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# IOWA FAMILY SUPPORT CREDENTIAL

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IFSC PROGRAM GUIDE



Iowa  
Family Support  
Credential

Dear Family Support Program,

Congratulations on your journey to earn the Iowa Family Support Credential.

The Iowa Family Support Credential is formal recognition from the state of Iowa that you are operating a quality family support program. Funders, community members and participants can all be assured that your program has been rigorously reviewed and found to be in full adherence to all quality standards.

You will work closely in the next two to three years to develop policies and procedures that align with the Iowa Family Support Standards. You and your staff will work over the next couple of years to implement those policies and procedures into daily practice.

The peer review is an external evaluation process to verify that your program is in adherence to the Iowa Family Support Standards. This guide will provide you with more information and help you have a clear understanding about both the credentialing and peer review process.

Congratulations again on achieving this critical milestone!

Sincerely,

*Janet*

Janet N. Horras, Iowa Home Visitation Program Director



Iowa  
Family Support  
Credential

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Procedure Name:	<b>IFSC Tools</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2014
Date(s) of revision:	June 2014, September 2014; June 2023
Other References:	

**14.04 Waiver:** To be filled out by programs when the supervisor does not meet the qualifications listed in standard 14.04.

**Program/peer reviewers/program specialists**

**Body of Evidence:** Designed to assist in determining how to show evidence of first and second-order standards.

**Program/peer reviewers/program specialists**

**Body of Evidence Checklist:** Derived from the Body of Evidence, designed to assist in review of “Box” to assist in ensuring all applicable evidence is included. This document will be filled out by the program specialist and submitted to the program post-mock review.

**Program/program specialists**

**Body of Evidence - Subcontracting:** Designed to assist in determining how to show evidence of individual standards when a program uses subcontractors.

**Program/peer reviewers/program specialists**

**Code of Conduct:** Peer reviewers will sign this document after agreeing to the peer review assignment. Programs will receive signed copies via the lead peer reviewer and may share these with any individuals with questions on how IFSC adheres to confidentiality and maintaining a code of conduct with peer reviewers.

**Program/peer reviewers**

**Community Partners Roster:** An Excel spreadsheet for program to provide peer reviewers with needed information about community partners to help in the selection of participants to be included in the interview panel.

**Program/peer reviewers/program specialists**

**Confidentiality Agreement:** Peer reviewers will sign this document after agreeing to the peer review assignment. Programs will receive signed copies via the lead peer reviewer for both peers and may share with any individuals with questions on how IFSC adheres to confidentiality and maintaining a code of conduct with peer reviewers.

## **Program/peer reviewers**

**Corrective Action Plan:** Programs will complete this document following receipt of the Peer Review Report in the event they are found out of adherence for any standards. The program will address any unsubstantiated first order or second-order standards that were out of adherence and state what they are doing to now ensure adherence to the standard. Once completed, this plan will be submitted to the IFSC coordinator\* who will submit it to the peer reviewers.

## **Program/peer reviewers/program specialists**

**Definitions for IFSC:** This list contains acronyms frequently used and descriptions of administrative roles in the IFSC program.

## **Program/peer reviewers/program specialists**

**Definitions for Iowa Family Support Credentialing:** This list contains words and phrases found in the Iowa Family Support Standards and definitions. This tool also references the standards where these words/phrases are found.

## **Program/peer reviewers/program specialists**

**Emergency Contact Form:** To be completed by the peer reviewers and program, then sent to the IFSC coordinator prior to the peer review. Everyone should keep a copy of this in case of emergencies that may occur before or during the peer review. Numbers should include how to get ahold of someone after normal business hours.

## **Program/peer reviewers**

**File Review Checklist:** Lists requirements from the standards that may be found in participant files. Specific checklists are available for long term home visitation, short term home visitation, and group-based programming. Program specialists will utilize this during a mock review. Peer reviewers will utilize this tool during the peer review.

## **Program/peer reviewers/program specialists**

**Interview Invitation Template:** A template to be used by the program to send to individuals to be invited to interview panels during the peer review. The program can modify this document to meet the needs of the different panels.

## **Program/program specialists**

**Interview Questions:** These tools list the type of questions that may be asked during peer review. These serve as a guide for both the peer reviewers to be used during the peer review and the program specialist for the mock review process. The program may share these with the various groups that will be participating in interviews during the peer review. It should be stressed that these are not the exact questions which will be asked during the peer review, but instead a guide to give programs an idea of the type of questions that may be asked. Questions during the peer review will be guided by what the peer review team is/is not finding in the SAM and "Box".

## **Program/peer reviewers/program specialists**

**Iowa Family Support Standards:** The standards, based on COA standards, are designed to accommodate a variety of family support programs for families and children, including, but not limited to: (1) home visiting programs that deliver support services in families' homes; (2) early intervention programs for children who have or are at risk for developmental delays; and (3) group-based parent education programs.

**Program/peer reviewers/program specialist**

**Linking Standards:** Designed to assist programs in creating or adapting policies to meet the standards. This document divides all standards to fit in one of 15 categories.

**Program/program specialists**

**Observation Form:** Lists requirements noted in the standards that may be observed during either a group-based parent education class or a home visit. Specific forms are available for both types of programs. Items not found during a class or home visit are not an indication that the program is not meeting the standard, simply that they were not observed during that particular time.

**Peer reviewers**

**Participant Roster:** An Excel spreadsheet for the program to provide peer reviewers with needed information about each participant to help in the selection of participant files to be reviewed onsite.

**Program/peer reviewers**

**Peer Review Report:** This document will be filled out by the peer reviewers and submitted to the IFSC coordinator\* post-peer review. This becomes a public document. The IFSC coordinator\* will review the report and then send it to the program.

**Program/peer reviewers**

**Peer Review Report Addendum:** Peer reviewers will complete a report addendum following receipt of the program's Corrective Action Plan. In the Addendum, the peer reviewers will reevaluate the program's adherence, taking into account the corrective actions that have been taken.

**Program/peer reviewers**

**Peer Review Request Form:** This form will be filled out by the program, with the assistance of the program specialist, to request peer review. This form will then be emailed to the program specialist who will attach a letter confirming the program's readiness for peer review and email both to the IFSC coordinator and the program.

**Program/peer reviewers/program specialists**

**Peer Review Schedule:** Example schedules have been made for two, three, and four day peer reviews for both home visitation and group parent education programs, along with combination or multiple programs. Peer reviewers will only customize schedules when necessary to meet the needs for each peer review.

**Program/peer reviewer**

**Personnel Records Checklist:** Lists requirements from the standards that may be found in personnel records. Program specialists will utilize this during a mock review. Peer reviewers will utilize this tool during the peer review.

**Peer reviewers/program specialists**

**Rating Indicator Sheet:** Used to guide the rating of program's adherence to the Iowa Family Support Standards. Programs can utilize this tool as they give themselves an initial rating when they begin the credentialing process and update as they continue to meet the standards. The peer reviewers will rate programs during the peer review according to these indicators.

**Program/peer reviewers/program specialists**

**Request for Extension Checklist:** Checklist to be used by the program and the program specialist to ensure that the program is meeting all of the required elements of an extension request.

**Program/program**

**Self-Assessment and Materials (SAM):** The SEQIP is converted into the SAM by the IFSC program specialist when the program has demonstrated that they are ready to request peer review and will be shared with the peer review team.

**Program/peer reviewers/program specialists**

**Self-Evaluation and Quality Improvement Plan (SEQIP):** An Excel document designed for the program to use as a working tool to compile information while receiving technical assistance. This tool will be shared between the program, the program specialist, and IFSC staff.

**Program/program specialists**

**Supervision Checklist:** Lists requirements from the standards that may be found in supervision records. Program specialists will utilize this during a mock review. Peer reviewers will utilize this tool during the peer review.

**Program/peer reviewers/program specialist**

**Training Log:** Lists all training requirements and the standard that references them. Programs may utilize this tool to ensure and document that all required trainings are met. Peer reviewers will utilize this tool when reviewing personnel records to ensure that staff meets the training requirements set by the standards.

**Program/peer reviewers/program specialists**

**Withdrawal Form:** In the event that a program wishes to withdraw from the process, the agency will fill out a form and collect signatures from the program specialist, executive director and/or board chair. This form will be provided to the IFSC coordinator and community health consultant.

**Program/program specialists**



Procedure Name:	<b>Overview of Initial Credentialing Process</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, IFSC Staff
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2014; June 2023
Other References:	Tool FF; Iowa Family Support Credential Application; Peer Review Application; SEQIP; Peer Review Request Form; Extension Request; Peer Review Report; Addendum; Fidelity Review

The credentialing process was designed for family support programs that do not have access to outside evaluation and are not currently credentialed through a national process. Both in-home family support programs and group-based parent education programs are eligible to apply, among any other family support programs.

Peer reviewers must successfully complete an application and peer review training prior to any assignments. Peer reviewers cannot have any conflicts of interest with the program they are evaluating. Peer reviewers cannot offer technical assistance during the course of the peer review.

***From Tool FF:***

- 1) By July 1, 2013, 25 percent of state funds expended for home visiting programs are for evidence based or promising program models.
- 2) By July 1, 2014, 50 percent of state funds expended for home visiting programs are for evidenced-based or promising program models.
- 3) By July 1, 2015, 75 percent of state funds expended for home visiting programs are for evidence based or promising program models.
- 4) By July 1, 2016, 90 percent of state funds expended for home visiting programs are for evidence-based or promising program models. The remaining 10 percent of funds may be used for innovative program models that do not yet meet the definition of evidence-based or promising programs.

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**PROCEDURE**

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***First Step:*** The program submits an application and supporting materials to participate to the IFSC Coordinator. Applications can be found online at <https://lsiowa.org/ifsc> or acquired by emailing [IFSCProgram@LSIowa.org](mailto:IFSCProgram@LSIowa.org).



**Second Step:** Once the program is accepted into the process, it will be assigned a program specialist. In the event that an assignment cannot be made, the program may be placed on a waiting list and notified of placement on the list. Programs will be removed and assigned to a program specialist in the order of placement.

An initial meeting will be scheduled to introduce the program to the Iowa Family Support Credential process and the Iowa Family Support Standards. A Memorandum of Understanding will be signed by the program, IFSC Program Specialist, and IFSC Coordinator which formally starts the technical assistance process. The IFSC Program Specialist will help the program initially self-evaluate in relation to the family support standards using the Self-Evaluation and Quality Improvement Plan (SEQIP) within three months of the MOU meeting. The program, with the support of the IFSC Program Specialist, will then be responsible for developing and implementing a quality improvement plan to address any standards that are not met. They will also provide technical assistance to the program to assist in meeting the standards. Together, the IFSC Program Specialist and the program will identify any training needs the program may have. The IFSC Program Specialist's role will vary in intensity; however, the goal will be two virtual TA check in meetings per year to review progress made on the quality improvement plan and technical assistance needs the program has. The program also will complete a Mock Peer Review approximately 1 month prior to the end of TA to ensure they are adequately prepared for the peer review.

