

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

“This guidance document is advisory in nature but is binding on an agency until amended by such agency. A guidance document does not include internal procedural documents that only affect the internal operations of the agency and does not impose additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties or include confidential information or rules and regulations made in accordance with the Nebraska Administrative Procedure Act. If you believe that this guidance document imposes additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties, you may request a review of the document.”

Pursuant to
Neb. Rev. Stat. § 84-901.03



PEER SUPPORT CERTIFICATION & TRAINING GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) directs the establishment of standards for peer support, including standards for training programs and for the training and certification of service delivery through peer support services.

Certification is designed and intended for trained individuals to include parents/legal guardians or caregivers who have been successful in their own recovery, and are prepared to share their experience and knowledge with others as part of an organized care team.

The Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) Certification process was developed by the DBH OCA in collaboration with consumers, educators, providers and peers. It is structured to meet or exceed the standards prepared by the International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC) as appropriate and is also aligned with the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) core competencies for peer support.

The purpose of peer support professional certification is to promote consumer protection and public confidence by assuring that peer support services are being provided by trained and qualified individuals. For the provider, peer certification gives recognition to the unique experience, education and skills of the peer support provider, encouragement for continued professional growth and development as well as a recognized and billable professional certificate.

The guidance document lays out expectations and instructions for testing, the certification process, grandfather certification process and the guidelines for trainers that include the minimum required Peer Support Core Curriculum competencies. The document also addresses forms, applications, renewals, continuing education and testing in respective sections.

II. REQUIREMENTS FOR CPSS CERTIFICATION

AGE: Applicants must be at least nineteen (19) years old.

LAWFUL PRESENCE: Applicants must be United States citizens or qualified aliens and provide supporting documentation as requested.

RECOVERY/LIVED EXPERIENCE: This certification is designed and intended for self-disclosed current or previous consumers of behavioral health services who have been successful in their own recovery, or as a parent, legal guardian or primary caretaker of an individual who receives or has received behavioral health services. All applicants must be prepared to share their experience and knowledge with others while working as part of an organized clinical and non-clinical care team. Attestation of a minimum of one (1) year of recovery and as having lived experience is required within the application.

BASIC EDUCATION: Applicants must provide verification of successfully completing high school or obtaining a GED diploma.

PEER SUPPORT CORE CURRICULUM TRAINING: Applicants must obtain a certificate of completion of DBH OCA approved Peer Support Core Curriculum training. **NOTE: Peer Support Core Curriculum Training must be completed within twelve (12) months immediately prior to the date of the application for the CPSS certification.**

ADULT AND CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES PORTAL REGISTRY: Applicants must successfully complete the Adult and Child Protective Services Portal Registry background check *through the portal link listed on the CPSS application* and found on the DBH OCA webpage. Registry information will be released to the applicant and the designated DBH OCA staff.

CONVICTION INFORMATION: The application includes a question about whether the applicant has any misdemeanor or felony convictions. The applicant must answer “Yes” if he/she has ever been convicted of a felony. The applicant must also answer ‘Yes’ if he/she has been convicted of a misdemeanor in the last seven (7) years immediately prior to the date of the CPSS application.. **The Office of Consumer Affairs and Division of Behavioral Health understand and value lived experience as a provider of peer services and a conviction does not automatically disqualify applicants from obtaining certification.**

The applicant must list *all* felony convictions. The applicant must also list misdemeanor conviction that have occurred *within the last seven (7) years* immediately prior to the date of the CPSS application submission. It does not matter whether the applicant reported the conviction on a previous application. Infractions, diversions, and dismissals do not need to be listed. Applicants who have pled guilty or who have been convicted of a criminal offense should check with the court system to determine if the conviction appears on their record as a misdemeanor. Misdemeanors can be processed through traffic courts, therefore the application must include misdemeanor traffic violations.

