

# **The Illinois Model for Certified Veteran Support Specialist (CVSS)**



In Collaboration with Illinois Joining Forces

Mission: To protect the public by providing competency-based credentialing  
of Human Service professionals.

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## PREFACE

The intent of this document, The Illinois Model for Certified Veteran Support Specialist (CVSS), is to establish a valid, reliable, and defensible methodology for the evaluation of CVSS competency. To assure CVSS professionals meet an acceptable standard of competency, the credential itself defines, in terms of knowledge and skills, minimum acceptable standards of the CVSS profession.

The Illinois Certification Board (ICB) maintains competency based professional certification programs. The minimum CVSS competencies are the knowledge base and skill base which have been defined in the "Recovery Support Specialist, Role Delineation Study, and 2016 Final Report," completed by the Comprehensive Examination Services (CES). These minimum CVSS professional competencies (Domains), define the nature and scope of the unique function of Veteran recovery support services, provided by the professional CVSS. The competencies are specific to the effective utilization of unique insights gained through one's personal experience in recovery and to support other individuals with such conditions.

**Competency Based:** This professional, voluntary certification system is competency based. This means that the minimum standards for CVSS are the knowledge and skill base identified for the profession. The competencies are specific Veteran recovery support services distinguishing this profession from other behavioral health/human services professions.

**Experience Based:** This certification system recognizes the following avenues through which minimum CVSS competencies may be acquired: paid work experience, volunteer work, and/or supervised practicum/internship experience that is part of a process approved by ICB.

## INTRODUCTION

The Certified Veteran Support Specialist credential is designed to certify an individual's competency in the field of Veteran recovery support primarily for Servicemembers, Veterans and their Families (SMVF). Under this credential, a Veteran is defined as any person who is or was a servicemember of the Armed Forces of the United States both Active and Reserve components, regardless of combat experience or discharge status.

The role of the CVSS is to use his/her life experiences as an example of recovery and resiliency. In addition, the CVSS responsibilities include advocating for the needs of Veterans as well as teaching them how to advocate for themselves, assisting the Veteran to navigate service and support systems and to help the Veteran identify and achieve personal recovery goals.

CVSS professionals perform a unique function in the specialty of healthcare and human services, and can work in a variety of settings, using various approaches to provide military cultural competent recovery supportive services. In recognition of the need to assure quality care for consumers, the ICB and Illinois Joining Forces collaboratively developed the CVSS Model. This voluntary system evaluates professional competency and grants certification only to persons who meet specified minimum professional standards. The Model identifies the functions, responsibilities, knowledge, and skill bases required by the professional CVSS in the performance of his/her job, regardless of the setting in which the work is performed or through which previous professional training and orientation has been received.

The Model recognizes CVSS professionals may have received education and/or training in a wide range of disciplines. Therefore, the certification for the CVSS is specifically designed to measure CVSS professionals' competency, to define their role and function and identify a unique place for CVSS professionals among other health/human service providers. The certification is uniquely designed to accommodate and evaluate professionals who have been previously academically and/or experientially trained.

The Model has defined a baseline criterion for CVSS professionals, as having met specific predetermined criteria, for providing Veteran support services. The purpose of certification is to assure that quality service is available to the consumer. In addition, the Model provides professional certification that can guide employers in selecting competent CVSS professionals, provides CVSS professionals with validation of and recognition for their skills and competencies, and defines the unique role of CVSS professionals as health and human service providers.

## MISSION

To protect Illinois individuals of Veteran recovery support services through the provision of competency-based credentialing of Certified Veteran Support Specialists (CVSS).

This Mission shall be achieved by:

- The establishment of standards, procedures and assessments for the voluntary and professional credentialing of individuals employed in the Veteran recovery support field of mental health, rehabilitation, substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders.
- The assurance that professional Veteran support services to Veterans receiving substance use disorder, and/or co-occurring mental health services be provided by competent, credentialed individuals.
- The provision of a respected and recognized credential of professional competency in substance use and mental health illness, Veteran recovery support services.
- The provision of a structure and protocol for maintaining and updating appropriate professional credentialing standards.