**Third Step:** The program has up to three years with a potential one year extension of signing the Memorandum of Understanding to request peer review. The program and the IFSC Program Specialist will inform the IFSC Coordinator that the program is ready for the peer review portion of credentialing. This is communicated via the Peer Review Application Form filled out by the program and send to the IFSC Program Specialist. The program will also submit their completed SEQIP and staffing grid with the Peer Review Application Form. The IFSC Program Specialist reviews all of this information. The IFSC Program Specialist will modify the SEQIP to the Self-Assessment and Supporting Materials (SAM). If the IFSC Program Specialist believes the program is ready for peer review they submit all of these documents and a letter of recommendation to the IFSC Coordinator. The lead peer reviewer will request the SAM and "Box" from the program.

The program is now ready for the peer review. A letter will go to the program and peer reviewers who were assigned.

**Fourth Step:** The peer review length varies from two to five days for an initial peer review, depending on the organization and program's circumstances. The peer review consists of interviews, observations of home visits and / or groups, and document reviews. The peer review concludes with an oral exit report that outlines the strengths and opportunities for growth of the program and organization.

**Fifth Step:** The lead peer reviewer submits the Peer Review Report to the IFSC coordinator within two weeks of the conclusion of the peer review. The written report contains ratings for each standard. Ratings of three or four require the peer review team to provide written rationale for each first and

second order standard. If the report contains 20% or more standards out of adherence, the program will be placed on probationary status and will be required to follow a post-peer review timeline that includes technical assistance, evidence of practice, and a fidelity peer review. If a fidelity review is warranted, the peer reviewers will have completed the contractual obligation.

**Sixth Step:** No later than the end of week 14 of the post-peer review process, the program will submit the Corrective Action Plan that will contain additional documentation demonstrating how the program is meeting the standard(s) that the peer review team found out of adherence. The additional documentation will be reviewed by the assigned peer review team and the IFSC Coordinator. It may take several attempts before the peer review team is confident that the program is adhering to the standard(s). Because of this, it is in the program's interest to complete and submit the Corrective Action Plan as soon as possible.

**Seventh Step:** IF the additional documentation and Addendum is approved by the IFSC coordinator, the program will be awarded the Iowa Family Support Credential. Notification will come via email from the community health consultant. The credential will be valid for five years.

IF the additional documentation and Addendum are not approved at the end of the three months, a one-day fidelity peer review will be conducted to review evidence of standards originally rated as out of adherence through documentation and staff interviews through documentation and staff interviews.

IF, after the fidelity peer review, the agency has demonstrated adherence to the standards, the program will receive the Iowa Family Support Credential. If, after the fidelity peer review, there are still standards out of adherence, the program must withdraw and wait one year before reapplying for credentialing.



Procedure Name:	<b>Overview of Renewal Credentialing Process</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, IFSC Staff
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2014; June 2023
Other References:	Tool FF; Iowa Family Support Credential Application; Peer Review Application; SEQIP; Peer Review Request Form; Extension Request; Peer Review Report; Addendum; Fidelity Review

The credentialing process was designed for family support programs that do not have access to outside evaluation and are not currently credentialed through a national process. Both in-home family support programs and group-based parent education programs are eligible to apply, among any other family support programs.

Peer reviewers must successfully complete an application and peer review training prior to any assignments. Peer reviewers cannot have any conflicts of interest with the program they are evaluating. Peer reviewers cannot offer technical assistance during the course of the peer review.

***From Tool FF:***

- 1) By July 1, 2013, 25 percent of state funds expended for home visiting programs are for evidence based or promising program models.
- 2) By July 1, 2014, 50 percent of state funds expended for home visiting programs are for evidenced-based or promising program models.
- 3) By July 1, 2015, 75 percent of state funds expended for home visiting programs are for evidence based or promising program models.
- 4) By July 1, 2016, 90 percent of state funds expended for home visiting programs are for evidence-based or promising program models. The remaining 10 percent of funds may be used for innovative program models that do not yet meet the definition of evidence-based or promising programs.

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**PROCEDURE**

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***First Step:*** The program submits an application and supporting materials to participate to the IFSC Coordinator. Applications can be found online at <https://lsiowa.org/ifsc> or acquired by emailing [IFSCProgram@LSIowa.org](mailto:IFSCProgram@LSIowa.org). Programs should plan to submit the application for renewal at least 15

months prior to the expiration of the current credential to allow for planning and a full 12 months of technical assistance.

**Second Step:** Once the program is accepted into the process, it will be assigned a program specialist.

An initial meeting will be scheduled to introduce the program to the Iowa Family Support Credential process and the Iowa Family Support Standards. A Memorandum of Understanding will be signed by the program, IFSC Program Specialist, and IFSC Coordinator which formally starts the technical assistance process. The IFSC Program Specialist will help the program initially self-evaluate in relation to the family support standards using the Self-Evaluation and Quality Improvement Plan (SEQIP) within three months of the MOU meeting. The program, with the support of the IFSC Program Specialist, will then be responsible for developing and implementing a quality improvement plan to address any standards that are not met. They will also provide technical assistance to the program to assist in meeting the standards. Together, the IFSC Program Specialist and the program will identify any training needs the program may have. The IFSC Program Specialist's role will vary in intensity; however, the goal will be two virtual TA check in meetings per year to review progress made on the quality improvement plan and technical assistance needs the program has. The program also will complete a Mock Peer Review approximately 1 month prior to the end of TA to ensure they are adequately prepared for the peer review.

**Third Step:** The program has up to one year of signing the Memorandum of Understanding to request peer review. The program and the IFSC Program Specialist will inform the IFSC Coordinator that the program is ready for the peer review portion of credentialing. This is communicated via the Peer Review Application Form filled out by the program and send to the IFSC Program Specialist. The program will also submit their completed SEQIP and staffing grid with the Peer Review Application Form. The IFSC Program Specialist reviews all of this information. The IFSC Program Specialist will modify the SEQIP to the Self-Assessment and Supporting Materials (SAM). If the IFSC Program Specialist believes the program is ready for peer review they submit all of these documents and a letter of recommendation to the IFSC Coordinator. The lead peer reviewer will request the SAM and "Box" from the program.

The program is now ready for the peer review. A letter will go to the program and peer reviewers who were assigned.

**Fourth Step:** The peer review length varies from one to five days for a peer review to renew the IFSC, depending on the organization and program's circumstances. The peer review consists of interviews, observations of home visits and / or groups, and document reviews. The peer review concludes with an oral exit report that outlines the strengths and opportunities for growth of the program and organization.

**Fifth Step:** The lead peer reviewer submits the Peer Review Report to the IFSC coordinator within two weeks of the conclusion of the peer review. The written report contains ratings for each standard. Ratings of three or four require the peer review team to provide written rationale for each first and second order standard. If the report contains 20% or more standards out of adherence, the program

will be placed on probationary status and will be required to follow a post-peer review timeline that includes technical assistance, evidence of practice, and a fidelity peer review. If a fidelity review is warranted, the peer reviewers will have completed the contractual obligation.

**Sixth Step:** No later than the end of week 14 of the post-peer review process, the program will submit the Corrective Action Plan that will contain additional documentation demonstrating how the program is meeting the standard(s) that the peer review team found out of adherence. The additional documentation will be reviewed by the assigned peer review team and the IFSC Coordinator. It may take several attempts before the peer review team is confident that the program is adhering to the standard(s). Because of this, it is in the program's interest to complete and submit the Corrective Action Plan as soon as possible.

**Seventh Step:** **IF** the additional documentation and Addendum is approved by the IFSC coordinator, the program will be awarded the Iowa Family Support Credential. Notification will come via email from the community health consultant. The credential will be valid for five years.

**IF** the additional documentation and Addendum are not approved at the end of the three months, a one-day fidelity peer review will be conducted to review evidence of standards originally rated as out of adherence through documentation and staff interviews through documentation and staff interviews.

**IF**, after the fidelity peer review, the agency has demonstrated adherence to the standards, the program will receive the Iowa Family Support Credential. If, after the fidelity peer review, there are still standards out of adherence, the program must withdraw and wait one year before reapplying for credentialing.



Procedure Name:	<b>Program Specialist Assignments</b>
Applicable to:	Program, IFSC Staff
Effective Date:	March 2014
Date(s) of revision:	June 2014; June 2023
Other References:	

Technical assistance is provided to program by their assigned IFSC Program Specialist. IFSC Program Specialists are employees of Lutheran Services in Iowa. IFSC Program Specialists meet the educational and experience requirements of the position and receiving training on the Iowa Family Support Credential policies, procedures, standards, and mentoring. IFSC Program Specialist’s disclose all potential conflicts of interest and assignments to programs are made in a manner that mitigates any possible conflicts of interest.

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## PROCEDURE

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### REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAM SPECIALISTS:

Program specialists will hold a bachelor’s degree or higher in social work, human services, education, or health-related field. In addition, program specialists must have experience working in a family support field and complete the Iowa Family Support Technical Assistance Training prior to working with programs.

### ASSIGNMENTS FOR PROGRAM SPECIALISTS:

Program specialists must disclose any of the following:

- Past employment or consultation work with an assigned organization
- Past affiliation (professional or personal) with a staff member of an assigned organization

Programs will be assigned according to geographic area of IFSC Program Specialist unless there is a conflict of interest. Geographic areas are fluid, depending upon where the program specialists live. If there is a conflict of interest, assignments outside of the geographic area may be made. All attempts to

resolve the conflict of interest or mitigate the conflict of interest will be taken, including assignment of the program to the IFSC Coordinator.

Full-time program specialists will average 25 programs on caseload. This can be flexible depending on where each program on the caseload is at in the process. The IFSC Coordinator will carry a caseload of less than 10 programs as needed. If all IFSC Program Specialists and the IFSC Coordinator are full, programs will be assigned to a wait list. A wait list will only be utilized if all program specialists are at capacity.

As LSI employees, IFSC Program Specialists do not sign either the IFSC Code of Conduct or IFSC Confidentiality Agreement, but do sign the LSI Employee Handbook that outlines work standards, ethics, and guidelines. IFSC Program Specialists will sign any confidentiality documents the program may have which require authorization to review participant files and organizational information.



Procedure Name:	<b>Memorandum of Understanding</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; December 2015; June 2023
Other References:	MOU, SEQIP; Involuntary Withdrawal Form

## Initial

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to be completed and signed by the program specialist as well as someone on behalf of the program. The MOU will be completed and signed at the meeting with the program and be sent to the IFSC coordinator.

\*The MOU states that the program participating in the credentialing process will work together with the assigned program specialist during a time span of up to three years with a maximum one year extension.

Programs are allotted 40 hours of technical assistance per fiscal year (October 1<sup>st</sup>-September 30<sup>th</sup>) during the duration of credentialing process.

The program will make adequate progress, allocating time each month to work toward adherence to the standards. **The program is responsible for initiating contact with the program specialist each month to provide an update on progress.**

The program will utilize the Self-Evaluation and Quality Improvement Plan (SEQIP) throughout the duration of time working toward program's credential. The SEQIP will be developed within the first three months of signing the MOU, be updated in an ongoing manner, and submitted at a minimum of quarterly to their program specialist.

