

# COPE<sup>®</sup> 2025

## Data Report

*Advancing the Standard of Continuing Education*



**Accreditation**

# COPE Introduction

The annual COPE Data Report highlights the breadth, quality, and diversity of accredited continuing education within optometry. Reviewing the data provides valuable insights for continuing education providers, speakers, and stakeholders who shape the development of optometric education. The report data supports the advancement of innovative educational models while reaffirming the enduring importance of traditional programming. Ongoing assessments ensure that continuing education remains relevant, rigorous, and responsive to the needs of today's optometric professionals.

The COPE Governing Council extends its sincere appreciation to all members of the accredited continuing education community. We remain resolute in our commitment to advancing high-quality, evidence-based education that is free from commercial bias. This commitment ensures meaningful learning experiences and supports the ongoing professional development of doctors of optometry in delivering exceptional patient care.

## *The 2025-2026 COPE Governing Council*

We are pleased to share the second annual COPE Data Report with our stakeholders. The 2025 data describes an accreditation program that continues to grow and meet its mission of advancing the quality and integrity of optometric continuing education by upholding standards of excellence that lead to better patient care and improved health outcomes. COPE continues to be a leader in CE accreditation and optometrists know when they see the COPE logo that they will receive high-quality, unbiased education. All that we do would not be possible without our hardworking COPE staff and volunteer COPE Reviewers who are the backbone of our accreditation system. We are all dedicated to supporting the work of COPE's CE providers and our shared commitment to lifelong learning for the benefit of the public.

**Lisa Fennell**

*ARBO Chief Executive Officer*



# COPE 2025 Data Report

The COPE 2025 Data Report provides information on the accredited continuing education (CE) environment in optometry and the nature of the education being provided. The report features information on the continuing education courses and providers in the COPE system. The diversity of topics and formats of COPE accredited courses as well as the number and geographic distribution of COPE continuing education providers offers optometrists access to high-quality education wherever they are located. The COPE Accreditation program has been in operation for over 30 years. During that time, COPE has continued to grow and evolve along with the profession of optometry to consistently meet the needs of licensing boards, optometrist learners, and CE providers.

# COPE Accreditation

The Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE®) was created by the Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry (ARBO®) to accredit continuing education on behalf of optometric regulatory boards. Continuing education (CE) is the primary method used by optometric regulatory boards to promote the continuing competence of licensed optometrists. COPE Accreditation serves the public, regulatory boards and the profession by promoting improvement in competence, performance and patient outcomes. Activities accredited by COPE are attended by optometrists in North America seeking CE credit for license renewal because of the almost universal acceptance of COPE CE by optometric licensing boards.

The COPE Governing Council is comprised of representatives from the American Academy of Optometry (AAO), Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry (ARBO) and Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO). This governing body sets the standards, policies and procedures for the COPE accreditation program.

COPE's Accreditation Criteria and Standards for Integrity and Independence (SII) in Accredited Continuing Education ensure that accredited CE is designed to be relevant, effective, evidence-based, and independent of commercial bias. The COPE accreditation program ensures high-quality CE that meets rigorous standards for educational excellence and independence. COPE has adopted the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME®) Accreditation Criteria and Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education (SII). This allows COPE accredited optometric continuing education to be considered equal to the continuing medical education taken by medical doctors.

# COPE Mission Statement

COPE is committed to advancing the quality and integrity of optometric continuing education by upholding standards of excellence that lead to better patient care and improved health outcomes.

## COPE Objectives

The objectives of the Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE) are:

- ▶ To accredit high-quality, competency-based optometric continuing education that addresses practice gaps, enhances professional practice and contributes to positive healthcare outcomes for patients and their communities.
- ▶ To establish clear and transparent processes for accreditation of continuing optometric education.
- ▶ To ensure the integrity and independence of all accredited continuing optometric education content that promotes evidence-based outcomes.
- ▶ To promote culturally competent accredited continuing optometric education.
- ▶ To provide a process for continuous quality improvement of COPE Administrators, Accredited Providers, and Reviewers.
- ▶ To assist and support regulatory boards by providing a trusted standardized accreditation process that ensures public protection.

# Key Findings of the COPE 2025 Data Report

## Courses and Activities

- ▶ 6,571 courses were submitted for COPE review in 2025 (2.6% increase from 2024).
- ▶ 431 COPE Administrators/Providers held 3,062 accredited activities.

## Course Categories

- ▶ Category distribution remains consistent with Treatment/Management of Ocular Disease continuing to be the largest category.
- ▶ Format Distribution of Courses Submitted:
  - Synchronous In-Person: 64.56%
  - Synchronous Virtual: 23.89%
  - Asynchronous: 11.55%

## Format Trends

- ▶ In-person remains dominant, but virtual and asynchronous formats have grown.
- ▶ A breakdown of courses taken by optometrists indicates a shift toward virtual learning.

## COPE CE Providers

- ▶ COPE supports administrators, accredited providers, and jointly accredited providers in four countries.
- ▶ Provider types include business consulting, CE companies, foundations, hospitals, local/state/national associations, group practices, government, and schools.
- ▶ For-profit providers are the majority (328), with 103 non-profit providers.

