



15 Questions Asked By Our First-Time Locum Tenens Clinicians

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Could Locum Tenens Be Your Path to Professional Happiness?

Locum tenens is always a practice option for clinicians – whether you recently passed your national board-certification exam, you've been a licensed provider for years or you're approaching retirement. There's never a bad point in your professional life to consider making the shift to locum tenens work, and doing so can be the start of a long, successful chapter in a satisfying career.

At VISTA, we work with physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants every day, at every stage in their professional lives, helping to place them in rewarding temporary and permanent assignments. We field a lot of questions about the unique advantages and responsibilities of locum tenens work, and we developed this guide from our recruiters' experience talking firsthand with clinicians like you – those exploring locum tenens for the first time.

Inside, we'll cover the most frequently asked questions related to:

- Starting out with locum tenens, including how everything from payment to travel works
- Common misconceptions about locum tenens
- And what it's like to partner with VISTA

Read on to learn more about locum tenens so you can make the switch with confidence and start practicing faster.



1. Do I Have a Choice as to Where I'm Placed?

Yes, you have many choices with locum tenens work. Where and when you practice is ultimately up to you. There are opportunities for locum tenens clinicians across the country and beyond – some likely in your backyard – and demand is high across specialties.

One advantage of working through an experienced staffing agency like VISTA is having a resource to talk to about what you're looking for in a job, quality options to choose from and the comfort of knowing that the opportunities you're presented with are carefully screened. You may not find the perfect match right away, but when new assignments come up, your VISTA recruiter will send you details of the assignment. You then have the option to accept or decline – there's never any pressure to take a job. **By keeping the lines of communication open**, you can help your recruiter understand what you're looking for, where and when.

2. Do I Have to Arrange My Own Travel and Housing for Each Assignment?

The ability to travel extensively is a perk of locum tenens, but traveling isn't always easy. From packing to booking your flight to thinking about where you're going to stay, the thought of travel arrangements is a lot to add when you're preparing for a new work assignment. Taking advantage of an agency should help move this off your plate, so you can focus on the upcoming job.

VISTA covers the costs of travel and accommodations, and our full-time travel department handles all travel and housing arrangements. The travel team is on-call, so there's always someone to help you if you have travel issues or questions.

3. Are My Travel Preferences Taken Into Account?

What if you want to fly with a specific airline or stay in a certain hotel? Maybe you have strong feelings about certain brands, or maybe you're interested in earning frequent flyer miles or hotel points while traveling for work. **VISTA's in-house travel department will work with you on all your accommodations**, and if you have particular preferences to make traveling easier, those are always taken into consideration.

4. Can I Bring My Family With Me?

Clinicians who are new to locum tenens often ask about what happens after they accept an assignment. Can you bring family members or pets with you? **Of course you can.** You will never be expected to leave your life or loved ones behind, and your personal well-being should always come first.

It's important to note that travel expenses for additional people or pets are not covered by VISTA. Family and pet travel is at your expense, but we're happy to lend our expertise to make sure everyone arrives safely. You can work with your recruiter and our travel department, and we'll help figure out any special requests or arrangements.

5. What Else Should I Know When Preparing to Leave for an Assignment?

In our partnerships with locum tenens clinicians, our recruiters are often asked for advice about mistakes to avoid when starting an assignment. A common question asked as an assignment start-date nears is, ***Can you think of anything I'm forgetting?***

If your assignment will mean traveling for a prolonged period of time, here are a few things to consider:

- Pause things like gym memberships and cleaning services, and arrange for lawn care or snow removal as necessary.
- Redirect or pause mail delivery and arrange to have a neighbor take in packages.
- Check your home, car or other valuables to make sure leaving them unattended will not cause any issues. (For example: Is there a leaky roof you need to address? Is your car safely stored?)

Remember that taking a locum tenens assignment does not always mean extended time away from home. Many locum tenens clinicians fly in and out the same week or, as mentioned before, you may find a wealth of opportunities locally.

No matter where you're headed, before you start any locum tenens assignment through VISTA, you'll be fully briefed by your recruiter and have all of the information to arrive prepared – including a travel itinerary, notes about what to wear, after-hours contact information and more.

6. How Do I Get Paid?

Locum tenens work is based on an independent contractor model, so how you are paid will be different than a standard full-time employee. Rather than a salary, your pay is calculated hourly or daily, depending on your specialty, and you can expect direct deposit. If you work with a locum tenens staffing agency like VISTA, you don't have to worry about being paid on time. That's because you are paid directly by VISTA, and then we receive payment from the facility.

There's more to know about managing your money as a locum tenens professional than how you're paid. Accurate expense tracking, budgeting and understanding potential tax deductions can make life (and tax time) easier. We explore income management, tax tips and more in our ebook, ***Essential Information About Becoming a Locum Tenens Professional.***

7. What About Benefits?

As a locum tenens provider, you have more options available to you for health insurance than a typical employee under his or her employer's plan. Plus, health insurance premiums for independent plans are **100 percent tax deductible**. As an independent contractor, you will also have options as to how you save for retirement. Get more details on financial planning specific to locum tenens in our ebook, ***Essential Information About Becoming a Locum Tenens Professional.***

8. Who Covers Liability Insurance?

If you work through a staffing agency like VISTA, **professional liability insurance is covered**. You will be added through VISTA's annual group policy, which is renewed every year, even if you don't continue working locum tenens.