While working with the program specialist, the program will develop a timeline toward achieving the credential. The program will be responsible for following the timeline.

The program will meet with the assigned program specialist virtually **with the goal of two meetings per year, based upon the program specialist and program's discretion.**

The program is responsible to contact the IFSC coordinator if they wish to withdraw from the process or be assigned a new program specialist.



If the program does not make adequate progress as described above, the program will receive a warning from the IFSC coordinator. If the program does not respond to the warning within 30 days, the program will be involuntarily withdrawn from the IFSC program and must wait one year to reapply.

## **RENEWAL PROGRAMS**

\*The Renewal Program MOU states that the program participating in the renewal process will work together with the assigned program specialist during a time span of up to one year.

The program will choose a track to take for the renewal process

- Arrangement for in-depth program technical assistance and two mock reviews.
- Arrangement of two mock reviews conducted for quality assurance and feedback only.
- Arrangement of two mock reviews and limited technical assistance.



Procedure Name:	<b>Tracking Program Time</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; May 2014; June 2023
Other References:	MOU; Subcontractor Credentialing; Request Additional Time Form; Caseload Roster Spreadsheet

Programs are awarded 40 hours of technical assistance per fiscal year.

If an agency is credentialing multiple programs, **each** program receives 20 hours of technical assistance for the program standards, along with 20 hours of technical assistance for the organizational standards.

Multi-agencies who are credentialing together will receive 20 hours of program standard technical assistance and 20 additional technical assistance hours for each agency being credentialed.

The program specialist will discuss with program and ask the IFSC coordinator for more time if an additional 10 hours is needed. The IFSC coordinator will either approve or deny this request based on information received.

**The program is responsible to make contact with the program specialist at a minimum monthly per signed MOU and meet virtually based on the program specialist’s and program’s discretion.** This should include any updates to the SEQIP, policy changes that need to be reviewed, and any other updates.

If the program specialist has not heard from the program, contact should be made to the program by the program specialist to inquire about updates, etc.

The program specialist records any time used, to the nearest 15 minutes (reviewing materials, phone calls, virtual meetings, emails, etc.)



Procedure Name:	<b>SEQIP and SAM</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2014 ; June 2023
Other References:	SEQIP; SAM; Body of Evidence

**SEQIP -- Self Evaluation and Quality Improvement Plan:**

The SEQIP is a tool the program will use when receiving technical assistance. The SEQIP is a companion tool that reflects the 139 first and second order standards. Standards 1-15 are program standards and 16-33 are organizational standards. Some standards may be relevant on both a program and agency level. Each second-order standard or unsubstantiated first order standard needs to be reflected in policy/procedure.

Depending on the program type, a SEQIP with pre-determined NA standards will be used by the program. All NA's should be confirmed with the program specialist. **Each program being credentialed within the agency needs its own SEQIP. For one program with multiple agencies, there will be one SEQIP for the program standards and then each agency will complete it's own SEQIP for standards 16-33.** The document is compiled and shared between program and IFSC staff. This phase should be completed within the first three months of signing the MOU and submitted to the program specialist. This will be updated on a quarterly basis.

**SAM -- Self-Assessment and Materials:**

The SAM is a tool used when the program has demonstrated readiness to request for peer review and the SEQIP is converted to be shared with peer reviews.

The SEQIP/SAM tool is an Excel document with the following features:

- The first tab is the title page with tips for collaborating when sharing the document with programs and the program specialist
- There is one Iowa Family Support Credential Standard per numbered tab so the program specialist and programs can focus on one standard or set of standards, at any given time
  - **Each tab contains a summary of the corresponding standards but NOT the entire standard**
  - The SEQIP/SAM tool is designed to be a companion piece for tracking information and is not intended to replace the standards document

- The final tab is a summary worksheet that will automatically transfer the initial rating on the other worksheets and allow for updates and comments to be made each quarter
- The document has been protected to safeguard formatting and information as it is shared between the program and IFSC staff
- For any assistance with the format of the SEQIP, e-mail the program specialist
- This format will not change in any way until it is converted to the SAM
- The program will send the SEQIP to the program specialist who will convert it into the SAM
- The document is formatted to print each worksheet on one page (longer standards may print on two) and a program can choose to either print certain sheets or the entire workbook
- The program will not alter the format of the SEQIP at any time and will need to submit the SEQIP in the original format to be converted into the SAM



Procedure Name:	<b>Mock Review</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	May 2011
Date(s) of revision:	July 2013; June 2014; June 2023
Other References:	Mock Interview Questions; Mock Preliminary Review Report; Peer Review Schedule Procedure

**Initial visit:**

- Review Program Guide
- Review Iowa Family Support Standards
- The first draft of the self-evaluation (SEQIP) is introduced and completed within three months of service to include a plan for quality improvement that includes specific activities and timelines.
- Review Body of Evidence with program staff to discuss how program will develop evidence to show adherence to the standards.
- Review Rating Indicators to rate standards on SEQIP.
- MOU is reviewed and signed.
- Linking Standards document reviewed along with Policy and Procedure Tip Sheets.
- Review participant files, training logs, personnel records, and supervisory records with the program. All family support professional staff will bring one participant file to meeting.

**Ongoing 3-30 months:**

- The self-evaluation (SEQIP) and listing of documentation will continue to be worked on and reviewed
- Work to finalize both program and agency policy and procedures and ensure these are in adherence to the Iowa Family Support Standards
- Create a list of acronyms used by the program
- Consult procedure on working with multiple programs and multi-agencies, as needed

**6, 12, 18, 24 months:**

- A review of participant files, training logs, personnel records, and supervisory records will be completed to monitor for continued improvement towards compliance
- Review the screening tool, assessments used, service plan, participant rights and responsibilities, participant grievance, release of information, and participant access to case records against applicable standards
- Review the Training Log. This is not required to be used by the program, but is strongly recommended. This log may help the program supervisor ensure that all Iowa Family Support Standards applicable trainings are documented and updated as necessary

- Compare supervision policy and procedure against records looking for consistent scheduling of supervision time and needed documentation
- Program specialist will share notes with the program supervisor

### **30 months:**

**A mock review will be completed on participant files, training logs, personnel records, and supervisory records, in addition to the self-evaluation and “Box” of evidence.**

- Assigned program specialist and another program specialist will conduct this mock review to check for adherence to the standards and make any last minute recommendations
- The mock review of the self-evaluation (SEQIP) and “Box” will take an entire day to complete
  - The program specialists will use the Mock Review Report template to provide feedback
  - Notes may include what should be added, highlighted, or flagged for peers to easily identify what the peer reviewers should be looking at for adherence
  - Identify what narrative or documentation could be strengthened
- Program specialist will debrief with the program supervisor at the conclusion of the review

### **36 months / day of request:**

**A mock review will be completed on participant files, training logs, personnel records, and supervisory records.**

The day of the peer review request, the program specialist will review to ensure that the program has continued adhering to the standards in both policy and practice. **The program specialist will not submit their recommendation for peer review if the program has not adhered to the standards for the three months leading up to the peer review request.**

Staff meeting to prepare for the virtual review will happen the day the request form is completed and should include:

- Review sample schedule for the virtual visit
  - Discuss the typical schedule and explain the purpose behind each meeting, observation, and interview
  - The specifics for the peer review will be worked out between program and lead peer reviewer
- Review Home Visit and / or Group Parent Education Observation Checklist(s)
- Discuss areas program specialist may still have concerns
- Utilize the mock interview questions as needed
- Confirm that practice changes have been implemented
- Confirm policy and procedure changes have been made
- Ensure a secure virtual platform for peer review, invitations to groups, and staff time expectations, etc.
- Program completes Request for Peer Review Form and sends to the program specialist
- Program specialist sends program’s Request for Peer Review Form and letter of recommendation to the IFSC coordinator and program



Procedure Name:	<b>Mock Review for Renewal Programs</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2015
Date(s) of revision:	June 2023
Other References:	Mock Interview Questions; Mock Preliminary Review Report; Peer Review Schedule Procedure

**Initial visit:**

- Review Program Guide
- Review Iowa Family Support Standards
- The first draft of the self-evaluation (SEQIP) is introduced and completed within three months of service to include a plan for quality improvement that includes specific activities and timelines.
- Review Body of Evidence with program staff to discuss how program will develop evidence to show adherence to the standards.
- Review Rating Indicators to rate standards on SEQIP.
- MOU is reviewed and signed.
- Linking Standards document reviewed along with Policy and Procedure Tip Sheets.
- Review participant files, training logs, personnel records, and supervisory records with the program. All family support professional staff will bring one participant file to meeting.

**Ongoing 1-6 months:**

- The self-evaluation (SEQIP) and listing of documentation will continue to be worked on and reviewed
- Send existing and new policies and procedures to program specialist to review for adherence to the Iowa Family Support Standards.
- Create or update current list of acronyms used by the program
- Consult procedure on working with multiple programs and multi-agencies, as needed

**6 months:**

**A mock review will be completed on participant files, training logs, personnel records, and supervisory records, in addition to the self-evaluation and “Box” of evidence.**

- Assigned program specialist and another program specialist will conduct this mock review to check for adherence to the standards and make any last minute recommendations
- The mock review of the self-evaluation (SEQIP) and “Box” will take an entire day to complete
  - The program specialists will use the Mock Review Report template to provide feedback
  - Notes may include what should be added, highlighted or flagged for peers to easily identify what the peer reviewers should be looking at for adherence

- Identify what narrative or documentation could be strengthened
- Program specialist will debrief with the program supervisor at the conclusion of the review

**12 months / day of request:**

**A mock review will be completed on participant files, training logs, personnel records, and supervisory records.**

The day of the peer review request, the program specialist will review to ensure that the program has continued adhering to the standards in both policy and practice. **The program specialist will not submit their recommendation for peer review if the program has not adhered to the standards for the three months leading up to the peer review request.**

Staff meeting to prepare for the virtual review will happen the day the request form is completed and should include:

- Review sample schedule for the virtual visit
  - Discuss the typical schedule and explain the purpose behind each meeting, observation, and interview
  - The specifics for the peer review will be worked out between program and lead peer reviewer
- Review Home Visit and / or Group Parent Education Observation Checklist(s)
- Discuss areas program specialist may still have concerns
- Utilize the mock interview questions as needed
- Confirm that practice changes have been implemented
- Confirm policy and procedure changes have been made
- Ensure a secure virtual platform for peer review, invitations to groups, and staff time expectations, etc.
- Program completes Request for Peer Review Form and sends to program specialist
- Program specialist sends program's Request for Peer Review Form and letter of recommendation to the IFSC coordinator and program





Procedure Name:	<b>Request Peer Review</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008;
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011 March 2014; June 2014; June 2023
Other References:	Peer Review Request Form

Once a program has completed the SEQIP and "Box", it is reviewed by assigned program specialist. All changes and updates should be approved at least three months prior to a program's request for peer review date in order to ensure consistent practice change before the request. The program specialist will then convert the SEQIP into the SAM. Based on the program's completed policies and procedures and evidence in "Box", the program will submit an application for peer review. If the program is renewing a credential, the application for peer review will be sent to the Program Specialist prior to the expiration of their current credential. The program will also include their final SAM and their completed and current staffing grid. The Program Specialist will review the application for peer review and determine if it is their belief that the program is adequately prepared for peer review. If the Program Specialist agrees that the program is ready for peer review, they will draft a letter of recommendation. The completed application for peer review, the letter of recommendation from the program specialist, the final SAM, and final staffing grid will be sent by email to the IFSC coordinator for review and scheduling.