## Impact and Reach

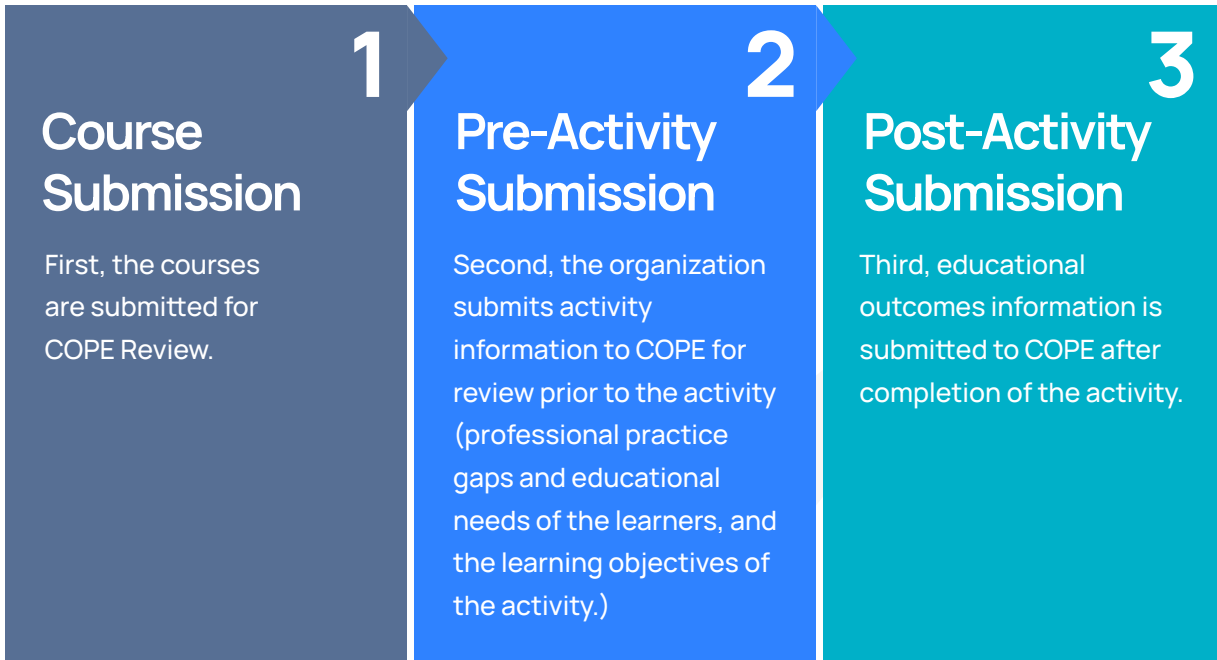
- ▶ Over 800,000 courses were taken by optometrists in 2025 (from *OE TRACKER*®).
- ▶ The COPE Accreditation System supports lifelong learning and public protection by ensuring CE quality and accessibility.

## Conclusion

The COPE 2025 Data Report demonstrates the continued growth, diversity, and high standards of accredited optometric continuing education. The program's commitment to evidence-based, unbiased, and accessible CE supports the professional development of optometrists and ultimately benefits patient care.

# COPE Accreditation Process

COPE Activity Accreditation is a three-step process.



6,571

Courses

*A course is the session where the educational content is delivered.*

2,195

Activities

*An activity is a meeting or event with one or more courses.*

In 2025, there were 6,571 courses submitted for COPE review. This represents the highest number of courses submitted in COPE history. There were 2,195 activities submitted for COPE review. The number of activity submissions has remained relatively stable over time.