## PHILOSOPHY

Although persons with substance use and mental health illness must take personal responsibility to achieve success in this journey toward recovery multiple supports and systems can greatly assist them by promoting and/or facilitating this recovery. For this reason, the federal government's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) declared that its foundational mission is "to build resilience and facilitate recovery" for persons with mental health problems or substance use disorders. (For more information, see "About SAMHSA" at [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)). To effectively achieve this Mission, as stated in Recommendation 2.2 of the Commission's Final Report, we are called upon to "Involve consumers and families in fully orienting the mental health system toward recovery." The Report further emphasizes that "Recovery-oriented services and supports are often successfully provided by consumers through consumer-run organizations and by consumers who work as providers in a variety of settings, such as peer support and psychosocial rehabilitation programs. Consumers who work as providers help expand the range of availability of service and support that professionals can offer. Studies show that consumer-run services and consumer-providers can broaden access to peer support, engage more individuals in traditional mental health services, and serve as a resource in the recovery of people with psychiatric diagnoses. Because of their experiences, consumer-providers bring different attitudes, motivations, insights and behavioral qualities to the treatment encounter" (New Freedom Commission, 2003, p.37).

The discussion of Recommendation 2.2 concludes with the following statement: "Consequently, consumers should be involved in a variety of appropriate service and support settings. In particular, consumer-operated services for which an evidence base is emerging should be promoted" (New Freedom Commission, 2003, p. 37).

## **CERTIFIED VETERAN SUPPORT SPECIALIST (CVSS)**

As the field of authentic peer support and assistance continues to expand, we believe in a fundamental need for CVSS professionals to assist consumers, agencies and professionals in making proper decisions concerning the correlating of CVSS professional competencies with existing consumer needs.

The CVSS certification process recognizes a wide range of experience and training, and a full range of job functions, knowledge and skills for CVSS professionals. This Model incorporates all elements of a professional system and is based upon accepted and validated standards. The CVSS credentialing program includes:

- objective testing instruments
- a meaningful code of ethics
- a disciplinary review mechanism
- a continuing education requirement and
- a supervised work experience

The CVSS professionals are individuals trained to incorporate their unique personal experience in their own recovery with a distinct knowledge base and human service skills. This combination of experience and training allows the CVSS professional to facilitate the recovery and build the resilience of persons with substance use and mental health illness or those dually diagnosed with mental illness and substance use disorder. The knowledge and skill base may be acquired through a combination of specialized training, education and supervised work experiences. CVSS professionals help consumers to address their physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual needs to facilitate and maintain wellness throughout the mental health recovery process. Persons served by a CVSS include persons with mental illnesses, persons dually diagnosed with mental illness and substance use disorder, family members/significant others and/or staff of organizations seeking consultation on the Veteran recovery support model.

CVSS professionals assist consumers in becoming involved in their own substance use and mental health recovery process so they might develop personalized action plans for their own mental, emotional, physical and social health. They provide experience, education and professional services to assist and support individuals, in developing and/or maintaining recovery-oriented, wellness-focused lifestyles. In addition, CVSS professionals recognize problems beyond their training, skill or competence, and are carefully trained to refer to appropriate professional service(s).

## **APPLICATION CRITERIA**

Applicants for CVSS must meet all requirements outlined by the Model. These requirements include completion of the application, successful completion of approved training and education, documented supervision, successful completion of the examination with a passing score and payment of all appropriate fees. All applicants must also subscribe to the ICB, CVSS Professional Code of Ethics and to the jurisdiction of the ICB in enforcement of the Code.

The professional CVSS is recognized as the direct support professional, with formal Veteran recovery support service responsibilities available to individuals. The professional CVSS at this level is expected to have military cultural competent knowledge of the principles of substance use disorder and mental health recovery and peer support services. Following approved training, CVSS professionals at this level will be able to identify services and activities which promote recovery; articulate points of their own recovery story that are relevant to the obstacles faced by others; promote personal responsibility for recovery; and implement recovery practices in the broad arena of the substance use disorder and mental health service delivery system.

The requirements for ICB certification (CVSS) include:

- Training in the Illinois Certified Veteran Support Specialist Performance Domains: **Advocacy, Health and Wellness, Mentoring, Professional Responsibility, Reintegration and Systems Navigation**
- Successful mastery of the core functions and knowledge base required for CVSS certification, demonstrated by a passing score on the CVSS examination
- Agreement to disclose personal experience as a consumer of Veteran recovery support services, demonstrated by signature of the CVSS Statement of Disclosure
- Ongoing continuing education
- Training/education specific to the certification
- Supervision in CVSS functions
- Payment of appropriate fees

**MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION**

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

Board Certification Level	Degree	Hours of Training/ Education	Supervised Practical Experience	Work or Volunteer Experience	Required Examination
CVSS	High School Or GED	100 clock hours <u>60 hours*</u> CVSS Specific (Minimum of 10 hours in each Domain*) <u>6 hours</u> Professional Ethics and Responsibility <u>34 hours</u> Topic Areas** (Minimum of 2 hours in each topic area)	100 clock hours of supervision received in the CVSS Domains  (Minimum of 10 hours in each Domain)	2000 hours (One Year)	Successful score on the CVSS Examination

**\*Domains:** Advocacy, Health and Wellness, Mentoring, Professional Responsibility, Reintegration, Systems Navigation

**\*\*Topic Areas:** Adult Education/Teaching Skills, Community Integration, Effective Advocacy, Identification and Treatment of Mental Health Disorders, Identification and Treatment of Substance Use Disorders, Interpersonal Communication, Legal Issues/Confidentiality/HIPPA, Military Cultural Competence, Professional Ethics, Stigma Discrimination Issues, Suicide Prevention, System Navigation and Services Access, Wellness Management/Recovery and Resiliency

**Degree Requirement**

- Must be documented to meet the criteria for board certification.
- The applicant for CVSS must have a High School Diploma, GED, or higher degree.

**Training / Education**

- The applicant for CVSS must document a minimum of 100 clock hours of education.
- Sources of education are orientation/seminar/courses, college courses, seminars, conferences, in-service, lectures
- One college semester hour equals 15 clock hours
- One college quarter hour equals 10 clock hours
- One college trimester hour equals 12 clock hours

## Supervised Practical Experience

- To meet the experience requirements for the CVSS, the applicant must submit a completed Supervisor Evaluation Form from a work/volunteer/internship experience, which was maintained for at least one year.
- The supervision must be documented. The supervisor does not need to be ICB certified.
- Supervision is broadly defined as in the SAMHSA Technical Assistance Publication Number 21 (TAP 21). TAP 21 defines supervision/clinical supervision as the administrative, clinical and evaluative process of monitoring, assessing and enhancing counselor performance.
- The applicant must submit verified documentation of supervision covering the six CVSS Performance Domains.
- Supervision includes the hours the individual spends being observed, either directly or indirectly (audio/video tapes, chart review, etc.) performing these services, time spent discussing topics related to the CVSS role and responsibilities in staff meetings, or time spent with a designated supervisor discussing the CVSS professional's work performance.
- Realizing that supervision may take place in a variety of settings and have many faces, ICB has determined not to place limiting criteria on either the areas of supervision, or qualifications of a supervisor.

## Supervised Work Experience

Work experience is defined as paid, supervised employment or volunteer work in a position where an applicant spends at least 51% of his or her time providing military cultural substance use disorder and/or mental health recovery support services. A supervised/internship experience that is part of a process approved by ICB may also be utilized. Applicants minimally must have primary responsibility for providing Veteran recovery support services to an individual and/or group, preparing recovery plans, documenting client's progress and be supervised by an individual who is knowledgeable in the CVSS Domains.

A non-resident of Illinois pursuing a credential as a CVSS is eligible for ICB Certification, if at least 51% of the applicant's work experience in the last 90 days prior to application was performed in Illinois.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

The application process is a series of steps leading to ICB certification. Payment of fees is required only as the individual completes each step. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all materials are present and completed as accurately as possible. Missing, incomplete or inadequate information will result in delays in the review process. To prevent delays in the review process, applicants must insure that the supervisor's form(s) have been forwarded in a timely manner.

Staff of ICB will screen the application for completeness. If documentation or verification is not present, the review will be delayed. The applicant will be notified of receipt of the application and the reason for any delays will be identified. **Applications not completed within one year of initiation will be destroyed.**

## **APPEAL PROCESS**

When applicants are denied certification, question the results of the application review, question examination results, or are subject to an action by ICB that they deem unjustified, they have the right to inquire and appeal. If, after having been provided an explanation or clarification of the action of ICB, applicants (complainants) still think an action taken is unjustified, they may appeal.



Complainants 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.

If applicants wish to appeal their written examination scores, they must submit a written request to ICB within 30 days of the postmark of the exam 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 do not permit them to have access to examination questions, answer keys, or other secure materials.

## 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.

## EXAMINATION PROCESS

Applicants approved for the CVSS credential will be required to take an examination.

The CVSS examination is designed to assure that applicants applying for certification have acquired the knowledge necessary to function in a competent manner. Maintenance of the test questions is ongoing and the model and exam may be updated periodically.

