

The Illinois Model For The CRSS - Employment Endorsement (CRSS-E)



**Mission:
To protect the public by providing competency based
credentialing of Human Service Professionals**

**401 East Sangamon Avenue
Springfield, IL 62702
1-800-272-2632 (Illinois Only)
217-698-8110
217-698-8234 (Fax)**

**WWW.IAODAPCA.ORG
info@iaodapca.org**

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Supersedes all previous endorsement requirements**

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PREFACE

This document defines the role, purpose, functions, and responsibilities for professionals who provide supported employment services according to the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment, and establishes a fair methodology for evaluation of competency. The credential defines the minimum standards of competency through the IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Model.

This professional endorsement is competency based, meaning the minimum standards for the CRSS-E are the fidelity items identified for the profession. The competencies are specific to IPS Supported Employment services. The CRSS-E recognizes paid work experience and/or internships and education as means to acquiring the competencies to provide supported employment services.

PURPOSE

- 1 To establish standards and procedures for the voluntary, professional endorsement of CRSS-E professionals who provide IPS Supported Employment services.
- 2 To provide a respected credential of professional competency that recognizes the efforts of professionals with the CRSS-E toward continuous learning and their willingness to work to provide IPS Supported Employment services.
- 3 To provide a method for maintaining and updating professional standards by keeping current with research and evidence-based practices in providing IPS Supported Employment services.

RATIONALE

The Illinois Certification Board, Inc. (ICB) endorses the concept that IPS Supported Employment is a specialty field requiring performance by competent and professional individuals. The standards for the endorsement are weighted on the side of proven experience and training.

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The mission of the CRSS-E is to be committed to the provision and improvement of effective, IPS Supported Employment services. The endorsement identifies a workforce that possesses the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to use best practices in the evidence-based practice.

INTRODUCTION

Professionals with CRSS-E fill a unique role among health and human service professionals by filling a need for professionals with specialized supported employment skills and training. They work in a variety of settings, using a combination of strategies and recognizing the need to provide quality services to the public. ICB, a voluntary credentialing system, provides the CRSS-E based on a combination of experience, education and training, and supervised practical experience.

The Illinois Model is the basic document that describes the rationale and competencies of the credentialing process for the CRSS-E. ICB recognizes that professionals with CRSS-E are educated in a wide range of areas, utilize many different approaches and techniques, and bring to the field diverse personal and professional experiences. The endorsement system is designed to accommodate and evaluate these professionals.

DEFINITION

Overview of IPS Supported Employment

IPS supported employment helps people with severe mental illnesses work at regular jobs of their choosing. Although variations of supported employment exist, IPS (Individual Placement and Support) refers to the evidence-based practice of supported employment.

Characteristics of IPS Supported Employment

- * It is an evidence-based practice
- * IPS supported employment practitioners focus on client strengths
- * Work can promote recovery and wellness
- * Practitioners work in collaboration with state vocational rehabilitation
- * It uses a multidisciplinary team approach
- * Services are individualized and long-lasting
- * The IPS approach changes the way mental health services are delivered

Practice Principles of IPS Supported Employment

1. **Focus on Competitive Employment:** Agencies providing IPS services are committed to competitive employment as an attainable goal for clients with serious mental illness seeking employment.
2. **Eligibility Based on Client Choice:** Clients are not excluded on the basis of readiness, diagnoses, symptoms, substance use history, psychiatric hospitalizations, level of disability, or legal system involvement.
3. **Integration of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Services:** IPS programs are closely integrated with mental health treatment teams.
4. **Attention to Client Preferences:** Services are based on clients' preferences and choices, rather than providers' judgments.
5. **Personalized Benefits Counseling:** Employment specialists help clients obtain personalized, understandable, and accurate information about their Social Security, Medicaid, and other government entitlements.
6. **Rapid Job Search:** IPS programs use a rapid job search approach to help clients obtain jobs directly, rather than providing lengthy pre-employment assessment, training, and counseling.
7. **Systematic Job Development:** Employment specialists build an employer network based on clients' interests, developing relationships with local employers by making systematic contacts.
8. **Time-Unlimited and Individualized Support:** Follow-along supports are individualized and continued for as long as the client wants and needs the support.

REQUIREMENTS

The CRSS-E is specifically developed for professionals who are competent in the CRSS-E domains and who possess enhanced abilities to assist individuals with mental health conditions in obtaining and maintaining competitive employment. The CRSS-E provides a process by which professionals can demonstrate competencies in providing IPS Supported Employment services.

