

# **COUNSELORS OF PROBLEM AND COMPULSIVE GAMBLING CERTIFICATION**

## **ILLINOIS CERTIFICATION BOARD (ICB)**

**D/B/A - IAODAPCA**



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

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Supersedes all previous certification requirements**

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## PREFACE

This document defines the role, purpose, functions and responsibilities of problem and compulsive gambling counseling professionals and establishes a fair methodology for evaluation of competency. The credential defines minimum acceptable knowledge and skills for certified problem and compulsive gambling counselors (PCGCs) to insure they meet an acceptable standard of competency.

**Competency Based** - This professional, voluntary certification system is competency based, meaning that the minimum standards for PCGCs are the knowledge and skill base identified for the profession. The competencies are specific to problem and compulsive gambling counseling, thus distinguishing this profession from other behavioral health/human services professions.

**Experience Based** - The board registration system realizes that a person may take a number of avenues to acquire the minimum problem and compulsive gambling counseling competencies. An essential avenue is work experience showing the professional actually practicing these competencies.

## PURPOSE

**Mission** – To protect the public by providing competency-based credentialing of Human Service Professionals.

- To improve the quality of life for residents of Illinois
- To cut tax dollars spent on problem and compulsive gambling
- To build public confidence in counselors' ability to work with problem and compulsive gamblers
- To ensure quality to the consumer of problem and compulsive gambling counseling services
- To open doors to new professional opportunities for behavioral health professionals

## RATIONALE

The Illinois Certification Board (ICB) endorses the concept that treatment of problem and compulsive gambling is a specialty field that requires performance by competent and professional individuals. The standards for certification are weighted on the side of proven experience and education.

## ICB PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The evidence is conclusive that problem and compulsive gambling is highly correlated with substance use/abuse, criminal behavior and criminal involvement. Behavioral health providers, including substance abuse and mental health, share a responsibility to assist problem and compulsive gamblers in their recovery. This shared responsibility led to the development of a certification process for counselors of problem and compulsive gambling.

Certain knowledge areas and skills are required to provide effective treatment and case management services to individuals involved in problem and compulsive gambling. PCGCs must demonstrate the ability to provide effective services including identification, assessment, case planning, case management and advocacy. They must also demonstrate competency in linking with other treatment and behavioral health providers, and in monitoring and counseling, and must also be knowledgeable of the rehabilitative services provided by treatment centers.

The overlap of roles and responsibilities has resulted in greater communication and interdependence among treatment professionals. The development of a certification for counselors of problem and compulsive gambling is designed to strengthen the supervision and rehabilitative potential provided by our treatment system.

## INTRODUCTION

PCGCs fill a unique role among health and human service professionals, working in a variety of settings, utilizing numerous treatment approaches and recognizing the need to ensure quality care for consumers. ICB designed this voluntary credentialing system for treatment professionals who provide services to adult and juvenile problem and compulsive gamblers. The demonstrated link between problem and compulsive gambling, alcohol and other drug abuse and criminal behavior has resulted in the development of this credentialing process.

ICB realizes that PCGCs are educated in a wide range of disciplines including, addictions, social work, mental health, psychology and other behavioral health disciplines. The certification defines the roles and functions of problem and compulsive gambling counselors, and assesses an individual's ability to provide quality treatment and case management services to adult and juvenile problem and compulsive gambling involved individuals.

The certification process is designed to accommodate and evaluate those who are both experientially trained, as well as academically trained. It sets a baseline standard for treatment professionals working in any clinical counseling setting when providing an array of services to gambling involved offenders. Certification provides a professional credential that can guide employers in selecting competent staff and sets the direction for further professional growth.

## DEFINITION AND SETTING

The PCGC certification was developed for treatment professionals working with the problem and compulsive gambling populations. The setting in which the required number of work and supervised hours must be met is defined as: any setting that provides counseling, service coordination, behavior management or behavior shaping to adult or juvenile individuals.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION

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

Degree/License/ Certification Level	Required Work Experience	Hours of Supervised Practical Experience**	Hours of Training/Education***	Required Examination
IDPR Licensed * Counseling Professionals or CAADC	One year (2,000 hours) qualified work experience	N/A	<b>30</b> Gambling Specific	On-Line Examination
Master's Level or CSADC	One year (2,000 hours) qualified work experience in the past three years	50	<b>250</b> (30 of Gambling) (220 of Addiction)	On-Line Examination
Bachelor's Level or CRADC	Two years (4,000 hours) qualified work experience in the past four years	100	<b>250</b> (30 of Gambling) (220 of Addiction)	On-Line Examination
Associate's Level or CADC	Three years (6,000 hours) qualified work experience in the past five years	150	<b>250</b> (30 of Gambling) (220 of Addiction)	On-Line Examination
HS Diploma/GED	Four years (8,000 hours) qualified work experience in the past six years	200	<b>250</b> (30 of Gambling) (220 of Addiction)	On-Line Examination

