
IOWA FAMILY SUPPORT CREDENTIAL

IFSC PROGRAM GUIDE



Iowa
Family Support
Credential

Dear Family Support Program,

Congratulations on your journey to earn the Iowa Family Support Credential.

The Iowa Family Support Credential is formal recognition from the state of Iowa that you are operating a quality family support program. Funders, community members and participants can all be assured that your program has been rigorously reviewed and found to be in full adherence to all quality standards.

You will work closely in the next two to three years to develop policies and procedures that align with the Iowa Family Support Standards. You and your staff will work over the next couple of years to implement those policies and procedures into daily practice.

The peer review is an external evaluation process to verify that your program is in adherence to the Iowa Family Support Standards. This guide will provide you with more information and help you have a clear understanding about both the credentialing and peer review process.

Congratulations again on achieving this critical milestone!

Sincerely,

Amanda

Amanda Winslow, Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief



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Procedure Name:	IFSC Tools
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2014
Date(s) of revision:	June 2014, September 2014; June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	

14.04 Waiver: To be filled out by programs when the supervisor does not meet the qualifications listed in standard 14.04.

Program/peer reviewers/program specialists

Body of Evidence: Designed to assist in determining how to show evidence of first and second-order standards.

Program/peer reviewers/program specialists

Body of Evidence Checklist: Derived from the Body of Evidence, designed to assist in review of SharePoint documents to assist in ensuring all applicable evidence is included. This document will be filled out by the program specialist and submitted to the program post-mock review.

Program/program specialists

Code of Conduct: Peer reviewers will sign this document after agreeing to the peer review assignment. Programs will receive signed copies via the lead peer reviewer and may share these with any individuals with questions on how IFSC adheres to confidentiality and maintaining a code of conduct with peer reviewers.

Program/peer reviewers

Community Partners Roster: An Excel spreadsheet for program to provide peer reviewers with needed information about community partners to help in the selection of participants to be included in the interview panel.

Program/peer reviewers/program specialists

Confidentiality Agreement: Peer reviewers will sign this document after agreeing to the peer review assignment. Programs will receive signed copies via the lead peer reviewer for both peers and may share with any individuals with questions on how IFSC adheres to confidentiality and maintaining a code of conduct with peer reviewers.

Program/peer reviewers

Corrective Action Plan: Programs will complete this document following receipt of the Peer Review Report in the event they are found out of adherence for any standards. The program will address any

unsubstantiated first order or second-order standards that were out of adherence and state what they are doing to now ensure adherence to the standard. Once completed, this plan will be submitted to the IFSC coordinator* who will submit it to the peer reviewers.

Program/peer reviewers/program specialists

Definitions for IFSC: This list contains acronyms frequently used and descriptions of administrative roles in the IFSC program.

Program/peer reviewers/program specialists

Emergency Contact Form: To be completed by the peer reviewers and program, then sent to the IFSC coordinator prior to the peer review. Everyone should keep a copy of this in case of emergencies that may occur before or during the peer review. Numbers should include how to get ahold of someone after normal business hours.

Program/peer reviewers

File Review Checklist: Lists requirements from the standards that may be found in participant files. Specific checklists are available for long term home visitation, short term home visitation, and group-based programming. Program specialists will utilize this during a mock review. Peer reviewers will utilize this tool during the peer review.

Program/peer reviewers/program specialists

Glossary for Iowa Family Support Credentialing: This list contains words and phrases found in the Iowa Family Support Standards and definitions.

Program/peer reviewers/program specialists

Interview Invitation Template: A template to be used by the program to send to individuals to be invited to interview panels during the peer review. The program can modify this document to meet the needs of the different panels.

Program/program specialists

Interview Questions: These tools list the type of questions that may be asked during peer review. These serve as a guide for both the peer reviewers to be used during the peer review and the program specialist for the mock review process. The program may share these with the various groups that will be participating in interviews during the peer review. It should be stressed that these are not the exact questions which will be asked during the peer review, but instead a guide to give programs an idea of the type of questions that may be asked. Questions during the peer review will be guided by what the peer review team is/is not finding in the SAM and SharePoint.

Program/peer reviewers/program specialists

Iowa Family Support Standards: The standards, based on COA standards, are designed to accommodate a variety of family support programs for families and children, including, but not limited to: (1) home visiting programs that deliver support services in families' homes; (2) early intervention programs for children who have or are at risk for developmental delays; and (3) group-based parent education programs.

Program/peer reviewers/program specialist

Linking Standards: Designed to assist programs in creating or adapting policies to meet the standards. This document divides all standards to fit in one of 15 categories.

Program/program specialists

Observation Form: Lists requirements noted in the standards that may be observed during either a group-based parent education class or a home visit. Specific forms are available for both types of programs. Items not found during a class or home visit are not an indication that the program is not meeting the standard, simply that they were not observed during that particular time.

Peer reviewers

Participant Roster: An Excel spreadsheet for the program to provide peer reviewers with needed information about each participant to help in the selection of participant files to be reviewed onsite.

Program/peer reviewers

Peer Review Report: This document will be filled out by the peer reviewers and submitted to the IFSC coordinator* post-peer review. This becomes a public document. The IFSC coordinator* will review the report and then send it to the program.

Program/peer reviewers

Peer Review Report Addendum: Peer reviewers will complete a report addendum following receipt of the program's Corrective Action Plan. In the Addendum, the peer reviewers will reevaluate the program's adherence, taking into account the corrective actions that have been taken.

Program/peer reviewers

Peer Review Request Form: This form will be filled out by the program, with the assistance of the program specialist, to request peer review. This form will then be emailed to the program specialist who will attach a letter confirming the program's readiness for peer review and email both to the IFSC coordinator and the program.

Program/peer reviewers/program specialists

Peer Review Schedule: Example schedules have been made for one and two day peer reviews for both home visitation and group parent education programs, along with combination or multiple programs. Peer reviewers will only customize schedules when necessary to meet the needs for each peer review.

Program/peer reviewer

Personnel Records Checklist: Lists requirements from the standards that may be found in personnel records. Program specialists will utilize this during a mock review. Peer reviewers will utilize this tool during the peer review.

Peer reviewers/program specialists

Rating Indicator Sheet: Used to guide the rating of program's adherence to the Iowa Family Support Standards. Programs can utilize this tool as they give themselves an initial rating when they begin the credentialing process and update as they continue to meet the standards. The peer reviewers will rate programs during the peer review according to these indicators.

Program/peer reviewers/program specialists

Request for Extension Checklist: Checklist to be used by the program and the program specialist to ensure that the program is meeting all of the required elements of an extension request.

Program/program

Self-Assessment and Materials (SAM): The SEQIP is converted into the SAM by the IFSC program specialist when the program has demonstrated that they are ready to request peer review and will be shared with the peer review team.

Program/peer reviewers/program specialists

Self-Evaluation and Quality Improvement Plan (SEQIP): An Excel document designed for the program to use as a working tool to compile information while receiving technical assistance. This tool will be shared between the program, the program specialist, and IFSC staff.

Program/program specialists

Supervision Checklist: Lists requirements from the standards that may be found in supervision records. Program specialists will utilize this during a mock review. Peer reviewers will utilize this tool during the peer review.

Program/peer reviewers/program specialist

Training Log: Lists all training requirements and the standard that references them. Programs may utilize this tool to ensure and document that all required trainings are met. Peer reviewers will utilize this tool when reviewing personnel records to ensure that staff meets the training requirements set by the standards.

Program/peer reviewers/program specialists

Withdrawal Form: In the event that a program wishes to withdraw from the process, the agency will fill out a form and collect signatures from the program specialist, executive director and/or board chair. This form will be provided to the IFSC coordinator and community health consultant.

Program/program specialists



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Procedure Name:	Overview of Renewal Credentialing Process
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, IFSC Staff
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2014; June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	Tool FF; Iowa Family Support Credential Application; Peer Review Application; SEQIP; Peer Review Request Form; Extension Request; Peer Review Report; Addendum; Fidelity Review

The credentialing process was designed for family support programs that do not have access to outside evaluation and are not currently credentialed through a national process. Both in-home family support programs and group-based parent education programs are eligible to apply, among any other family support programs.

Peer reviewers must successfully complete an application and peer review training prior to any assignments. Peer reviewers cannot have any conflicts of interest with the program they are evaluating. Peer reviewers cannot offer technical assistance during the course of the peer review.

From Tool FF:

- 1) By July 1, 2013, 25 percent of state funds expended for home visiting programs are for evidence based or promising program models.
- 2) By July 1, 2014, 50 percent of state funds expended for home visiting programs are for evidenced-based or promising program models.
- 3) By July 1, 2015, 75 percent of state funds expended for home visiting programs are for evidence based or promising program models.
- 4) By July 1, 2016, 90 percent of state funds expended for home visiting programs are for evidence-based or promising program models. The remaining 10 percent of funds may be used for innovative program models that do not yet meet the definition of evidence-based or promising programs.

PROCEDURE

First Step: The program submits an application for renewal and supporting materials to participate to the IFSC Coordinator. Applications can be found online at <https://lsiowa.org/ifsc> or acquired by emailing IFSCProgram@LSIowa.org. Programs should plan to submit the application for renewal at least 15

months prior to the expiration of the current credential to allow for planning and a full 12 months of technical assistance.

Second Step: Once the program is accepted into the process, they will be assigned a program specialist.

An initial meeting will be scheduled to introduce the program to the Iowa Family Support Credential process and the Iowa Family Support Standards. A Memorandum of Understanding will be signed by the program, IFSC Program Specialist, and IFSC Coordinator which formally starts the technical assistance process. The IFSC Program Specialist will help the program initially self-evaluate in relation to the family support standards using the Self-Evaluation and Quality Improvement Plan (SEQIP) within one month of the MOU meeting. The program, with the support of the IFSC Program Specialist, will then be responsible for developing and implementing a quality improvement plan to address any standards that are not met. They will also provide technical assistance to the program to assist in meeting the standards. Together, the IFSC Program Specialist and the program will identify any training needs the program may have. The IFSC Program Specialist's role will vary in intensity; however, the goal will be two virtual TA check in meetings to review progress made on the quality improvement plan and technical assistance needs the program has. The program also will complete a Mock Peer Review approximately 1 month prior to the end of TA to ensure they are adequately prepared for the peer review.

Third Step: The program has up to one year of signing the Memorandum of Understanding to request peer review. The program and the IFSC Program Specialist will inform the IFSC Coordinator that the program is ready for the peer review portion of credentialing. This is communicated via the Peer Review Application Form filled out by the program and sent to the IFSC Program Specialist. The program will also submit their completed SEQIP and staffing grid with the Peer Review Application Form. The IFSC Program Specialist reviews all of this information. The IFSC Program Specialist will modify the SEQIP to the Self-Assessment and Supporting Materials (SAM). If the IFSC Program Specialist believes the program is ready for peer review they submit all of these documents and a letter of recommendation to the IFSC Coordinator. The lead peer reviewer will request the SAM and SharePoint link or flash drive from the program.

