

The Illinois Model For The Gender Competent Endorsement (GCE)



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

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PREFACE

This document defines the role, purpose, functions, and responsibilities for professionals who provide substance abuse treatment for women, and establishes a fair methodology for evaluation of competency. The credential defines the minimum standards of competency, which are the Gender Competent Endorsement (GCE) performance domains.

This professional endorsement is competency based. This means that the minimum standards for the GCE are the performance domains identified for the profession. The competencies are specific to substance abuse treatment for women. The GCE recognizes paid work experience and education as means to acquiring the competencies to provide substance abuse treatment for women.

PURPOSE

- To establish standards and procedures for the voluntary, professional endorsement of counselors who provide substance abuse treatment specifically for women.
- To provide a respected credential of professional competency that recognizes counselors' efforts toward continuous learning and their willingness to work to provide specialized services for women.
- To provide a method for maintaining and updating professional standards by keeping current with research and evidence-based practices in providing services to women.

RATIONALE

The Illinois Certification Board Inc. (ICB) endorses the concept that the treatment of substance abuse in women 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 GCE is to be committed to the provision and improvement of effective, gender-specific specialized treatment services for women in Illinois.

Professionals with GCE combine a distinct knowledge base with human service skills to deal with the unique attitudes and behaviors associated with the support for treatment of substance abuse in women. Knowledge and skill bases may be acquired through a combination of specialized training, education, and supervised work experiences.

ICB supports ongoing research and technology and remains open to new techniques as they are proven to be workable and effective. ICB is committed to the professional growth of those working in the alcohol and other drug abuse field and to openness and enthusiasm about new information that allows professionals with the GCE to become more effective in their work.

INTRODUCTION

Professionals with Gender Competent Endorsement fill a unique role among health and human service professionals by filling a need for substance abuse training specifically for women. 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 GCE 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 GCE. ICB recognizes that Professionals with GCE 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 regardless of academic preparation, or professional training and orientation.

DEFINITION

Women specific substance abuse treatment services are distinguished as those that:

- Address women's treatment needs
- Reduce barriers to recovery from alcohol and other drug dependence that are more likely to occur for women
- Are delivered in a context that is compatible with women's lifestyles and orientations and is safe from exploitation
- Take into account women's role, socialization and relative status within the larger culture

The GCE defines the minimum competencies for counselors who provide substance abuse treatment specifically for women.

REQUIREMENTS

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

Required Work Experience	Supervised Practical Experience	Training/Education	Letter Of Support
1 year (2,000 hours) qualified work experience	25 Hours of supervision by an individual knowledgeable in women addiction counseling	45 hours in the women-specific domains	From a credentialed professional (through ICB and/or a Licensed Independent Practitioner)

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 alcohol and other drug addiction counseling services to women. Volunteer work is not applicable. The applicant minimally must have primary responsibility for providing alcohol and other drug addiction counseling to an individual and/or group, preparing treatment plans and documenting client progress.

Supervision

The applicant must be working under or receiving clinical supervision from an individual who is knowledgeable in women addiction counseling.

Education

- Performance domains
 - Assessment of Women
 - Case Management of Women
 - Professional Responsibility with Women
 - Counseling of Women

- Sources of education are college courses, seminars, conferences, in-services, lectures, etc.
 - 1 college semester hour = 15 clock hours, 1 college quarter hour = 10 clock hours, 1 college trimester hour = 12 clock hours

EXAMINATION

Persons applying for the GCE who are not current members of ICB will be required to take and pass an examination.

Applicants may take examinations prior to approval of their application. The minimum application requirements include:

- the first two pages of the application that include general information about the applicant
- a signed and dated Assurance and Release form
- a signed, dated and notarized Code of Ethics
- payment of the application fee
- a letter from the applicant requesting to take the examination prior to application approval

This information must be received prior to the application deadline. The applicant will receive an examination letter and test code sheet. To be scheduled for the examination, the applicant must return a completed test code sheet with payment of the non-refundable examination fee. A deadline is set by which the payment and test code sheet must be received in the ICB office.

Individuals with disabilities and/or religious obligations that require modifications in examination administration must submit a written request for specific procedural changes to ICB no fewer than sixty days prior to the scheduled examination date. Official documentation of the disability or religious issue must be provided with the written request. With supportive documentation and proper notice for request, ICB will offer appropriate modifications.