\* Licensed physician to practice medicine in all its branches pursuant to the Medical Practice Act of 1987; licensed professional counselor or licensed clinical professional counselor pursuant to the Professional Counselor and Clinical Professional Counselor Licensing Act (225 ILCS 107), licensed as a psychologist pursuant to the Clinical Psychology Practice Act (225 ILCS 15) or licensed as a social worker or licensed clinical social worker pursuant to the Clinical Social Work and Social Work Practice Act (225 ILCS 20).

\*\* Realizing supervision may take place in a variety of settings and have many faces, ICB determined not to place limiting criteria on areas of supervision or qualifications of a supervisor. Rather, supervision should be as broadly defined as in the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment/Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Technical Assistance Publication Number 21. TAP 21 defines supervision/clinical supervision as the administrative, clinical and evaluative process of monitoring, assessing and enhancing counselor performance. Supervised hours are understood to be face-to-face supervision received.

\*\*\* The hours of education will include content on the performance domains as they relate to both adults and juveniles. A minimum of **ten hours** in each performance domain is required. **Six hours of ethics education is required.**

## ACCOUNTABILITY

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

## HOW TO APPLY

Certification will be granted contingent upon documentation of eligibility, submission of all required application material, successful completion of the appropriate examinations and payment of all fees. The following outlines the application, review and approval process.

1. Read the entire Illinois Model thoroughly.
2. Use the link provided to apply through Certemy. Paper applications are no longer accepted.
3. Upload all required documentation to support employment and education (i.e. current job description, official transcripts, copies of training certificates, letters of attendance/ participation).
4. A current job description is required and must be on agency letterhead, dated and signed by the applicant and supervisor and must reflect the applicant's actual job duties and responsibilities.
5. Sign, date and notarize the Problem and Compulsive Gambling Counselor's Code of Ethics.

### Review of Materials

The results may be one of the following:

**Application Approved** – The application meets all certification standards, and the applicant must pass the examination in order to meet the requirements for certification.

**Application Rejected** – Some materials need clarification, submission or resubmission of any part of the application. The applicant will be notified through their Certemy account of the problem(s). **Within one year of the application date, corrected materials must be submitted or the applicant will need to restart the application process.**

**It is important that you use the application link that is provided on our website. If you do not use that link, you will not be connected to ICB's PCGC application.**

## CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

ICB offers the PCGC examination to qualified applicants. The exam is computer based and is administered through the [International Problem Gambling and Gaming Certification Organization \(IPGGC\)](#) and the Professional Testing Corporation (PTC). Upon approval, applicants will receive instructions on how to register for the exam. Exam information can be found in the [IGCCB handbook](#). **Please note, the handbook that is affiliate with the link is for informational purposes only, please do not complete any forms included in the link.** Once the exam registration is complete, you will be given authorization to schedule your exam which will include choosing your exam date and location. The PCGC exam consists of 200 multiple choice questions with a 4-hour time limit.

The development of a valid examination for the certification 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 gambling counselor does in practice. The knowledge and skill bases for the questions in the examination are derived from the actual practice of the gambling counselor. Multiple sources were utilized in the development of questions for the examination. The examination is 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.

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 less than 30 days prior to the scheduled examination date. Official documentation of the disability or religious issue must be provided with the written request. With the proper documentation, ICB will offer appropriate modifications

Applicants' files will be closed if they do not retest within one year of obtaining a failing score. In such a case they will be required to submit a new application.

## CERTIFICATION TIME PERIOD

Once the application receives approval and applicants have passed the certification examination, they will be invoiced for the biennial certification fee. Once payment is received, certification will be issued.

ICB certification encompasses two calendar years starting on the date of successful completion of the certification process. Two dates (date of issue and expiration) will appear on the gambling counselor certificate along with a certification number.

Certified gambling counselors must display their certificates at their primary work site, and are responsible for renewal of their certification.