The program is now ready for the peer review. The program will upload policies, procedures and practice to SharePoint or flash drive. The program will have all of the documents uploaded no later than three weeks prior to the beginning of the peer review. A letter will go to the program and peer reviewers who were assigned.

Fourth Step: The peer review length varies from one to two days for a peer review to renew their IFSC, depending on the organization and program's circumstances. The peer review consists of interviews, observations of home visits and / or groups, and document reviews. The peer review concludes with an oral exit report that outlines the strengths and opportunities for growth of the program and organization.

Fifth Step: The lead peer reviewer submits the Peer Review Report to the IFSC coordinator within two weeks of the conclusion of the peer review. The written report contains ratings for each standard. Ratings of three or four require the peer review team to provide written rationale for each first and second order standard. If the report contains 20% or more standards out of adherence, the program will be placed on probationary status and will be required to follow a post-peer review timeline that includes technical assistance, evidence of practice, and a fidelity peer review. If a fidelity review is warranted, the peer reviewers will have completed the contractual obligation.

Sixth Step: No later than the end of week 14 of the post-peer review process, the program will submit the Corrective Action Plan that will contain additional documentation demonstrating how the program is meeting the standard(s) that the peer review team found out of adherence. The additional documentation will be reviewed by the assigned peer review team and the IFSC Coordinator. It may take several attempts before the peer review team is confident that the program is adhering to the standard(s). Because of this, it is in the program's interest to complete and submit the Corrective Action Plan as soon as possible.

Seventh Step: **IF** the additional documentation and Addendum is approved by the IFSC coordinator, the program will be awarded the Iowa Family Support Credential. Notification will come via email from the IFSC Coordinator. The credential will be valid for five years.

IF the additional documentation and Addendum are not approved at the end of the three months, a one-day fidelity peer review will be conducted to review evidence of standards originally rated as out of adherence through documentation and staff interviews through documentation and staff interviews.

IF, after the fidelity peer review, the agency has demonstrated adherence to the standards, the program will receive the Iowa Family Support Credential. If, after the fidelity peer review, there are still standards out of adherence, the program must withdraw and wait one year before reapplying for credentialing.



Procedure Name:	Peer Reviewer Training
Applicable to:	Peer Reviewers, IFSC Staff
Effective Date:	March 2016
Date(s) of revision:	June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	

Peer reviewers must successfully complete an application and peer review training prior to any assignments. Additionally, peer reviewers must complete an annual re-certification to maintain their status as a certified peer reviewer. Peer reviewers cannot have any conflicts of interest with the program they are evaluating. Peer reviewers cannot offer technical assistance during the course of the peer review.

PROCEDURE

Peer reviewers will not be reimbursed for time spent at the training.

INITIAL TRAINING

Once the Peer Review Application is approved by the IFSC Coordinator they will be scheduled for the next Peer Reviewer Training. This training must be completed prior to being assigned to any peer reviews. Peer Reviewer Training is conducted 1 -2 times per year depending on the number of applicants.

The Peer Review Training is conducted virtually and consists of a full two days reviewing IFSC policy, the Iowa Family Support Standards and interpretations, role-playing opportunities to practice skills, and concludes with a mock peer review where mock policies, procedures, and practices are reviewed. A mock peer review report is written by the peer reviewer applicants and turned in the IFSC Coordinator.

The IFSC Coordinator schedules individual meetings with each applicant to review the mock peer review report and provide feedback. The applicant's fit and desire to be a peer reviewer also will be discussed and a final decision will be made about the applicant's certification as a peer reviewer.

Upon certification, peer reviewers will fill in a map indicating their county of residency, the county in which they work, and any additional counties where a conflict of interest may exist. Every effort will be made to schedule new peer reviewers for a peer review as soon as possible following certification.

ANNUAL RE-CERTIFICATION

In order to maintain their status as a certified peer reviewer, peers are required to complete an annual re-certification. Peer reviewers will complete a Peer Review Report vignette based on a series of policies and documents supplied by the IFSC Coordinator and return prior to the meeting.

In the event that the peers cannot attend the re-certification training, they will need to make arrangements ahead of time with the coordinator to complete their recertification

Peers will annually complete a new map indicating conflict of interest, code of conduct and confidentiality forms.

The annual re-certification meeting occurs over the course of 3 hours. Meetings will take place virtually.

FALL MEETING

The fall meeting is not mandatory to retain certification status. The only requirement is that peer reviewers maintain their certification and that the certification remains in good standing.

During the fall meeting, peer reviewers will meet virtually to discuss interpretation of standards, address questions, and review any updates to the credentialing process.



Procedure Name:	Program Specialist Assignments
Applicable to:	Program, IFSC Staff
Effective Date:	March 2014
Date(s) of revision:	June 2014; June 2023
Other References:	

Technical assistance is provided to the program by their assigned IFSC Program Specialist. IFSC Program Specialists are employees of Lutheran Services in Iowa. IFSC Program Specialists meet the educational and experience requirements of the position and receive training on the Iowa Family Support Credential policies, procedures, standards, and mentoring. IFSC Program Specialist's disclose all potential conflicts of interest and assignments to programs are made in a manner that mitigates any possible conflicts of interest.

PROCEDURE

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAM SPECIALISTS:

Program specialists will hold a bachelor's degree or higher in social work, human services, education, or health-related field. In addition, program specialists must have experience working in a family support field and complete the Iowa Family Support Technical Assistance Training prior to working with programs.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR PROGRAM SPECIALISTS:

Program specialists must disclose any of the following:

- Past employment or consultation work with an assigned organization
- Past affiliation (professional or personal) with a staff member of an assigned organization

Programs will be assigned according to the geographic area of IFSC Program Specialist unless there is a conflict of interest. Geographic areas are fluid, depending upon where the program specialists live. If there is a conflict of interest, assignments outside of the geographic area may be made. All attempts to

resolve the conflict of interest or mitigate the conflict of interest will be taken, including assignment of the program to the IFSC Coordinator.

Full-time program specialists will average 25 programs on caseload. This can be flexible depending on where each program on the caseload is at in the process. The IFSC Coordinator will carry a caseload of less than 10 programs as needed. If all IFSC Program Specialists and the IFSC Coordinator are full, programs will be assigned to a wait list. A wait list will only be utilized if all program specialists are at capacity.

As LSI employees, IFSC Program Specialists do not sign either the IFSC Code of Conduct or IFSC Confidentiality Agreement but do sign the LSI Employee Handbook that outlines work standards, ethics, and guidelines. IFSC Program Specialists will sign any confidentiality documents the program may have which require authorization to review participant files and organizational information.



Procedure Name:	Memorandum of Understanding
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; May 2014; December 2015; June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	MOU, SEQIP; Involuntary Withdrawal Form

Initial

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be completed and signed by the program specialist as well as someone on behalf of the program. The MOU will be completed and signed at the first meeting with the program and be sent to the IFSC coordinator.

*The MOU states that the program participating in the credentialing process will work together with the assigned program specialist during a time span of up to three years, with a maximum one year extension.

Programs are allotted 40 hours of technical assistance per fiscal year (October 1st- September 30th), during the duration of the credentialing process.

The program will make adequate progress, allocating time each month to work toward adherence to the standards. **The program is responsible for initiating contact with the program specialist each month to provide an update on progress.**

The program will utilize the Self-Evaluation and Quality Improvement Plan (SEQIP) throughout the duration of time working toward the program's credential. The SEQIP will be developed within the first three months of signing the MOU, be updated in an ongoing manner, and submitted at a minimum quarterly to the program specialist.

While working with the program specialist, the program will develop a timeline toward achieving the credential. The program will be responsible for following the timeline.

The program will meet with the assigned program specialist virtually **with the goal of two meetings per year, based upon the program specialist and program's discretion.**

The program is responsible to contact the IFSC coordinator if they wish to withdraw from the process or be assigned a new program specialist.

If the program does not make adequate progress as described above, the program will receive a warning from the IFSC coordinator. If the program does not respond to the warning within 30 days, the program will be involuntarily withdrawn from the IFSC program and must wait one year to reapply.

RENEWAL PROGRAMS

*The Renewal Program MOU states that the program participating in the renewal process will work together with the assigned program specialist during a time span of up to one year.

The program will choose a track to take for the renewal process:

- Arrangement for in-depth technical assistance and two mock reviews.
- Arrangement for in-depth technical assistance and two mock reviews conducted for quality assurance and feedback only.



Procedure Name:	Tracking Program Time
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; May 2014; June 2023
Other References:	MOU; Subcontractor Credentialing; Request Additional Time Form; Caseload Roster Spreadsheet

Programs are awarded 40 hours of technical assistance per fiscal year.

If an agency is credentialing multiple programs, **each** program receives 20 hours of technical assistance for the program standards, along with 20 hours of technical assistance for the organizational standards.

Multi-agencies who are credentialing together will receive 20 hours of program standard technical assistance and 20 additional technical assistance hours for each agency being credentialed.

The program specialist will discuss with the program and ask the IFSC coordinator for more time if an additional 10 hours is needed. The IFSC coordinator will either approve or deny this request based on information received.

The program is responsible to make contact with the program specialist at a minimum monthly per signed MOU and meet virtually based on the program specialist's and program's discretion. This should include any updates to the SEQIP, policy changes that need to be reviewed, and any other updates.

If the program specialist has not heard from the program, contact should be made with the program by the program specialist to inquire about updates, etc.

The program specialist records any time used to the nearest 15 minutes (reviewing materials, phone calls, virtual meetings, emails, etc.)



Procedure Name:	SEQIP and SAM
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2014; June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	SEQIP; SAM; Body of Evidence

SEQIP -- Self Evaluation and Quality Improvement Plan:

The SEQIP is a tool the program will use when receiving technical assistance. The SEQIP is a companion tool that reflects the 139 first and second order standards. Standards 1-15 are program standards and 16-33 are organizational standards. Some standards may be relevant on both a program and agency level. Each second-order standard or unsubstantiated first order standard needs to be reflected in policy/procedure.

Depending on the program type, a SEQIP with pre-determined NA standards will be used by the program. All NAs should be confirmed with the program specialist. **Each program being credentialed within the agency needs its own SEQIP. For one program with multiple agencies, there will be one SEQIP for the program standards and then each agency will complete its own SEQIP for standards 16-33.** The document is compiled and shared between program and IFSC staff. This phase should be completed within the first three months of signing the MOU and submitted to the program specialist. This will be updated on a quarterly basis.

SAM -- Self-Assessment and Materials:

The SAM is a tool used when the program has demonstrated readiness to request for peer review and the SEQIP is converted to be shared with peer reviews.