431

COPE Administrators/  
Providers

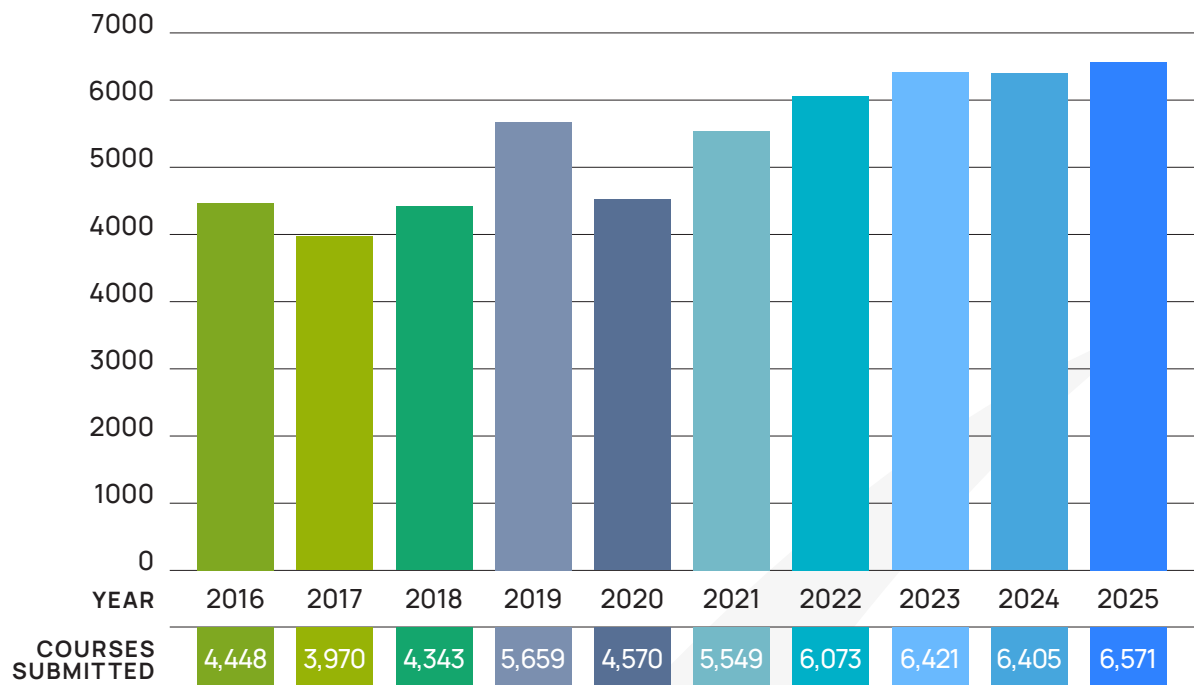
3,062

COPE Accredited Activities

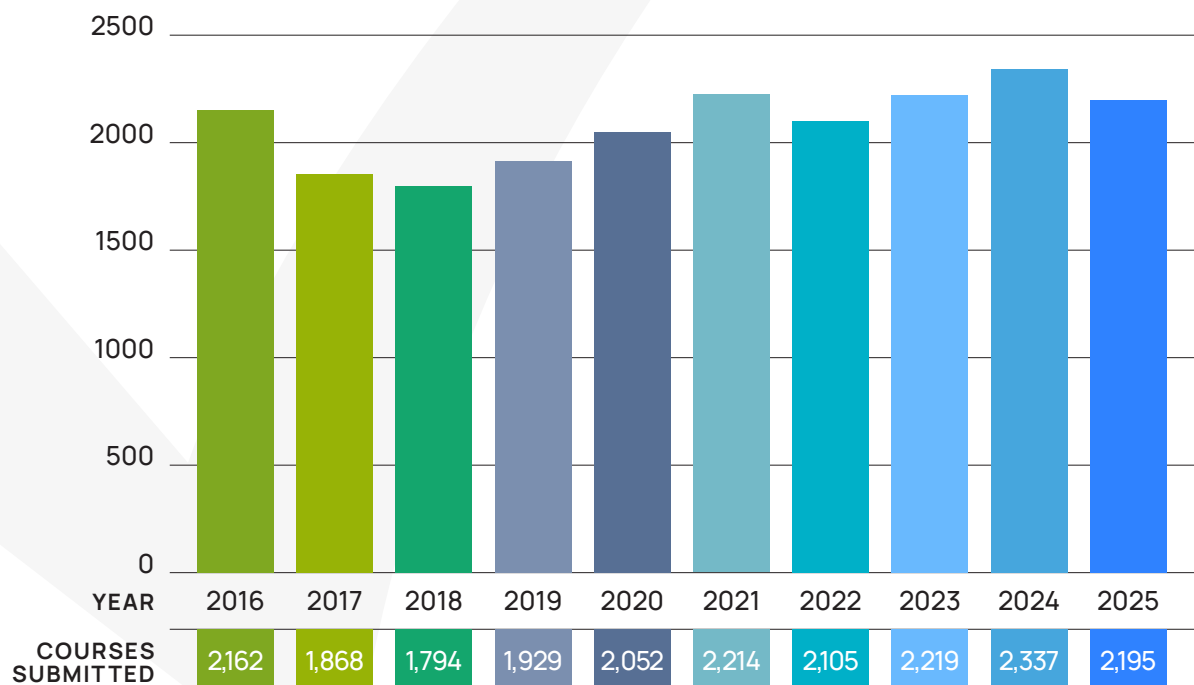
There were 431 COPE Administrators/Providers who held 3,062 COPE accredited activities in 2025.

The mean number of activities held by each COPE Administrator/Provider in 2025 was 7, while the median number was 2. There were 162 COPE Administrators/Providers that had 1 activity in 2025, and the maximum number of activities presented by one COPE Administrator/Provider was 299.

## Number of Courses Submitted to COPE Over Time



## Number of Activities Submitted to COPE Over Time



# COPE Course Categories

Each COPE Course is categorized into a generalized content area developed by COPE to meet the CE requirements for practitioner re-licensure of participating boards of optometry. The breakdown of courses by category in 2025 is below.

COPE Category	Number of Courses	Percentage
Treatment/Management of Ocular Disease	1,798	27.36%
General Optometry	726	11.05%
Glaucoma	614	9.34%
Peri-Operative Management of Ophthalmic Surgery	537	8.17%
Systemic Disease	491	7.47%
Neuro-Optometry	430	6.54%
Practice Management	395	6.01%
Pharmacology	352	5.36%
Functional Vision/Pediatrics	333	5.07%
Contact Lenses	277	4.22%
Public Health	210	3.20%
Low Vision/Visual Impairment & Rehabilitation	133	2.02%
Ethics/Jurisprudence	115	1.75%
Laser Procedures	75	1.14%
Surgery Procedures (Optometric)	74	1.13%
Injection Skills	11	0.17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,571</b>	

# COPE Course Formats

The course format is the method used to physically teach a course. COPE uses the following formats. Many licensing boards have specific requirements regarding the course formats that are accepted for license renewal.



