

# PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST AND FAMILY SUPPORT PARTNER CERTIFICATION GUIDE



# Welcome to the Idaho Peer Support Specialist and Family Support Partner Certification Process

This certification guide will take you through the process of gaining designation as a Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) and/or Certified Family Support Partner (CFSP) in the State of Idaho.

Certification for Idaho's Certified Peer Support Specialists and Certified Family Support Partners is managed by BPA Health under a contract with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW). DHW and BPA Health are committed to upholding IDAPA 16.07.19, the Idaho Administrative Code that applies to CPSSs and CFSPs which can be found at [www.idahopeercert.com](http://www.idahopeercert.com).

Please direct your questions about the certification process to the following contact. We are happy to help!

**BPA Health**  
**Peer and Family Support Certification**  
**208-947-1300**  
[info@idahopeercert.com](mailto:info@idahopeercert.com)  
[www.idahopeercert.com](http://www.idahopeercert.com)

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## Steps in the Certification Process

1. Complete training
2. Apply for 6-month certification
3. Receive a 6-month certification
4. Complete 20 hours of supervision and 100-200 hours of work experience
5. Have your supervisor submit verification of your hours
6. Receive a 1-year certification
7. Complete 10 hours of continuing education annually
8. Apply for certification renewal every year

Please read on to see more detailed information about the certification process. You can also read FAQs at [www.bpahealth.com/peer-and-family-support-faqs](http://www.bpahealth.com/peer-and-family-support-faqs).

# Certification Process

*A brief overview of the CPSS and CFSP certification process is outlined below and additional details about each step are included later in this guide.*

- 1)** Before applying for certification, applicants must successfully complete a minimum of 40 hours of Peer Support Specialist or Family Support Partner Training that is recognized by the State of Idaho. For a list of recognized training entities, please visit the training page at [www.idahopeercert.com](http://www.idahopeercert.com).
  
- 2)** Once you have completed your training, apply for 6-month certification online using the APPLY HERE button at [www.idahopeercert.com](http://www.idahopeercert.com). Your application will then be reviewed by the Peer and Family Support Certification Committee (Certification Committee) to ensure you meet the qualifications outlined later in this guide. We make our best effort to provide a quick turn around on each application we receive, however it may take up to 30 days to review your application and send communication about the status of your certification.
  
- 3)** Once your application is approved by the Certification Committee, you will receive a certification that is valid for 6 months or 1 year based on the certification requirements you have met. In most cases, applicants who have just completed training are awarded 6-month certification because they still need to complete the required work/volunteer experience and supervision that is needed for a full 1-year certification. Information about supervision and work/volunteer requirements is outlined later in this guide.
  
- 4)** After receiving your 6-month certification, you are a Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) or Certified Family Support Partner (CFSP) depending on the designation for which you have applied. You will then use the next 6 months to accrue 200 hours of work and/or volunteer experience if you hold a high school diploma or GED but do not hold a bachelor's degree or higher in a human services field **OR** 100 hours of work and/or volunteer experience if you hold a bachelor's degree or higher in a human services field. During your 6-month certification, you must also receive 20 hours of supervision from an individual who holds a bachelor's degree or higher in a human services field and supervisory capacity at your organization.

**Please note you CAN be a paid employee while accruing your hours and you DO NOT have to volunteer while accruing your hours of work experience and supervision.**

**Continuing education is NOT required during your initial 6-month certification and will not be evaluated until after you have earned full 1-year certification.**

5) Once you have completed your hours of supervision and work/volunteer experience, your supervisor must submit the Supervision and Work/Volunteer Experience Verification Form found on the applications page at [www.idahopecert.com](http://www.idahopecert.com). Your supervisor may use this form to track the hours of supervision he/she provides to you and then submit the form when all of your hours are complete. More than one form may be submitted if you receive work/volunteer/supervision hours at more than one location.

**This is the only form your supervisor needs to submit to verify your hours of supervision and work/volunteer experience. Please DO NOT submit an initial or renewal application when you are ready to verify your hours.**

6) When all of your hours of work/volunteer/supervision are submitted and approved by the Certification Committee, you will be granted a full 1-year certification.