The SEQIP/SAM tool is an Excel document with the following features:

- The first tab is the title page with tips for collaborating when sharing the document with programs and the program specialist
- There is one Iowa Family Support Credential Standard per numbered tab so the program specialist and programs can focus on one standard or set of standards, at any given time
 - **Each tab contains a summary of the corresponding standards but NOT the entire standard**
 - The SEQIP/SAM tool is designed to be a companion piece for tracking information and is not intended to replace the standards document

- The final tab assists peer reviewers know where the referenced policy, procedure and practice is located
- The document has been protected to safeguard formatting and information as it is shared between the program and IFSC staff
- For any assistance with the format of the SEQIP, e-mail the program specialist
- This format will not change in any way until it is converted to the SAM
- The program will send the SEQIP to the program specialist who will convert it into the SAM
- The document is formatted to print each worksheet on one page (longer standards may print on two) and a program can choose to either print certain sheets or the entire workbook
- The program will not alter the format of the SEQIP at any time and will need to submit the SEQIP in the original format to be converted into the SAM



Procedure Name:	Mock Review
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	May 2011
Date(s) of revision:	July 2013; June 2014; June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	Mock Interview Questions; Mock Preliminary Review Report; Peer Review Schedule Procedure

Initial visit:

- Review Program Guide
- Review Iowa Family Support Standards
- The first draft of the self-evaluation (SEQIP) is introduced and completed within three months of signing the MOU to include a plan for quality improvement that includes specific activities and timelines.
- Review Body of Evidence with program staff to discuss how program will develop evidence to show adherence to the standards.
- Review Rating Indicators to rate standards on SEQIP.
- MOU is reviewed and signed.
- Linking Standards document reviewed
- Review participant files, training logs, personnel records, and supervisory records with the program. All family support professional staff will bring one participant file to the meeting.

Ongoing 3-30 months:

- The self-evaluation (SEQIP) and listing of documentation will continue to be worked on and reviewed
- Work to finalize both program and agency policy and procedures and ensure these are in adherence to the Iowa Family Support Standards
- Create a list of acronyms used by the program
- Consult procedure on working with multiple programs and multi-agencies, as needed

6, 12, 18, 24 months:

- A review of participant files, training logs, personnel records, and supervisory records will be completed to monitor for continued improvement towards compliance
- Review the screening tool, assessments used, service plan, participant rights and responsibilities, participant grievance, release of information, and participant access to case records against applicable standards

- Review the Training Log. This is not required to be used by the program but is strongly recommended. This log may help the program supervisor ensure that all Iowa Family Support Standards applicable trainings are documented and updated as necessary
- Compare supervision policy and procedure against records looking for consistent scheduling of supervision time and needed documentation
- Program specialist will share notes with the program supervisor

30 months:

A mock review will be completed on participant files, training logs, personnel records, and supervisory records, in addition to the self-evaluation and SharePoint evidence.

- Assigned program specialist and another program specialist will conduct this mock review to check for adherence to the standards and make any last minute recommendations
- The mock review of the self-evaluation (SEQIP) and SharePoint
 - The program specialists will use the Mock Review Report template to provide feedback
 - Notes may include what should be added, highlighted, or flagged for peers to easily identify what the peer reviewers should be looking at for adherence
 - Identify what narrative or documentation could be strengthened
- Program specialist will debrief with the program supervisor at the conclusion of the review

36 months / day of request:

A mock review will be completed on participant files, training logs, personnel records, and supervisory records.

The day of the peer review request, the program specialist will review to ensure that the program has continued adhering to the standards in both policy and practice. **The program specialist will not submit their recommendation for peer review if the program has not adhered to the standards for the three months leading up to the peer review request.**

Staff meeting to prepare for the virtual review will happen the day the request form is completed and should include:

- Review sample schedule for the virtual visit
 - Discuss the typical schedule and explain the purpose behind each meeting, observation, and interview
 - The specifics for the peer review will be worked out between program and lead peer reviewer
- Review Home Visit and / or Group Parent Education Observation Checklist(s)
- Discuss areas program specialist may still have concerns
- Utilize the mock interview questions as needed
- Confirm that practice changes have been implemented
- Confirm policy and procedure changes have been made
- Ensure a secure virtual platform for peer review, invitations to groups, and staff time expectations, etc.
- Program completes Request for Peer Review Form and sends to the program specialist
- Program specialist sends program's Request for Peer Review Form and letter of recommendation to the IFSC coordinator



Procedure Name:	Mock Review for Renewal Programs
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2015
Date(s) of revision:	June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	Mock Interview Questions; Mock Preliminary Review Report; Peer Review Schedule Procedure

Initial visit:

- Review Program Guide
- Review Iowa Family Support Standards
- The first draft of the self-evaluation (SEQIP) is introduced and completed within three months of signing the MOU to include a plan for quality improvement that includes specific activities and timelines.
- Review Body of Evidence with program staff to discuss how program will develop evidence to show adherence to the standards.
- Review Rating Indicators to rate standards on SEQIP.
- MOU is reviewed and signed.
- Linking Standards document reviewed
- Review participant files, training logs, personnel records, and supervisory records with the program. All family support professional staff will bring one participant file to the meeting.

Ongoing 1-6 months:

- The self-evaluation (SEQIP) and listing of documentation will continue to be worked on and reviewed
- Send existing and new policies and procedures to program specialist to review for adherence to the Iowa Family Support Standards.
- Create or update current list of acronyms used by the program
- Consult procedure on working with multiple programs and multi-agencies, as needed

6 months:

A mock review will be completed on participant files, training logs, personnel records, and supervisory records, in addition to the self-evaluation and SharePoint evidence.

- Assigned program specialist and another program specialist will conduct this mock review to check for adherence to the standards and make any last minute recommendations
- The mock review of the self-evaluation (SEQIP) and SharePoint
 - The program specialists will use the Mock Review Report template to provide feedback

- Notes may include what should be added, highlighted or flagged for peers to easily identify what the peer reviewers should be looking at for adherence
- Identify what narrative or documentation could be strengthened
- Program specialist will debrief with the program supervisor at the conclusion of the review

12 months / day of request:

A mock review will be completed on participant files, training logs, personnel records, and supervisory records.

The day of the peer review request, the program specialist will review to ensure that the program has continued adhering to the standards in both policy and practice. **The program specialist will not submit their recommendation for peer review if the program has not adhered to the standards for the three months leading up to the peer review request.**

Staff meeting to prepare for the virtual review will happen the day the request form is completed and should include:

- Review sample schedule for the virtual visit
 - Discuss the typical schedule and explain the purpose behind each meeting, observation, and interview
 - The specifics for the peer review will be worked out between program and lead peer reviewer
- Review Home Visit and / or Group Parent Education Observation Checklist(s)
- Discuss areas program specialist may still have concerns
- Utilize the mock interview questions as needed
- Confirm that practice changes have been implemented
- Confirm policy and procedure changes have been made
- Ensure a secure virtual platform for peer review, invitations to groups, and staff time expectations, etc.
- Program completes Request for Peer Review Form and sends to program specialist
- Program specialist sends program's Request for Peer Review Form and letter of recommendation to the IFSC coordinator



Procedure Name:	Request Peer Review
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008;
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011 March 2014; June 2014; June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	Peer Review Request Form

Once a program is in 100% adherence with policy, procedure and practice and submits their final SEQIP it is reviewed by the assigned program specialist. All changes and updates should be approved at least three months prior to a program’s request for peer review date in order to ensure consistent practice change before the request. The program specialist will then convert the SEQIP into the SAM. Based on the program's completed policies and procedures and practice the program will request a peer review after the final mock review. When the program specialist agrees that the program is ready, both the program specialist and program will complete the Peer Review Request Form. The completed form and a letter of recommendation from the program specialist will be sent by email to the IFSC coordinator.

The program is responsible for selecting a date for their peer review to take place. Request for peer review must be made a **minimum of 12 weeks prior to the anticipated date of peer review**. Any request with less than 12 weeks will require evaluation by IFSC coordinator. All interviews will be completed virtually to ensure that all persons participating in the interviews feel that confidentiality will be maintained. If the program is a group parent education program, there must be groups scheduled during the peer review for observation. The group observation should not take place on the last day of the peer review if a two day review is required.

The organization's executive director, human resource director, and fiscal director are mandatory participants in the program management interview. In smaller organizations these functions may be filled by one or two persons with overlapping responsibilities.

The program submits their SAM with the documents in SharePoint.

All program policies and procedures must be in practice for a minimum of three months prior to the request for peer review.

At the time the program receives the Peer Review Report, the IFSC coordinator will send the program a form to provide feedback on the program specialist’s performance during the technical assistance process. This information will be discussed with the program specialist as part of the IFSC coordinator’s ongoing quality improvement.



Iowa
Family Support
Credential



Procedure Name:	Peer Review Number of Days Scheduled
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers
Effective Date:	March 2015
Date(s) of revision:	June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	Schedules

All peer reviews will be held virtually. Peer reviews will be one to two days depending on the size of the program.

One Day Compensation:

Compensation for the one day peer review: Co-peer will receive **\$988.80** and lead peer will receive **\$1,468.80**.

Two Day Compensation:

Compensation for the two day peer review schedule: Co-peer will receive **\$1,606.80** and lead peer will receive **\$2,086.80**.

When peers decide to co-lead, the amount received will be \$240 added to the co-peer amount.

If prior approval is obtained for an in person peer review the following requirements will be looked at to determine the number of days. The number of days scheduled for a peer review will vary according to the unique needs of the program being credentialed.

Requirements for Two Day Review:

Short-term home visitation programs and group parent education programs will receive a two day peer review for single agency/single programs.

Long-term home visitation programs that have two or less full time status (FTE) family support professionals and less than 60 **open** participant files will receive a two day peer review.

Compensation for the two day peer review schedule: Co-peer will receive **\$1,606.80** and lead peer will receive **\$2,086.80**.

Requirements for Three Day Review:

Short-term home visitation programs that also have a group component

Short-term home visitation that has two or more counties

Programs that have between three and 14 full time status (FTE) family support professionals and have between 100-449 **open** participant files will receive a three day peer review. A three day review may also be required for short-term or group parent education that has multiple counties and/or agencies involved in credentialing process.

Compensation for the three day peer review schedule: Co-peer will receive **\$1,984.80** and lead peer will receive **\$2,464.80**.

Requirements for Four Day Review:

Long-term home visitation programs that have 15 or more full time status (FTE) family support professionals and at a minimum of 450 **open** participant files

Long-term home visitation programs that have two or more agencies and two or more programs

Agencies that have two or more programs and are in two or more counties being credentialed

Short-term home visitation programs that have more than two agencies and more than two counties

Compensation for the two day peer review schedule: Co-peer will receive **\$2,362.80** and lead peer will receive **\$2,842.80**

Requirements for Five Day Review

Long-term home visitation programs that have three or more agencies

Long-term home visitation programs that have three or more programs or two or more agencies

Compensation for five day peer review schedule: Co-peer will receive **\$2,740.80** and lead peer will receive **\$3,220.80**.

When peers decide to co-lead, the amount received will be \$240 added to the co-peer amount.

RENEWAL

Requirements for a One Day Expedited Renewal:

Program must have 90% or higher adherence to all standards on the final Peer Review Report at the conclusion of the initial peer review.

Only previously credentialed Iowa Family Support programs are eligible. If the organization has additional programs that need credentialed which were not included in the previous peer review, the programs that have not been credentialed will need to go through the original process to receive their initial credential. Technical assistance may be provided for up to three years for the new program to achieve adherence to the standards before the peer review is scheduled.