9. Who Pays for Licensing and Credentialing?

Licensing is part of the job for locum tenens physicians and advanced practice providers. No matter where you're at in your career, you are required to be licensed in every state you work in and credentialed at each site. While the amount of time licensing and credentialing can take varies from state to state and site to site, keeping the right records and documents in order can go a long way in making it easier.

VISTA covers the cost of licensing and credentialing for any assignment worked through us, and our in-house licensing team does all of the leg work of requesting and tracking verifications, which helps make the process easier. One huge benefit of working with an experienced staffing agency like VISTA is the established relationships we have with licensing boards and medical staff offices. Our team will work with you, the state medical boards and health care facilities to ensure all of the necessary paperwork is done correctly and documentation is ready on time. Partner with your recruiter to put together a licensing plan (now and in the future) with the assistance of our licensing experts.

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10. Is Full-Time Work Possible with Locum Tenens?

There's a perception that locum tenens is only for part-time work. Some physicians might think of locum tenens as a way to make extra money by taking shifts around a full-time position, or as an option for semi-retirement. While this is true, it's not always the case. A key benefit of the locum tenens lifestyle is a flexible schedule, but this does not mean that work is hard to come by or that you should expect extended periods of time off.

As an independent contractor, **you get to choose whether you work part-time or full-time**. Depending on your preferences, making locum tenens your full-time job is entirely possible. Demand for clinicians is high across the country, so chances are you will be able to keep your schedule as full as you want it to be.

Keep in mind, however, that some facilities will take several months for credentialing, so your ability to plan out your schedule will impact your chances of keeping busy. Assignments do come and go – the more flexible you can be, the more options recruiters at VISTA will be able to put in front of you for full-time work. Note that some of the most rewarding locum tenens placements we hear about have ended up being assignments the clinician didn't initially consider.

11. How Do I Know I'm in Good Hands?

Clinicians unfamiliar with locums may be under the impression that locum tenens professionals are treated differently on the job. The truth is that **locum tenens clinicians are there to fill gaps and provide care where and when it's needed most.** Hosting facilities are unsurprisingly grateful for the role locum tenens clinicians play in keeping caseloads lighter and giving patients the attention they need. Locum tenens providers are treated like true members of the team, without the additional onboarding paperwork and politics that come with full-time positions.

VISTA places hundreds of clinicians every year, and many come back again and again because they like the experience so much. Through our 25-plus years of experience, we have maintained a commitment to vetting organizations as much as the clinicians we help to place, and we're confident in the connections we create. Stories of facilities throwing goodbye parties for locum tenens physicians on their last day on assignment are not unheard of.

12. Is There a Cost to Working With a Staffing Agency?

No respectable locum tenens staffing agency should charge you a placement fee. With VISTA, you're not paying for a service. **There's no cost and you can expect a personal, pressure-free experience** from our partnership.

13. What Makes VISTA Different?

VISTA is an **award-winning industry leader among locum tenens staffing firms** in the U.S. We're a founding member of the National Association of Locum Tenens Organizations (NALTO), which means we've paved the way in establishing and maintaining strict industry standards, and we'll stay on top of any industry changes or requirements you need to know about.

Yes, you have options when it comes to the staffing agency you use to find a locum tenens assignment. Know that at VISTA, we're dedicated to helping you find more than your next job. We'll be there to get to know you, form a personal connection and provide one-on-one advice – plus, make the process easier. From screening worksites to match your skills and interests, to helping with licensure and credentialing, your recruiter will work with you every step of the way.

14. What If I Still Have Questions While I'm On Assignment?

We know that questions come up at all times for the locum tenens first-timer – while researching jobs you're interested in, to well after you've landed at your new work site. Our 24-hour on-call answering service is there so you can talk to a live person at any time, day or night.

15. How Do I Get Started with VISTA?

Getting started with VISTA and taking advantage of our professional resources is simple. Here are a few steps to take:

- [Click here](#) to contact us and get in touch with a recruiter right away.
- Visit our job boards for [Physicians](#) and [Advanced Practice Providers](#) to explore what's available.
- Look through our [resources](#) to learn more.

Contact Us

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About VISTA

Founded in 1990, VISTA Staffing Solutions helps hospitals, medical practices and government agencies across the U.S. optimize their physician and advanced practitioner staffing, ensure quality and continuity of care for patients, and maintain financial stability. A leading provider of U.S. Locum Tenens and Permanent Search Services, VISTA is headquartered in Salt Lake City with additional offices in Atlanta, Milwaukee and Houston, and employs approximately 300 people. The company has shown consistent profitability since its second year of operation. VISTA Staffing Solutions is a founding member of the National Organization of Locum Tenens Organizations (NALTO), an organization that develops and enforces standards for credentialing, ethics and business practices within the locum tenens industry.

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