

COMMON QUESTIONS

CEP Frequently Asked Questions

Everything you need to know before applying for the Certified Emcee Professional designation.

ELIGIBILITY

What are the basic requirements to apply?

All applicants must have a **minimum of 5 years** of professional experience as an Emcee, Host, Facilitator, Moderator, or Entertainer, with no ethics violations in the past 10 years. You must also have attended at least one NSA or GSF equivalent event in the last 10 years and be in good professional standing.

How do the two eligibility pathways differ?

Pathway 1 (Volume & Consistency) requires 50+ professional engagements in the past 5 years and \$50,000+ annual income from emceeing in at least 3 of the last 5 years.

Pathway 2 (Market Excellence) requires 30+ engagements and \$80,000+ annual income under the same timeframe. Both are equal pathways to the CEP — there is no hierarchy between them.

Can I combine engagements across different roles?

Yes. Applicants may combine engagements across all eligible titles — Emcee, Host, Facilitator, Moderator, and Entertainer — provided the responsibilities in each role reflect professional leadership of **event flow, audience engagement, and program continuity**.

ROLE DEFINITIONS

What is the difference between an Emcee, Host, Facilitator, Moderator, Entertainer as Emcee, and someone who just made an announcement?

All five roles below are eligible for CEP consideration — but the scope and nature of work performed must reflect *sustained, skilled leadership of event flow*. The sixth scenario (announcements) does not qualify.

Emcee (Master of Ceremonies)

The throughline of the entire program. An Emcee opens the show, introduces speakers and segments, manages transitions and pacing, reads and engages the live audience, handles the unexpected, and closes the event. Their skill and presence are felt from start to finish. This is the primary role the CEP designation was built around.

Host

Represents the event, organization, or venue and creates a welcoming, branded experience for guests. A Host may open and close the program, introduce key speakers, and serve as the public face of the event. When a Host actively manages energy and flow throughout the full program arc — not just bookend moments — that engagement qualifies.

Facilitator

Guides a group through a structured process, discussion, workshop, or learning experience. The Facilitator's goal is helping participants reach a shared outcome — their role is process-oriented (moving a group toward a conclusion) rather than performance-oriented. Facilitation qualifies when your responsibilities include actively managing room energy and flow, and the audience threshold is met.

Moderator

Manages a panel, Q&A session, or structured discussion. A Moderator keeps conversation focused, ensures balanced participation among panelists, draws out key insights, and connects ideas for the audience. Moderating a panel at a conference, summit, or forum qualifies as an eligible engagement when the audience and income thresholds are met.

Entertainer as Emcee

Uses performance as part of an emcee role, with responsibility for guiding the audience through the broader event program. To qualify, the entertainer must provide continuity between distinct program segments, facilitate transitions involving other speakers, performers, or activities, and support the event's objectives beyond their own performance. Standalone performances, regardless of length or audience interaction, do not qualify. The qualifying factor is what the performer is *responsible for* — not how entertaining they are or how long they are onstage.

Making an Announcement X Does Not Qualify

Stepping to a microphone to direct guests ("Dinner is served in the ballroom"), share logistics, or make a single announcement — even from a main stage — does not qualify as an emcee engagement, regardless of how the event organizer labeled your role on the contract. CEP eligibility requires *sustained, skilled leadership* of program flow for a substantial portion of the event.

My contract says "Emcee" but I mostly made announcements between acts. Does it count?

The title on your contract is not the deciding factor — the **nature and scope of work performed** is. If your responsibilities were limited to periodic announcements, script-reading between acts, or directing guest traffic, that engagement would not meet the standard for a qualifying event. To count, your role must reflect active, sustained leadership of the event's energy, flow, and audience experience throughout the program.

COUNTING ENGAGEMENTS

Can I count a multi-day event as more than one engagement?

Yes. You are able to break down your engagement events by day. If you work a **three-day conference**, for example, each day may be counted as one separate entry on your Professional Experience Spreadsheet. Depending on the event structure and your role, you may qualify for more than one line item. Document each day separately with its relevant event details.

What qualifies as a professional engagement?

A professional engagement must include an **audience of 50 or more attendees** and involve professional service in an eligible role (Emcee, Host, Facilitator, Moderator, or Entertainer as Emcee). All engagements counted toward eligibility must fall within the **past 5 years**.

Do private events qualify?

Yes — private events including galas, fundraisers, award ceremonies, and corporate functions may qualify when they include a structured program agenda and the applicant's primary responsibility is guiding participants through it. Events where the dominant purpose is social entertainment and emcee duties are incidental to a DJ or performance role do not qualify.

APPLICATION PROCESS

What happens after I pay my application fee?

Once your fee is received, **NSA Staff will send you a welcome email** with next steps and a SurveyMonkey link. You'll use that link to invite your evaluators to complete the required client evaluations as part of your application. Share the link promptly so evaluators have adequate time to respond before the submission deadline.

What documents do I need to submit?

Your application package includes: a **completed CEP Application Form**; a video portfolio of 5–7 clips (minimum 20 minutes total, no older than three years); at least three examples of professional event documentation such as run-of-show or scripts; 10–15 client evaluations; and a **Professional Experience Spreadsheet** verifying your engagements and annual income.

VIDEO PORTFOLIO

What should I keep in mind when selecting my video clips?

Keep the **Five E's** in mind — Eloquence, Enterprise, Ethics, Expertise, and Engagement. These competencies form the rubric your video portfolio will be evaluated against. Choose clips that collectively demonstrate your range across all five areas, not just your strongest individual moments.

How recent do my video clips need to be?

All video submissions must be **no older than three years** at the time of application submission. Your portfolio should consist of 5–7 clips totaling a minimum of 20 minutes of emcee performance.

FEES

What is the application fee?

The CEP application fee is **\$375 for NSA Members** and **\$988 for Non-Members**. Non-Member applicants also receive **complimentary access to the NSA Digital Vault for**

one year as part of their application. All fees are non-refundable and must be paid to initiate your application and receive your evaluator SurveyMonkey link.

TIMELINE & RENEWAL

When can I apply?

The CEP application window opens **November 1, 2026** and closes **January 31, 2027 at 11:59 PM PST**. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered for the current cycle. Pay your application fee during this window and NSA Staff will send your welcome email and SurveyMonkey evaluator link promptly.

When are certification decisions announced?

Final certification decisions are typically issued in **March**, following the NSA Board of Directors' final vote. Applications move through three phases: submission, video clip review, and NSA Board review and vote.

How long is the CEP designation valid, and how do I renew?

The CEP is valid for **three years**. To renew, you must earn 10 NSA/GSF education credits, complete a minimum of 10 emcee engagements during the certification period, reaffirm the NSA Code of Professional Ethics, and pay the renewal fee (\$125 for Members, \$275 for Non-Members).
