revenue other than income from fees. Beginning in FY24, the Board reduced fees according to ACT 114 of 2023.*

8. How many applicants for the occupational authorization fail each year? Does the occupational entity track how many applicants that do not progress are veterans, women, or minorities?

*Statewide, we had 3 failures to pass last year, 2 males and 1 female.. On the National level we had 3 failures, 2 female and 1 male.*

9. Can applicants complete the training requirements for this occupational authorization with vocational or non-traditional education (e.g., apprenticeships)? What percentage of applicant's complete apprenticeships?

*There is a One-Year Internship available for individuals. In order to qualify for this program, you must have two (2) or more years of accredited college-level course work from a regionally accredited college or university and be at least 20 years of age. Secondly, you must meet at least one of the following requirements a)complete a 1-year internship under the sponsorship of an Arkansas Licensed Hearing Specialist of at least 3-years or Arkansas audiology license; b)hold a National Board for Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences certificate; c) be registered as a hearing instrument dispenser in good standing in another state whose licensing requirements meet or exceed the licensing requirements of the State of Arkansas; d) be a graduate of an American Conference of*

*Audioprosthology program; e) hold an Associate of Applied Science degree in Hearing Healthcare Practitioner. Plus, pass the National IHS Exam and the State of Arkansas Practical Exams*

*In 2023, there were 8 new interns, and 9 new Licensed Dispensers, or 47% of our applicants started the internship program. One participant completed the internship. Two are waiting to take their National and Board Exams this month. Their completion is all gauged on the month they start the program and when they are eligible to test. Very few drop out of the program.*

10. In what ways would removal of the occupational authorization or reduction of occupational authorization requirements be harmful to current authorization holders?

*By setting rigorous standards and ensuring only qualified professionals enter the field, licensure plays a pivotal role in upholding the integrity of Licensed Hearing Specialists, assuring customers competent care and ethical hearing instrument practice and protection of the health and safety of the public.*