Expedited process is available on alternating renewal cycles. Organizations cannot apply for an expedited renewal if the previous credential was awarded through an expedited renewal process.

Compensation for the one day renewal: Co-peer will receive **\$988.80** and lead peer will receive **\$1,468.80**.

When peers decide to co-lead, the amount received will be \$240 added to the co-peer amount.

***Disclaimer: It is the responsibility of IFSC staff to determine the length of a peer review and the decision may include additional information not listed above. The procedure above will be used as a guide, but due to unique situations may fall outside the time frames listed above.**



Procedure Name:	Peer Reviewer Assignments
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers
Effective Date:	March 2014; May 2014;
Date(s) of revision	June 2014; June 2023; April 2025
Other Reference:	IFSC Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement

Requirements for peer reviewers:

All persons providing peer review services have completed an application and successfully completed peer reviewer training. To be selected for a peer review assignment, peer reviewers must have a bachelor's degree in health, human services, or education and must be well-versed in the family support field. In addition, all peer reviewers must agree to follow and sign the Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement and must self-disclose any conflict of interest to IFSC coordinator. **Peer reviewers will not have any contact with the program post-peer review and will not work or reside in the program's service delivery area.**

Requirements for lead peer reviewers:

Must meet all the requirements of peer reviewers **AND**

- Must have completed three peer reviews prior to assignment to lead peer reviewer
- Lead peer reviewers will have no negative feedback from a program within the past year

Roles of lead peer reviewer will include coordinating peer review, submission of final Peer Review Report, and lead communication with the program regarding logistics both before and during the peer review.

All peer reviewers will be required to be recertified on an annual basis.

Assignments for peer reviewers:

Two possible dates for peer review will be given to the IFSC coordinator from the program that would work for the organization. The program specialist should discuss with the program the availability of groups and home visits during the peer review process.

The IFSC coordinator will send out an email on Mondays, when there is a peer review to schedule, to all peer reviewers requesting availability of peer reviewers.

Peer reviewers will send an email if they are interested, available, and there is no conflict of interest with the specific site by noon on Friday of the same week.

Peer reviewers will be selected based on availability, conflict of interest, time between reviews, and previous lead peer reviewer roles. Best practice is for peer reviewers to have ample time in between peer reviews. IFSC will try to ensure peer reviewers will have two months after a peer review before assignment to a new peer review. IFSC will utilize peer reviewer location maps to help ensure assignments are not within peer reviewers' residence or service delivery counties.

The IFSC coordinator will send an email to the program, selected peer reviewers to let them know which peers were selected for the review.

The IFSC coordinator will send an email to other peer reviewers to let them know the peer review team has been filled.

Peer reviewers will sign and date the Code of Conduct, Confidentiality Agreement, and contract for each peer review assignment. The contract will be sent to the IFSC coordinator who will gather any remaining signatures needed and send a copy back to the peer reviewers. The Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreements will also be sent to the program via the lead peer reviewer.



Procedure Name:	Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; May 2014; June 2023; April 2025
Other Reference:	Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement

Peer reviewers will sign the Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement after the assignment of a peer review. The documents will be sent to peer reviewers by the IFSC coordinator.

The lead peer reviewer will send to the program both the signed Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement from each assigned peer reviewer and cc the IFSC coordinator. Programs may share this with any individuals who have questions on how IFSC adheres to confidentiality and maintains a code of conduct with peer reviewers.

Additional information:

As LSI employees, program specialists do not sign either the IFSC Code of Conduct or IFSC Confidentiality Agreement but do sign the LSI Employee Handbook that outlines work standards, ethics, and guidelines.

Program specialists will sign any confidentiality documents the program may have which require authorization to review participant files and organizational information.



Procedure Name:	Extension Request Checklist
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	May 2011
Date(s) of revision:	July 2013; June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	Extension Request Checklist

Instructions: This checklist is to be used by the program and the program specialist to ensure that the program is meeting all of the required elements of the request for an extension.

NOTE:

- Programs must submit the request at least 6 months prior to the date of original request if needed
- Programs must show they have been actively working towards earning the credential and must be adhering to a minimum of 60% of the standards to be eligible for the extension
- Programs going through the renewal process are **NOT** eligible for extensions, unless an exception is granted
- Exceptions will only be granted on extenuating situations and will be reviewed by Iowa HHS for final approval

Check off each item to ensure the request meets all of the requirements:

- _____ 12 point font is used
- _____ Length of the request is six pages or less
- _____ Request is signed by the contact person for the program
- _____ Request is signed by the program specialist indicating that they are in complete agreement with the accuracy of the information contained within the request
- _____ Program has followed the instructions for completing the request
- _____ Program specialist feels that the program has a plan in place that will be successful in getting the program ready for the peer review at the end of the 12 month extension. The program specialist **CAN NOT** sign requests for program when the opinion is held that the program will not be ready at the end of the 12 month extension.
- _____ Request summarizes why there is a need (*helpful hint: program needs to take ownership*)
- _____ Request must clearly state how the program will use the additional time to prepare and be ready for the peer review
- _____ Request must demonstrate how effectively the program has used the technical assistance provided thus far

_____ Request must provide a detailed plan for the additional 12 months which provides:

_____ Detailed timeline for the 12 months

_____ Detailed activities must be included in the timeline

_____ The plan must demonstrate that if it is followed, the program will be ready for the peer review at the end of the 12 months. In other words, the plan must give a detailed listing of activities with timelines that will ensure that the program is ready for the peer review at the end of the twelve months.

_____ Request addresses all elements used for evaluating the request for the extension:

_____ Barriers outside of the control of the program such as:

_____ Change in program specialist (can mark N/A)

_____ Changes in key program personnel (can mark N/A)

_____ Other influences such as, but not limited to, major health concerns of key program personnel or their immediate family members (can mark N/A)

_____ Ability of the program to be ready for the peer review if granted a 12 month extension

_____ Can the program's plan be realistically achieved in 12 months?

_____ Must be in adherence to a minimum of 60% (or 19) of the standards at the time the request is made. **Helpful hint:** *the request must state this clearly and identify which standards the program is in adherence to at the time of the request and the program's plan with timeline should include the remaining standards and when the program will achieve adherence to the standards. Keep in mind that any new changes in practice should be in place for at least three months prior to the peer review.*

_____ Demonstrated cooperation with the program specialist over the previous 36 months

Helpful hint: *gaps in no contact with the program specialist should be explained. State will be looking at the hours billed per program and if it looks like a program is not taking advantage of the program specialist services they should be prepared to explain why. Owning up to putting credentialing on the shelf for a few months is better for the program than making up excuses.*

_____ Demonstrated consistent work toward adherence to the standards over the previous months except for the barriers noted that were outside of the control of the program

Helpful hint: *A change in program specialist does not lessen the responsibility of the program to continue to work toward adherence to the standards. Other agency duties and responsibilities that are part of the normal work environment are not an excuse for not working on adherence to the standards. It is better to frame it in what program has accomplished instead of all of the reasons why program hasn't had time to work on credentialing.*

_____ Request received at least six months prior to when the TA expires

Send request to: ☐

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services

Early Intervention and Support Staff) ☐



Procedure Name:	Peer Review Process
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision	May 2011; July 2013; May 2014; December 2014; December 2015; June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	Emergency Contact Form; Caseload Roster; Peer Review Schedule; Community Partner Roster; Home Visitation Peer Review Case File Checklist; Parent Education Peer Review Case File Checklist; Supervision Checklist; Personnel Records Checklist

Pre-Peer Review:

The program must supply to the lead peer reviewer a Caseload Roster that includes family initials or family ID/case number, worker name, enrollment date, geographic area, any developmental delays identified and exit date. On the Caseload Roster, the program should include families that have exited the program in the six-months prior to the peer review. Within one week prior to the peer review date, peer reviewers will randomly select files to be reviewed and inform the program.

Using the Community Partner Roster the program must submit a list of community partners for selection for the interview panel to the lead peer reviewer. The roster includes other family support programs operating in the area, major sources of referrals **to** the program, major sources of referrals **from** the program, and community collaborators such as, but not limited to, center-based early childhood programs, physicians, area education agency, schools, community action program(s), Head Start programs, maternal child health programs and public health programs. **It should be noted that it would be a rare exception to have the program going through the credentialing process assign someone from the same organization to the community partner roster. This should be discussed with the lead peer reviewer prior to the peer review.**

The program and IFSC Staff will work together for delivery of the SAM and SharePoint link to all peer reviewers no less than 10-12 weeks prior to the peer review.

The lead peer reviewer must communicate the review dates, and schedule to the IFSC coordinator.

Peer Reviewers:

Lead peer reviewer is responsible for timely communication with the program:

- Email program that the SharePoint link was received
- Set up a schedule with co-peer(s) to review the SharePoint documents prior to peer review and should, at a minimum, have two peer review calls pre-peer review
- Work with program contact to set agenda at a **minimum of six weeks** in advance to accommodate everyone who will be participating
- Notify the program of the number of families to be invited to participant panel interview (it is suggested that six to eight families be invited with the intent that three to five will show up)
- Select participant files to be reviewed
- May request clarification for any evidence they are not finding prior to the peer review
- Email both peer reviewers' signed copies of Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreements to the program and cc IFSC coordinator.
- Complete Emergency Contact Form and email to program and IFSC coordinator; everyone should keep a copy of this in case of emergencies that may occur before or during the peer review.

Peer reviewers will:

- Schedule delivery of the SharePoint link 10-12 weeks before the peer review date
- Complete a thorough review of the SAM and evidence prior to the peer review
- Tentatively rate each of the standards and develop questions for the interview panels based on the content of the SAM and SharePoint documents

Virtual Review:

Any unusual situations, questions, or concerns that do occur during the virtual review should be discussed with the IFSC coordinator immediately. This could include if peer reviewers feel that the program is not ready for peer review and should not continue with the review.

The program shall carefully review one file with the peer review team to orient the peer review team to file organization. The program will not be present during the file review; however, the program will be available at all times during the peer review if the peer reviewers have any questions. For Daisey file review, program staff **must** be present.

The peer review team will review a randomized selection of a **minimum of 10% of the program's files, or a minimum of 5 files for small programs**, from up to six months prior to peer review date. The selection will ensure a representation of files from each worker, each geographic area served, participants that are newly enrolled, participants that have recently exited program, and participants that have been served for a lengthier period of time to show recent practice change. **At the discretion of the peer review team, additional files for review may be selected prior to or during the peer review to ensure the peer reviewers can see recent practice change.** The lead peer reviewer will work with the program to access electronic participant records, as necessary.

The peer reviewers shall safeguard the participant files and not leave files unattended. The file review may carry over into subsequent days of the peer review. The program is responsible to adhere to all

confidentiality policies during peer review. Peer reviewers will have access to a Program's SharePoint link until final approval of the Peer Review Report.