## Synchronous In-Person

The course instructor is in the same room as the participants. The instructor is face-to-face with the audience and can touch the participants.



## Synchronous Virtual

The course instructor is not physically present (not face-to-face) but is meeting with learners in real-time and can provide immediate feedback.



## Asynchronous

The course instructor and learner are not together at the same time, have no real-time communication, and the content is learner-paced.

## 2025 COPE Course Format Distribution

Format	Number of Courses	Percentage
Synchronous In-Person	4,242	64.56%
Synchronous Virtual	1,570	23.89%
Asynchronous	759	11.55%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,571</b>	

## The Distribution of COPE Courses by Format from 2019-2025

Format	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Synchronous In-Person	4,242 64.56%	4,223 65.9%	4,193 65.3%	3,814 62.8%	4,433* 79.9%	3,813* 62.8%	5,097* 90%
Synchronous Virtual	1,570 23.89%	1,506 23.5%	1,527 23.8%	1,637 26.9%	349* 6.3%	1,623* 26.7%	169* 3%
Asynchronous	759 11.55%	676 10.5%	701 10.9%	622 10.2%	766 13.8%	622 10.2%	392 6.9%

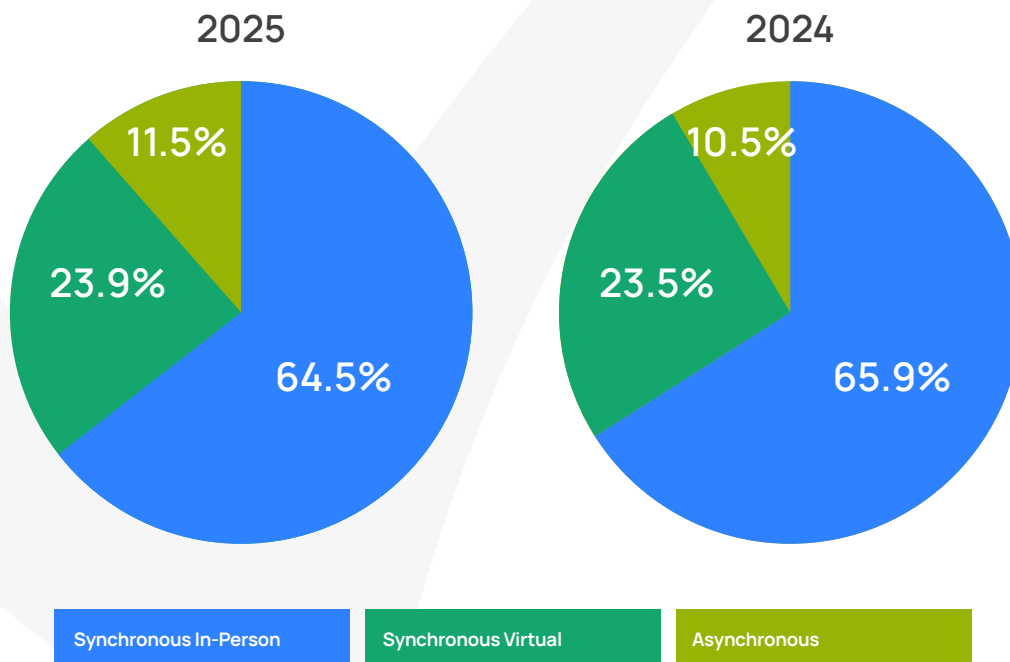
\*Due to the COPE rule modification and state/provincial rule waivers for COVID-19, some courses submitted as live in 2019-2021 were presented as online/interactive.

# COPE Course Formats

A comparison of the format of courses submitted to COPE in 2025 and 2024 versus the format of courses taken by optometrists in 2025 and 2024 (from ARBO's *OE TRACKER*® program) is below.