The program is responsible for selecting a date for their peer review to take place. Request for peer review must be made a **minimum of 12 weeks prior to the anticipated date of peer review**. All boxes required for the peer reviewers must be completed within one week of the peer review request. Any request with less than 12 weeks will require evaluation by IFSC coordinator. This is typically off-site from the program to ensure that all persons participating in the interviews feel that confidentiality will be maintained. The site must be secure and not subject to interruptions. If the program is a group parent education program, there must be groups scheduled during the peer review for observation. The group should not take place on the last day of the peer review.

The organization's executive director, human resource director, and fiscal director are mandatory participants in the program management interview. In smaller organizations, these functions may be filled by one or two persons with overlapping responsibilities.

The program should make arrangements to submit their SAM with pre-site evidence "Box" directly to the peer reviewers.



**All program policies and procedures must be in practice for a minimum of three months prior to the request for peer review.**

At the time the program receives the Peer Review Report, the IFSC coordinator will send the program a form to provide feedback on the program specialist's performance during the technical assistance process. This information will be discussed with the program specialist as part of the IFSC coordinator's ongoing quality improvement.



Procedure Name:	<b>Peer Review Number of Days Scheduled</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers
Effective Date:	March 2015
Date(s) of revision:	June 2023
Other References:	Schedules

The number of days scheduled for a peer review will vary according to the unique needs of the program being credentialed. The scheduled number of days depends on several factors, which are described below.

**Requirements for Two Day Review:**

Short-term home visitation programs and group parent education programs will receive a two day peer review for single agency/single programs.

Long-term home visitation programs that have two or less full time status (FTE) family support professionals and less than 60 **open** participant files will receive a two day peer review.

Compensation for the two day peer review schedule: Co-peer will receive **\$1,606.80** and lead peer will receive **\$2,086.80**.

**Requirements for Three Day Review:**

Short-term home visitation programs that also have a group component

Short-term home visitation that have two or more counties

Programs that have between three and 14 full time status (FTE) family support professionals and have between 100-449 **open** participant files will receive a three day peer review. A three day review may also be required for short-term or group parent education that has multiple counties and/or agencies involved in credentialing process.

Compensation for the three day peer review schedule: Co-peer will receive **\$1,984.80** and lead peer will receive **\$2,464.80**.

**Requirements for Four Day Review:**

Long-term home visitation programs that have 15 or more full time status (FTE) family support professionals and at a minimum of 450 **open** participant files

Long-term home visitation programs that have two or more agencies and two or more programs

Agencies that have two or more programs and are in two or more counties being credentialed

Short-term home visitation programs that have more than two agencies and more than two counties

Compensation for the two day peer review schedule: Co-peer will receive **\$2,362.80** and lead peer will receive **\$2,842.80**

#### **Requirements for Five Day Review**

Long-term home visitation programs that have three or more agencies

Long-term home visitation programs that have three or more programs or two or more agencies

Compensation for five day peer review schedule: Co-peer will receive **\$2,740.80** and lead peer will receive **\$3,220.80**.

**When peers decide to co-lead, the amount received will be \$240 added to the co-peer amount.**

## **RENEWAL**

#### **Requirements for a One Day Renewal:**

Program must have 90% or higher adherence to all standards on the final Peer Review Report at the conclusion of the initial peer review.

Only previously credentialed Iowa Family Support programs are eligible. If the organization has additional programs that need credentialed which were not included in the previous peer review, the programs that have not been credentialed will need to go through the original process to receive their initial credential. Technical assistance may be provided for up to three years for the new program to achieve adherence to the standards before the peer review is scheduled.

Expedited process is available on alternating renewal cycles. Organizations cannot apply for an expedited renewal if the previous credential was awarded through an expedited renewal process.

Compensation for the one day renewal: Co-peer will receive **\$988.80** and lead peer will receive **\$1,468.80**.

**When peers decide to co-lead, the amount received will be \$240 added to the co-peer amount.**

**\*Disclaimer: It is the responsibility of IFSC staff to determine the length of a peer review and the decision may include additional information not listed above. The procedure above will be used as a guide, but due to unique situations may fall outside the time frames listed above.**



Procedure Name:	<b>Peer Reviewer Assignments</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers
Effective Date:	March 2014
Date(s) of revision:	May 2023
Other References:	IFSC Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement

**Requirements for peer reviewers:**

All persons providing peer review services have completed an application and successfully completed peer reviewer training. To be selected for a peer review assignment, peer reviewers must have a bachelor's degree in health, human services, or education and must be well-versed in the family support field. In addition, all peer reviewers must agree to follow and sign the Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement and must self-disclose any conflict of interest to the IFSC coordinator. **Peer reviewers will not have any contact with the program post-peer review and will not work or reside in the program's service delivery area.**

**Requirements for lead peer reviewers:**

Must meet all the requirements of peer reviewers **AND**

- Must have completed three peer reviews prior to assignment of lead peer reviewer
- Lead peer reviewers will have no negative feedback from a program within the past year

Roles of lead peer reviewer will include the coordinating of peer review, submission of final Peer Review Report, and leading communication with the program regarding logistics both before and during the peer review.

All peer reviewers will be re-certified on an annual basis.

**Assignments for peer reviewers:**

One date for peer review will be given to the IFSC coordinator from the program that would work for the agency. The program specialist should discuss with the program the availability of groups and home visits during the peer review process.

Peer reviewers will be selected based on availability, conflict of interest, time between reviews, and previous lead peer reviewer roles. Best practice is for peer reviewers to have ample time in between peer reviews. IFSC will try to ensure peer reviewers will have two months after a peer review before

assignment to a new peer review. IFSC will utilize peer reviewer location maps to help ensure assignments are not within peer reviewers residence or service delivery counties. Peer reviewers will sign and date the Code of Conduct, Confidentiality Agreement, and contract for each peer review assignment.



Procedure Name:	<b>Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2014; May 2023
Other References:	Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement

Peer reviewers will sign the Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement after agreeing to the assignment of a peer review. The documents will be sent to the peer reviewers by the IFSC coordinator.

The lead peer reviewer will send the program both the signed Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement from each assigned peer reviewer and cc the IFSC coordinator. Programs may share this with any individuals who have questions on how IFSC adheres to confidentiality and maintaining a code of conduct with peer reviewers.

**Additional information:**

As LSI employees, program specialists do not sign either the IFSC Code of Conduct or IFSC Confidentiality Agreement, but do sign the LSI Employee Handbook that outlines work standards, ethics, and guidelines.

Program specialists will sign any confidentiality documents the program may have which require authorization to review participant files and organizational information.



Procedure Name:	<b>Extension Request Checklist</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	May 2011
Date(s) of revision:	July 2013; June 2014; June 2023
Other References:	Extension Request Checklist

**Instructions:** This checklist is to be used by the program and the program specialist to ensure that the program is meeting all of the required elements of the request for an extension.

**NOTE:**

- Programs must submit the request at least 6 months prior to the date of original request if needed
- Programs must be adhering to a minimum of 60% of the standards to be eligible for the extension
- Programs going through the renewal process are NOT eligible for extensions

**Check off each item to ensure the request meets all of the requirements:**

\_\_\_\_\_ 12 point font is used

\_\_\_\_\_ Length of the request is six pages or less

\_\_\_\_\_ Request is signed by the contact person for the program

\_\_\_\_\_ Request is signed by the program specialist indicating that they are in complete agreement with the accuracy of the information contained within the request

\_\_\_\_\_ Program has followed the instructions for completing the request

\_\_\_\_\_ Program specialist feels that the program has a plan in place that will be successful in getting the program ready for the peer review at the end of the 12 month extension. The program specialist **CANNOT** sign requests for programs when the opinion is held that the program will not be ready at the end of the 12 month extension.

\_\_\_\_\_ Request summarizes why there is a need (*helpful hint: program needs to take ownership*)

\_\_\_\_\_ Request must clearly state how the program will use the additional time to prepare and be ready for the peer review



\_\_\_\_\_ Request must demonstrate how effectively the program has used the technical assistance provided thus far

\_\_\_\_\_ Request must provide a detailed plan for the additional 12 months which provides:

\_\_\_\_\_ Detailed timeline for the 12 months

\_\_\_\_\_ Detailed activities must be included in the timeline

\_\_\_\_\_ The plan must demonstrate that if it is followed, the program will be ready for the peer review at the end of the 12 months. In other words, the plan must give a detailed listing of activities with timelines that will ensure that the program is ready for the peer review at the end of the twelve months.

\_\_\_\_\_ Request addresses all elements used for evaluating the request for the extension:

\_\_\_\_\_ Barriers outside of the control of the program such as:

\_\_\_\_\_ Change in program specialist (can mark N/A)

\_\_\_\_\_ Changes in key program personnel (can mark N/A)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other influences such as, but not limited to, major health concerns of key program personnel or their immediate family members (can mark N/A)

\_\_\_\_\_ Ability of the program to be ready for the peer review if granted a 12 month extension

\_\_\_\_\_ Can the program's plan be realistically achieved in 12 months?

\_\_\_\_\_ Must be in adherence to a minimum of 60% (or 19) of the standards at the time the request is made. **Helpful hint:** *the request must state this clearly and identify which standards the program is in adherence to at the time of the request and the programs plan with timeline should include the remaining standards and when the program will achieve adherence to the standards. Keep in mind that any new changes in practice should be in place for at least three months prior to the peer review.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Demonstrated cooperation with the program specialist over the previous 36 months  
**Helpful hint:** *gaps in no contact with the program specialist should be explained. State will be looking at the hours billed per program and if it looks like a program is not taking advantage of the program specialist services they should be prepared to explain why. Owning up to putting credentialing on the shelf for a few months is better for the program than making up excuses.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Demonstrated consistent work toward adherence to the standards over the previous months except for the barriers noted that were outside of the control of the program  
**Helpful hint:** *A change in program specialist does not lessen the responsibility of the program to continue to work toward adherence to the standards. Other agency duties and responsibilities that are part of the normal work environment are not an excuse for not working on adherence to the standards. It is better to frame it in what program has*

*accomplished instead of all of the reasons why program hasn't had time to work on credentialing.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Request received at least six months prior to when the TA expires

Send request to:

**State Home Visitation Program Manager**



Procedure Name:	<b>Peer Review Process</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; July 2013; May 2014; June 2014; December 2015; June 2023
Other References:	Emergency Contact Form; Caseload Roster; Peer Review Schedule; Community Partner Roster; Home Visitation Peer Review Case File Checklist; Parent Education Peer Review Case File Checklist; Supervision Checklist; Personnel Records Checklist

**Pre-site:**

The program must supply to the lead peer reviewer a Caseload Roster that includes family initials or family ID/case number, worker name, enrollment date, geographic area, developmental delays of child, and exit date. On the Caseload Roster, the program should include families that have exited the program in the six-months prior to the peer review. Within one week prior to the peer review date, peer reviewers will randomly select files to be reviewed and inform the program.