Applicant must pass the examination that measures proficiency in Veteran support service domains. Upon approval of the application, applicants will receive notification of eligibility to take the examination. The applicant also will be informed of the locations, dates, times, fees and procedures for official examination registration.

Due to resource limitations, within 60 days prior to the scheduled test date applicants must notify ICB of the need for special arrangements/accommodations to complete the examination (i.e., test reader, Braille, large print, etc.).

Applicants are responsible for arriving at the testing location in a timely manner. ICB will notify the applicant of the examination results.

- **Pass:** Applicants will be notified that they have passed the examination and will be provided with the procedure to become officially certified.
- **Fail:** Applicants will be notified of their failure to pass the examination and will be provided with the policy for re-examination.

Applicants who fail the examination will be given additional opportunities to retake the examination. ICB will automatically notify applicants of the next examination date for which they will be eligible to test. Applicants must notify ICB in writing of their intent to be seated for that examination by completing a Test Code Sheet. All examination fees and forms must be received by ICB prior to the date of re-examination.

## CERTIFICATION MAINTENANCE AND RECERTIFICATION

Certified Veteran Support Specialists will follow the guidelines set forth in the Illinois Model for Certified Veteran Support Specialists (CVSS). They are required to pay an annual certification fee. They will submit continuing education units (CEUs) every two years upon expiration of their certification.

CVSS professionals will be notified that their certification is about to expire no fewer than 30 days prior to the expiration date. They will submit their certification fee and CEUs to the Illinois Certification Board (ICB) by their expiration date. Forms for the documentation of CEUs are available on the ICB's website, [www.iaodapca.org](http://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.

#### **A. Continuing Education Policy**

1. Forty (40)\* continuing education units (CEUs) are required to maintain certification and must be earned within the two-year certification period. An average of 20 CEUs should be obtained each year. CEUs are not transferable to any other certification period. CEUs obtained prior to the CVSS Professional's initial date of certification are not eligible for maintaining certification. A CVSS professional may receive CEU credit only once for a training event, even if it is repeated during different certification 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.
2. All 40 CEUs required to maintain certification **must** be recognized or petitioned for ICB CEUs. Continuing education is broken down into two categories. Some continuing education may be recognized by ICB for both categories.

**Category I** - Minimum 15 CEUs of education specific to knowledge and skills, as they relate to military culture; recovery and the role of the Veteran support specialist in the recovery process

Examples of Category I education are: Advocacy, Health and Wellness, Mentoring, Professional Responsibility, Reintegration and Systems Navigation

**Category II** - Minimum 25 CEUs of education specific to knowledge and skills related to the core functions of CVSS professionals, but do not have to be specific to Veteran recovery and peer support. This education covers military culture competence in support services skills, competencies, and knowledge base.

Examples of Category II education may include evidence-based practices, leadership skills, communication skills, trauma-informed care, alternative therapies, conflict resolution, confidentiality, legal systems, crisis intervention, health and safety, roles/boundaries, relapse prevention, cultural competency and intervention.

**\*If a member also holds a current, and in good standing, Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor (CADC) or Certified Recovery Support Specialist(CRSS) certificate, they are required to only submit 10 CEUs; all specific to Veteran recovery support services Domains: Advocacy, Health and Wellness, Mentoring, Professional Responsibility, Reintegration and Systems Navigation**

#### **B. Sources of Continuing Education Units**

1. 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.
2. Structured individual continuing education, such as the ICB Bibliocredit Reading Program and other self-study programs, is available to CVSS Professionals with a maximum of 15 continuing education units every two (2) years. For additional information and listing of publications, and their CEU value, please visit the ICB website at [www.iaodapca.org](http://www.iaodapca.org).

3. CVSS professionals may receive up to 12 Category II CEUs every two years for volunteer time serving as a member of a Veteran's Board of Directors or as a member of a Veteran's Board of Directors' committee.
4. Teaching and training other Veteran support service providers in CVSS knowledge areas qualifies for up to a maximum of 15 CEUs in a two-year certification period. The number of CEUs awarded will be equal to the number of hours spent in actual training time. Presentations for which the CVSS professional has previously received credit are also not eligible. Petitions must be submitted for any presentations that have not been awarded ICB CEUs.
5. Research papers accepted for publication, reading or discussion at a professional meeting or conference, and professional publications in the mental health, rehabilitation, or alcohol and other drug (AOD) field qualifies for up to a maximum of 15 CEUs in a two-year certification period. The topic must pertain to military culture and address one of the CVSS domains. The work can be counted only once, even though presented in more than one format or location. Petitions must be submitted for CEUs.