## COPE Courses Submitted to COPE in 2025 and 2024

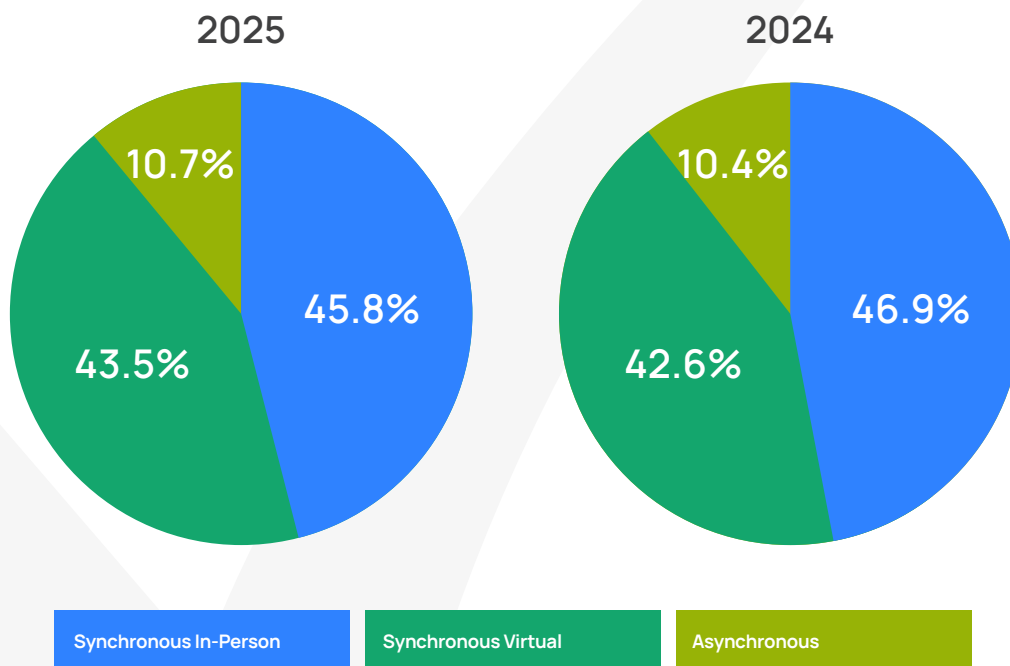
Format	2025	2024
<b>Synchronous In-Person</b>	4,242	4,225
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>64.5%</b>	<b>65.9%</b>
<b>Synchronous Virtual</b>	1,570	1,503
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>23.9%</b>	<b>23.5%</b>
<b>Asynchronous</b>	759	675
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,571</b>	<b>6,408</b>



# COPE Course Formats

Courses Taken by Optometrists in 2025 and 2024  
(from *OE TRACKER*®)

Format	2025	2024
<b>Synchronous In-Person</b>	363,167	363,514
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>45.8%</b>	<b>46.9%</b>
<b>Synchronous Virtual</b>	345,019	330,364
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>43.5%</b>	<b>42.6%</b>
<b>Asynchronous</b>	84,789	80,577
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>792,975</b>	<b>774,455</b>