Using the Community Partner Roster the program must submit a list of community partners for selection for the interview panel to the lead peer reviewer. The roster includes other family support programs operating in the area, major sources of referrals **to** the program, major sources of referrals **from** the program, and community collaborators such as, but not limited to, center-based early childhood programs, physicians, area education agency, schools, community action program(s), Head Start programs, maternal child health programs and public health programs. **It should be noted that it would be a rare exception to have the program going through the credentialing process assign someone from the same organization to the community partner roster. This should be discussed with the lead peer reviewer prior to the peer review.**

The program and the lead peer reviewer will work together for delivery of the SAM and "Box" to all peer reviewers no less than 10-12 weeks prior to the peer review.

**Peer reviewers:**

The lead peer reviewer is responsible for timely communication with the program:

- Email the program that the "Box" was received

- Confirm address of where the peer review will take place
- Work with the program contact to set agenda at a **minimum of six weeks** in advance to accommodate everyone who will be participating
- Notify the program the number of families to be invited to participant panel interview (it is suggested that at least six to eight families be invited with the intent that three to five will show up)
- Select participant files to be reviewed
- May request clarification for any evidence they are not finding prior to the peer review
- Email both peer reviewers signed Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreements to the program and cc the IFSC coordinator
- Complete Emergency Contact Form and email to program and IFSC coordinator

The peer reviewers will:

- Schedule delivery of the “Box” at least 10-12 weeks before the peer review date
- Complete a thorough review of the SAM and evidence prior to the peer review
- Tentatively rate each of the standards and develop questions for the interview panels based on the content of the SAM and “Box”

#### **Virtual Review:**

The program shall carefully review one file with the peer review team to orient the review team to the file organization. The program will not be present during the file review; however, the program will be available at all times during the peer review if the peer reviewers have any questions. For Daisy file review, program staff must be present.

The peer review team will review a randomized selection of a **minimum of 10% of the program's files, or a minimum of 5 files for small programs**, from up to six month prior to peer review date. The selection will ensure a representation of files from each worker, each geographic area served, participants that are newly enrolled, participants that have recently exited program, and participants that have been served for a lengthier period of time to show recent practice change. At the discretion of the peer review team, additional files for review may be selected prior to or during the peer review to ensure the peer reviewers can see recent practice change. The lead peer reviewer will work with the program for access to electronic participant records, as necessary.

The peer reviewers shall safeguard the participant files and not leave files unattended. The file review may carry over into subsequent days of the peer review. The program is responsible to adhere to all confidentiality policies during peer review. Peer reviewers will have access to a Program’s “Box” until final approval of the Peer Review Report.



Procedure Name:	<b>Peer Review Process for Renewal Programs</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2015
Date(s) of revision:	December 2015; June 2023
Other References:	Emergency Contact Form; Caseload Roster; Peer Review Schedule; Community Partner Roster; Home Visitation Peer Review Case File Checklist; Parent Education Peer Review Case File Checklist; Supervision Checklist; Personnel Records Checklist

**Pre-site:**

The program must supply to the lead peer reviewer a Caseload Roster that includes family initials or family ID/case number, worker name, enrollment date, geographic area, any developmental delays identified, and exit date. On the Caseload Roster, the program should include families that have exited the program in the six-months prior to the peer review. Within one week prior to the peer review date, peer reviewers will randomly select files to be reviewed and inform the program.

Using the Community Partner Roster the program must submit a list of community partners for selection for the interview panel to the lead peer reviewer. The roster includes other family support programs operating in the area, major sources of referrals **to** the program, major sources of referrals **from** the program, and community collaborators such as, but not limited to, center-based early childhood programs, physicians, area education agency, schools, community action program(s), Head Start programs, maternal child health programs and public health programs. **It should be noted that it would be a rare exception to have the program going through the credentialing process assign someone from the same organization to the community partner roster. This should be discussed with the lead peer reviewer prior to the peer review.**

The program and the lead peer reviewer will work together for delivery of the SAM and "Box" to all peer reviewers no less than 8-10 weeks prior to the peer review.

**Peer reviewers:**

The lead peer reviewer is responsible for timely communication with the program:

- Email the program that the "Box" was received

- Work with the program contact to set agenda at a **minimum of six weeks** in advance to accommodate everyone who will be participating
- Notify the program the number of families to be invited to participant panel interview (it is suggested that at least six to eight families be invited with the intent that three to five will show up)
- Select participant files to be reviewed
- May request clarification for any evidence they are not finding prior to the peer review
- Email both peer reviewers signed Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreements to the program and cc the IFSC coordinator
- Complete Emergency Contact Form and email to program and IFSC coordinator

The peer reviewers will:

- Schedule delivery of the “Box” at least 8-10 weeks before the peer review date
- Complete a thorough review of the SAM and evidence prior to the peer review
- Tentatively rate each of the standards and develop questions for the interview panels based on the content of the SAM and “Box”

#### **Virtual Review:**

The program shall carefully review one file with the peer review team to orient the review team to the file organization. The program will not be present during the file review; however, the program will be available at all times during the peer review if the peer reviewers have any questions. For Daisey file review, program staff must be present.

The peer review team will review a randomized selection of a **minimum of 10% of the program's files, or a minimum of 5 files from smaller programs**, from up to six months prior to the peer review date. The selection will ensure a representation of files from each worker, each geographic area served, participants that are newly enrolled, participants that have recently exited program, and participants that have been served for a lengthier period of time to show recent practice change. At the discretion of the peer review team, additional files for review may be selected prior to or during the peer review. The lead peer reviewer will work with the program for access to electronic participant records, as necessary.

The peer reviewers shall safeguard the participant files and not leave files unattended. The file review may carry over into subsequent days of the peer review. The program is responsible to adhere to all confidentiality policies during peer review. Peer reviewers will have access to a Program’s “Box” until final approval of the Peer Review Report.



Procedure Name:	<b>Expedited Renewal Process</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists, Peer Reviewers
Effective Date:	February 2016
Date(s) of revision:	June 2018, September 2018; June 2023; February 2024
Other References:	

Programs that have earned the Iowa Family Support Credential may be eligible for a streamlined renewal process. The streamlined renewal is expedited to take less time and effort to prepare for the virtual peer review and will have a condensed peer review. To earn the expedited renewal process the following must be met:

- 1) Program must have 90% or higher adherence to all 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> order standards on the previous Peer Review Report at the conclusion of the initial site visit.
- 2) Only previously credentialed Iowa Family Support programs are eligible. If the organization has additional programs that need credentialed which were not included in the previous peer review, the programs that have not been credentialed will need to go through the original process to receive their initial credential. Technical assistance may be provided for up to three years for the new program to achieve adherence to the standards before the peer review is scheduled.
- 3) Expedited process is available on alternating renewal cycles. Organizations cannot apply for an expedited renewal if the previous credential was awarded through an expedited renewal process.
- 4) Expedited Peer Review must have 50 or less second order standards being reviewed
- 5) Programs must review the changed policies prior to submitting their application for TA. This will be submitted with their application.
- 6) All policies must include date (year only) revised. If nothing has changed on that policy since last credential use date of last credential. If policy has changed since last credential use the revised date.

#### Process for the Iowa Family Support Expedited Renewal Credential

- 1) Submit a box (or flash drive) with evidence for the following:
  - a. Any policies/procedures and evidence that the organization or program has changed significantly since receiving the initial credential.

- b. Any policies/procedures and evidence that are new due to Iowa Family Support Standards updates.
  - c. Any policies/procedures and evidence that did not receive a 1 or 2 rating on the previous review.
  - d. Policy/procedures and practice for standards:
    - i. 2.01, 3.01, 3.04, 4.01, 4.02, 4.03, 6.03, 10.05, 10.06, 10.07, 13.01, 13.02, 13.03, 13.04, 11.04, 14.05, 14.06, 17, 20.01, 21.01, 21.04, 25.03, 25.07, 26.02, 27.01, 27.02, 29.06, 32.03 (28 second order standards)
    - ii. New Staff Only (or New Supervisors Only): 14.01, 14.03, 14.04, 15.03, 24.01, 24.02, 24.03, 24.04, 24.05, 24.06, 24.07, 29.01, 29.02, 29.03, 29.04, (15 second order standards)
- 2) The expedited peer review will be a one day review to include the following:
- a. Program participants, Family Support Professional and Family Support Supervisors interviews.
  - b. Boards/Community Partners/Funders as determined by IFSC Coordinator depending on applicability. Interview panels may be combined if appropriate.
  - c. Interview on how program has sustained continuous quality improvement for the credentialed program(s).
  - d. Review of participant files to ensure practice follows standards. Peer Reviewers will review up a minimum of 5 participant files or up to 10% of participant files, whichever is greater. Peer Reviewers will review a maximum of 10 participant files.
  - e. Review of personnel files for all new program staff since last peer review. Current Mandatory Report certificates will be reviewed for all program staff.
  - f. Review of training files for all new program staff since last peer review. Copies of complete training files or logs will be submitted to the peer reviewers prior to the peer review in the box.
  - g. Review of supervision files for a portion of the participants as determined by the peer reviewers.
  - h. Conduct a home visit/group observation as determined by **program**, as the schedule allows determined by IFSC Coordinator.



## Checklists

Each checklist will be completed as explained below.

- Participant file checklists will be completed by sharing documents via PHI review
- Training file checklists will be completed by the program and submitted prior to Peer Review
- Personnel file checklists will be completed by the program and submitted prior to Peer Review
- Supervision file checklists will be completed by sharing documents via PHI review and through screen sharing

## Protected Health Information Review

Peer Reviewers will review documents containing PHI electronically. This information is used to review all of the checklists along with information found in the “Documents Available Onsite” portion of the “Body of Evidence.” Programs will upload this information into a document server. This document server will be referred to as the PHI Portal. Programs have the option of doing this in two ways:

- Programs may use their own HIPAA compliant document server and grant the assigned peer reviewers and the IFSC Coordinator access to read the documents or
- Programs may elect to use a document server provided by IFSC. The document server is HIPAA compliant and protected by a Business Associate Agreement. Peer reviewers are provided with access to read the documents. Programs are provided with access to read and write the documents. The IFSC Coordinator will also have read and write access to help with organization of the document server and making sure files are where they need to be for the peer reviewers.

Programs will have all of the documents uploaded no later than three business days prior to the beginning of the peer review. Prior to uploading this information into the PHI Portal programs will ensure that the file name of each document is relevant to the document they are uploading and label which second order standard it applies to. Programs also will ensure that all pages of all documents uploaded to the PHI Portal they upload to the PHI Portal are rotated the correct way. Programs can either change the way the documents are scanned to achieve this or they can rotate the page in the saved PDF files prior to uploading it to the PHI Portal. For assistance with this please contact the IFSC Coordinator.

