

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

Effective Date: January 1, 2019

Revised Date: July 7, 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	3
II.	REQUIREMENTS FOR CPSS CERTIFICATION	4
III.	IC&RC TESTING INFORMATION	6
IV.	PEER SUPPORT CORE CURRICULUM SUBMISSION GUIDELINES	7
V.	PEER SUPPORT CORE CURRICULUM TRAINER RECORD RETENTION GUIDELINES	9
VI.	OPTIONAL APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS	9

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 or 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 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.

The guidelines set forth are consistent with the regulations for peer support currently moving through the review and approval process. Upon release of the Peer Support regulations, there will be an opportunity for any person holding a State of Nebraska-issued Certified Peer Support and Wellness Specialist (CPSWS), who meets the grandfather guidelines, to apply for the new Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) credential.

IF YOU COMPLETED PEER SUPPORT TRAINING PRIOR TO JANUARY OF 2019 AND CURRENTLY HOLD A CPSWS CERTIFICATE issued by the State of Nebraska, no additional training or testing is required until the regulations are effective.

If, however, you would like to take the IC&RC Peer Recovery exam now to obtain your CPSS certification, you can submit an online CPSS application. You will also need to have the Peer Support Employer/Volunteer Verification form completed to confirm that you have worked or volunteered in a peer support role for a minimum of five hundred (500) hours in the last twelve (12) months immediately prior to making application for the CPSS Certificate.

IF YOU COMPLETE THE PEER SUPPORT CORE CURRICULUM TRAINING AFTER JANUARY 1, 2019, you will need to complete the online CPSS application and have a copy of

the certificate of completion of a *State of Nebraska-approved minimum of a sixty (60) hour Peer Support Core Curriculum training* available to upload to the online CPSS application.

Following internal review of the application, the applicant will be notified via email that the applicant has either 1) been approved to make arrangement to take the IC&RC Peer Recovery exam 2) asked to supply additional information or 3) denied based on an application or credential requirement deficiency. Applicants should keep a copy of their entire application, including all supporting documentation for their own records.

II. REQUIREMENTS FOR CPSS CERTIFICATION

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

LAWFUL PRESENCE: Must be lawfully present in the United States and provide supporting documentation as requested.

RECOVERY/LIVED EXPERIENCE: This certification is designed and intended for a self-disclosed current or previous consumer 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 shall 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: Must provide verification of completion of a high school or General Equivalency (GED) diploma, or higher degree.

PEER SUPPORT CORE CURRICULUM TRAINING: Must obtain a certificate of completion or equivalent documentation of completion of a State of Nebraska Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) approved Peer Support Core Curriculum training. **NOTE: Peer Support Core Curriculum Training must be completed within 12 months immediately prior to the date of the application for the CPSS certification.**

ADULT AND CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES PORTAL REGISTRY: Must complete the Adult and Child Protective Services Portal Registry background check information *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 you have any misdemeanor or felony convictions. You must answer “Yes” if you have ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor. **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.**

You must list all your misdemeanor and felony convictions. It does not matter how long ago the conviction happened or whether or not you reported the conviction on a previous application.

Infractions, diversions, and dismissals do not need to be listed. If you have ever received a citation from a law enforcement office or were ever charged with an offense, you can check with the court system to determine if the incident appears on your record as a misdemeanor. Misdemeanors can be processed through traffic courts, so be sure to include misdemeanor traffic violations.

Examples of Common Misdemeanors: This list is provided to help you 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/Burglary

Unauthorized Use of Financial Transaction Device Assault

Disorderly Conduct/Disorderly House

Reckless Driving

Driving under Suspension/Revocation

License Vehicle without Liability Insurance Fail
to Appear in Court

False Information or Reporting Leave
the Scene of an Accident Operator not

Carrying License

Unlawful Display of Plates/Renewal Tab Park

Rule Violation/Curfew Violation

Dog at Large/Fail 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), 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 misdemeanor outside of the State of Nebraska, a copy of the court record that includes the statement of charges and the final disposition.

Additional information *may be requested* by the DBH OCA upon initial review of your application to include: a copy of the entire court record related to all misdemeanor or felony 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 licensure or certification (for example: a

medication aide, licensed alcohol and drug counselor, mental health practitioner, registered nurse, etc.), please 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 to include an official copy of the disciplinary action, including any charges, sanctions and disposition.

TESTING - 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.*

NOTE: If you have had difficulty meeting this time frame of 6 months as a result of the closed testing centers due to Covid-19, contact the OCA at 402-471-7736 right away for assistance in getting your Peer Recovery exam scheduled as soon as possible.

CODE OF ETHICS: 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: The CPSS Certification will require a renewal application be completed every two (2) years, along with an attestation of the completion of twenty (20) continuing education hours (CEUs). CPSS certificates include the month and year of the expiration of the current certification.

III. 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 registering to test, a test registration link, location sites, fees and obtaining the exam study guide information. Applicants must adhere to all IC&RC policies and procedures as outlined on the IC&RC web page 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 thereby allowing candidates to test on a date and time and a location that convenient for them. Candidates will receive information from IC&RC on registering for testing once application for certification is approved by the State of Nebraska DBH OCA.

CONTENT: The State of Nebraska Peer Support Core Curriculum training include the minimum standards which align with the SAMHSA guidelines and IC&RC competencies to help prepare the applicant for the workforce as well as the IC&RC examination.

CANDIDATE GUIDE: The domains, including the competency/task statements per domain, sample exam questions, and a list of references are included in the free candidate guide found at the following IC&RC link: <https://internationalcredentialing.org/examprep/>.

STUDY GUIDE: A study guide for the IC&RC Peer Recovery examination can be found at <https://internationalcredentialing.org/PR.Study.Guide>.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS: Individuals requesting modifications, accommodations, or assistance when taking the exam will need to contact the IC&RC and put said request in writing.

CANCELLATION/RESCHEDULING POLICY: Applicants are required to arrive on time for their exam and **MUST** *provide an acceptable proof of identification* as outlined on the IC&RC website. See the IC&RC site for cancellation and rescheduling policy.

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

***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.*

IV. 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 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. You will need to create a login and password to be able 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 trainer should hold the Nebraska Certified Peer Support and Wellness Specialists (CPSWS) or 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 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

V. 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.
- 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.

Trainer 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 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.

VI. OPTIONAL APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

The purpose of the optional application review process is to determine if the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) accurately, adequately and fairly reviewed the application content. A letter sent to the DBH OCA requesting a review must be received by the division within 30 days of the notification of the denial determination letter sent to the applicant from the DBH OCA. A person shall be considered notified of the DBH OCA determination three days after the date of mailing. The written request for review by the applicant will be sent to the DBH OCA Administrator who will thoroughly review the complete application and supplemental materials to determine whether or not applicant’s denial was

appropriate based on the requirements. The DBH OCA Administrator will consult with the DBH administrative team and applicant will be notified in writing as to the findings of the administrative team.