The development of a valid examination for the credentialing process begins with a clear and concise definition of the knowledge, skills and abilities needed for competent job performance. The test is based on what the counselor with GCE does in practice. The knowledge and skill bases for the questions in the examination are derived from the actual practice of alcohol and other drug addiction treatment for women. Multiple sources were utilized in the development of questions for the examination. The examinations are comprised of multiple-choice questions, and each question is linked to the performance domains as well as the knowledge and skills identified for each domain. Applicants are allowed three and one-half (3½) hours to complete examinations.

Examination results are Pass/Fail and will be reported to applicants within 60 days. Applicants failing the examination will be given opportunities to retest providing the application is in good standing. ICB will notify them of the next examination date they will be eligible to test. Applicants must notify ICB of their intent to be seated for that examination by completing a test code sheet and paying the appropriate examination fee.

An applicant's file will be closed if the applicant does not retest within one year of obtaining a failing score. In such a case the applicant will be required to submit a new application.

A comprehensive study guide is available. The study guide is a tool to review the basic information required for the knowledge base covered on the examination.

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. The following outlines the application, review and approval process:

- Read the entire Illinois Model for the Gender Competent Endorsement thoroughly.
- Fill out all parts of the application. Print legibly or type application.
- A current job description is required. The job description must be on agency letterhead, dated and signed by the applicant and supervisor and must reflect actual job duties and responsibilities.
- Attach all required documentation to support employment (i.e., current job description).
- Sign, date, and obtain a notary signature for the Code of Ethical Conduct.
- Verify the completeness of the application by using the **Checklist** in this model.
- When application is complete, send all materials to: ICB, Inc.
Applications will not be accepted by fax. 401 East Sangamon Avenue
Springfield, IL 62702
- Once the application is approved, the applicant will be invoiced for your endorsement fee.
- Once payment is received the endorsement will be issued.

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:

- Application Approved – The application meets all standards for the GCE.
- 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.**
- Application Denied – The endorsement standards were not met resulting in denial of application.

ENDORSEMENT TIME PERIOD

ICB credentials encompass two calendar years commencing on the date of successful completion of the application process. Two dates (date of issue and expiration) will appear on the certificate.

FEES

Application Fee	\$50.00
Examination Fee.....	\$125.00
Biennial Endorsement Fee.....	\$50.00
Extension Fee (Up to 6 months)	\$ 5.00
(Per Month)	

IF YOU ARE A CERTIFIED COUNSELOR, IN GOOD STANDING WITH IAODAPCA, INC., ALL FEES ARE WAIVED FOR THIS ENDORSEMENT.

ENDORSEMENT MAINTENANCE AND RENEWAL

The purpose of continuing education is to promote ongoing professional development. It benefits the individual, group, organization and community to whom services are provided. Continuing education is a means of accumulating the training necessary to transition to another certification classification. Professionals with GCE will build upon their previously demonstrated competencies and demonstrate their professional development through pursuit of continuing education.

To maintain the high standards of the professional practice and to assure continuing awareness of new knowledge in the field, ICB requires all members to renew their credentials every two years. It is the responsibility of each member to maintain his or her credential. Any failure to act is the responsibility of the member. Any change of address must be submitted to ICB in writing.

Professionals with GCE are required to pay a biennial fee and submit continuing education units (CEUs). They will be notified that their endorsement is about to expire no fewer than 30 days prior to the expiration date. They will submit their biennial fee and CEUs to ICB by their expiration date. If 45 days have passed from the expiration date without payment of the credential renewal fee and/or submission of continuing education units, the endorsement shall be terminated. Non-responsiveness to credential renewal notices will result in termination of the endorsement status. Forms for the documentation of CEUs can be downloaded from the ICB website and 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.

If more time is needed, extensions may be requested. Credentialed members may request up to six, 30-day extensions. Extensions must be requested in writing, detailing the specific reasons for the request. Extensions will not be granted beyond six months. If at the end of six months of extensions the requirements for credential renewal have not been met, the endorsement will be terminated.

Continuing Education Policy

Ten (10) continuing education units (CEUs) are required to maintain the GCE and must be earned within the two-year endorsement period. An average of 20 CEUs should be obtained each year. 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 only 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 GCE must be education in women specific alcohol and other drug addiction treatment performance domains, and **must** be recognized or petitioned for ICB CEUs.