Procedure Name:	Peer Review Process for Renewal Programs
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2015
Date(s) of revision:	December 2015; June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	Emergency Contact Form; Caseload Roster; Peer Review Schedule; Community Partner Roster; Home Visitation Peer Review Case File Checklist; Parent Education Peer Review Case File Checklist; Supervision Checklist; Personnel Records Checklist

Pre-site:

The program must supply to the lead peer reviewer a Caseload Roster that includes family initials or family ID/case number, worker name, enrollment date, geographic area, any developmental delays identified, and exit date. On the Caseload Roster, the program should include families that have exited the program in the six-months prior to the peer review. Within one week prior to the peer review date, peer reviewers will randomly select files to be reviewed and inform the program.

Using the Community Partner Roster the program must submit a list of community partners for selection for the interview panel to the lead peer reviewer. The roster includes other family support programs operating in the area, major sources of referrals **to** the program, major sources of referrals **from** the program, and community collaborators such as, but not limited to, center-based early childhood programs, physicians, area education agency, schools, community action program(s), Head Start programs, maternal child health programs and public health programs. **It should be noted that it would be a rare exception to have the program going through the credentialing process assign someone from the same organization to the community partner roster. This should be discussed with the lead peer reviewer prior to the peer review.**

The program and the lead peer reviewer will work together for delivery of the SAM and SharePoint link to all peer reviewers no less than 8-10 weeks prior to the peer review.

Peer reviewers:

The lead peer reviewer is responsible for timely communication with the program:

- Email the program that the SharePoint link was received

- Work with the program contact to set agenda at a **minimum of six weeks** in advance to accommodate everyone who will be participating
- Notify the program the number of families to be invited to participant panel interview (it is suggested that at least six to eight families be invited with the intent that three to five will show up)
- Select participant files to be reviewed
- May request clarification for any evidence they are not finding prior to the peer review
- Email both peer reviewers signed Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreements to the program and cc the IFSC coordinator
- Complete Emergency Contact Form and email to program and IFSC coordinator

The peer reviewers will:

- Schedule delivery of the SharePoint link at least 8-10 weeks before the peer review date
- Complete a thorough review of the SAM and evidence prior to the peer review
- Tentatively rate each of the standards and develop questions for the interview panels based on the content of the SAM and SharePoint documents

Virtual Review:

The program shall carefully review one file with the peer review team to orient the review team to the file organization. The program will not be present during the file review; however, the program will be available at all times during the peer review if the peer reviewers have any questions. For Daisey file review, program staff must be present.

The peer review team will review a randomized selection of a **minimum of 10% of the program's files, or a minimum of 5 files from smaller programs**, from up to six months prior to the peer review date. The selection will ensure a representation of files from each worker, each geographic area served, participants that are newly enrolled, participants that have recently exited program, and participants that have been served for a lengthier period of time to show recent practice change. At the discretion of the peer review team, additional files for review may be selected prior to or during the peer review. The lead peer reviewer will work with the program for access to electronic participant records, as necessary.

The peer reviewers shall safeguard the participant files and not leave files unattended. The file review may carry over into subsequent days of the peer review. The program is responsible to adhere to all confidentiality policies during peer review. Peer reviewers will have access to a Program's SharePoint link until final approval of the Peer Review Report.



Procedure Name:	Expedited Renewal Process
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists, Peer Reviewers
Effective Date:	February 2016
Date(s) of revision:	June 2018, September 2018; June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	

Programs that have earned the Iowa Family Support Credential may be eligible for a streamlined renewal process. The streamlined renewal is expedited to take less time and effort to prepare for the virtual peer review and will have a condensed peer review. To earn the expedited renewal process the following must be met:

- 1) Program must have 90% or higher adherence to all 1st and 2nd order standards on the previous Peer Review Report at the conclusion of the initial site visit.
- 2) Only previously credentialed Iowa Family Support programs are eligible. If the organization has additional programs that need credentialed which were not included in the previous peer review, the programs that have not been credentialed will need to go through the original process to receive their initial credential. Technical assistance may be provided for up to three years for the new program to achieve adherence to the standards before the peer review is scheduled.
- 3) Expedited process is available on alternating renewal cycles. Organizations cannot apply for an expedited renewal if the previous credential was awarded through an expedited renewal process.
- 4) Expedited Peer Review must have 50 or less second order standards being reviewed
- 5) Programs must review the changed policies prior to submitting their application for TA. This will be submitted with their application.
- 6) All policies must include date (year only) revised. If nothing has changed on that policy since last credential use date of last credential. If policy has changed since last credential use the revised date.

Process for the Iowa Family Support Expedited Renewal Credential

- 1) SharePoint or flash drive with evidence for the following:
 - a. Any policies/procedures and evidence that the organization or program has changed significantly since receiving the initial credential.

- b. Any policies/procedures and evidence that are new due to Iowa Family Support Standards updates.
 - c. Any policies/procedures and evidence that did not receive a 1 or 2 rating on the previous review.
 - d. Policy/procedures and practice for standards:
 - i. 2.01, 3.01, 3.04, 4.01, 4.02, 4.03, 6.03, 10.05, 10.06, 10.07, 13.01, 13.02, 13.03, 13.04, 11.04, 14.05, 14.06, 17, 20.01, 21.01, 21.04, 25.03, 25.07, 26.02, 27.01, 27.02, 29.06, 32.03 (28 second order standards)
 - ii. New Staff Only (or New Supervisors Only): 14.01, 14.03, 14.04, 15.03, 24.01, 24.02, 24.03, 24.04, 24.05, 24.06, 24.07, 29.01, 29.02, 29.03, 29.04, (15 second order standards)
- 2) The expedited peer review will be a one day review to include the following:
- a. Program participants, Family Support Professional and Family Support Supervisors interviews.
 - b. Boards/Community Partners/Funders as determined by IFSC Coordinator depending on applicability. Interview panels may be combined if appropriate.
 - c. Interview on how program has sustained continuous quality improvement for the credentialed program(s).
 - d. Review of participant files to ensure practice follows standards. Peer Reviewers will review up a minimum of 5 participant files or up to 10% of participant files, whichever is greater. Peer Reviewers will review a maximum of 10 participant files.
 - e. Review of personnel files for all new program staff since last peer review. Current Mandatory Report certificates will be reviewed for all program staff.
 - f. Review of training files for all new program staff since last peer review. Copies of complete training files or logs will be submitted to the peer reviewers prior to the peer review via the SharePoint link or Flash drive.
 - g. Review of supervision files for a portion of the participants as determined by the peer reviewers.
 - h. Conduct a home visit/group observation as determined by **program**, as the schedule allows determined by IFSC Coordinator.



Procedure Name:	Virtual Peer Review Policy
Applicable to:	Programs; Peer Reviewers; Program Specialists
Effective Date:	October 2020
Date(s) of revision:	July 2021; June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	Peer Review Process; Peer Review Schedule;

Policy:

Programs will participate in a virtual peer review process:

As a part of a virtual peer review process, all required panel interviews and checklists will be completed. Protected Health Information (PHI) will be reviewed in participant files, supervision files, and other documents as outlined as “Documents Available in PHI Portal”/SharePoint in the body of evidence.

Procedure:

Virtual Platform

All peer reviews will occur virtually. Each panel interview will have its own meeting link so each person can get into the meeting(s) they’re supposed to be a part of. The following are some things to consider when determining where / how to participate in the virtual peer review:

- Participants in virtual meetings should all have their own devices to join the meetings. Sharing devices is discouraged as it can lead to problems being able to hear everyone speak and problems with participants being able to hear peer reviewers.
- Programs may consider using a computer to participate in order to share their screen to explain something.
- Programs and participants should consider using a quiet, low traffic space and may also want to consider using headphones with a microphone if interruptions are possible.

Panel Interviews

Panel interviews will take place just as they would during an onsite peer review except that those participating in the interviews will join via a virtual platform. Each panel interview will have its own link and those participating should only be provided links for the meetings they’re participating in. Family Support Participants enrolled in the program should be encouraged to participate in the panel interview remotely if possible. The program and peer reviewers will work together to identify families that have access to the internet either on their phone or at a location that they can join Wi-Fi.

Checklists

Each checklist will be completed as explained below.

- Participant file checklists will be completed by sharing documents via PHI review
- Training file checklists will be completed by the program and submitted prior to Peer Review
- Personnel file checklists will be completed by the program and submitted prior to Peer Review
- Supervision file checklists will be completed by sharing documents via PHI review and through screen sharing

Protected Health Information Review

Peer Reviewers will review documents containing PHI electronically. This information is used to review all of the checklists along with information found in the SharePoint portion of the “Body of Evidence.” Programs will upload this information into a document server. This document server will be referred to as SharePoint.

Programs have the option of doing this in two ways:

- Programs may use their own HIPAA compliant document server and grant the assigned peer reviewers and the IFSC Coordinator access to read the documents or
- Programs may elect to use a document server provided by IFSC. The document server is HIPAA compliant and protected by a Business Associate Agreement. Peer reviewers are provided with access to read the documents. Programs are provided with access to read and write documents. The IFSC Coordinator will also have read and write access to help with organization of the document server and making sure files are where they need to be for the peer reviewers.

Programs will have all of the documents uploaded no later than three weeks prior to the beginning of the peer review. Prior to uploading this information into the SharePoint programs will ensure that the file name of each document is relevant to the document they are uploading and label which second order standard it applies to. Programs also will ensure that all pages of all documents uploaded to the SharePoint they upload are rotated the correct way. Programs can either change the way the documents are scanned to achieve this, or they can rotate the page in the saved PDF files prior to uploading it to SharePoint. For assistance with this please contact the IFSC Coordinator.

As documents that contain PHI may be requested by the peer reviewers during the peer review, programs will refrain from emailing them directly to the peer reviewer but rather upload them to the SharePoint. Peer reviewers also will not print or save any documents containing protected health information.

For participant file reviews, programs will upload documents in applicable folders based on document type. For each participant file, a folder should be created under each participant name labeled for the following documents as applicable:

- Screening for Eligibility
- Enrollment
- Assessments
- Goal Plans
- Releases of Information
- Case Notes
- Discharge Planning and Aftercare Planning

- File Closing
- Supervisor Review

Agenda

The lead peer reviewer will work with the program to create the agenda. The agenda should be finalized six weeks prior to the beginning of the peer review. The lead peer reviewer will then send the agenda to the IFSC Coordinator to set up all of the virtual meetings. The IFSC Coordinator will send that to the program and to the peer reviewers. The program then will notify all necessary participants of their meeting dates, times, and virtual meeting links to join the meeting.



Procedure Name:	Peer Review Schedule
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2014; June 2023
Other References:	Peer Review Schedule for Home Visitation and Group-based Parent Education

The program specialist will discuss the typical schedule with the program prior to the peer review and explain the purpose behind each meeting, observation, and interview.

The lead peer reviewer works with program at a minimum of six weeks in advance to set the schedule for peer review.

Entrance and Exit Meetings:

The peer review team will lead the entrance meeting. The meeting is held to explain the purpose of the Iowa Family Support Credentialing Program and to provide an overview of the peer review process. It is a mechanism for staff and community members to ask questions about the process.

The peer review team will lead the exit meeting. Individual ratings will not be given during this meeting. The peer reviewers will provide an oral report that outlines the Strengths and any Opportunities for Growth that the program or organization may have.