To obtain this seal of endorsement, applicants must be Certified Recovery Support Specialists and can provide proof that they are certified in good standing.

The following chart details the minimum requirements for the CRSS-E based on work experience, supervised practical experience and training/education:

Required Work Experience	Supervised Practical Experience	Training/Education	Certification Requirements
6 months (1,000 hours) qualified work experience and/or internship	25 hours	Successful completion of the IPS Supportive Employment Practitioner Skills Training	A current CRSS in good standing with the Illinois Certification Board.

Work Experience

ICB defines qualified work experience as paid, supervised work experience in a position where at least 51% of the applicant’s time is spent providing direct primary Peer and Employment related services in a Team capacity to the seriously mentally ill. Volunteer work may be applicable, or work as a Peer in an Agency with a Peer and IPS Program that has integration between the 2 program services. The applicant minimally must have primary responsibility for providing Peer services targeting employment to an individual and/or group, contributing to treatment plans and documenting client progress.

Supervision

The applicant must be working under or receiving clinical supervision from an individual who is trained as an IPS Team Supervisor.

Education

The applicant must show proof of successful completion of the IPS Supportive Employment Practitioner Skills Training.

FEES

Application Fee.....	\$35.00
Initial Endorsement Fee.....	\$10.00
Annual Endorsement Fee.....	\$10.00

ACCOUNTABILITY

This system is accountable to other professionals. The credentials are independent, private, freestanding and self-supporting. The profession determines and maintains its own standards.

HOW TO APPLY

Endorsement will be granted contingent upon documentation of eligibility, submission of all required application materials and payment of all fees. Following is the application, review and approval process:

- 1 Read the entire Illinois Model for the CRSS-Employment Endorsement thoroughly.
- 2 Complete all parts of the application. Print legibly or type application.
- 3 Attach all required documentation (work experience forms, supervisor forms, training forms).
- 4 Sign and date the Assurance and Release.
- 5 Verify the completeness of the application by using the **Checklist** in this model.
- 6 Mail the application materials to:
(Applications will not be accepted by fax.)
- 7 Once the application is approved, the applicant will be invoiced for the endorsement fee.
- 8 Once payment is received the endorsement will be issued.

**ICB, Inc.
401 East Sangamon Avenue
Springfield, IL 62702**

Review of Materials

Upon receipt, the application and materials will be screened by ICB for completeness and correctness. The results may be one of the following:

- 1 Application Approved – The application meets all standards for the CRSS-E.
- 2 Application Pending – Some of the materials need clarification, submission, or resubmission of any part of the application. The applicant will be notified in writing of the problem(s). **Within one year of the application date, corrected materials must be submitted to ICB or the application will be destroyed resulting in reapplication.**
- 3 Application Denied – The endorsement criteria was not met resulting in denial of application.

ENDORSEMENT TIME PERIOD

The Employment Endorsement time period will be the same as the CRSS certification the applicant holds. At the completion of the application process, the applicant will receive an embossed sticker, to attach to the certificate of CRSS certification that will signify they have received the endorsement to provide IPS Supportive Employment services.

ENDORSEMENT MAINTENANCE AND RENEWAL

To maintain the high standards of professional practice and to assure continuing awareness of new knowledge in the field, professionals with CRSS-E are required to renew their credentials every two years and are responsible for maintaining their credentials. Any failure to act is the responsibility of the member.

Professionals with CRSS-E are required to pay an annual endorsement fee and submit continuing education units (CEUs) every other year. Professionals with CRSS-E will be notified that their endorsement is about to expire no fewer than 30 days prior to the expiration date. They will submit their annual fee and CEUs to ICB by their expiration date. Non-responsiveness to credential renewal notices will result in termination of the endorsement status. Any change of address must be submitted to ICB in writing. Forms for the documentation of CEUs can be downloaded from the ICB website, www.iaodapca.org, under Credentialing/Credentialing Forms. The form must be completed, signed and submitted with proof of attendance. CEUs should not be submitted until notification of expiration. **CEUs will not be accepted by fax.**

Continuing Education requirements are in addition to those needed to maintain the CRSS credential. ICB will allow use of the IPS Supported Employment specific hours to be counted as CRSS Category II continuing education hours.

Continuing Education Policy

The purpose of continuing education is to promote ongoing professional development. It benefits the individual, group, organization and community to whom services are provided.