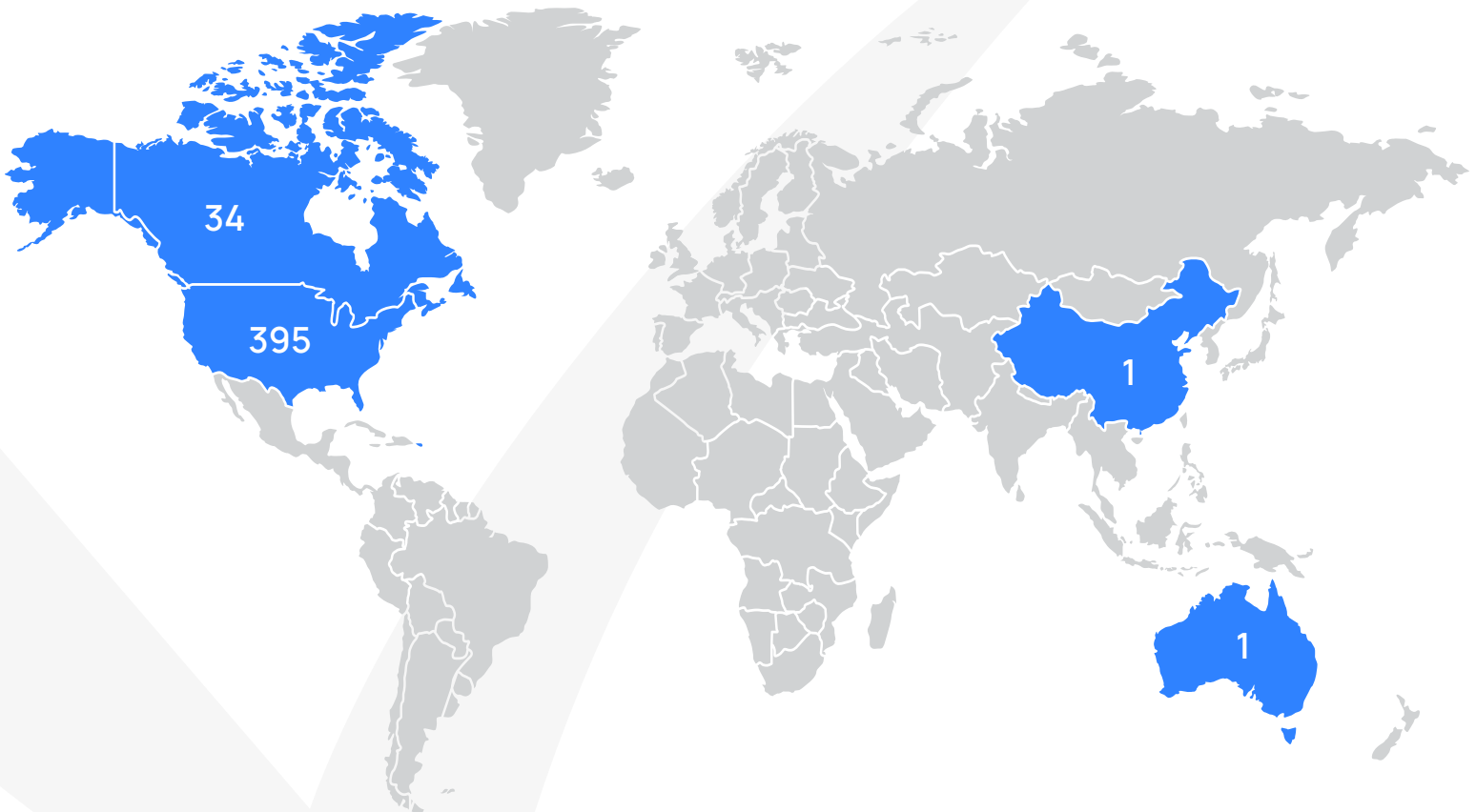


\*ARBO's *OE TRACKER*® program tracks continuing education credits for optometrists. The data in *OE TRACKER* can be accessed by optometrists and licensing boards online or on the *OE TRACKER* mobile app. Both COPE accredited and non-accredited courses are tracked by *OE TRACKER*. In 2025, over 800,000 courses taken by optometrists were added to *OE TRACKER*. Over 9.5 million courses have been uploaded since the inception of the program.

# COPE Administrators and Accredited Providers

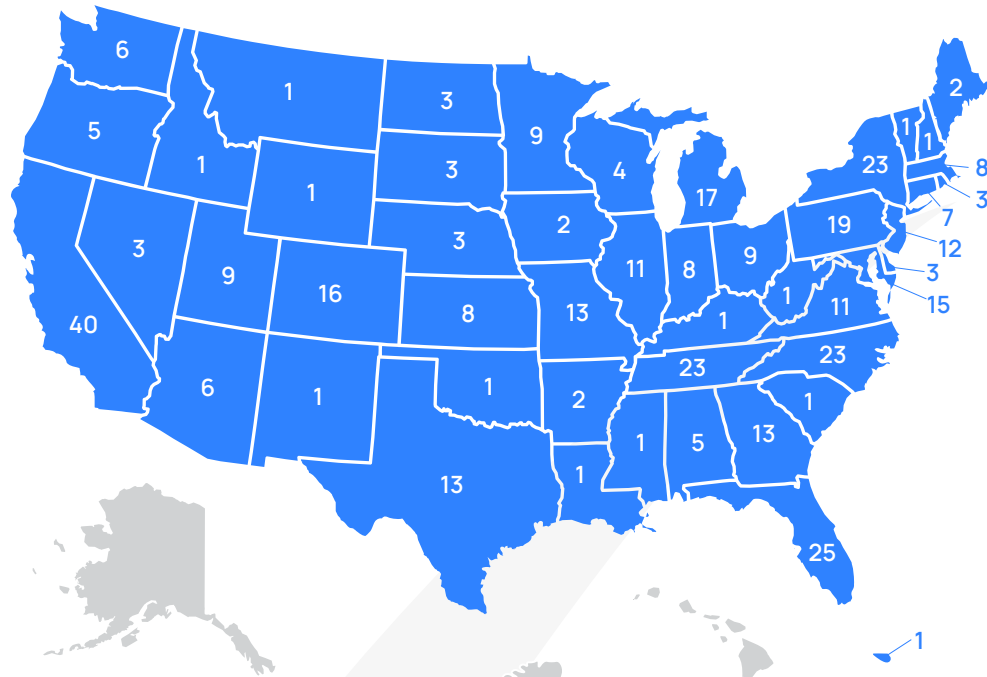
In 2025, there were 400 COPE administrators, 2 accredited providers, and 29 jointly accredited providers who presented 3,062 COPE accredited CE activities. The COPE Accreditation system is international in scope with COPE Administrators/Providers located in the US, Australia, Canada, and China.