As documents that contain PHI may be requested by the peer reviewers during the peer review, programs will refrain from emailing them directly to the peer reviewer but rather upload them to the PHI Portal. Peer reviewers also will not print or save any documents containing protected health information.

For participant file reviews, programs will upload documents in applicable folders based on document type. For each participant file, a folder should be created under each participant name labeled for the following documents as applicable:

- [Screening for Eligibility](#)
- [Enrollment](#)
- [Assessments](#)
- [Goal Plans](#)
- [Releases of Information](#)



Procedure Name:	<b>Virtual Peer Review Policy</b>
Applicable to:	Programs; Peer Reviewers; Program Specialists
Effective Date:	October 2020
Date(s) of revision:	July 2021; June 2023; February 2024
Other References:	Peer Review Process; Peer Review Schedule;

**Policy:**

Programs will participate in a virtual peer review process :

As a part of a virtual peer review process, all required panel interviews and checklists will be completed. Protected Health Information (PHI) will be reviewed in participant files, supervision files, and other documents as outlined as “Documents Available in PHI Portal” in the body of evidence.

**Procedure:**

**Virtual Platform**

All peer reviews will occur virtually. Each panel interview will have its own meeting link so each person can get into the meeting(s) they’re supposed to be a part of. The following are some things to consider when determining where / how to participate in the virtual peer review:

- Participants in virtual meetings should all have their own devices to join the meeting. Sharing of devices is discouraged as it can lead to problems being able to hear everyone speak and problems with participants being able to hear peer reviewers.
- Programs may consider using a computer to participate in order to share their screen to explain something.
- Programs and participants should consider using a quiet, low traffic space and may also want to consider using headphones with a microphone if interruptions are possible.

**Panel Interview**

Panel interviews will take place just as they would during an onsite peer review except that those participating in the interviews will join via a virtual platform. Each panel interview will have its own link and those participating should only be provided links for the meetings they’re participating in. Family Support Participants enrolled in the program should be encouraged to participate in the panel interview remotely if possible. The program and peer reviewers will work together to identify families that have access to the internet either on their phone or at a location that they can join Wi-Fi.

## Checklists

Each checklist will be completed as explained below.

- Participant file checklists will be completed by sharing documents via PHI review
- Training file checklists will be completed by the program and submitted prior to Peer Review
- Personnel file checklists will be completed by the program and submitted prior to Peer Review
- Supervision file checklists will be completed by sharing documents via PHI review and through screen sharing

## Protected Health Information Review

Peer Reviewers will review documents containing PHI electronically. This information is used to review all of the checklists along with information found in the “Documents Available Onsite” portion of the “Body of Evidence.” Programs will upload this information into a document server. This document server will be referred to as the PHI Portal. Programs have the option of doing this in two ways:

- Programs may use their own HIPAA compliant document server and grant the assigned peer reviewers and the IFSC Coordinator access to read the documents or
- Programs may elect to use a document server provided by IFSC. The document server is HIPAA compliant and protected by a Business Associate Agreement. Peer reviewers are provided with access to read the documents. Programs are provided with access to read and write the documents. The IFSC Coordinator will also have read and write access to help with organization of the document server and making sure files are where they need to be for the peer reviewers.

Programs will have all of the documents uploaded no later than three business days prior to the beginning of the peer review. Prior to uploading this information into the PHI Portal, programs will ensure that the file name of each document is relevant to the document they are uploading and label which second order standard it applies to. Programs also will ensure that all pages of all documents uploaded to the PHI Portal they upload to the PHI Portal are rotated the correct way. Programs can either change the way the documents are scanned to achieve this or they can rotate the page in the saved PDF files prior to uploading it to the PHI Portal. For assistance with this please contact the IFSC Coordinator.

As documents that contain PHI may be requested by the peer reviewers during the peer review, programs will refrain from emailing them directly to the peer reviewer but rather upload them to the PHI Portal. Peer reviewers also will not print or save any documents containing protected health information.

For participant file reviews, programs will upload documents in applicable folders based on document type. For each participant file, a folder should be created under each participant name labeled for the following documents as applicable:

- Screening for Eligibility
- Enrollment
- Assessments
- Goal Plans
- Releases of Information

- Case Notes
- Discharge Planning and Aftercare Planning
- File Closing
- Supervisor Review

## **Agenda**

The lead peer reviewer will work with the program to create the agenda. The agenda should be finalized six weeks prior to the beginning of the peer review. The lead peer reviewer will then send the agenda to the IFSC Coordinator to set up all of the virtual meetings. The IFSC Coordinator will send that to the program and to the peer reviewers. The program then will notify all necessary participants of their meeting dates, times, and virtual meeting links to join the meeting.



Procedure Name:	<b>Peer Review Schedule</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2014; June 2023; February 2024
Other References:	Peer Review Schedule for Home Visitation and Group-based Parent Education

The program specialist will discuss the typical schedule with the program prior to the peer review and explain the purpose behind each meeting, observation, and interview.

**The lead peer reviewer works with program at a minimum of six weeks in advance to set the schedule for peer review.**

**Entrance and Exit Meetings:**

The peer review team will lead the entrance meeting. The meeting is held to explain the purpose of the Iowa Family Support Credentialing Program and to provide an overview of the peer review process. It is a mechanism for staff and community members to ask questions about the process.

The peer review team will lead the exit meeting. Individual ratings will not be given during this meeting. The peer reviewers will provide an oral report that outlines the Strengths and any Opportunities for Growth that the program or organization may have.

**Participant File Review:**

The peer review team will review a randomized selection of a **minimum of 10% of the program's files, or a minimum of 5 files from smaller programs**, from up to six-months prior to the peer review date. **At the discretion of the peer review team, additional files may be selected for review prior to or during the peer review.** The lead peer reviewer will work with the program for access to electronic participant records, as necessary. For larger programs, the peer reviewers will have the discretion of adjusting the percentage of files to be reviewed.

**Observations:**

*Home Visitation Programs:* Each peer reviewer will observe one home visit. Peer reviewers will have a home observation checklist to note observations that are related to adherence to the standards. The

program will be responsible for determining the participants that will be observed on a home visit. For programs with only one home visitor, only one peer reviewer will observe the home visit.

*Group-Based Parent Education Programs:* Programs will arrange the peer review around a group-based parent education opportunity. The peer reviewers will have an observation checklist to note observations that are related to adherence to the standards.

#### **Other Documentation:**

The program is responsible for providing access to all training, personnel and supervisory records to the peer review team. Supervisory records include items such as documentation of one-on-one meetings with staff. Documentation should include such things as date, time, purpose, content, and results. Supervisory records also include items such as team meetings and participant staffing. These may be documented by meeting agendas, meeting notes, etc. **Note:** Supervisory records are not human resource records on file with the organization.

#### **Interview Panels:**

The program is responsible for inviting representatives for each interview panel, as communicated by the lead peer reviewer, and ensuring invited participants know the date, time, and have access to the link of the interview. Invitations should be made at least four weeks in advance of the peer review. The program then should follow up with confirmations at least three weeks prior to the review. Reminders should occur in the week leading up to the peer review.

*Funders Interview:* The interview should try to have at least three representatives present. If the program has multiple funding sources, best practice is to include representatives from each.

*Program Management Interview:* The organization's executive director, human resource director, and fiscal director are mandatory participants. In smaller organizations, these functions may be filled by one or two persons with overlapping responsibilities. The person that has overall responsibility for the program (may or may not be program supervisor) must also be included in the interview.

*Community Partners Interview:* Community partners, referral sources and other early childhood programs are possible participants for the interview. The lead peer reviewer and the program will work together to identify potential interviewees. The lead peer reviewer will randomly select the invitees utilizing the Community Partners Roster. **It should be noted that community partner interviews should not include those from within the organization being credentialed. The lead peer reviewer will work with the program for any exceptions.**

*Program Participant Panel:* The lead peer reviewer will work with the program to identify a panel of participants.. Children may attend the interview with parents; however, there will not be any activities provided by the peer review team for the children during the interview.

*Program Supervisor Interview:* The program supervisor will participate.

Family Support Professional *Interview*: All direct service staff will participate in a group setting.

*Program Board of Director's Interview*: Best practice is to include a minimum of three board members for a group interview.



Procedure Name:	<b>Peer Review Schedule for Renewal Programs</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2015
Date(s) of revision:	December 2015; June 2023; February 2024
Other References:	Peer Review Schedule for Home Visitation and Group-based Parent Education

The program specialist will discuss the typical schedule with the program prior to peer review and explain the purpose behind each meeting, observation, and interview.

**The lead peer reviewer works with the program at a minimum of six weeks in advance to set the schedule for peer review.**

**Entrance and Exit Meetings:**

The peer review team will lead the entrance meeting. The meeting is held to explain the purpose of the Iowa Family Support Credentialing program and to provide an overview of the peer review process. It is a mechanism for staff and community members to ask questions about the process.

The peer review team will lead the exit meeting. Individual ratings will not be given during this meeting. The peer reviewers will provide an oral report that outlines the Strengths and any Opportunities for Growth that the program or organization may have.

**Participant File Review:**

The peer review team will review a randomized selection of a **minimum of 10% of the program's files, or a minimum of 5 files from smaller programs**, from up to six-months prior to the peer review date. At the discretion of the peer review team, additional files may be selected for review prior to or during the peer review. The lead peer reviewer will work with the program for access to electronic participant records, as necessary. For larger programs, the peer reviewers will have the discretion of adjusting the percentage of files to be reviewed.

**Observations:**

*Home Visitation Programs:* At the program’s request, one peer reviewer may observe one home visit. Peer reviewer will have a home observation checklist to note observations that are related to adherence



to the standards. The program will be responsible for determining the participants that will be observed on a home visit.

*Group-Based Parent Education Programs:* At the programs request, one peer reviewer may observe a group-based parent education opportunity. If desired, programs will arrange the peer review around a group-based parent education opportunity. The peer reviewer will have an observation checklist to note observations that are related to adherence to the standards.

#### **Other Documentation:**

The program is responsible for providing access to all training logs, personnel and supervisory records to the peer review team. Supervisory records include items such as documentation of one-on-one meetings with staff. Documentation should include such things as date, time, purpose, content, and results. Supervisory records also include items such as team meetings and participant staffing. These may be documented by meeting agendas, meeting notes, etc.

#### **Interview Panels:**

The program is responsible for inviting representatives for each interview panel as communicated by the lead peer reviewer; ensuring invited participant knows the date, time, and has access to the link of the interview. Invitations should be made at least four weeks in advance of the peer review. The program then should follow up with confirmations at least three weeks prior to the review. Reminders should occur in the week leading up to the peer review. **The interview panels will be held at peer reviewer's discretion.**

*Funders Interview:* The interview should try to have at least three representatives present. If the program has multiple funding sources, best practice is to include representatives from each.