Examples of Common Misdemeanors: This list is provided to help identify misdemeanors that are sometimes mistaken for infractions. ***This is not a complete list.***

MIP
DUI/DWI
Open Container
Tobacco Use by Minor
Shoplifting/Theft/
Unauthorized Use of Financial Transaction Device
Assault
Disorderly Conduct/Disorderly House
Reckless Driving
Driving under Suspension/Revocation
License Vehicle without Liability Insurance
Failure to Appear in Court
False Information or Reporting
Leaving the Scene of an Accident
Operator not Carrying License
Unlawful Display of Plates/Renewal Tab
Park Rule Violation/Curfew Violation
Dog at Large/Failure to Vaccinate Animal
Littering/Fireworks
Bad Check

The following is information that will need to be provided on the online CPSS application:

- List the date of conviction(s) to include *all* felonies and any misdemeanor *within the last 7 years immediately prior to the date of the CPSS application*, county and state in which the conviction occurred and the type of conviction(s). Please include a brief description of the conviction(s) including what the conviction was for, what happened and who was involved.
- An explanation of the actions the applicant has taken to address the behaviors or actions related to the conviction(s).
- If the applicant is currently on probation, a letter from the applicant's probation officer addressing the terms and current status of the probation.
- If the applicant has *ever* been convicted of a felony or any misdemeanor within the last seven (7) years immediately prior to the date of the CPSS application outside of the State of Nebraska, a copy of the court record that includes the statement of charges and the final disposition must be included with the application.

Upon initial review of the application, additional information *may be requested* by the DBH OCA to include: a copy of the entire court record related to all reportable felony and misdemeanor convictions, and an explanation of the events leading to the conviction, to include: what, when, where and why.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION(S) OR LICENSURE(S): If the applicant has ever held or currently holds another professional license or certification (for example: a medication aide, licensed alcohol and drug counselor, mental health practitioner, registered nurse, etc.), list the name, identification number, date of issuance, date of expiration and any disciplinary action that may have ever been taken against said certifications or licenses in

Nebraska or any other state. Additional information may be requested by the DBH OCA including, but not limited to, an official copy of the disciplinary action, including any charges, sanctions and disposition.

PEER RECOVERY EXAM - INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION & RECIPROcity CONSORTIUM (IC&RC) PEER RECOVERY EXAMINATION: IC&RC Peer Recovery Examination *must be passed within six (6) months* from the date the IC&RC emails the applicant with notification of approval to test and test registration links. *It is recommended to register to test as soon as possible as test openings do fill up quickly.*

CODE OF ETHICS: Applicant must read and agree to abide by the Nebraska CPSS Code of Ethics as indicated by applicant's digital signature on the online CPSS Application.

CPSS CERTIFICATE APPLICATION FEE: There is currently no application fee charged by the State of Nebraska for the CPSS certification.

CPSS CERTIFICATE EFFECTIVE DATES: Upon successful completion of the IC&RC Peer Recovery exam, the applicant will receive a certification card from the State of Nebraska DHHS Licensure Unit. This certification card will list the effective date and the date of expiration. The CPSS Certification will expire on September 1st of odd numbered years. In order to re-certify, CPSS certificate holders will be required to complete a renewal application along with an attestation of the completion of twenty (20) continuing education hours (CEUs), inclusive of 6 CEU's in Ethics.

NOTE: If an applicant was certified within 12 months of the expiration date of September 1st of odd numbered years, the continuing education hours (CEU's), inclusive of 6 CEU's in Ethics, will be waived until the following renewal period. The CPSS certificate holder will still need to complete the online re-certification form prior to the expiration of the certification on September 1st of odd numbered years.

III. GRANDFATHER REQUIREMENTS

CERTIFIED PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST (CPSS): If the applicant received their CPSS after January 1, 2019, he/she will receive an updated certification card with revised dates, and are not required to do anything further.

