

## **1. What is a Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS)?**

A Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) is a person who is trained to use their personal lived experience and recovery with mental health and/or substance use disorders to mentor others who want to achieve recovery.

## **2. How can I become a Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) in Nebraska?**

In order to become a CPSS, you first need to have lived experience with mental health (MH) and/or substance use disorder (SUD) and have been in recovery for at least one year or be a parent or primary caregiver of someone who has been affected by MH or a SUD. Second, you need to find an approved training course in Nebraska that provides 60 hours of training. If you are not sure where to find an approved training class, please visit the approved peer support trainer information <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Peer-Support-Approved-Core-Curriculum.aspx>.

## **3. How often will peer support specialist training courses be available?**

At this time, there is no set schedule for courses. Please see the approved provider list for contact information to find out when curriculum providers are providing their next training(s) or to inquire about setting up a training: <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Peer-Support-Approved-Core-Curriculum.aspx>.

## **4. What is the cost of training?**

Please contact the approved curriculum providers listed on the OCA web page at: <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Peer-Support-Approved-Core-Curriculum.aspx> to learn more about their trainings and any cost for these trainings.

## **5. What if there is an emergency and I am not able to complete all hours of the training?**

If you are unable to complete all of the required hours of training, you will have to retake the training in full the next time it becomes available. Please be sure to contact your approved curriculum provider in the event you are unable to complete the entire training.

## **6. What do I do once I have successfully completed the Peer Support training course?**

Once you have successfully completed a State of NE approved Peer Support Services training course, you will need to complete the Certified Peer Support Specialist online application to take the Peer Recovery exam. The requirements for the application can be found here, <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Peer-Support-Training-Completed-after-January-1-2019.aspx>. Be sure to have all documents ready to be uploaded into the application prior to applying. ***You will not be able to save the application and finish later***, so if you need to get a document to finish the application, you will have to start over. You will be given 6 months to successfully pass the Peer Recovery exam from the date the IC&RC emails you of approval to register for the exam.

## **7. How old do you have to be to be a Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS)?**

You must be at least 19 years of age to obtain CPSS certification in Nebraska.

**8. Can I use my State of Nebraska CPSS certification to provide peer support services in any state?**

Since each state has its own requirements to become certified as a peer support specialist you will need to check with each state individually on their requirements.

**9. Do you have to be a resident of Nebraska to be certified?**

You do not have to be a resident of Nebraska. However, certifications may not be recognized by other states as each state has its own requirements for certification.

**10. Can I work with adults and youth with this certification?**

Yes. The training will teach you the essentials of peer support and allow you to work with both adults and youth.

**11. How does the background check affect my eligibility to be approved to take the certification test?**

A background check is done on every applicant. The Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) reviews each application individually based on varying experiences of applicants. The OCA may ask for additional information in the event they need clarification or have any questions related to any part of your application. If you have questions about your specific background, please contact the OCA at 402.471.7736.

**12. What do I do if I am on the Adult Protective Service (APS)/Child Protective Services (CPS) registry?**

If you are on the APS/CPS registry, the State will be unable to issue you a certification. However, you can contact the APS/CPS office at 402.471.9272 to request information on removal (expungement).

**13. How long is the application process for taking the test? How soon will I hear back?**

Once your application is submitted, you will receive a confirmation email that it has been received. Please allow up to 30 business days for processing. If additional information is requested, this may increase the amount of time needed to process the application. It is recommended that the application requirements be read thoroughly prior to beginning the application process.

**14. When and where do I schedule myself to take the IC&RC certification test?**

Once the OCA has approved your application, they will notify the testing company, IC&RC, who will then send you an email to schedule the test. During the registration, you will choose when and where to take the test based on what best works with your schedule. There are multiple testing sites throughout the State of Nebraska.

**15. What is the cost to take the certification test?**

IC&RC charges a \$100.00 fee to take the exam. This will need to be paid prior to taking the test. Payment options will be provided at the time of registration.

**16. How long do I have to take the test once I submit the CPSS Application and receive notification of approval to test?**

Once you receive notification of approval to test by the IC&RC, you will have up to six months to successfully pass the exam.

**17. What if I need to change or cancel my test date after it is scheduled?**

Please see IC&RC guidelines here <https://internationalcredentialing.org/exam/rescheduling>.

**18. Is there a study guide I can review prior to taking the test?**

IC&RC provides a link to the Rhode Island Peer Recovery Specialist Certification Guide. It can be found here <https://internationalcredentialing.org/PR.Study.Guide>.

**19. How and when will I know if I passed the test?**

An email is sent to you from the testing company to give you your score, usually the same day you take the test. The OCA will also be notified and a certificate will be issued to you by the State of Nebraska and mailed to the address provided on your CPSS application.

**20. How long does it take to get my certificate once I have passed the test?**

Please allow 7 – 10 business days to receive your certificate once you have passed the test.

**21. What happens if I fail the test? How many times can I take the test?**

If you fail the test, you will be required to wait 90 days from the date you last tested to take the test again. You have six months from the date the IC&RC emails you to register for the exam and successfully complete the exam. If you have not successfully passed the exam within six months, you will have to complete the online application again and your application will be reviewed by the OCA to ensure all requirements are met prior to being approved to take the exam.

**22. How much does it cost to retake the test?**

The IC&RC fee to retake the test is \$100.00.

**23. What if I currently hold a CPSWS certificate and want to be grandfathered in as a CPSS?**

Peer Support Specialists who currently hold a CPSWS and have worked or volunteered a minimum of 500 hours in the last 12 months immediately preceding the submission of your application will need to submit the online grandfather application. You will need to include the verification form signed by your supervisor to verify hours. Your supervisor will also need to provide a signed copy of your job description. If you are approved to be grandfathered, this means you DO NOT need to take a State of Nebraska approved Peer Support Core Curriculum training, but you WILL still need to successfully pass the IC&RC test within 90 days of the date you receive an email from the IC&RC providing exam registration details.

**24. What do I do now that I have my CPSS certification?**

A renewal application will be required every 2 years that includes an attestation (self-report) of having completed twenty hours of continuing education units (CEUs). Any misdemeanor or felony incurred while certified as a CPSS will need to be reported in writing to the OCA within 30 days of the date of the occurrence.

**25. What are CEUs and where can I get them?**

CEUs, or continuing education units, are additional units of learning done by the CPSS in order to stay up to date on new and current evidence-based practices. These can be found as in-person classes, webinars, or online classes. The CEUs must be related to the thirteen domains and related competencies on the OCA website: <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Peer-Support-Trainer-Curriculum-Requirements.aspx>.

You will **need to retain documentation** (i.e. certificates of completion) to show you successfully completed the courses you list on your renewal application in the event you are audited. If you have questions about specific learning opportunities, please contact the OCA directly at 402.471.7736.

**26. Am I guaranteed a job after passing the test?**

The training, testing and certification process is not a guarantee of employment.

**27. What if I am convicted of a misdemeanor or felony in Nebraska or any other state while certified as a Peer Support Specialist?**

You must notify the OCA in writing within 30 days of the conviction.