Participant File Review:

The peer review team will review a randomized selection of a **minimum of 10% of the program's files, or a minimum of 5 files from smaller programs**, from up to six-months prior to the peer review date. **At the discretion of the peer review team, additional files may be selected for review prior to or during the peer review.** The lead peer reviewer will work with the program for access to electronic participant records, as necessary. For larger programs, the peer reviewers will have the discretion of adjusting the percentage of files to be reviewed.

Observations:

Home Visitation Programs: Each peer reviewer will observe one home visit. Peer reviewers will have a home observation checklist to note observations that are related to adherence to the standards. The

program will be responsible for determining the participants that will be observed on a home visit. For programs with only one home visitor, only one peer reviewer will observe the home visit.

Group-Based Parent Education Programs: Programs will arrange the peer review around a group-based parent education opportunity. The peer reviewers will have an observation checklist to note observations that are related to adherence to the standards.

Other Documentation:

The program is responsible for providing access to all training, personnel and supervisory records to the peer review team. Supervisory records include items such as documentation of one-on-one meetings with staff. Documentation should include such things as date, time, purpose, content, and results. Supervisory records also include items such as team meetings and participant staffing. These may be documented by meeting agendas, meeting notes, etc. **Note:** Supervisory records are not human resource records on file with the organization.

Interview Panels:

The program is responsible for inviting representatives for each interview panel, as communicated by the lead peer reviewer, and ensuring invited participants know the date, time, and have access to the link of the interview. Invitations should be made at least four weeks in advance of the peer review. The program then should follow up with confirmations at least three weeks prior to the review. Reminders should occur in the week leading up to the peer review.

Funders Interview: The interview should try to have at least three representatives present. If the program has multiple funding sources, best practice is to include representatives from each.

Program Management Interview: The organization's executive director, human resource director, and fiscal director are mandatory participants. In smaller organizations, these functions may be filled by one or two persons with overlapping responsibilities. The person that has overall responsibility for the program (may or may not be program supervisor) must also be included in the interview.

Community Partners Interview: Community partners, referral sources and other early childhood programs are possible participants for the interview. The lead peer reviewer and the program will work together to identify potential interviewees. The lead peer reviewer will randomly select the invitees utilizing the Community Partners Roster. **It should be noted that community partner interviews should not include those from within the organization being credentialed. The lead peer reviewer will work with the program for any exceptions.**

Program Participant Panel: The lead peer reviewer will work with the program to identify a panel of participants. Children may attend the interview with parents; however, there will not be any activities provided by the peer review team for the children during the interview.

Program Supervisor Interview: The program supervisor will participate.

Family Support Professional *Interview*: All direct service staff will participate in a group setting.

Program Board of Director's Interview: Best practice is to include a minimum of three board members for a group interview.



Procedure Name:	Peer Review Schedule for Renewal Programs
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2015
Date(s) of revision:	December 2015; June 2023
Other References:	Peer Review Schedule for Home Visitation and Group-based Parent Education

The program specialist will discuss the typical schedule with the program prior to peer review and explain the purpose behind each meeting, observation, and interview.

The lead peer reviewer works with the program at a minimum of six weeks in advance to set the schedule for peer review.

Entrance and Exit Meetings:

The peer review team will lead the entrance meeting. The meeting is held to explain the purpose of the Iowa Family Support Credentialing program and to provide an overview of the peer review process. It is a mechanism for staff and community members to ask questions about the process.

The peer review team will lead the exit meeting. Individual ratings will not be given during this meeting. The peer reviewers will provide an oral report that outlines the Strengths and any Opportunities for Growth that the program or organization may have.

Participant File Review:

The peer review team will review a randomized selection of a **minimum of 10% of the program's files, or a minimum of 5 files from smaller programs**, from up to six-months prior to the peer review date. At the discretion of the peer review team, additional files may be selected for review prior to or during the peer review. The lead peer reviewer will work with the program for access to electronic participant records, as necessary. For larger programs, the peer reviewers will have the discretion of adjusting the percentage of files to be reviewed.

Observations:

Home Visitation Programs: At the program’s request, one peer reviewer may observe one home visit. Peer reviewer will have a home observation checklist to note observations that are related to adherence

to the standards. The program will be responsible for determining the participants that will be observed on a home visit.

Group-Based Parent Education Programs: At the programs request, one peer reviewer may observe a group-based parent education opportunity. If desired, programs will arrange the peer review around a group-based parent education opportunity. The peer reviewer will have an observation checklist to note observations that are related to adherence to the standards.

Other Documentation:

The program is responsible for providing access to all training logs, personnel and supervisory records to the peer review team. Supervisory records include items such as documentation of one-on-one meetings with staff. Documentation should include such things as date, time, purpose, content, and results. Supervisory records also include items such as team meetings and participant staffing. These may be documented by meeting agendas, meeting notes, etc.

Interview Panels:

The program is responsible for inviting representatives for each interview panel as communicated by the lead peer reviewer; ensuring invited participant knows the date, time, and has access to the link of the interview. Invitations should be made at least four weeks in advance of the peer review. The program then should follow up with confirmations at least three weeks prior to the review. Reminders should occur in the week leading up to the peer review. **The interview panels will be held at peer reviewer's discretion.**

Funders Interview: The interview should try to have at least three representatives present. If the program has multiple funding sources, best practice is to include representatives from each.

Program Management Interview: The organization's executive director, human resource director, and fiscal director are mandatory participants. In smaller organizations, the functions may be filled by one or two persons with overlapping responsibilities. The person that has overall responsibility for the program (may or may not be program supervisor) must also be included in the interview.

Community Partners Interview: Community partners, referral sources and other early childhood programs are possible participants for the interview. The lead peer reviewer and the program will work together to identify potential interviewees. The lead peer reviewer will randomly select the invitees utilizing the Community Partners Roster. **It should be noted that community partner interviews should not include those from within the organization being credentialed. Please speak with the lead peer reviewer for an exception.**

Program Participant Panel: The lead peer reviewer will work with the program to identify a panel of participants. Children may attend the interview with parents; however, there will not be any activities provided by the peer review team for the children during the interview.

Program Supervisor Interview: The program supervisor will participate.

Family Support Professional Interview: All direct service staff will participate in a group interview.

Program Board of Director's Interview: Best practice is to include a minimum of three board members for a group interview.



INSERT DATE

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

Dear INSERT NAME,

We are pleased to inform you that the state of Iowa has announced that INSERT PROGRAM NAME operated by INSERT AGENCY NAME is ready to participate in a peer review of our program. Our program will earn the Iowa Family Support Credential, if as a result of the peer review, we are found to be in substantial adherence to the Iowa Family Support Standards.

The Iowa Family Support Credential is awarded to family support and parent education programs that have fully integrated evidence based practices into their programming and throughout their organization. The Iowa Family Support Standards are based on the most up to date research regarding best practice in the family support field. Adherence to the standards indicates that the program is providing high quality services that will result in positive outcomes for young children and their families.

Our peer review will be conducted by trained peers on INSERT DATE to validate our program's adherence to the standards. We need your participation in a panel interview on INSERT DATE AND TIME to assist our program in earning the honored distinction of being credentialed by the state of Iowa. We selected you to participate in the panel interview because INSERT REASON. We know how busy you are but please give serious consideration to participating and assisting the INSERT PROGRAM OR ORGANIZATION NAME. Please let INSERT YOUR NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION know of your availability by INSERT DEADLINE FOR RESPONDING.

Thank you for considering this request!

Sincerely,

INSERT YOUR NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION



Procedure Name:	Subcontractor, Multi-Program, Multi-Agency Credentialing
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2014
Date(s) of revision:	June 2014; June 2023
Other References:	Body of Evidence

Subcontracting Programs

When a program uses subcontractors, the following steps are taken:

- During peer review process, peer reviewers will review contracts to ensure program is holding all subcontractors accountable to Iowa Family Support Standards. Organizational standards apply to the lead or contracting organization. Peer reviewers will evaluate adherence to the organizational standards of the lead agency, not its subcontractors. However, the lead organization's contract with subcontractor should clearly outline similar standards of operation. The peer review team will review subcontract language to demonstrate adherence to program and organizational standards.
 - Peer reviewers will need to see evidence for program standards (1-15) based on training logs, supervision records, participant file review, forms used
 - Peer reviewers will need to see evidence for agency standards (16-33) based upon contract compliance, interviews, contracting agency's procedures on how they hold subcontractors accountable (chart reviews, site visits reviews, contract, supervision documentation, board meeting minutes, annual reports, policy and procedure manual)
- Contracting agency must ensure that subcontracting agency holds programs/staff accountable to standards; however, the peer reviewers will not review specific budgets, policies, procedures, etc. of subcontracting agency. This will be evidenced through the contract. The contracting agency will need to show evidence that the subcontracting agency is adhering to standards in relationship to the programs seeking credential.
- Credential will be awarded to the contractor and the subcontracting agency will be acknowledged that the specific program was credentialed through contracted agency

Multi-Agency Credentialing

Each agency will need to show adherence to standards.

Depending on the number of agencies, the number of peer reviewers assigned and/or number of days for peer review may be increased.

Multi-Program Credentialing

Programs within the same agency will receive their own credential.

Depending on the number of programs, the number of peer reviewers assigned and/or number of days for peer review may be increased.



Procedure Name:	Entrance Meeting
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2023
Other References:	Entrance and Exit Meeting Script

Purpose: To introduce the peer review team and familiarize program staff, etc. with the purpose of credentialing and activities of the team

The entrance meeting is open to all attendees that the program and organization chooses to invite. An outline of the entrance meeting will be as follows:

1. Introductions
2. History and purpose of Iowa Family Support Credentialing
3. Role of peer reviewers
4. Overview of peer review



Procedure Name:	Exit Meeting
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	Entrance and Exit Meeting Script

Purpose: To review general findings and observations and to conclude the peer review

The exit meeting is open to all attendees that the program and organization chooses to invite. An outline of the exit meeting will be as follows:

1. Thank for hospitality
2. Summarize activities of peer review process
3. Positive comments regarding cooperation of personnel, SharePoint documentation, files, etc.
4. Strengths
5. Opportunities for Growth
6. Next Steps



Procedure Name:	Timeline of Peer Review Report
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; May 2014; December 2014; June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	Peer Review Report; Addendum; Corrective Action Plan

Post Peer Review Process

The program will not contact the peer review team after the conclusion of the exit meeting. The IFSC coordinator* serves as a liaison between the program and peer review team. All communication regarding the Peer Review Report should be directed to the IFSC coordinator*.

During the post-review period, programs may be in contact with the program specialist. Programs may also request of the IFSC coordinator a new program specialist to work with them during this time. There will not be a cap on the time allotted for technical assistance post peer review.

Schedule to turn in report is as follows:

The lead peer reviewer will submit the Peer Review Report to the IFSC coordinator* within two weeks of the peer review being completed.

The peer review team will use the Peer Review Report and Addendum provided for their documentation. In all cases of reviewing Peer Review Reports, the track changes and comment tools **must** be used in Microsoft Word.