CERTIFIED PEER SUPPORT AND WELLNESS SPECIALIST (CPSWS): If the applicant currently holds a State of Nebraska-issued CPSWS certificate, and has worked and/or volunteered a minimum of five hundred (500) hours providing peer support in the last twelve (12) months immediately preceding the date of the CPSS application, the following steps must be completed:

- Complete the online Grandfather Application and provide all requested information and documentation, and
- Complete the Employer Verification form with the job description attached and signed by the supervisor.

- Upon approval of the CPSS Grandfather application, the applicant must take and pass the IC&RC Peer Recovery exam within ninety (90) days of the approval to test notification sent by IC&RC.

NOTE: *The applicant does NOT need to re-take Peer Support training.*

IV. IC&RC TESTING INFORMATION

The purpose of the IC&RC is to promote uniform professional standards and quality assurance for the peer support specialist profession, and to give the profession greater visibility throughout the United States and other countries. Following is a link to information on the IC&RC Peer Recovery exam: <https://internationalCERTIFICATEing.org/creds/pr>.

The email notification the applicant receives from IC&RC includes instructions for exam registration and payment. Applicants must adhere to all IC&RC policies and procedures as outlined on the IC&RC web page (<https://internationalcredentialing.org/>) and as provided to applicants upon notification of approval to test.

PEER RECOVERY EXAM DATES and LOCATIONS: The IC&RC exam is offered at approved testing centers throughout Nebraska, thereby allowing applicants to test on a date, time and a location that is convenient for them. Applicants will receive information from IC&RC on registering for testing once application for certification is approved by the State of Nebraska DBH OCA.

RETEST: Applicants who do not pass the IC&RC Peer Recovery exam can retest after a mandatory ninety (90) day wait period from the previous exam date. Applicants will be sent retest instructions from the IC&RC if the applicant did not pass the exam.

***NOTE:** All applicants must successfully complete the Peer Recovery exam within 6 months of the date applicant is notified by IC&RC of approval to test and provided exam registration directions.*

FOR MORE DETAILED TESTING INFORMATION TO INCLUDE THE STUDY GUIDES, PLEASE VISIT THE IC&RC WEBSITE:

<https://internationalcredentialing.org/>

***NOTE:** If the applicant has had difficulty meeting the testing time frame as a result of closed testing centers due to Covid-19, contact the OCA at 402-471-7736 right away to review any options for a possible test date extension.*

V. PEER SUPPORT CORE CURRICULUM SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Peer Support Core Curriculum training standards have been implemented to ensure consistency and competency among all Nebraska peer workers. Any person or organization wanting to provide Peer Support Core Curriculum training should complete the online application as listed below for review and approval by the DBH OCA.

https://appengine.egov.com/apps/Account/Login?ReturnUrl=%2Fapps%2Fne%2FPeer_Support_Core_Curriculum_Training_Application

The DBH OCA will either 1) ask for feedback seeking additional information, 2) approve the curriculum, or 3) deny the curriculum. The contact information for all DBH OCA approved Core Curriculums as well as approved trainers will be posted on the DBH OCA web page for public access.

The Peer Support Core Curriculum training must detail the sixty (60) hours of the thirteen (13) Domains and associated competencies, to include ten (10) hours of Ethics. Curriculums will be submitted via the online **Peer Support Core Curriculum Training Submission application**. **There is a ‘save and continue’ feature that allows for completing the application over an extended period of time. A login and password will need to be created in order to utilize this feature.** The application information should include the following:

