



Applications for programs to participate in the Iowa Family Support Credentialing Program

Become an Iowa Family Support Credentialed Program

We are looking for family support programs that desire to earn the Iowa Family Support Credential by demonstrating adherence to the Iowa Family Support Standards. Below is a summary of the Iowa Family Support credentialing program, the time and commitment for a program to participate, and the information required to be considered to participate in the process.

Purpose of the Iowa Family Support Credentialing Program

The purpose of the Iowa Family Support Credentialing program is to improve program quality, provide an outside evaluation perspective and to ensure that family support programs in Iowa represent a deep and abiding commitment to delivering the highest quality services possible to families and children. As the family support initiative continues to grow and expand in our state, quality improvement helps assure that family support will continue to be regarded by the interested public as a quality service, representing a given set of standards. The Iowa Family Support Credentialing program is intended for programs that do not have access to an external evaluation.

The Iowa Family Support credential is public recognition by the Early Childhood Iowa Office and the Iowa Department of Public Health that a family support program is following best practice standards. The Credential will be awarded to programs that complete the peer review and are found to be in substantial adherence with all of the Iowa Family Support Standards. The Iowa Family Support credential has been recognized by the Iowa Legislature as an indication of quality practice. The Iowa Legislature encourages all family support programs to have either a national or state credential indicating that the program is meeting quality standards.

Please contact the IFSC coordinator if your program already has an external evaluation process and you would like to earn the Iowa Family Support Credential. It may be possible for you to earn the Iowa Family Support Credential by an independent review of the work of the external evaluation. The external evaluation must demonstrate you are meeting or exceeding the Iowa Family Support Standards.

The Iowa Family Support Standards are available online at:

<https://lsiowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Iowa-Family-Support-Standards-August-2022.pdf>

Who are Iowa Family Support Peer Reviewers?

Peer reviewers are dedicated professionals who have substantial experience with family support and are committed to continuous quality improvement. Peer reviewers must be knowledgeable about family support and the best practice standards, and have ability to openly, honestly, and fairly assess a program's current ability to implement the standards. Peers are individuals who are comfortable with conducting interviews and documentation review that focuses on the program's positive changes and quality improvement efforts, while also helping programs by identifying areas in need of further strengthening. Peers have a variety of backgrounds and may be program managers, family support trainers, college level human service educators, statewide family support system level coordinators, supervisors, and direct service providers. Peer reviewers are chosen after a careful screening process and completion of a peer reviewer training. Peer reviewers are required to abide by a code of conduct and confidentiality agreement.

Benefits of Participating in the Iowa Family Support Credentialing Process

Participation in the credentialing process demonstrates your program's commitment to quality improvement and to best practice. The Iowa Family Support Credential will give your program public recognition that you have participated in an external evaluation process and are meeting the Iowa Family Support Standards.

Time and Financial Commitment

A family support program that has chosen to participate in the family support credentialing program is making a time and financial commitment. Once a program is selected for participation, they will be assigned a program specialist that will be available to assist the program with all aspects of preparation leading up to the onsite peer review.

Programs will work with their program specialist to first complete an initial self evaluation and quality improvement plan (SEQIP.) It is estimated that it will take an average of 8 to 12 hours to complete the Self Assessment. It should be completed within the first three months of being selected for participation in the program. The purpose of the initial assessment is for the program to self evaluate how they are meeting the standards and to identify any areas where additional assistance is needed.

Prior to the onsite peer review the program will complete a final Self Assessment Materials (SAM) that will document how they are meeting each of the family support standards. Every program is different for how long it will take them to complete this process. Programs have up to three years after they are accepted into the program and assigned a program specialist to earn the credential.

The program will also be required to assist in organizing the activities during the three day on site which includes but is not limited to:

- Locating meeting room space (a private conference room not located in the same building as the program)
- is required
- Providing breakfast and lunch both days for the peer review team and lunch only for the half day
- Providing access to supervision records
- Providing access to randomly selected participant files
- Providing two copies of the Self Assessment and Materials
- Providing a copy of the agency or program strategic plan
- Providing access to the curriculum used by the program
- Inviting interview panel participants
- Participating in selected interviews
- Arranging for observations (home visit or group education.)

Programs may want to work with their Early Childhood Iowa Area board to provide the meeting room sites and to provide for breakfast and lunch arrangements.

Still have Questions?

For questions regarding the application process and procedure, please contact the Iowa Family Support Credential (IFSC) program, administered by Lutheran Services in Iowa. Contact information can be found at the bottom of the application.

Iowa Family Support Credentialing Program Application Form

Date of Application _____

Program Name(s):

Organization Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

Fax Number:

E-Mail Address:

Contact Person for Credentialing Process:

Type of Program (Parent Education, Home Visitation (long-term or short-term), Early Intervention, other):

Early Childhood Iowa Area(s) (counties covered):

Are you currently going through another credentialing program (COA, HFA, CARF, FaDSS, etc.):

Is your program a single site or multi-site?

Is your program partnering with another program for credentialing?

Will the program be sub-contracting any services?

Also, as part of the application please include the following:

1. A two to three page statement providing information regarding the following:
 - What you hope to gain by participating in the Iowa Family Support Credentialing process (increased knowledge, confidence in the program, improve quality, etc.)?
 - Geographic area where family support services are provided (counties served, ECI areas, etc.)
 - How your program currently evaluates its effectiveness?
 - Model(s) that your program(s) use. What policies are in place now? What curriculum is used?
 - How many children and families were served during the previous fiscal year?
 - Number of staff with program
 - What do you feel are your strengths/areas of concerns?
 - How long has your program been in existence for home visiting programs, parent education programs and/or early intervention services?
2. At least three letters of support for the applicant to participate (we recommend that one letter come from the Early Childhood Iowa Area board or the major funding source)
3. A list of funding sources. A copy of your most recent program report to your major funding source.

Your submission of this application signifies your agreement to participate and cooperate fully in the Iowa Family Support Credentialing program. **Programs will receive notification of acceptance, waiting list status, or if their application is incomplete within 30 days after it has been reviewed.**

Please send the application and all necessary materials to:

IFSC Program
Lutheran Services in Iowa
3125 Cottage Grove Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50311
Phone: (563)322-7419 X 6328
Email: IFSCProgram@Iowa.org