The following timeline begins the day after the peer review exit meeting.

- Week 1-2 Peer reviewers collaborate to write Peer Review Report and submit to the IFSC coordinator*
- Week 3 IFSC coordinator* reviews and approves the Peer Review Report and provides feedback
- Week 4 Peer reviewers have one week to address all comments and suggestions on the Peer Review Report before submitting the **final version without mark-ups or comments to the IFSC coordinator***
- Week 5 IFSC coordinator* will send to the program the final Peer Review Report (this takes into account going back and forth) within one week

- Week 6-14 Programs collect evidence, write Corrective Action Plan and submits to the IFSC coordinator* by the end of Week 14
- Week 15 IFSC coordinator* forwards program documentation to the peer reviewers. Peer reviewers review Corrective Action Plan and return the Peer Review Report Addendum **within one week** of the final evidence submitted by programs meeting adherence of identified standards rated three or four.
- Week 16 IFSC coordinator* will review the Peer Review Report Addendum within one week
- Week 17 IFSC coordinator* will send Addendum to the peer review team for feedback with one week to respond
- Week 18 IFSC coordinator* reviews final Peer Review Report and Addendum and sends to the Iowa HHS representative
- Week 19 The Iowa HHS representative will then review the final report and send congratulatory credential email announcement to program

The Addendum will be used to provide feedback to the program based on the Corrective Action Plan and any additional documents received from the program on standards that were out of adherence (three or four ratings) at review.

Peer reviewers will not have contact with the program once the on-site peer review has been completed.

Written Peer Review Reports are public documents and are made available upon request from the Iowa HHS representative. Written reports will not contain any information that could potentially identify program participants, interview panelists, or direct program staff. All preliminary reports and personal notes of the peer reviewers are considered working documents and will be shredded upon the notification of program credential.



Procedure Name:	Writing Peer Review Reports
Applicable to:	Peer Reviewers
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2014; June 2023
Other Reference:	Peer Review Report; Addendum; Rating Indicator Sheet

The Peer Review Report will be co-written with all assigned peer reviewers and the final draft submitted by the lead reviewer. The report should be written using business writing practices and reflect a professional document. Proper spelling and punctuation must be used throughout the report. Complete sentences are used unless the comment is a direct quote from an interview panel participant. In the case of a participant quote, an incomplete sentence or grammatically incorrect sentence may appear.

Identifying a particular person by name is not permissible in the final report. This is true even if it is a quote from an interview panel participant. For example, if a participant states, "I don't know what I would do without Sally," peer reviewer may record that quote as, "I don't know what I would do without (my worker)." (Identifying information has been changed and job title substituted.)

Program strengths should be practice that goes above and beyond the standard. The program strengths are to comment about practice that exceeds the standards or exemplary practice that is not addressed in the standards. Only standards rated as 1's should be included in program strengths. Rationales will not be written for any one or two ratings. If the program does not receive many 1's on the report, other strengths can be identified.

Strengths and Opportunities for Growth need to be written so that they are able to stand on their own. There must be enough context that a reader can understand why this is a Strength or Opportunity for Growth. Strengths should be about the program or the organization's practice and are not about the funders or community.

Checklist for Peer Review Reports/Addendums:

- Must rate each first and second order standard
- For all first and second order standards out of adherence, a rationale must be written

- **If a second order standard is rated as out of adherence then the first order standard must be rated as out of adherence; the lowest rated second order standard will be used when rating the first order standard**
- Track changes and the comment tools must be used in Microsoft Word when responding to the IFSC coordinator's* review of the report
- When referring to numbers- under ten should be spelled out and numbers above ten can be listed numerically (ex: four, 20), however when writing the number in adherence, please use the digit and not spell out the number (ex 4 of 12)
- The rationale must contain all parts of the standard out of adherence
- Bullets may be used in rationale as it relates to the standards
- List reason why standard is NA for all applicable standards
- If the program has an NA, and the peer reviewers feel that an NA is not appropriate, a call should be made to the IFSC coordinator for a discussion. If it is determined that the program is not NA, the program may be found out of adherence to the NA standard(s)
- Do not give technical assistance on the Peer Review Report or the Addendum
- Write the rationale using the percent IN adherence to the standard. *Example 3 of 9 (33%) files contained evidence in file review that families have goal...*
- Must always state number of files in adherence, number of files reviewed and percent
- If the files in adherence are zero, it would be 0 of 9 files, without the percent
- Write in strength base format (ex. XYZ agency has not yet developed a policy stating....)
- Three ratings are given for the following reasons:
 - Program has a policy but not following policy consistently (74% or less) OR
 - Program is following standards in practice, however, does not have a policy OR
 - Program has a policy and is meeting standards in practice consistently, however, the policy does not meet the standard
- Four ratings are given for the following reason:
 - Program does not have policy nor show practice that the standard is being met (74% or less)

Addendum:

- Must follow all of guidelines above
- Need to document how the program is now meeting the standard(s)



Procedure Name:	Peer Review Invoices & Payment
Applicable to:	Peer Reviewers
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2014; June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	Peer Review Invoice Template; Peer Review Report

Peer reviewers should follow all provisions for payment in accordance with their peer review contracts.

- Peer Reviewers receive:
 - For the one day Renewal: Co-peer will receive **\$988.80** and lead peer will receive **\$1,468.80**
 - For the two day peer review: Co-peer will receive **\$1,606.80** and lead peer will receive **\$2,086.80**.
 - For a three day review: Co-peer will receive **\$1,984.80** and lead peer will receive **\$2,464.80**.
 - For a four day review: Co-peer will receive **\$2,362.80** and lead peer will receive **\$2,842.80**
 - For five day peer review: Co-peer will receive **\$2,740.80** and lead peer will receive **\$3,220.80**.
- When peers decide to co-lead, the amount received will be \$240 added to the co-peer amount.

Upon completion and approval of the final Peer Review Report, peer reviewers should email their initial invoices to the IFSC coordinator. The IFSC coordinator will review invoices for content and consistency. The program coordinator will review the following for content and consistency:

- contact information is complete and correct
- contract number is filled in and correct
- program name is complete and not abbreviated
- dates of peer review and invoice submission

IFSC coordinator will inform peer reviewer of any changes that need to be made via email. Any changes or omissions (program name or abbreviation, signature, etc.) will require a revised copy of the invoice be sent from the peer reviewer. Once corrected and resent, the IFSC coordinator will send a final approval email to the peer reviewer.

After electronic approval, peer reviewers may submit either by electronic or hard copy.

If peer reviewers chose to submit by hard copy, invoices should be printed, signed and sent to:

IFSC Program
Lutheran Services in Iowa
3125 Cottage Grove Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50311

Hard copy invoices received by the 5th business day of each month will be processed during the month received. Invoices received after that date will be processed with the following month's invoices.

If peer reviewers choose to submit approved invoices electronically, invoices should include both an electronic signature and contain "I approve this invoice" in the body of the email with attached invoice.

Please note that invoices that arrive late or need major corrections will be processed with the following month's invoices.



Procedure Name:	Post Peer Review Not in Adherence
Applicable to:	IFSC Staff, IFSC Programs
Effective Date:	10/2024
Date(s) of revision:	
Other References:	

When a program is found not to be in adherence with 100% of the Iowa Family Support Standards at the end of the Peer Review process, the program will be placed on probationary status and will undergo a Fidelity Review.

A fidelity peer review is a one day review conducted by IFSC staff for programs on probationary status. The fidelity peer review will be conducted to show policy and procedure changes, along with recent practice changes for standards that were rated out of adherence. During the fidelity review, only standards that were rated out of adherence at the end of the peer review will be reviewed. Reviews will be conducted on participant files and supporting documentation which shows recent practice change of those standards out of adherence. Interviews will be conducted with program staff to demonstrate how programs are adhering to recent practice change. The file review will include 10% of the total open files, closed files as necessary, and may or may not be the same files that were originally reviewed during the peer review.

At the conclusion of the fidelity peer review, the agency will receive a written report within two weeks. This report will show the program is either still out of adherence to the standards in policy and practice or in adherence and meets standards by adopting policies and recent practice change.

If, after the fidelity peer review, the agency has demonstrated adherence to the standards, the program will receive the Iowa Family Support Credential.

The agency will continue on the original timeline for renewal.

The final report will state the probationary status was given to the program.

If, after the fidelity peer review, the program is still out of adherence to the standards in policy and practice, the program will withdraw and reapply for the credentialing after one year.



Iowa
Family Support
Credential

Procedure Name:	Probationary Status for Programs
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	July 2013
Date(s) of revision	September 2013; March 2014; June 2023; January 2025
Other References:	Peer Review Report; Addendum

The Iowa Family Support Credential (IFSC) program understands the time and commitment agencies give to become ready for credentialing. In most cases, probationary status is not applicable.

Probationary status is to ensure the fidelity of the Iowa Family Support Credentialing (IFSC) process. Agencies will be placed on probationary status when found to be 20% or greater out of adherence to the IFSC standards.

Once the peer review has been concluded and the Peer Review Report has been finalized, for programs who have found to be 20% or greater out of adherence, the agency will be placed on probationary status. The probationary status will be no longer than six months or until the fidelity review is completed. The program will have the option to work with a different program specialist during this time period. The program specialist will work with the program for one month to implement changes to policies and procedures, supporting documents, and any practice change during the final months. The program will have three months to show recent practice change before a fidelity peer review will be held.

A fidelity peer review is a one day review conducted by IFSC staff for programs on probationary status. The fidelity peer review will be conducted to show policy and procedure changes, along with recent practice changes for standards that were rated out of adherence. During the fidelity review, only standards that were rated out of adherence during the initial peer review will be reviewed. Reviews will be conducted on participant files and supporting documentation which shows recent practice change of those standards out of adherence. Interviews will be conducted with program staff to demonstrate how programs are adhering to recent practice change. The file review will include 10% of the total open files, closed files as necessary, and may or may not be the same files that were originally reviewed during the peer review.

At the conclusion of the fidelity peer review, the agency will receive a written report within two weeks. This report will show the program is either still out of adherence to the standards in policy and practice or in adherence and meets standards by adopting policies and recent practice change.

If, after the fidelity peer review, the agency has demonstrated adherence to the standards, the program will receive the Iowa Family Support Credential.

The agency will continue on the original timeline for renewal.

The final report will state the probationary status was given to the program.

If, after the fidelity peer review, the program is still out of adherence to the standards in policy and practice, the program will withdraw and reapply for the credentialing after one year.



Procedure Name:	Appeal / Grievance Statement
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	September 2012
Date(s) of revision	September 2013; September 2014; June 2023; January 2025; October 2025
Other References:	

I. Purpose:

To provide steps by which grievances can be resolved.

II. Definitions:

Grievance: A written complaint or concern related to actions or policies of the program or its staff.

Appeal: A written request to correct or amend information or policies of the program or its staff.

III. Access:

1. The grievance policy will be available in written form from the Iowa Family Support Credential Program (IFSC), Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, or Early Childhood Iowa.
2. A copy of the grievance policy will be given to the consumer, program, or the public upon request and can also be found in the IFSC Program Guide.