Ten (10) continuing education units (CEUs) are required to maintain the CRSS-E and must be earned within the two-year endorsement period. CEUs are not transferable to any other endorsement period. CEUs obtained prior to the initial endorsement date are not eligible for maintaining the endorsement. Credit may be received once for a training event, even if it is repeated during different endorsement periods. A CEU is equivalent to one clock hour. (Excluded is non-program time such as breaks, social hours, registration time, meal times). One college semester hour of credit is equivalent to 15 CEUs, one college trimester hour of credit is equivalent to 12 CEUs, and one college quarter hour of credit is equivalent to 10 CEUs.

The 10 CEUs required to maintain the CRSS-E must be education supported by the employment fidelity scale and **must** be recognized or petitioned for ICB CEUs.

Renewal for Professionals with CRSS-E will be contingent on continued good standing of their CRSS certification. Proof of current certification will be required and submitted with their biennial CRSS-E renewal.

Sources of Continuing Education Units

Recognized programs are training/education programs ICB has identified as fulfilling the criteria for CEU credit and have been awarded CEUs by ICB or are pre-recognized sources. The certificate of completion will contain the program number assigned by ICB, the number of CEUs and the category.

Agency In-Service Education and Training Programs

Agency in-service training programs may be counted for all CEUs required for endorsement renewal.

- 1 The training must be employment specific topics related to the IPS supported employment fidelity scale.
- 2 The training must be documented on agency letterhead with a qualified supervisor's signature.
- 3 In-services not awarded CEU recognition by ICB may be petitioned for CEUs.

Validation of Continuing Education

Professionals with CRSS-E must document they have obtained CEUs and submit certificates or other proof of completion such as transcripts or official grade reports for college or university courses.

Procedures to Petition for CEUs

Not all educational experiences available have been awarded CEUs by ICB, requiring the need to petition for CEU credit. Requests are to be submitted to ICB on the petition form with the following information:

- 1 Documentation of attendance
- 2 Goals and objectives of the program
- 3 Date/length of program in clock hours
- 4 Brochure describing program content
- 5 Sponsor, location, instructor and target population
- 6 Definition of the training type (publication, workshop, seminar)
- 7 Identification of the specific performance domain content
- 8 Non-refundable petition fee

Requests will be reviewed within 30 days, and the Professional with CRSS-E will be notified of the results. If recognized, they will be informed of the number of CEUs awarded.

Extension of Continuing Education Requirements

Professionals with CRSS-E unable to meet the continuing education requirements for renewal of their endorsement may request an extension for up to six months past their expiration date. Professionals with CRSS-E not meeting the CEU requirement after the six-month extension will be terminated. Reinstatement shall be through completion of the full endorsement requirement.

NOTE: The extension process leaves only 18 months to obtain CEUs for the current endorsement period.

INACTIVE STATUS

Professionals with CRSS-E, in good standing, unable to meet the continuing education requirements for endorsement renewal due to health or extenuating personal circumstances, may place their endorsement on inactive status. The process for reactivation from inactive status will then be followed when they wish to activate the endorsement.

ICB established an Inactive Status to allow Professionals with CRSS-E, who are experiencing extenuating circumstances, a means to prevent their endorsement from expiring. It has been established for those who expect to be inactive for more than two years.

Eligibility Requirements for Inactive Status:

- 1 Endorsement is in good standing, i.e., current with fees and continuing education units
- 2 Moving to another state but remaining active in the field
- 3 Retired
- 4 Pursuing academic coursework and not active in the field for the duration of such course work
- 5 On extended military active duty
- 6 Having health problems
- 7 Having extenuating personal reasons

Insufficient hours of continuing education will not be accepted as a rationale for requesting inactive status.

Procedure for Obtaining Inactive Status:

- 1 Request inactive status, in writing from ICB, stating specific reason(s) for the request.
- 2 Provide documentation for eligibility with the written request.
- 3 Members will receive a letter acknowledging their endorsement is on inactive status.
- 4 Pay a \$20.00 biennial fee.

During the period of inactive status, members are considered to be without the CRSS-E endorsement, and as such cannot refer to themselves, in writing or verbally, as holding the CRSS-E.

Procedure for Reactivating an Endorsement from Inactive Status:

Professionals with CRSS-E who have left the state and continued in the field must:

- 1 Submit a written request for reactivation to ICB.
- 2 Submit payment of endorsement fees.