## FEE STRUCTURE

Application Fee .....	\$100.00
Exam Fee .....	\$410.00
Biennial Certification Fee .....	\$190.00
Extension Fee (per month - maximum six months) .....	\$50.00
Inactive Status (Biennial) .....	\$50.00
Retired Emeritus Status (Biennial) .....	\$30.00
Returned Check Fee .....	\$75.00

**All fees are non-refundable. The fee schedule is subject to change without notice.**

## MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION AND RECERTIFICATION

To maintain the high standards of professional practice and to assure continuing awareness of new knowledge in the field, ICB requires all PCGCs to renew their certification every two years. PCGCs are responsible for maintaining and renewing their credential. They must notify ICB, in writing, of any change of address.

PCGCs are required to pay a biennial certification fee and submit continuing education units (CEUs) through their Certemy portal prior to their expiration date this printed on their certificate. They will be notified their certification is about to expire no fewer than 60 days prior to their expiration date.

A non-response to biennial notices will result in termination of certification.

### **Continuing Education Policy**

The 40 CEUs, required to maintain certification, 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 initial date of certification are not eligible to be used for maintaining certification. PCGCs 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, excluding non-program time such as breaks, social hours, registration time and 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.

All CEUs required for certification maintenance **must** be recognized or petitioned for ICB CEUs. Continuing education is broken down into two categories. Some continuing education may be recognized for both categories.

- **CATEGORY I** - Minimum 15 CEUs of education specific to gambling. This covers training on dynamics of gambling addiction, effects of problem and compulsive gambling on individuals and families, signs and symptoms of problem gambling, special populations.
- **CATEGORY II** - Minimum 25 CEUs of education specific to knowledge and skills related to the five (5) performance domains, but does not have to be gambling specific. This covers training in providing client, family and community education, intake and assessment, counseling, case management and professional responsibility.

**Note:** PCGCs who are licensed psychologists and physicians, LCPCs, and LCSWs, need only submit 10 Category I gambling specific CEUs and proof of current licensure. PCGCs who are ICB certified AOD counselors, need only submit 10 Category I gambling specific CEUs and proof of current certification. Category II CEUs are not required.

### **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 name of the participant, name of program, date of program, program number assigned by ICB, number of CEUs, and the category.
- Structured individual continuing education, such as self-study programs, is available to PCGCs with a maximum of 15 CEUs every two (2) years.
- PCGCs may receive up to 12 Category II CEUs every two years for volunteer time serving as a member of the Board of Directors, a member of a Board committee or another ICB committee.
- Teaching and/or training other PCGCs in the knowledge or competency areas qualifies for up to 15 CEUs every two years. The number of CEUs awarded will be equal to the number of hours spent

in actual training time. Patient and public education lectures are not eligible. Presentations for which the gambling counselor has previously received credit are also not eligible.

- Research papers accepted for publication, reading or discussion at a professional meeting or conference, and professional publications in the gambling treatment field qualify for up to 15 CEUs every two years. The topic must pertain to problem and compulsive gambling and address one of the performance domains. The work can be counted only once, even though presented in more than one format or location.

### **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.

### **Validation of Continuing Education**

PCGCs must document they have obtained CEUs and submit the appropriate validation for each educational experience. Acceptable validation (documentation) will be as follows:

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

### **Procedures for Counselors to Petition for CEUs**

Not all educational experiences available to the PCGC will have been awarded CEUs by ICB, requiring the counselor 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 gambling specific content and/or knowledge/skill related to the performance domains
- Non-refundable petition fee

Requests will be reviewed within 30 days, and the PCGC will be notified of the results with the number of CEUs if the program is recognized through the petitioning process.

### **Extension of Continuing Education Requirements**

PCGCs unable to meet the continuing education requirements for recertification may request an extension unable to meet the continuing education requirements for recertification may request a one-month extension, in writing. To request an extension, certified AOD counselors must include the biennial certification fee plus \$50.00 with a written request.

The extension will not be granted beyond one month. If at the end of the extension, counselors who have not met the requirements for recertification, will have their certification terminated. They will not be permitted to place their certification on inactive status. Reinstatement shall be through completing the full certification requirement.

**NOTE:** This process leaves only 18 months to obtain CEU credit for the current recertification period.

## INACTIVE STATUS

ICB has established an inactive status to allow PCGCs, in good standing unable to meet the continuing education requirements for recertification due to health or other extenuating circumstances. Inactive status is available for PCGCs who expect to be inactive for more than two years and who:

- Intend to remain active in the problem and compulsive gambling treatment profession and leaves the state
- leave the problem and compulsive gambling treatment field to retire
- leave the problem and compulsive gambling treatment profession for purposes of academic achievement
- leave the problem and compulsive gambling treatment profession for extended active military duty
- leave the problem and compulsive gambling treatment profession for health reasons
- leave the problem and compulsive gambling treatment profession because of extenuating personal reasons
- leave the problem and compulsive gambling treatment profession and elects not to maintain their certification via the continuing education mechanism

Inactive status allows PCGCs 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.** PCGCs not meeting the continuing education requirements at recertification, or after the granted extensions provided for under the Illinois Model will have their certification terminated.