## COPE Administrator/Provider Locations

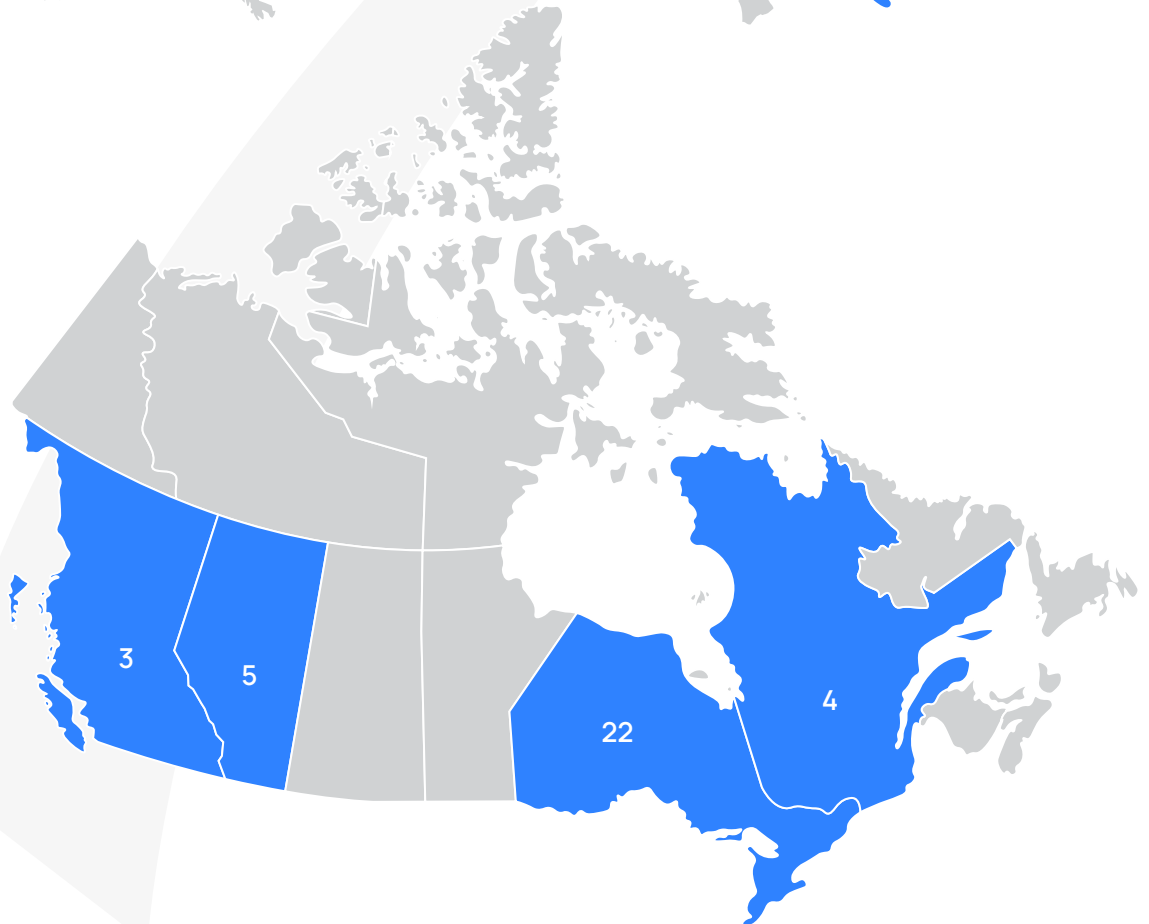


# COPE Administrators and Accredited Providers

US COPE  
Admin/Provider  
Locations



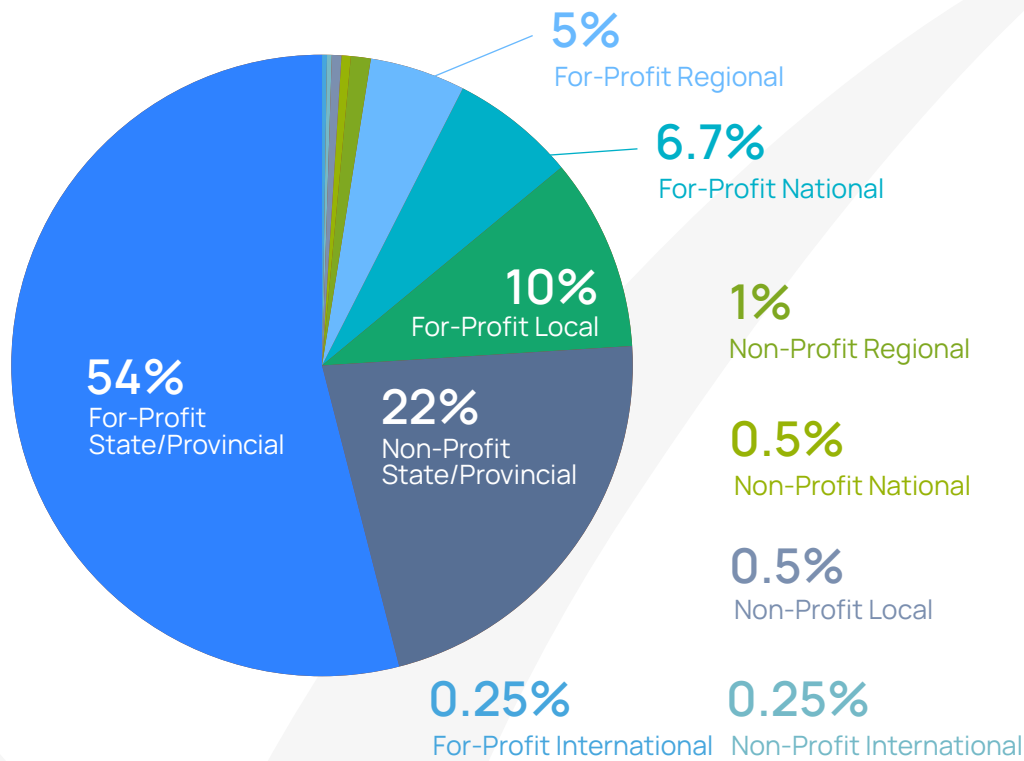
Canadian COPE  
Admin/Provider  
Locations



# The Scope of COPE Administrators/Providers

The scope of COPE Administrators'/Providers' CE enterprise varies from for-profit to non-profit at the local, state/provincial, regional, national or international level.