- Ten (10) hours of ethics must be included within the sixty (60) hour total curriculum hours.
- Forty (40) hours must be live interactive hours.
- Any hours in excess of forty (40) may be provided in a form other than live interactive hours and as specified by the approved curriculum.
- Any video or other media to be used within the curriculum should be listed and submitted for review.
- Specify the “method of delivery” of each competency i.e., page 3 of 18-page Power Point file named ‘Domain 1 Power Point’, 16-minute video file name ‘Engagement Methods’, handout on mutuality file name ‘mutuality handout’, Role play exercise B file name ‘Motivational Interviewing Role Play Instructions’ page 4, etc., listed under the thirteen (13) Domains.
- Identify the ‘competency measure’ that will be used for each Domain to include the passing score – i.e., 20-question quiz with a 75% minimum passing score.
- List the total number of hours spent in each of the thirteen (13) Domains to equal a minimum total of sixty (60) hours of Peer Support Core Curriculum training to include a minimum of ten (10) hours of ethics.
- The training manual.
- Daily training agenda.
- Attendance rosters that list trainees’ legal names and include AM and PM sign-in sheets.
- Cancellation/Rescheduling Policy.

CPSS Curriculum Requirements:

- Interactive teaching strategies are recommended for the core competencies.
- A minimum of one (1) trainer should hold the Nebraska Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) credential.
- All trainers should be identified with their legal name on the Peer Support Core Curriculum Submission Form with detailed contact information and credentials.
- There shall be a minimum of a 1:10 trainer-to-student ratio.
- A description of how competency measures, for example, a test or quiz, will be conducted for trainees attending via videoconference must be included with the curriculum submission.

- Dates and attendance rosters for each day of the training.
- The following is a list of the thirteen (13) Domains that must be included within the Peer Support Core Curriculum. To view the specific competencies within each domain, click on the [Peer Support Core Curriculum Guidelines](#).
 1. Engagement
 2. Support
 3. Lived Experience
 4. Personalize Peer Support
 5. Recovery Planning
 6. Resources, Services & Supports
 7. Health, Wellness & Recovery Skills
 8. Crisis Management
 9. Communication
 10. Collaboration & Teamwork
 11. Leadership and Advocacy
 12. Professional Growth & Development
 13. Ethics

VI. PEER SUPPORT CORE CURRICULUM TRAINER RECORD RETENTION GUIDELINES

All curriculum trainers shall maintain a secure system of recordkeeping that include the following:

- Attendance rosters that list trainees legal name and to include AM and PM sign in sheets.
- Curriculum Provider Training Tracking form for every training.
- Course Evaluations, as provided to approved curriculum providers by the DBH OCA, from all training participants.
- Approved Peer Support Core Curriculum submission form and all attachments.
- Letter of curriculum approval from the DBH OCA.
- Any OCA approved changes to trainers or curriculum content AFTER the initial curriculum approval.
- Competency measures documentation.
- The legal name of all trainees that successfully complete the training and are issued a certificate of completion.

Trainers must retain the above records for a minimum of three (3) years. All approved curriculum and course work are subject to audit by the Division of Behavioral Health. Nebraska approved curriculums will be posted on the DBH OCA website. Curriculums will be approved for a period of three (3) years.

If there is a change in trainers or curriculum content, the change needs to be submitted to the DBH OCA via the online ‘Applicant Additional Information Request’ form as listed: https://appengine.egov.com/apps/ne/additional_information_request for approval within thirty (30) days *prior to implementing the proposed change or presentation of the curriculum*. Curriculum providers will need to reapply for curriculum approval every three (3) years by completing the Peer Support Core Curriculum Submission online application.

All Curriculum Submission forms will be reviewed in the order in which they are received and within approximately thirty (30) business days from the date of receipt. The person submitting the curriculum will be notified via the email address provided on the curriculum submission application once the curriculum is approved, denied, or should additional information need to be provided.

VII. APPEALS

A CPSS applicant or applicant for training curriculum approval who is issued a denial or disciplinary action may request an appeal in writing within 90 days of the date notice of adverse action is mailed. Appeals will be conducted according to Title 465 of the Nebraska Administrative Code. The request may be delivered in person, by mail, or electronically by sending it to DHHS.PeerCertification@nebraska.gov. The request for hearing is required to set forth a claim and identify the basis for the appeal.