**C. Agency In-service Education and Training Programs**

Of the 40 CEUs required biennially, 20 CEUs may be agency in-service training programs. Inservices not awarded CEU recognition by ICB may be petitioned for CEUs.

**D. Validation of Continuing Education**

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

- Certificates or other proof of completion from ICB recognized or petitioned trainings.
- Transcripts or other official grade reports for college or university courses.
- Documentation on "Official" agency letterhead documenting participation on a Veteran's Board or related committee.
- Training Brochure with your name if you're applying for CEUs for a training you conducted
- Documentation on "Official" agency/university letterhead of a teaching experience.
- Copy of research and/or publication you're submitting for CEU's

**E. Procedures to Petition for CEUs**

Not all educational experiences available to CVSS professionals will have been awarded CEUs by ICB, requiring them 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 or other document describing program content
- Sponsor, location, instructor and target population
- Definition of the training type (publication, workshop, seminar)
- Identification of the Veteran support specific content and/or knowledge/skill related to the Core Functions
- Non-refundable petition fee (\$10.00)

Requests will be reviewed within 30 days and CVSS professionals will be notified of the results. If recognized, they will be informed of the number of CEUs awarded.

## **F. Extension of Continuing Education Requirements**

CVSS Professionals unable to meet the continuing education requirements for recertification may request an extension, in writing. Extensions are \$5.00 per month for up to six months from the CVSS professional's expiration date. CVSS professionals not meeting the CEU requirement after the six-month extension shall not be permitted to place their certification on inactive status and shall be terminated. Reinstatement shall be through completing the full certification requirement.

**NOTE:** CVSS professionals should remember that this process leaves only 18 months to obtain CEU credit for the current recertification period.

### **INACTIVE STATUS**

CVSS professionals in good standing unable to meet the continuing education requirements for certification maintenance due to health or extenuating personal reasons may place their certification on inactive status. The process for reactivation from inactive status will then be followed when they wish to activate their certification.

Inactive status allows CVSS professionals to prevent expiration of their certification, thus avoiding the full reapplication process. Inactive status will not be granted for noncompliance with the continuing education requirement of the certification. CVSS professionals not meeting the continuing education requirement at renewal, or after the granted extensions provided for under the Illinois Model, will be terminated.

Inactive status will be made available to CVSS professionals who are in good standing with ICB, who expect to be inactive for more than two years, and who are unable to meet the requirements for certification maintenance.

**CVSS professionals may petition for inactive status and petitions may be approved for persons who:**

- Intend to remain active in the CVSS profession and leaves the state;
- Leave the CVSS profession field to retire;
- Leave the CVSS profession for purposes of academic achievement;
- Leave the CVSS profession for extended military active duty;
- Leave the CVSS profession for health reasons;
- Leave the CVSS profession because of extenuating personal reasons; or
- Leave the CVSS profession and elects not to maintain their certification via the continuing education mechanism.

CVSS professionals requesting inactive status for health or extenuating personal reasons may do so after a petition to ICB has been approved. Such petitions may be sought after a health or extenuating personal circumstance has occurred, but in determining approval, ICB will decide if the circumstance warranted the late petition.

### **Procedures**

The process for placing certification on inactive status includes:

- Requesting inactive status in writing to ICB, including documentation/petition for the status change.
- Receiving a letter from ICB acknowledging the retention of his/her certification number and his/her inactive status.
- Surrendering documentation of certification provided by ICB

During the period of inactive status, CVSS professionals will, for the purposes of professional use and designation, be deemed to be without the certification.

Process for reactivating certification from inactive status:

- CVSS professionals who are on inactive status and have surrendered their certification, but find that they are ready to reinstate their certification prior to the lapse of two years time, will submit a written request and the required certification fee, reapplication fee and verification of the resumption of CVSS employment/volunteer work.
- CVSS professionals, who have been on inactive status for more than two years, will submit a written request for reinstatement to ICB, the required certification fee, application fee, examination fee and proof of renewed employment/volunteer activity in the CVSS profession. They will successfully complete the CVSS examination. They must submit a current job description, on agency letterhead, signed and dated by their current supervisor, and include the amount of time spent in direct service.

## TERMINATION OF CERTIFICATION

### Reasons for Termination

- Failure to apply for a fee extension beyond the expiration date for renewal of certification, without a request for extension
- Failure to comply with the conditions of an extension by the deadline
- Failure to document appropriate continuing education as required in this model
- Failure to submit annual fees, and without a request for an extension or payment plan
- Ethical violation substantiated by ICB.