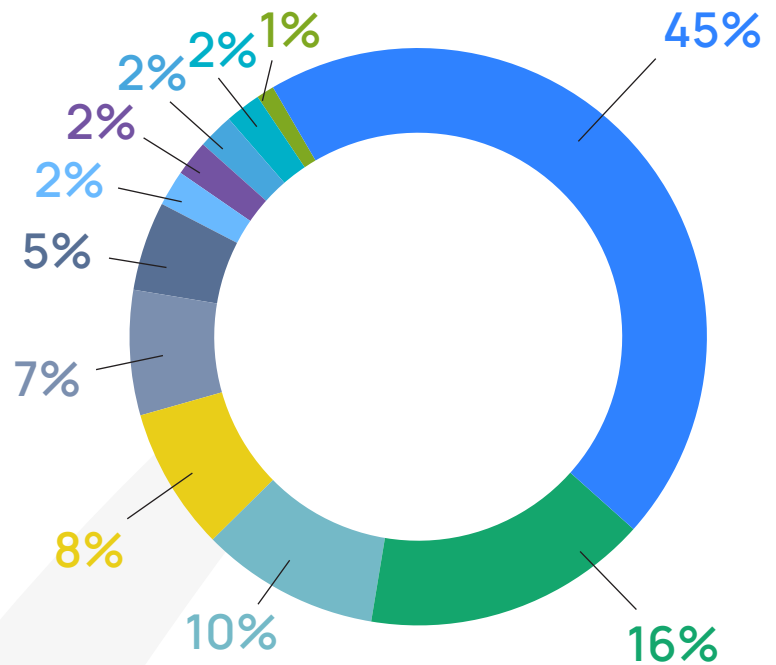
## Scope of Companies Offering COPE Accredited CE



Non-Profit Companies		For-Profit Companies	
Local	2	Local	44
International	1	International	1
State/Provincial	94	State/Provincial	233
Regional	4	Regional	21
National	2	National	29
<b>Total Non-Profit</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>Total For-Profit</b>	<b>328</b>

# COPE Diversity of Companies

The COPE CE system is very diverse with the types of companies offering COPE Accredited CE ranging from State/Provincial Optometric Associations, to Group Optometric/Ophthalmic practices, hospital/healthcare system, and optometry/medical schools.



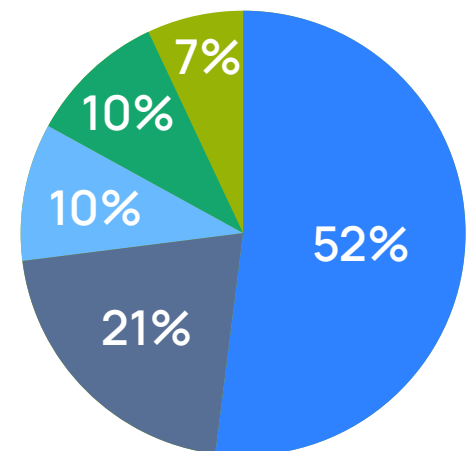
2025 COPE Administrator/Provider Company Type	Number
Group Optometric/Ophthalmic Practice	194
CE Company	71
State/Provincial Optometric Association	41
Optometry/Medical School	35
State/National Membership Organization	30
Local Optometric Association	20
Business Consulting	10
Hospital/Healthcare System	9
National Optometric Association	8
Foundation	7
Government/Other	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>

# COPE and Joint Accreditation

COPE also participates in the Joint Accreditation for Interprofessional Continuing Education™ collaborative. Joint Accreditation (JA) is a program developed through a collaboration of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME®), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE®), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC®). The program allows organizations to be simultaneously accredited to provide continuing education for multiple healthcare professions through a single application process, set of accreditation criteria and standards, and fee structure. Jointly accredited providers can award continuing education credit to the following professions: athletic trainers, dentists, dietitians, nurses, optometrists, physician associates/(PAs), pharmacists, physicians, psychologists, and social workers. More information on the Joint Accreditation collaborative may be found at <https://jointaccreditation.org/>.

COPE joined Joint Accreditation in 2018 as one of the first associate member accreditor organizations to provide optometrists with team-based continuing education opportunities, educate other healthcare professions on optometry's role in the larger interprofessional healthcare system, and ultimately promote improved patient care and outcomes. Currently, there are 32 jointly accredited CE providers that offer COPE credit. The type of company participating in Joint Accreditation with COPE in 2025 are shown below.

2025 Jointly Accredited Provider Company Type	Number
CE Company	15
Medical School	6
Government	3
Hospital/Healthcare System	3
Association	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>



# COPE and Joint Accreditation

Jointly accredited activities engage a wide spectrum of health professionals, supporting both individual development and team-based learning. Learner interactions by profession in 2024 are shown below. Optometrists had 67,232 interactions with jointly accredited continuing education activities in 2024.

## Learner Interactions by Profession - 2024

Profession	Learner Interactions
Nurses	11,855,190
Physicians	8,967,086
Pharmacists	3,349,656
Pharmacy Technicians	1,732,621
Physicians Associates	1,098,801
Social Workers	824,580
Psychologists	201,407
Registered Dietitians	122,087
<b>Optometrists</b>	<b>67,232</b>
Dentists	55,837
Athletic Trainers	22,150
Allied Dental Staff	15,714
Dietetic Technicians	1,379
Other Learners	5,666,776
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,980,516</b>

Data courtesy of the Joint Accreditation for Interprofessional Continuing Education. 2025. Joint Accreditation Data Report: Learning Together, Leading Forward – 2024. [www.jointaccreditation.org/reports/2024-data-report](http://www.jointaccreditation.org/reports/2024-data-report).

For more information on  
COPE Accreditation,  
please scan the QR code below.



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*OE TRACKER* program,  
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