
MAINTAINING YOUR CERTIFICATION

CERTIFIED ASSESSMENT/ REFERRAL SPECIALIST

Certified Assessment/Referral Specialists (CARS) will follow the guidelines set forth in the Illinois Model for Certification of the Assessment/Referral Specialist. They are required to pay a biennial certification fee of \$170.00 and submit 40 continuing education units (CEUs) on or before the expiration date that is printed on the certificate. A late fee of \$45.00 will be assessed if the certification is not renewed on time.

Each CARS will be notified that his or her certification is about to expire no fewer than 60 days prior to the expiration date. The renewal notice will come via email. They will submit their biennial certification fee and CEUs to the Illinois Certification Board (ICB) by their expiration date. Fees are to be paid and CEUs are to be uploaded into their online Certemy portal in order for their recertification to be processed by ICB.

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 CARS' initial date of certification are not eligible to be used for maintaining certification. A CARS may receive CEU credit only once for a training event, even if the event 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.

The CEUs must include the following topic:

- **15 CEUs in Alcohol and Other Drugs**

At least 15 CEUs of education that are on alcohol and other drug information.

(Examples: pharmacology, signs and symptoms of alcohol and other drug use, AOD rules and regulations, AOD special populations.)

The remaining CEUs are to be education specific to knowledge and skills/Performance Domains related to the Core Functions of assessment and referral specialists. These CEUs do not need to be AOD specific.

(Examples: family dynamics, domestic violence, intervention/prevention strategies, health/safety, crisis intervention, human behavior/development, screening, assessment, case management, outcome evaluation, professional ethics, cultural diversity, confidentiality, legal systems)

CARS have the option to complete all 40 of their CEUs on alcohol and other drug specific topics.

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 name of the participant, name and date of the program, signature of instructor or sponsor, program number assigned by ICB, and the number of CEUs.
2. Structured individual continuing education, such as home study programs, is available to CARS with a maximum of 15 CEUs every two years.
3. A CARS may receive up to 12 CEUs every two years for volunteer time serving as a member of the Board of Directors, a member of a Board committee, or a member of an ICB committee.
4. Teaching and training other professionals in the assessment and referral knowledge or competency 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. Patient education and public education lectures are not eligible for CEUs. Presentations for which the CARS 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 AOD field qualifies for up to a maximum of 15 CEUs in a two-year certification period. The topic must pertain to alcohol and other drug use and address one of the domains or knowledge or skill areas. 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 previously awarded CEU recognition by ICB may be petitioned for CEUs

D. Validation of Continuing Education

Certified Assessment and Referral Specialists must document they have obtained CEUs and submit the appropriate validation for each educational experience.

1. Certificates or other proof of completion for ICB recognized or petitioned trainings.
2. Transcripts or other official grade reports for college or university courses.

E. Procedures for CARS to Petition for CEUs

Not all educational experiences available to the CARS will have been awarded CEUs by ICB, requiring the CARS to petition for such education/training for CEU credit. Requests are to be submitted to ICB on the petition form upon completion of the training event, 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 AOD specific content and/or assessment/referral domain or knowledge area
- Non-refundable petition fee

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

F. Extension of Continuing Education Requirements

A CARS unable to meet the continuing education requirements for recertification may request a one-month extension through their Certemy portal. The one-month extension is \$50.00. To request an extension, CARS must include the biennial certification fee plus \$50.00 for the one-month extension. The extension time starts from the certified member's expiration date. Extensions will not be granted beyond one month. CARS who have not met the requirements for recertification by the end of the extension time will have their certification terminated. They will not be permitted to place their certification on inactive status.

G. Inactive Status

A CARS in good standing unable to meet the continuing education requirements for re-certification maintenance due to health or extenuating personal reasons may place their certificate on inactive status if they meet the requirements. The process for reactivation from inactive status will then be followed when the counselor wishes to activate his/her certification.