### Notification Procedure

The ICB will give CVSS professionals a written notice at least 30 days prior to expiration of CVSS certification, pending documentation of renewal. At the time of renewal, if certification is not maintained, it will be considered terminated and CVSS professionals will be notified of termination by ICB. All requests for re-instatement must be in writing to the attention of the Executive Director, 401 East Sangamon Avenue, Springfield, IL, 62702. A written response will be sent to the member.

### Due Process Appeals

CVSS professionals who are not awarded certification and who disagree with the certification decision, may appeal following the Appeals Process.

## FEE SCHEDULE

CVSS Application Fee (Applicant not already certified by ICB).....	\$ 75.00
CVSS Application Fee (Applicant holding a CRSS and/or CADC) .....	\$ 50.00
Examination .....	\$ 85.00
Annual Certification Fee .....	\$ 60.00
CEU Extension Fee (per month - maximum six months).....	\$ 5.00
CEU Petition Fee .....	\$ 10.00

**For a comprehensive listing of fees (appeals, petitions, etc.), go to <http://www.iaodapca.org/faq/> or contact ICB at (217) 698-8110.**

***For special considerations or to develop a payment plan, contact ICB at (217) 698-8110.***

## PERFORMANCE DOMAINS

ICB measures competency through the six Performance Domains, as defined by, the Recovery Support Specialist, Role Delineation Study, Final 2016 Report, prepared by Comprehensive Examination Services (CES). CVSS professionals perform the Core Functions of each Performance Domain to various degrees. CVSS professionals are not required to be experts in the Core Functions, but are expected to gain proficiency in these functions as they advance in their careers.

ICB certification focuses on the evaluation and demonstration of professional competency, with emphasis on professional competency. Competency is defined as the ability to perform the job and to perform the required tasks. The professional competencies are cumulative as individuals move through their professional development.

### **Advocacy**

- Serve as an advocate for the Veteran.
- Serve as an advocate for the members of the Veteran's family.
- Help the Veteran and family members develop self-advocacy skills.
- Identify and communicate gaps in the service system that are resulting in unmet needs for Veterans and their families.
- Serve as a bridge between the Veteran and the Veteran's family members to help the family develop an understanding of the Veteran's lived experience and how it affects the Veteran's current and future behaviors.

### **Mentoring**

- Establish and maintain an effective peer-mentor relationship with the Veteran.
- Model and teach life skills, including conflict management, interpersonal communication and problem solving skills.
- Serve as a mentor and role-model to the Veteran when delivering recovery support services.
- Promote social learning through shared experiences.
- Establish and maintain a communication plan with the Veteran to provide on-going support.

### **Reintegration**

- Assist the Veteran to assess needs and desires related to transition from military to civilian lifestyle.
- Assist the Veteran to establish short-term and long-term goals to achieve transition needs and desires.
- Assist the Veteran to develop and implement a plan to achieve short term and long-term transition goals.
- Assist the Veteran to monitor and respond to successes and barriers to achieving short-term and long-term transition goals.

### **Systems Navigation**

- Assist the Veteran to assess needs and desires to be met by formal, structural systems, including the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs and Illinois Department of Veteran's Affairs systems, civilian community-based systems and the judicial system.

- Help the consumer access the services and supports that will help them attain their individual recovery goals.
- Serve as a bridge between the Veteran and formal, structured systems to ensure Veterans overcome barriers to services
- Assist the Veteran to identify informal support systems to access or build upon to meet the Veteran's needs and desires.

### **Health and Wellness Support**

- Assist the Veteran to identify needs and desires related to health and wellness.
- Assist the Veteran to seek resources and services to address health and wellness needs and desires.
- Provide information or resources to assist the Veteran to make informed decisions regarding services for substance use and mental health needs.
- Assist the Veteran to develop skills and/or access resources to help achieve desired community, living working, learning and social goals.
- Assist the Veteran to develop an understanding of the holistic approach to wellness/recovery, which includes physical, mental, spiritual and social wellness.
- Assist the Veteran to access information and resources necessary to make informed decisions to positively affect the Veteran's overall health and wellness.

### **Professional Responsibility**

- Identify and respond appropriately to risk indicators of harm to self or others.
- Maintain documentation as required by agency, state and federal laws.
- Maintain confidentiality as required by agency, state and federal laws.
- Seek supervision, training and technical assistance as necessary and appropriate.
- Respond appropriately to personal stressors, triggers and indicators.