IV. Procedures:

Grievances and/or appeals should be submitted in writing and state the concern, names of staff/personnel who received information about the concern, the date the grievance/appeal was submitted, and who the information is being submitted to.

1. When a grievance/appeal occurs, the complaint should be responded to in writing by the IFSC coordinator or administrator(s) responsible for the program within 30 days of receipt.
2. IFSC coordinator receiving the complaint should report the complaint to the director of early childhood services and the director of service quality.
3. Upon consultation, the IFSC coordinator will respond to the grievance/appeal in writing within 30 days and a copy will be provided to the grievant/appellant.
4. If the complainant is not satisfied with the action taken in response to the issue presented, an appeal may be written to the Quality Standards Workgroup within 30 days.
5. All appeals will be reviewed at the quarterly Quality Standards Workgroup meeting in response to the problem. A special meeting may be arranged if the situation is warranted.
6. A ruling of the Quality Standards Workgroup will be final, and the result of the ruling will be provided in writing within 30 days of the decision.



Procedure Name:	Celebration
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2023; April 2025
Other References:	Congratulations Letter; Peer Review Addendum; Peer Review Report; Sample Press Release

Programs

Once the program has received official notification from the IFSC Coordinator that the program has been found to be in compliance with the Iowa Family Support Standards, the program will want to begin planning a celebration. The program has achieved a tremendous goal and should take time to celebrate the achievements.

Who to invite to the celebration?

Program Staff	All of the staff involved with the family support program should be invited to participate. Program staff have worked very hard to achieve the credentialing goal and this is one way of recognizing the staff's hard work. Many organizations also include past staff as well.
Agency/Organization Leadership	This is a way for the agency leadership to recognize the hard work of the program staff. Agency leadership can also use this as an opportunity to tie the work of the program into the overall mission of the agency/organization.
Governing Board, Community Partners, Program Participants, Funders	Think of all the people that participated in the peer review process who played a role in the program's earning the credential. This is a way to thank everyone and also announce the agency's credential.
Elected Officials	This includes local elected officials such as mayors, members of the board of supervisors, city council, etc. It also includes state representatives and senators. State representatives and senators are the persons that provide funding that makes the credentialing process possible. If elected officials cannot attend, an invitation helps inform of the agency's achievement.

Other Community Leaders	Think of others in the community that may be interested in attending such as the chamber of commerce or economic development organization. Use the celebration as a way of informing community leaders about the program and organization.
Program Specialist/Coordinator	The assigned program specialist is also celebrating the program's achievement. It is a very nice way to thank the program specialist for the involvement and provide closure to the process.
Media	Local newspapers, radio stations, etc. The agency can use the press release provided about earning the credential and also to follow up with an invitation to the celebration. If the organization has a newsletter, invite the person that is responsible for the newsletter to attend. Make sure to have someone in attendance designated to take photographs.

Should refreshments be served?

Serving some type of refreshments is a nice way to get people to mingle and relax to have informal conversations, encourage attendance, and puts people in a celebratory mood. Refreshments can be as simple as beverages and cookies or could be as elaborate as a meal.

Who should speak during the formal program and what should be talked about?

The agency can have a master/mistress of ceremonies that welcomes everyone and introduces each speaker. Sometimes this is the Early Childhood Iowa area director and other times it is the organization's program manager or executive director. Be sure to recognize any elected officials in attendance that will not be addressing the group or any other dignitaries or groups in attendance.

The organization's executive director should say a few words of congratulations to the program staff. This is a good opportunity to recognize how the program assists the organization to accomplish the mission. Another topic to mention is the importance of quality programming to the organization.

The Early Childhood Iowa area director or the chair of the ECI area board could also offer a few words of congratulations. It could be mentioned how the program fits in the community plan and assists to reach the area ECI goals.

The Iowa HHS representative or designee will also want to speak and will need about ten to fifteen minutes. The speech will provide some background information about the credential, the process that the program completed to earn the credential, and will culminate with having the program staff come forward to receive the credential.

The program supervisor should be prepared to say a few words after the credential is presented. The supervisor can speak specifically about the ups and downs in the process to earn the credential and articulate how the process has been beneficial to the program, organization, and program participants.

Where should the celebration take place?

If space is available, it is nice to have the celebration at the agency's offices. If that is not possible, it may be held in an available community room such as the local library or a community church.

What is the role of the Early Childhood Iowa area board?

It is a good idea to invite your local ECI board members to attend the celebration. The board chair or the local director may be asked to speak at the celebration.

The ECI area board may sponsor the celebration by providing funding to cover the costs of the refreshments for the celebration.

How does the community know about the program's achievement?

The best way is to have the media in attendance at the celebration. If the media cannot attend, provide the media with the press release and photos and do a follow up interview after the celebration.



Procedure Name:	Program Withdrawal
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2014; June 2023
Other References:	IFSC Program Withdrawal Form

Voluntary Withdrawal:

To voluntarily withdraw from the credentialing process, the program will complete the Program Withdrawal Form. This form can be obtained from the program specialist or by contacting the IFSC program coordinator.

The program's executive director and/or board chair will be asked to sign the Withdrawal Form.

When completed, the Withdrawal Form will be sent to the IFSC coordinator.

Involuntary Withdrawal:

In the case that a program does not respond to communication within 30 days, the program will be issued a written warning from the IFSC coordinator. If the program does not respond within 30 days to the warning, the program will be involuntarily withdrawn.

Once withdrawn, either voluntarily or involuntarily, the program must wait one year to reapply for IFSC credentialing process.



Procedure Name:	Alternate Credential (Crosswalk)
Applicable to:	Applicants to Iowa Family Support Credentialing Process
Effective Date:	November 2008
Date(s) of revision:	March 2014; April 2014; December 2015; June 2023
Other References:	Crosswalk

Eligibility for Alternate Process: Programs must abide by a comparable set of standards *and* have an external evaluation/review completed, at a minimum, every five years. The external review must demonstrate adherence to the program standards.

If programs are accredited through the Council on Accreditation (COA), the program will not need to submit a Crosswalk as the Iowa Family Support Standards are already aligned with COA.

Healthy Families America, Food and Nutrition Programs through Iowa State University Extension, and Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) have completed a Crosswalk.

The program model must submit to the IFSC coordinator a crosswalk of program’s standards with the Iowa Family Support Standards. Typically, the person submitting the Crosswalk is at the state level that has program oversight and is submitting on behalf of the program model.

The IFSC coordinator will complete the technical review on all submissions to ensure completeness.

The IFSC coordinator will appoint a crosswalk review team of two members from the Quality Standards Workgroup to closely review the Crosswalk to ensure that there is alignment with every Iowa Family Support Standard. The crosswalk team will review the submitted Crosswalk independently and then review the results as a team. The crosswalk team will be responsible for all communication with the program regarding changes and revisions to the Crosswalk submitted. Once the crosswalk team determines that all standards are aligned, the team will forward the Crosswalk to the Quality Standards Workgroup.

The program will then submit the most recent review from the review body (Healthy Families America, Head Start, RIP, etc.) to the IFSC coordinator. IFSC coordinator will present Crosswalk and the most recent outside review to the Quality Standards Workgroup.

The IFSC coordinator will carefully review the submitted materials to ensure that the outside accrediting body found the program to have met each of the applicable standards that align with the Iowa Family

Support Standards. If there is anything that is questionable, the IFSC coordinator will ask the Quality Standards Workgroup for assistance. The program may be asked to submit additional supporting evidence.

If the Quality Standards Workgroup has any concerns that the standards are not completely adhered to, the group can decide to deny the request for the program to earn the Iowa Family Support Credential by the alternate method and may refer the program to the traditional method.

If the standards are being met, the program will be awarded an Iowa Family Support Credential.



Policy Name:	IFSC Annual Fee Policy
Applicable to:	Programs; Program Specialist
Effective Date:	January 2022
Date(s) of revision:	April 2022; May 2022; December 2024
Other References:	Tool FF; IFSC Annual Update Form
Location:	Program Guide; IFSC Staff Guide

Policy:

Starting in July 2022, all programs that have earned the Iowa Family Support Credential (IFSC) or that are accepted into the Iowa Family Support Credential process for the program’s first credential will incur a fee in July of each year for continued participation in the credential. This fee will be based each year on the planned family service capacity of the program. The planned family service capacity is determined based on the funded capacity of the program by all funding sources. IFSC will determine the fee based on information reported to the IFSC on the IFSC Annual Update Form each year.

The fee for continued participation in the Iowa Family Support Credential will give programs access to the following opportunities:

- 5 hours of individual TA per year, this includes years when the program is not actively participating in renewal of the Iowa Family Support Credential;
- Monthly webinars highlighting topics relating to the Iowa Family Support Standards or best practices;
- Quarterly newsletters highlighting changes to the Iowa Family Support Standards, new IFSC policies, updates on best practices, or new IFSC resources and tools;
- Training and Professional Development as offered by IFSC.

Procedure:

The Iowa Family Support Credential will require each program to fill out an IFSC Annual Update Form due by July 31st of each year. Programs will submit the form to the [IFSC Coordinator](#) via email. Programs that do not complete and annual form will be assigned in the same tier as the previous year. The IFSC will invoice each program by September 30th each year. Programs must have their invoice paid by December 31st. Invoices not paid by January 1st each year will incur a late fee. The fee will be based on each program’s assigned tier. The fee will be 10% of their annual fee and will be charged monthly until the fee is paid. Programs may also have their Iowa Family Support Credential rescinded until the fee is paid in full.



The IFSC annual fee will be based on the following matrix:



Tier	Capacity	Fee
1	25 families or less	\$ 350.00
2	26 – 99 families	\$ 450.00
3	100 families or more	\$ 550.00

Multiple Programs Operated by One Organization:

If an organization has two or more different programs credentialed, each program will be assigned to the appropriate tier based on the planned family service capacity of the program and the appropriate annual fee will apply.

Each program will receive a 10% discount on the annual fee. To be eligible for this discount, programs must submit the IFSC Annual Fee Update Form together and indicate each program’s status as “Multiple Programs Operated by One Organization.” This discount will be reflected on the invoice.

One Program Operated by Multiple Organizations:

If there is one program implemented in multiple organizations, each organization’s program will be assigned to the appropriate tier based on each organization’s planned family service capacity. The peer review for both options will consist of a review of the organizational standards for each organization and a review of the program standards as implemented by each organization.

Option 1: Combined Peer Review for All

One peer review will be conducted for the program and all organizations. Each organization is assigned the appropriate tier based on each organization’s planned family service capacity.

Option 2: Individual Peer Reviews

One peer review will be conducted for each organization in the program as an individual peer review. Each organization is assigned the appropriate tier based on each organization’s planned family service capacity.

Each organization will receive a 10% discount on the annual fee. To be eligible for this discount, organizations must submit the IFSC Annual Fee Update Form together and indicate the peer review type under “One Program Operated by Multiple Organizations.” This discount will be reflected on the invoice.

Questions about tier assignments should be sent to the [IFSC Coordinator](#).



Iowa
Family Support
Credential