Professionals with CRSS-E who have left the human services field but wish to reactivate their endorsement before two years have lapsed must:

- 1 Submit a written request for reactivation to ICB.
- 2 Submit payment of endorsement fees.
- 3 Submit payment of reapplication fee.
- 4 Provide documentation of current employment in a related field.
- 5 Provide documentation of current CEU experience.

Professionals with CRSS-E who wish to reactivate their endorsement and have been on inactive status for more than two years must:

- 1 Submit a written request for reactivate to ICB.
- 2 Submit payment of endorsement fees.
- 3 Submit payment of reapplication fee.
- 4 Submit current job description. This must be on agency letterhead, signed and dated by members and their current supervisors and include the amount of time spent in direct service.

TERMINATION OF ENDORSEMENT

Endorsement will be terminated for:

- 1 Failure to apply for an extension prior to the expiration date.
- 2 Failure to comply with the conditions of an extension by the deadline.
- 3 Failure to document 10 continuing education units (CEUs) over the two-year endorsement period and no request for extension.
- 4 Ethics violations.
- 5 Failure to pay the Annual Fee.

ICB will give written notice at least 30 days before the endorsement expires.

APPEAL PROCESS

When an applicant is denied a credential, questions the results of the application review, or is subject to an action by ICB that the applicant deems unjustified, the applicant has the right to inquire and appeal. If, after having been provided an explanation or clarification of the action of ICB, and the applicant still thinks that an action taken is unjustified, he or she may appeal. The applicant may appeal the decision within 30 days of receipt of the notice of denial, or any other action deemed unjustified, by sending a certified letter to the Executive Director of ICB, 401 East Sangamon, Springfield, IL 62702.

If applicants wish to appeal examination scores, they must submit a written request to ICB within 30 days of the postmark of the examination score report. Applicants will be required to pay a fee to re-score the examination. They should be aware that examination security and item banking procedures does not permit them to have access to examination questions, answer keys or other secure materials.

DISCIPLINARY REVIEW PROCESS

Professionals with CRSS-E hold a unique position of trust and responsibility and as a result must be aware at all times of ethical requirements imposed on them.

ICB has established a “disciplinary review process” which provides an avenue through which complaints can be filed about ethical conduct of Professionals with CRSS-E or an applicant of the ICB credentialing system.

If a breach of the code of ethics is suspected, it should first be brought to the professional's attention. If this does not result in a satisfactory outcome, the supervisor should be informed. If this action still does not result in a satisfactory outcome, an ethics complaint should be made to ICB. For a copy of this formal process, contact ICB directly.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PERFORMANCE DOMAINS

Professionals competent in the CRSS-E Domains have enhanced abilities in assisting individuals to obtain and maintain competitive employment. The evidence-based practice tool for IPS Supported Employment, developed by researchers at Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center, identifies three broad domains in the model, as follows:

1. Domain 1: STAFFING

- 1.1. Knowledge – Caseload Size**
- 1.2. Knowledge – Employment Services Staff**
- 1.3. Knowledge – Vocational Generalists**

2. Domain 2: ORGANIZATION

- 2.1. Knowledge – Integration of rehabilitation with mental health through team assignment**
- 2.2. Knowledge – Integration of rehabilitation with mental health through frequent team member contact**
- 2.3. Knowledge – Collaboration between employment specialists and vocational rehabilitation counselors**
- 2.4. Knowledge – Vocational unit**
- 2.5. Knowledge – Role of employment supervisor**
- 2.6. Knowledge – Zero exclusion criteria**
- 2.7. Knowledge – Agency focus on competitive employment**
- 2.8. Knowledge – Executive team support for supported employment**

3. Domain 3: SERVICES

- 3.1. Knowledge – Work incentives planning**
- 3.2. Knowledge – Disclosure**
- 3.3. Knowledge – Ongoing, work-based vocational assessment**
- 3.4. Knowledge – Rapid search for competitive job**
- 3.5. Knowledge – Individualized job search**
- 3.6. Knowledge – Job development: Frequent employer contact**
- 3.7. Knowledge – Job development: Quality of employer contact**
- 3.8. Knowledge – Diversity of job types**
- 3.9. Knowledge – Diversity of employers**
- 3.10. Knowledge – Competitive jobs**
- 3.11. Knowledge – Individualized follow-along supports**
- 3.12. Knowledge – Time-limited follow-along supports**
- 3.13. Knowledge – Community-based services**
- 3.14. Knowledge – Assertive engagement and outreach by integrated treatment team**