*Program Management Interview:* The organization's executive director, human resource director, and fiscal director are mandatory participants. In smaller organizations, the functions may be filled by one or two persons with overlapping responsibilities. The person that has overall responsibility for the program (may or may not be program supervisor) must also be included in the interview.

*Community Partners Interview:* Community partners, referral sources and other early childhood programs are possible participants for the interview. The lead peer reviewer and the program will work together to identify potential interviewees. The lead peer reviewer will randomly select the invitees utilizing the Community Partners Roster. **It should be noted that community partner interviews should not include those from within the organization being credentialed. Please speak with the lead peer reviewer for an exception.**

*Program Participant Panel:* The lead peer reviewer will work with the program to identify a panel of participants. Children may attend the interview with parents; however, there will not be any activities provided by the peer review team for the children during the interview.

*Program Supervisor Interview:* The program supervisor will participate.

*Family Support Professional Interview:* All direct service staff will participate in a group interview.

*Program Board of Director's Interview:* Best practice is to include a minimum of three board members for a group interview.



INSERT DATE

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

Dear INSERT NAME,

We are pleased to inform you that the state of Iowa has announced that INSERT PROGRAM NAME operated by INSERT AGENCY NAME is ready to participate in a peer review of our program. Our program will earn the Iowa Family Support Credential, if as a result of the peer review, we are found to be in substantial adherence to the Iowa Family Support Standards.

The Iowa Family Support Credential is awarded to family support and parent education programs that have fully integrated evidence based practices into their programming and throughout their organization. The Iowa Family Support Standards are based on the most up to date research regarding best practice in the family support field. Adherence to the standards indicates that the program is providing high quality services that will result in positive outcomes for young children and their families.

Our peer review will be conducted by trained peers on INSERT DATE to validate our program's adherence to the standards. We need your participation in a panel interview on INSERT DATE AND TIME to assist our program in earning the honored distinction of being credentialed by the state of Iowa. We selected you to participate in the panel interview because INSERT REASON. We know how busy you are but please give serious consideration to participating and assisting the INSERT PROGRAM OR ORGANIZATION NAME. Please let INSERT YOUR NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION know of your availability by INSERT DEADLINE FOR RESPONDING.

Thank you for considering this request!

Sincerely,

INSERT YOUR NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION



Procedure Name:	<b>Subcontractor, Multi-Program, Multi-Agency Credentialing</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2014; June 2014;
Date(s) of revision:	June 2023
Other Reference:	Body of Evidence- Subcontracting

**Subcontracting Programs:**

When a program uses subcontractors, the following steps are taken:

- The program applying for credential will assume leadership role during process
  - The program may invite subcontracting supervisor(s) to meet with the program specialist if this is appropriate to meet program needs
  - No additional technical assistance hours are assigned for subcontracting agencies
- The program must ensure that all subcontracting agencies and individuals are in adherence to Iowa Family Support Standards
  - Programs need to assure adherence through **site visits, contracts, file reviews, supervision reviews, Policy and Procedure Manual, and training records**
  - The program should keep documents for subcontracting staff (**training logs and modified personnel records**) to ensure adherence to standards
- During the peer review process, peer reviewers will review contracts to ensure the program is holding all subcontractors accountable to all Iowa Family Support Standards. Organizational standards apply to the lead or contracting organization. Peer reviewers will evaluate adherence to the organizational standards of the lead agency, not its subcontractors. However, the lead organization's contract with the subcontractor should clearly outline similar standards of operation. The peer review team will review subcontract language to demonstrate adherence to program and organizational standards.
  - Peer reviewers will need to see evidence for program standards (1-15) based on **training logs, personnel records, and supervision records**
  - Peer reviewers will need to see evidence for agency standards (16-33) based upon contract compliance, interviews, contracting agency's procedures on how they hold subcontractors accountable (**chart reviews, site visits reviews, supervision records, contract, etc.**)

- The contracting agency must ensure that the subcontracting agency holds programs/staff accountable to standards; however, the peer reviewers will not review **specific budgets, policies, procedures, etc.** of the subcontracting agency. This will be evidenced through the contract. The contracting agency will need to show evidence that the subcontracting agency is adhering to standards in relationship to the programs seeking credential
- The credential will be awarded to the contractor and the subcontracting agency will be acknowledged that the specific program was credentialed through the contracted agency
- Programs receive 40 hours of technical assistance per fiscal year

#### **Multi-Agency Credentialing:**

Agencies who work together for credentialing will be assigned the same program specialist.

Technical assistance hours for program standards (1-15) will be allotted 20 hours total for all agencies. Each agency will work together to adopt program policies and procedures that will meet standards.

Technical assistance for organizational standards (16-33) will be allotted 20 hours to each agency. Each agency will need to show adherence to standards.

Depending on the number of agencies, the number of peer reviewers assigned and/or number of days for peer review may be increased.

#### **Multi-Program Credentialing:**

An agency that wishes to credential multiple programs will be assigned one program specialist and receive 20 hours of technical assistance per program going through credential.

Agencies will receive another 20 hours of technical assistance for organizational standards.

Each program within the same agency will receive a credential.

Depending on the number of programs, the number of peer reviewers assigned and/or number of days for peer review may be increased.



Procedure Name:	<b>Entrance Meeting</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2023
Other References:	

The program is responsible for invitations regarding the entrance meeting, which is open to the public. It is common to invite the Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) area director and area board members, other funders, all staff working in the program participating in the peer review process, and key personnel in the agency. Others that may be invited include state legislators and other persons in the community.

The peer review team will lead the entrance meeting and both peers will introduce themselves. The meeting is held to explain the purpose of the Iowa Family Support Credentialing Program and to provide an overview of the peer review process. The entrance meeting is a mechanism for staff and community members to ask questions about the process.



Procedure Name:	<b>Exit Meeting</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2023
Other References:	

The program is responsible for invitations regarding the exit meeting, which is open to the public. The peer review team will lead the exit meeting. The peer reviewers will not provide individual rating for any standards during this meeting. The peer review team will provide an oral report that outlines the Strengths and any Opportunities for Growth that the program or organization may have. The peer review team will ask the organization to provide additional strengths after sharing the list. The peer review team will then explain the next steps in the process and thank everyone for attending.

**The exit meeting is not the time for debate on any items or comments that the peer reviewers share. Any items found to be in dispute may be addressed by the program during the post peer review process.**



Procedure Name:	<b>Timeline of Peer Review Report</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2014; June 2023
Other References:	Peer Review Report; Addendum; Corrective Action Plan

### **Post Peer Review Process**

The program will not contact the peer review team after the conclusion of the exit meeting. The IFSC coordinator\* serves as a liaison between the program and peer review team. All communication regarding the Peer Review Report should be directed to the IFSC coordinator\*.

During the post-review period, programs may be in contact with the program specialist. Programs may also request of the IFSC coordinator a new program specialist to work with them during this time. There will not be a cap on the time allotted for technical assistance post peer review.

The following timeline begins the day after the peer review exit meeting.

- Week 1-2 Peer reviewers collaborate to write Peer Review Report and submit to the IFSC coordinator\*
- Week 3 IFSC coordinator\* reviews the Peer Review Report, provides feedback and approve
- Week 4 Peer reviewers have one week to address all comments and suggestions on the Peer Review Report before submitting the final version without mark-ups to the IFSC coordinator\*
- Week 5 IFSC coordinator\* will send to the program the Peer Review Report (this takes into account going back and forth) within one week
- Week 6-14 Programs collect evidence and write Corrective Action Plan and send to program specialist for approval. Once program specialist agrees the Corrective Action Plan meets the standard, the program submits to the IFSC coordinator\* by the end of Week 14. Programs are encouraged to submit additional evidence regarding any standards rated a three or four as soon as possible. It may take several attempts before the peer review team is confident that the program is now meeting the standard(s). **IF** the additional documentation is not found to be sufficient, the program will need to reapply and begin



the credentialing process all over again. (The program will need to wait one year before reapplying).

- Week 15 The IFSC coordinator\* forwards the program's information to the peer reviewers. Peer reviewers review the Corrective Action Plan and return the Addendum within one week of the final evidence submitted by programs meeting adherence of identified standards rated three or four.
- Week 16 IFSC coordinator\* will review the Addendum within one week
- Week 17 IFSC coordinator\* will send Addendum to the peer review team for feedback with one week to respond
- Week 18 IFSC coordinator\* reviews final Peer Review Report and Addendum and sends to community health consultant
- Week 19 Community health consultant will then review the final report and send congratulatory credential email announcement to program

The Addendum will be used to provide feedback to the program based on the Corrective Action Plan and any additional documents received from the program on standards that were out of adherence (three or four ratings) at review.

**Peer reviewers will not have contact with the program once the on-site peer review has been completed.**

Written Peer Review Reports are public documents and are made available upon request from the community health consultant. Written reports will not contain any information that could potentially identify program participants, interview panelists, or direct program staff. **All tools used during the peer review will be submitted to the IFSC coordinator\* along with the Peer Review Report.** All preliminary reports and personal notes of the peer reviewers are considered working documents and will be shredded upon the notification of program credential.

At the time the IFSC coordinator sends the Peer Review Report, the IFSC coordinator will also email the program a form to provide feedback on the peer review team and program specialist. The feedback provided will help in the ongoing evaluation of the process and will be shared with the peer review team and program specialist.

The IFSC program coordinator will email the program to verify the wording for a credential plaque and certificate to be received at the program's celebration.



Procedure Name:	<b>Probationary Status for Programs</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	July 2013
Date(s) of revision	September 2013; March 2014; June 2023
Other References:	Peer Review Report; Addendum

The Iowa Family Support Technical Assistance Network (IFSC) understands the time and commitment agencies give to become ready for credentialing. In most cases, the probationary status is not applicable.

Probationary status is to ensure the fidelity of the Iowa Family Support Credentialing (IFSC) process. Agencies will be placed on probationary status when found to be 20% or greater out of adherence to the IFSC standards.

Once the peer review has been concluded and the Peer Review Report has been finalized, for programs who have found to be 20% or greater out of adherence, the agency will be placed on probationary status. The probationary status will be no longer than six months or until the fidelity review is completed. The program will be required to work with a different program specialist during this time period. The program specialist will work with the program for one month to implement changes to policies and procedures, supporting documents and with any practice change during the final months. The program will have three months to show recent practice change before a fidelity peer review will be held.

A fidelity peer review is a one day review conducted by IFSC staff for programs on probationary status. The fidelity peer review will be conducted to show policy and procedure changes, along with recent practice changes for standards that were rated out of adherence. During the fidelity review, only standards that were rated out of adherence during the initial peer review will be reviewed. Reviews will be conducted on files and supporting documentation, which shows recent practice change of those standards out of adherence. Interviews will be conducted with program staff to demonstrate how programs are adhering to recent practice change. The file review will include 10% of the total open files, closed files as necessary and may or may not be the same files that were originally reviewed during the peer review.

At the conclusion of the fidelity peer review, the agency will receive a written report within two weeks. This report will show the program is either still out of adherence to the standards in policy and practice or is in adherence and meets standards by adopting policies and recent practice change.