7) You must then earn 10 hours of continuing education annually with at least 1 hour of continuing education in ethics to renew your certification each year. Please visit the continuing education page at [www.idahopecert.com](http://www.idahopecert.com) to learn about continuing education requirements and opportunities. You must obtain certificates of completion for your continuing education to submit with your application for certification renewal each year.

8) Apply for certification renewal each year by submitting the Application for Certification Renewal found at [www.idahopecert.com](http://www.idahopecert.com). It is your responsibility to renew your certification every year before it expires. Please submit all certification renewal requirements 30 days before your certification expiration date so the Certification Committee can process your application.

**While we encourage you to receive ongoing supervision during your full 1-year certification, your supervisor is no longer required to verify your hours of supervision and work experience in order for you to renew your certification each year.**

# Requirements to Receive 6-Month Certification

*Applicants must meet the following requirements in order to obtain their initial 6-month certification. The application for initial 6-month certification can be found on the APPLY HERE page at [www.idahopeercert.com](http://www.idahopeercert.com).*

➤ **Applicants must be at least 18 years of age**

➤ **Lived Experience**

CPSS applicants must have personal lived experience with recovery from mental illness or mental illness co-occurring with substance use disorder.

CFSP applicants must have personal lived experience as a parent or adult caregiver who is raising or who has raised a child who lives with a mental illness or mental illness with a co-occurring substance use disorder.

➤ **Training**

Applicants must complete a Peer Support Specialist or Family Support Partner training that is recognized by the State of Idaho **before** applying for certification. Please visit the training page at [www.idahopeercert.com](http://www.idahopeercert.com) for a list of recognized training entities. You must submit a certificate of completion and letter of notification from your training organization indicating you completed the training and passed the comprehension exam.

➤ **High School Diploma or GED Certificate**

Applicants must have a minimum of a high school diploma or GED and provide verification of their education by submitting a diploma or GED certificate with their application. Applicants who hold a high school diploma or GED will be required to accrue 200 hours of work/volunteer experience during their 6-month certification in order to become fully certified as a CPSS and/or CFSP.

**OR**

### **Bachelor's Degree or Higher in a Human Services Field**

Applicants who hold a bachelor's degree or higher in a human services field from an accredited institution must provide verification of their education by submitting a copy of their diploma with their application. Applicants who have a bachelor's degree or higher in a human services field will be required to accrue 100 hours of work/volunteer experience during their 6-month certification in order to become fully certified as a CPSS and/or CFSP.

➤ **Acknowledgment of the Code of Ethics**

Applicants must acknowledge and agree to the obligations, duties, and responsibilities of the profession for which they are seeking certification by signing the Code of Ethics Acknowledgment found within the certification application.

## **Requirements to Receive Full 1-Year Certification**

*In addition to requirements for a 6-month certification, applicants must meet the following requirements in order to obtain full 1-year certification. The Supervision and Work/Volunteer Verification Form can be found on the APPLY HERE page at [www.idahopecert.com](http://www.idahopecert.com)*

➤ **100-200 Hours of Work/Volunteer Experience**

Applicants who hold a high school diploma or GED are required to accrue 200 hours of work/volunteer experience during their 6-month certification in order to become fully certified as a CPSS and/or CFSP. Applicants who hold a bachelor's degree or higher in a human service field are required to accrue 100 hours of work/volunteer experience during their 6-month certification in order to become fully certified as a CPSS and/or CFSP.

Paid work and/or volunteer experience may take place in a clinical and/or community setting such as a mental health agency, inpatient hospital, outpatient treatment center, or residential treatment center. You may obtain work/volunteer experience in more than one setting if preferred, and it must occur in the specific context of working with peers or families providing services specific to peer or family support.

**PLEASE NOTE:** You must be under the supervision of an individual who holds a bachelor's degree or higher in a human services field and works in a supervisory capacity at the organization from which you are obtaining work/volunteer experience. Your supervisor must verify your hours of work/volunteer experience on the Supervision and Work/Volunteer Experience Verification form on the applications page at [www.idahopecert.com](http://www.idahopecert.com).

➤ **20 Hours of Supervision**

All CPSSs and CFSPs must document a minimum of 20 hours of supervision with a supervisor who holds a bachelor's degree or higher in a human services field and who works in a supervisory capacity within the agency.