### **Procedure for obtaining Inactive Status**

- Request inactive status in writing from ICB stating the specific reason(s) for the request
- Include documentation for eligibility with the request
- Surrender current original PCGC certificate to ICB. The PCGC will receive a letter from ICB acknowledging the certification is on inactive status.
- Pay a \$30.00 biennial fee.

During the period of inactive status, the counselor is considered to be without ICB certification. Such counselors cannot refer to themselves in writing or verbally as certified PCGCs.

### **Procedure for reactivating from Inactive Status**

- For PCGCs who have left the state and continued in the problem gambling treatment field
  - Send written request for reactivation to ICB
  - Document fulfillment of requirements for certification under the laws/rules of the jurisdiction where the work experience is occurring
  - Payment of certification fee
- For PCGCs who have left the problem gambling treatment field but wish to reactivate their certification **before two years have lapsed:**
  - Send written request for reactivation to ICB
  - Payment of certification fee
  - Payment of reapplication fee
  - Provide documentation of current PCGC employment
  - Provide documentation of current CEU experience

- For PCGCs who wish to reactivate their certification and have been on inactive status for **more than two years**:
  - Send written request for reactivation to ICB
  - Payment of certification fee
  - Payment of reapplication fee
  - Payment of written examination fee
  - Successfully complete the examination required for certification
  - Submit current job description on agency letterhead, signed and dated by the PCGC and the current supervisor and include the amount of time spent in direct service.

## **RETIRED EMERITUS STATUS**

***ICB has established a “Retired Emeritus Status” level to accommodate counselors who are retired from the work force, but wish to maintain a connection to ICB.***

### **Eligibility for “Retired Emeritus Status” is:**

- Certified and in good standing, i.e., current with fees
- At least fifty-five (55) years of age
- Minimum of 10 years work experience
- Retiring with no intention of returning to any form of Problem Gambling employment
- Pay \$30.00 biennial retired emeritus status fee (no continue education units (CEUs) are required for this status)

### **Procedure for obtaining “Retired Emeritus Status”:**

- Request “Retired Emeritus Status” in writing from ICB
- Include documentation for eligibility with the request
- Surrender the current original counselor certificate to ICB
- A letter from ICB will be sent acknowledging retired emeritus status
- Counselors will sign a waiver stating they are no longer working in the field and a separate “Retired Emeritus Status” certificate will be issued
- Pay a biennial \$30.00 fee

### **Procedure for reactivating a certificate from “Retired Emeritus Status”**

Those returning to the Problem Gambling work force must reactivate their certification level by completing the entire application process, examination and paying appropriate fees.

## **TERMINATED CERTIFICATION**

### **Certification will be terminated for the following:**

- Failure to pay fees or apply for an extension beyond the expiration date
- Failure to comply with the conditions of an extension by the deadline
- Failure to document 40 continuing education units over the two-year period of certification and no request for extension or payment plan
- Ethics violations

### **Notification Procedure for termination of certification:**

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

All requests for reinstatement must be made in writing to ICB. Telephone inquiries will not be accepted. A written response will be sent to the member.

## APPEAL PROCESS

When an applicant is denied certification, questions the results of the application review, questions examination results or is subject to an action by ICB that the applicant deems unjustified, he or she has the right to inquire and appeal. If, after having been provided an explanation or clarification of the action of ICB, the applicant (complainant) still thinks that an action taken is unjustified, he or she may appeal. The complainant 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 their examination scores, they must submit a written request and fee to ICB within 30 days of receiving the examination score. Applicants 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

Certified problem and compulsive gambling counselors hold a unique position of trust and responsibility and must be aware, at all times, of the ethical requirements imposed on them as a result of this special position.

ICB has established a “disciplinary review process” that provides an avenue through which complaints can be filed about ethical conduct of an ICB certified problem and compulsive gambling counselor or an applicant to the ICB certification system.

If a breach of the code of ethics is suspected, ICB suggests that it be brought to the counselor’s attention first. If this action results in an unsatisfactory outcome, the counselor’s supervisor should be informed. If this action results in an unsatisfactory outcome, an ethics complaint should be made to ICB.

The complainant will send a written request for an ethics complaint packet to ICB, 401 East Sangamon Avenue, Springfield, IL 62702.