The performance domains are Assessment of Women, Case Management of Women, Professional Responsibility with Women, and Counseling of Women.

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.

Structured individual continuing education, such as the ICB Bibliocredit Reading Program and other self-study programs, is available.

Agency In-Service Education and Training Programs

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

- The training must be women specific topics related to the four performance domains.
- The training must be documented on agency letterhead with a qualified supervisor's signature.
- In-services not awarded CEU recognition by ICB may be petitioned for CEUs.

Validation of Continuing Education

Professionals with GCE must document they have obtained CEUs and submit the appropriate validation for each educational experience.

- Certificates or other proof of completion for ICB recognized or petitioned trainings
- Transcripts or other 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 such education/training for CEU credit. Requests are to be submitted to ICB on the petition form with the following information:

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

Requests will be reviewed within 30 days, and the counselor with the GCE 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 GCE unable to meet the continuing education requirements for renewal of their endorsement may request an extension, in writing. Extensions are \$10.00 per month for up to six months from the expiration date. Professionals with GCE not meeting the CEU requirement after the six-month extension shall not be permitted to place their endorsement on inactive status and shall be terminated. Reinstatement shall be through completion of the full endorsement requirement.

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

INACTIVE STATUS

ICB established an Inactive Status to allow Professionals with GCE, 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:

- Endorsement is in good standing, i.e., current with fees and continuing education units
- Moving to another state but remaining active in the alcohol and other drug addiction field
- Retired
- Pursuing academic coursework and not active in alcohol and other drug addiction work for the duration of such course work
- On extended military active duty
- Having health problems
- Having extenuating personal reasons
- Leaving the alcohol and other drug addiction field and choosing not to maintain the GCE via CEUs

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

Procedure for Obtaining Inactive Status:

- Request inactive status, in writing from ICB, stating specific reason(s) for requesting inactive status.
- Provide documentation for eligibility with the written request.
- Members will surrender their current original endorsement to ICB. They will receive a letter acknowledging their credential is on inactive status.
- Pay a \$20.00 biennial fee.

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

Procedure for Reactivating an Endorsement from Inactive Status:

Professionals with GCE who have left the state and continued in the alcohol and other drug addiction field must:

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

Professionals with GCE who have left the alcohol and other drug addiction field but wish to reactivate their endorsement before two years have lapsed must:

- Submit a written request for reactivation to ICB.
- Submit payment of endorsement fees.
- Submit payment of reapplication fee.
- Provide documentation of current alcohol and other drug addiction employment.
- Provide documentation of current CEU experience.

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

- Submit a written request for reactivation to ICB.
- Submit payment of endorsement fees.
- Submit payment of reapplication fee.
- 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.

TERMINATED ENDORSEMENT

Endorsement will be terminated for:

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

ICB will give written notice at least 30 days before the certification 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 written 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 Gender Competent Endorsement 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 counselors or an applicant of the ICB certification system.

If a breach of the code of ethics is suspected, it is suggested that this be brought to the counselor’s attention first. 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.

GENDER COMPETENT ENDORSEMENT PERFORMANCE DOMAINS

Professionals competent in the GCE Domains have enhanced abilities to assist families, reduce infant mortality, break family cycle of addiction, increase engagement and retention of women in treatment, improve treatment success and outcomes, as well as support on-going recovery and aftercare. Four performance domains for the GCE were identified. Following is a brief outline of those domains.

Assessment of Women

- Strength based.
- Components of gender responsive assessment should include: trauma, social isolation, cultural competence, domestic violence, parenting, financial, safe housing, health (pre-natal/post-natal care), HIV/STDs, mental Health (post partum depression).
- Readiness to address issues.

Case Management of Women

- Engaging women through outreach.
- Coordinating women-specific health services (pregnancy, sexuality).
- Parenting and Child Development.
- Linkages with Child Welfare, Courts, Criminal Justice and TANF.
- Employment readiness and support.
- Support Networks.

Professional Responsibility with Women

- Creating a “trauma informed” treatment setting.
- Emotional and physical safety of the client.

Counseling of Women

- Non-aggressive, non-confrontational therapy styles.
- Components of gender-responsive treatment.
- Use of gender competent evidence based models.
- Social/cultural sensitivity.
- Understanding the interplay between trauma and substance abuse.
- Self-Esteem and substance abuse.
- Biological effects of substance abuse for women.
- Assessing client’s readiness to address trauma issues.