CPSS/CFSP supervisors must document the supervision they provide by submitting the Supervision and Work/Volunteer Verification Form found at [www.idahopecert.com](http://www.idahopecert.com). A CPSS/CFSP may obtain supervision from more than one supervisor and at more than one agency if needed. Verification must be submitted separately by each supervisor if this is the case. Supervisors may track hours of supervision on the verification form as they are provided and we encourage this practice. The electronic verification form will calculate a running total of supervision hours provided. Supervisors may save and return to the form after each occurrence of supervision they provide.

**\*\*Please note continuing education is NOT required during your initial 6-month certification. Continuing education will not be evaluated until after your supervisor has submitted verification of your hours and you have earned full 1-year certification.**

**Extension Requests**

You may request an extension of time if you need more than 6 months to accrue 20 hours of supervision and 100-200 hours of work/volunteer experience. Should you need an extension, please submit your extension request on the APPLY HERE page at [www.idahopecert.com](http://www.idahopecert.com). The extension request form will ask you to submit the number of work/volunteer and supervision hours you have completed thus far and your plan for accruing your remaining hours. We understand it may take longer than 6 months to accrue the required hours of work/volunteer/supervision and will grant a four (4) month extension if needed. Your certification will expire if you do not complete your hours during your 6-month certification and do not request an extension of time.



# Continuing Education Requirements for Certification Renewal

*You must submit certificates of completion for your continuing education to renew your certification. The application for certification renewal can be found on the APPLY HERE page at [www.idahopecert.com](http://www.idahopecert.com).*

After earning full 1-year certification, CPSSs and CFSPs are required to earn at least 10 hours of continuing education with at least 1 hour in ethics to renew their certification each year. You may attend webinars, conferences, workshops, and/or workplace training to obtain continuing education hours.

When applying for certification renewal, you must submit copies of certificates of attendance that document the following:

- Your name
- Topic/title of the continuing education course
- The entity who provided the training with a signature
- Number of hours completed
- Date of completion

Continuing education must be obtained within your current certification period. For example, if your current certification period is from July 1, 2019 – July 1, 2020, continuing education you completed prior to July 1, 2019 will **not** be accepted. Please ensure that continuing education falls under the following topics, keep track of your certificates of completion, and submit certificates of completion when applying for certification renewal each year.

**\*\*Please note:** if you plan to submit academic coursework to be considered for continuing education credit, you must submit a copy of your transcript stating the date you successfully completed the course which must fall within your current certification period. You must also submit a syllabus for the course indicating specific topics of study. In order to be considered for continuing education, topics must fall in the training competencies germane to your certification that are listed in [IDAPA 16.07.19](#). Continuing education topics are also listed below.

## Extension Requests

You may request a 1-month extension if you need additional time to complete your continuing education. Please submit your extension request on the APPLY HERE page at [www.idahopecert.com](http://www.idahopecert.com). Your certification will expire if you do not complete your continuing education and do not request an extension.

## **Continuing education topics for CPSSs and CFSPs include the following:**

- Ethics and boundaries
- Motivation and empowerment
- The recovery process
- Stages of change
- Job roles and duties
- Advocacy for recovery programs and for the peers and families they serve
- Recovery values: authenticity, self-determination, diversity, & inclusion
- How to share your recovery experience and use it to help others
- Awareness of risk factors in participants' behavior and the ability to access appropriate services
- Interpersonal and professional communication skills
- Relationship building
- Self-care
- Work place dynamics and processes
- The effects of trauma and use of a trauma informed approach
- Wellness and natural supports
- Cultural awareness and sensitivity
- Recovery plans and goal setting
- Family dynamics
- The state behavioral health system
- Local, state and national mental health and recovery resources

## **CFSPs may also take continuing education on the following topics in addition to those listed above:**

- Advocacy skills used in multiple systems (children's behavioral health system, child welfare system, juvenile court system, education/special education system)
- Parenting special needs children
- The child and family team and how to be a team player
- Children's mental health or co-occurring disorders
- Family centered planning

**Please note if you hold both CPSS and CFSP certification:** you must complete ten (10) UNIQUE hours of continuing education (CE) with at least one (1) hour in ethics for EACH of your certifications. This means the CE hours you submit with your application for peer support certification renewal will **NOT** count toward the CE hours required for your family support certification renewal. You will need to complete ten (10) ADDITIONAL CE hours with at least one (1) hour in ethics in order to renew your family support certification.