The complainant will complete the packet and submit it to ICB. Once the ethics complaint packet is received by ICB the complaint will be investigated resulting in one of three findings:

- Dismissal of the complaint
- Return of the complaint to the Executive Director for further investigation; or
- Imposition of disciplinary action.

The complainant may appeal any decision within 30 days of receipt of the results of the complaint by sending a certified letter to the Executive Director of ICB.

## GAMBLING COUNSELOR PERFORMANCE DOMAINS

The Columbia Assessment Services, Inc. Counselors of Problem Gamblers Role Delineation Study identified five performance domains for the problem and compulsive gambling counseling professional. Each domain identifies several tasks that provide the basis for questions in the examination. Following is a listing of the domains and associated task statements.

### Domain 1: Client, Family and Community Education

Statement 1: Provide relevant education to the client through formal and informal processes to introduce specific knowledge to support the recovery process.

Statement 2: Provide relevant education to the family of the client through formal and informal processes to introduce specific knowledge to facilitate family recovery.

Statement 3: Provide relevant education and consultation to the community (e.g., legal system, schools, financial community, legislators, health care community) through formal and informal processes to introduce specific knowledge of the problem and pathological gambling, resources available and opportunity for community involvement.

## **Domain 2: Intake and Assessment**

Statement 1: Orient the client to the program by explaining goals, philosophy, costs, expectations, rights and responsibilities, etc., to obtain the client's informed consent to proceed with assessment and/or treatment.

Statement 2: Using interview and testing techniques, determine the nature and severity of the client's gambling-related problems and behaviors to determine appropriate disposition.

Statement 3: Using interview techniques, gather relevant information from the client to obtain current status and history.

Statement 4: Recognize signs and symptoms of client co-morbid disorders and/or medical conditions using interview and testing techniques to provide or refer for appropriate concurrent treatment.

Statement 5: Convey the information obtained from the assessment process and its interpretation to relevant others to provide for the effective disposition and provision of services for the client.

## **Domain 3: Counseling**

Statement 1: Construct client's treatment plan with the client's participation and concurrence to establish the sequence and content of interventions toward treatment goals.

Statement 2: Conduct individual, family and/or group counseling using established clinical interventions to address treatment goals appropriately.

Statement 3: In collaboration with the client, regularly evaluate progress relative to individual treatment goals to modify the treatment plan, as necessary.

Statement 4: Prepare clients and significant others to anticipate, avoid and cope with conditions that could lead to relapse by identifying triggers and formulating strategies to support progress toward treatment goals.

Statement 5: Develop plans for the client's discharge or continuing care through negotiation with the client to achieve discharge goals.

Statement 6: Intervene, when necessary, in crisis situations with clients or significant other to prevent, resolve or cope with the crisis by utilizing necessary and appropriate resources and identifying and teaching new skills.

## **Domain 4: Case Management**

Statement 1: Coordinate services throughout the assessment, counseling and follow-up processes by involving appropriate individuals and agencies (e.g., legal, social, financial, health care, vocational) to match resources to client needs.

Statement 2: Establish a financial recovery plan with the client and significant others by coordinating and monitoring appropriate resources for budget, restitution and other financial concerns (e.g., checkbook management, payment of bills, access to funds) to promote financial stability during and after treatment.

Statement 3: Monitor the client's level of care on an ongoing basis to ensure the appropriate type and extent of services by reviewing client's current condition and progress toward treatment goals.

Statement 4: Advocate for the client's interest by interacting with appropriate individuals and agencies to promote the goals of the treatment process.

## **Domain 5: Professional Responsibility**

Statement 1: Adhere to the professional code and ethical standards by acting in accordance with its guidelines to safeguard the best interest of the client.

Statement 2: Adhere to all private, stated and other government agency requirements by recording in the client's case record regular summaries of significant contacts and clinical information to document the types of interventions involved and the client's responses.

Statement 3: Make regular reports, either written or verbal, to supervisors or other monitoring agents to review client progress relative to treatment goals and recommend necessary changes.

Statement 4: Seek consultation from supervisors and other qualified sources by recognizing when problems beyond the counselor's immediate knowledge and competence are encountered to work in the best interest of the client.

Statement 5: Establish a continuing learning plan directed to obtain further education and training to maintain competence in professional activities by taking formal academic courses, attending lectures, workshops and conferences and otherwise keeping abreast of current literature about problem gambling and related subjects.

Statement 6: Tailor services by addressing the needs of diverse populations (e.g., gender, age, sexual orientation and cultural issues) to maximize the effectiveness of professional services.