



ANNOUNCEMENT

Applications for Programs to Participate in the Iowa Family Support Peer Review Process to Earn an Iowa Family Support Credential ARE NOW BEING ACCEPTED

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 their adherence to the Iowa Family Support Standards. Below is a summary of the family support process, the time and commitment for a program to participate, and the information required to be considered to participate in the process. The Peer Review process will only be available to a limited number of programs during this first year of operation. We anticipate only being able to provide a peer review to twelve programs per year with our current funds.

Purpose of the Iowa Family Support Peer Review Process

The purpose of the Iowa Family Support Peer Review Process 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 Peer Review process is intended for programs that do not have access to an external evaluation.

The Iowa Family Support credential is public recognition by the Iowa Department of Management, Office of Empowerment that a family support program is following best practice standards. The Credential will be awarded to programs that complete the Peer Review and are complying 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 Family Support Coordinator at the Office of Empowerment 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:
http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/common/pdf/fs_standards.pdf

Who are Iowa Family Support Peer Reviewers?

Peer Reviewers are the backbone of the Iowa Family Support Credentialing system. These dedicated professionals have substantial experience with family support and are committed to continuous quality improvement. Peers 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.

Your program may be able to access peer review quality improvement funds through the Office of Empowerment to address potential training or technical assistance needs that are identified prior to the onsite portion of the peer review. The purpose

of the technical assistance funds is to help your program meet the Iowa Family Support Standards.

Time and Financial Commitment

A family support program that has chosen to participate in the family support credentialing process is making a time and financial commitment. Once a program is selected for participation they will first complete an initial self assessment. It is estimated that it will take an average of 8 to 12 hours to complete the Self Assessment. 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.

The program will be assigned a Family Support Technical Assistance Network member that will be available to assist the program with all aspects of preparation leading up to the Onsite Peer Review. The Technical Assistance will not be provided by anyone that is also participating in the onsite portion of the peer review.

Prior to the onsite peer review the program will complete a final self evaluation that will document how they are meeting each of the family support standards. It is estimated that it should take no more than 12 months from beginning the process to completing the onsite portion of the peer review.

The sequence of events for the peer review was revised based on the peer review pilots. We believe this approach to better reflect the spirit of partnership that we want to convey. We want programs to feel “ready” for the peer review and we believe by offering technical assistance and self evaluation upfront, that programs will have a much greater understanding of the standards and how their program is meeting them.

The Family Support Coordinator is also available to come to your program and talk more about the Credentialing process prior to the program making a commitment to participate.

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

- Locating meeting room space (two private conference rooms are required that are not located in the same building as the program),
- Providing breakfast and lunch both days for the peer review team (five persons),
- Providing access to supervision records,
- Providing access to randomly selected participant files,
- Providing two copies of the policy and procedure manual,
- 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 local empowerment board to provide the meeting room sites and to provide for breakfast and lunch arrangements.

The program is also required to complete a Quality Improvement Plan based on the final report of the peer review team. The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) must address any standard that received a rating of three or four from the peer review team. The QIP must be written within 90 days of receipt of the peer review final report. The QIP must contain timelines for each strategy/activity. The activities and strategies of the QIP must be completed by the program within a year of the completion of the peer review to earn the Iowa Family Support Credential. It is difficult to estimate the time needed to create a QIP and carry out the strategies contained within the QIP as that will vary greatly from program to program.

Still have Questions?

Please contact the Family Support Coordinator, at the Office of Empowerment. Contact information can be found at the bottom of the application.



Iowa Family Support Credential Program Application Form

Program Name:

Organization Name:

Community Empowerment Area:

Contact Person for Credentialing Process:

Address:

Phone Number:

Fax Number:

E-Mail Address:

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
 - How your program currently evaluates it's effectiveness
 - How many children and families were served during the previous fiscal year
2. At least three letters of support for the applicant to participate (we recommend that one letter come from the local empowerment board or the major funding source)
3. A copy of your most recent report to your major funding source.

Your submission of this application signifies your agreement to participate and cooperate fully in the peer review process leading to an Iowa Family Support Credential.

Applications are accepted on a revolving basis, however the receipt date will be considered in the selection process. You will receive notification of the status of your application within 30 days of receipt (approved, approved pending additional information, approved on waiting list, and denied)

You may mail, fax, or email (email is preferred) your application materials to:

Janet L. Gartin
Iowa Family Support Coordinator
Iowa Department of Management/Office of Empowerment
State Capitol, Rm. 12
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
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Janet.Gartin@iowa.gov