## Extension Eligibility for CPSSs/CFSPs Who Have Allowed their Certification to Expire

Certification Status	6-Month Certification	1-Year Certification
<b>Certification has not expired</b>	<p>Eligible for 4-month certification extension</p> <p>Extensions are granted to individuals who hold a 6-month certification and need additional time to complete their hours of work and supervision.</p>	<p>Eligible for 1-month certification extension</p> <p>Extensions are granted to individuals who hold a 1-year certification and need additional time to complete their hours of continuing education.</p>
<b>Grace period for certification that has been expired for 1-90 days</b>	<p>Eligible for 4-month certification extension</p> <p>Extensions are granted to individuals whose 6-month certification expired within the last 90 days.</p> <p>The extension start date is the date the individual submits their extension request.</p>	<p>Eligible for 1-month certification extension</p> <p>Extensions are granted to individuals whose 1-year certification expired within the last 90 days.</p> <p>The extension start date is the date the individual submits their extension request.</p>
<b>Certification has been expired for 91-365 days</b>	<p>Eligible for 4-month certification extension after completing continuing education</p> <p>CPSS/CFSP must complete 1 hour of continuing education for each month certification has been expired beyond 3 months.</p> <p>Example: an individual whose 6-month certification has been expired for 8 months must submit 5 hours of continuing education in order to be eligible for an extension.</p> <p>A 4-month extension will then be granted to the CPSS/CFSP to complete their remaining hours of work and supervision. The extension start date is the date the CPSS/CFSP submits their extension request and continuing education.</p>	<p>Not eligible for certification extension</p> <p>Extensions are not granted to CPSSs/CFSPs who hold a 1-year certification that has been expired for more than 90 days but less than 365 days. These individuals must complete 10 hours of continuing education with at least 1 hour in ethics and submit a complete renewal application in order to reinstate their certification.</p> <p>The certification start date is the date the CPSS/CFSP submits their renewal application and continuing education.</p>
<b>Certification has been expired for greater than 365 days</b>	<p>Not eligible for certification extension</p> <p>Extensions will not be granted to CPSSs/CFSPs whose 6-month or 1-year certification has been expired for more than 365 days.</p> <p>In order to reinstate their certification, these individuals must submit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An application for active certification status</li> <li>- 10 hours of continuing education with at least 1 hour in ethics that has been completed in the last 12 months</li> </ul> <p>Upon approval, the CPSS/CFSP will be granted a 6-month certification during which he/she must obtain 100-200 hours of work/volunteer experience based on their level of education and 20 hours of supervision. The start date of the 6-month certification is the date the CPSS/CFSP submits their application for active certification status and continuing education.</p>	

# Certification by Reciprocity

*An individual who holds a valid certification in a state other than Idaho may apply for CPSS or CFSP certification by reciprocity in Idaho.*

An individual who would like to become a certified peer support specialist or family support partner in Idaho must hold a current and active certificate and be in good standing with the state who is the authorizing regulatory entity for his/her certification. To begin the reciprocity process, individuals must complete the application for Certification by Reciprocity which can be found on the APPLY HERE page at [www.idahopeercert.com](http://www.idahopeercert.com).

Individuals who have received peer or family support certification from another certifying body will be required to meet Idaho's certification requirements as indicated in IDAPA 16.07.19. The Certification Committee will review and verify the applicant's lived experience, education, training, supervision, work/volunteer experience, and continuing education and issue certifications to applicants who meet Idaho's requirements.

## Complaints

Please complete the Complaint Submission Form at [www.idahopeercert.com](http://www.idahopeercert.com) if you wish to submit a complaint about a Certified Peer Support Specialist or Certified Family Support Partner. The Certification Committee does not accept anonymous complaints; however, your identifying information will be redacted from communication with the subject of the complaint.

## Grievances

Please complete the Grievance Submission Form at [www.idahopeercert.com](http://www.idahopeercert.com) if you wish to submit a grievance about a decision made by the Peer and Family Support Certification Committee regarding your certification. You may use this form if your certification has been denied, suspended, or revoked; if you question the results of the application review process; or if you are subject to an action you feel is unjustified. You must submit your grievance in writing within 30 calendar days of notification from the Peer and Family Support Certification Committee regarding the certification decision.