If, after the fidelity peer review, the agency has demonstrated adherence to the standards, the program will receive the Iowa Family Support Credential.

The agency will continue on the original timeline for renewal.

The final report will state the probationary status was given to the program.

If, after the fidelity peer review, the program is still out of adherence to the standards in policy and practice, the program will withdraw and reapply for the credentialing after one year.



Procedure Name:	<b>Appeal / Grievance Statement</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	September 2012
Date(s) of revision:	September 2013; September 2014; June 2023
Other References:	

**I. Purpose:**

To provide steps by which grievances can be resolved.

**II. Definitions:**

Grievance: A written complaint or concern related to actions or policies of the program or its staff.

Appeal: A written request to correct or amend information or policies of the program or its staff.

**III. Access:**

1. The grievance policy will be available in written form from the Iowa Family Support Credential Program (IFSC), Iowa Department of Public Health, or Early Childhood Iowa.
2. A copy of the grievance policy will be given to the consumer, program, or the public upon request and can also be found in the IFSC Program Guide.

**IV. Procedures:**

Grievances and/or appeals should be submitted in writing and state the concern, names of staff/personnel who received information about the concern, the date the grievance/appeal was submitted, and who the information is being submitted to.

1. When a grievance/appeal occurs, the complaint should be responded to in writing by the IFSC coordinator or administrator(s) responsible for the program within 30 days of receipt.
2. IFSC coordinator receiving the complaint should report the complaint to the director of early childhood services and the director of service quality.
3. Upon consultation, the IFSC coordinator will respond to the grievance/appeal in writing within 30 days and a copy will be provided to the grievant/appellant.
4. If the complainant is not satisfied with action taken in response to the issue presented, an appeal may be written to the Quality Standards Workgroup within 30 days.
5. All appeals will be reviewed at the quarterly Quality Standards Workgroup meeting in response to the problem. A special meeting may be arranged if the situation is warranted.
6. A written response to the appeal will be made within 30 days.
7. If the Quality Standards Workgroup cannot make a final decision, all grievances/appeals will be referred to Early Childhood Iowa Board within 30 days.

8. Ruling of the Early Childhood Iowa Board will be final and the result of the ruling will be provided in writing within 30 days of the decision.



Procedure Name:	<b>Celebration</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2023
Other References:	Congratulations Letter; Peer Review Addendum; Peer Review Report; Sample Press Release

Once the program has received official notification from the community health consultant that the program has been found to be in compliance with the Iowa Family Support Standards, the program will want to begin planning a celebration. The program has achieved a tremendous goal and should take time to celebrate the achievements.

**Who to invite to the celebration?**

- Community health consultant      This is the opportunity for the state to recognize the program’s hard work and present the plaque to the program.
  
- Program Staff      All of the staff involved with the family support program should be invited to participate. Program staff has worked very hard to achieve the credentialing goal and this is one way of recognizing the staff’s hard work. Many organizations also include past staff as well.
  
- Agency/Organization Leadership      This is a way for the agency leadership to recognize the hard work of the program staff. Agency leadership can also use this as an opportunity to tie the work of the program into the overall mission of the agency/organization.
  
- Governing Board, Community Partners, Program Participants, Funders      Think of all the people that participated in the peer review process who played a role in the program’s earning the credential. This is a way to thank everyone and also announce the agency’s credential.

Elected Officials	This includes local elected officials such as mayors, members of the board of supervisors, city council, etc. It also includes state representatives and senators. State representatives and senators are the persons that provide funding that makes the credentialing process possible. If elected officials cannot attend, an invitation helps inform of the agency's achievement.
Other Community Leaders	Think of others in the community that may be interested in attending such as the chamber of commerce or economic development organization. Use the celebration as a way of informing community leaders about the program and organization.
Program Specialist/Coordinator	The assigned program specialist is also celebrating the program's achievement. It is a very nice way to thank the program specialist for the involvement and provide closure to the process.
Media	Local newspapers, radio stations, etc. The agency can use the press release provided about earning the credential and also follow up with an invitation to the celebration. If the organization has a newsletter, invite the person that is responsible for the newsletter to attend. Make sure to have someone in attendance designated to take photographs.

### **Should refreshments be served?**

Serving some type of refreshments is a nice way to get people to mingle and relax to have informal conversations, encourage attendance, and puts people in a celebratory mood. Refreshments can be as simple as beverages and cookies or could be as elaborate as a meal.

### **Who should speak during the formal program and what should be talked about?**

The agency can have a master/mistress of ceremonies that welcomes everyone and introduces each speaker. Sometimes this is the Early Childhood Iowa area director and other times it is the organization's program manager or executive director. Be sure to recognize any elected officials in attendance that will not be addressing the group or any other dignitaries or groups in attendance.

The organization's executive director should say a few words of congratulations to the program staff. This is a good opportunity to recognize how the program assists the organization to accomplish the mission. Another topic to mention is the importance of quality programming to the organization.

The Early Childhood Iowa area director or the chair of the ECI area board could also offer a few words of congratulations. It could be mentioned how the program fits in the community plan and assists to reach the area ECI goals.

The community health consultant or designee will also want to speak and will need about ten to fifteen minutes. The speech will provide some background information about the credential, the process that

the program completed to earn the credential and will culminate with having the program staff come forward to receive the credential.

The program supervisor should be prepared to say a few words after the credential is presented. The supervisor can speak specifically about the ups and downs in the process to earn the credential, articulate how the process has been beneficial to the program, organization, and program participants.

**Where should the celebration take place?**

If space is available, it is nice to have the celebration at the agency's offices. If that is not possible, it may be held in an available community room such as the local library or a community church.

**What is the role of the Early Childhood Iowa area board?**

It is a good idea to invite your local ECI board members to attend the celebration. The board chair or the local director may be asked to speak at the celebration.

The ECI area board may sponsor the celebration by providing funding to cover the costs of the refreshments for the celebration.

**How does the community know about the program's achievement?**

The best way is to have the media in attendance at the celebration. If the media cannot attend, provide the media with the press release and photos and do a follow up interview after the celebration.





Procedure Name:	<b>Program Withdrawal</b>
Applicable to:	Programs, Peer Reviewers, Program Specialists
Effective Date:	March 2008
Date(s) of revision:	May 2011; March 2014; June 2014; June 2023
Other References:	IFSC Program Withdrawal Form

**Voluntary Withdrawal:**

To voluntarily withdraw from the credentialing process, the program will complete the Program Withdrawal Form. This form can be obtained from the program specialist or by contacting the IFSC program coordinator.

The program's executive director and/or board chair will be asked to sign the Withdrawal Form.

When completed, the Withdrawal Form will be sent to the IFSC coordinator.

**Involuntary Withdrawal:**

In the case that a program does not respond to communication within 30 days, the program will be issued a written warning from the IFSC coordinator. If the program does not respond within 30 days to the warning, the program will be involuntarily withdrawn.

**Once withdrawn, either voluntarily or involuntarily, the program must wait one year to reapply for IFSC credentialing process.**



Procedure Name:	<b>Alternate Credential (Crosswalk)</b>
Applicable to:	Applicants to Iowa Family Support Credentialing Process
Effective Date:	November, 2008
Date(s) of revision:	March 2014; April 2014; December 2015; June 2023
Other References:	Crosswalk

Eligibility for Alternate Process: Programs must abide by a comparable set of standards *and* have an external evaluation/review completed, at a minimum, every five years. The external review must demonstrate adherence to the program standards.

If programs are accredited through the Council on Accreditation (COA), the program will not need to submit a Crosswalk as the Iowa Family Support Standards are already aligned with COA.

Healthy Families America, Food and Nutrition Programs through Iowa State University Extension, and Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) have completed a Crosswalk.

The program model must submit to the IFSC coordinator a crosswalk of program's standards with the Iowa Family Support Standards. Typically, the person submitting the Crosswalk is at the state level that has program oversight and is submitting on behalf of the program model.

The IFSC coordinator will complete the technical review on all submissions to ensure completeness.

The IFSC coordinator will appoint a crosswalk review team of two members from the Quality Standards Workgroup to closely review the Crosswalk to ensure that there is alignment with every Iowa Family Support Standard. The crosswalk team will review the submitted Crosswalk independently and then review the results as a team. The crosswalk team will be responsible for all communication with the program regarding changes and revisions to the submitted Crosswalk. Once the crosswalk team determines that all standards are aligned, the team will forward the Crosswalk to the Quality Standards Workgroup.

The program will then submit the most recent review from the review body (Healthy Families America, Head Start, RIP, etc.) to the IFSC coordinator. IFSC coordinator will present Crosswalk and most recent outside review to the Quality Standards Workgroup.

The IFSC coordinator will carefully review the submitted materials to ensure that the outside accrediting body found the program to have met each of the applicable standards that align with the Iowa Family

Support Standards. If there is anything that is questionable, the IFSC coordinator will ask the Quality Standards Workgroup for assistance. The program may be asked to submit additional supporting evidence.

If the Quality Standards Workgroup has any concerns that the standards are not completely adhered to, the group can decide to deny the request for the program to earn the Iowa Family Support Credential by the alternate method and may refer the program to the traditional method.

If the standards are being met, the program will be awarded an Iowa Family Support Credential.



Policy Name:	<b>IFSC Annual Fee Policy</b>
Applicable to:	Programs; Program Specialist
Effective Date:	January 2022
Date(s) of revision:	April 2022; May 2022
Other References:	Tool FF; IFSC Annual Update Form
Location:	Program Guide; IFSC Staff Guide

**Policy:**

Starting in July 2022, all programs that have earned the Iowa Family Support Credential (IFSC) or that are accepted into the Iowa Family Support Credential process for the program’s first credential will incur a fee in July of each year for continued participation in the credential. This fee will be based each year on the planned family service capacity of the program. The planned family service capacity is determined based on the funded capacity of the program by all funding sources. IFSC will determine the fee based on information reported to the IFSC on the IFSC Annual Update Form each year.

The fee for continued participation in the Iowa Family Support Credential will give programs access to the following opportunities:

- 5 hours of individual TA per year, this includes years when the program is not actively participating in renewal of the Iowa Family Support Credential;
- Monthly webinars highlighting topics relating to the Iowa Family Support Standards or best practices;
- Quarterly newsletters highlighting changes to the Iowa Family Support Standards, new IFSC policies, updates on best practices, or new IFSC resources and tools;
- Trainings and Professional Development as offered by IFSC.

**Procedure:**

The Iowa Family Support Credential will require each program to fill out an IFSC Annual Update Form due by July 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. Programs will submit the form to the [IFSC Coordinator](#) via email. Programs that do not complete an annual form will be assigned in the same tier as the previous year. The IFSC will invoice each program by September 30<sup>th</sup> each year. Programs must have their invoice paid by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Invoices not paid by January 1<sup>st</sup> each year will incur a late fee and programs may have their Iowa Family Support Credential rescinded until the fee is brought current.

The IFSC annual fee will be based on the following matrix:



Tier	Capacity	Fee
1	25 families or less	\$ 350.00
2	26 – 99 families	\$ 450.00
3	100 families or more	\$ 550.00

**Multiple Programs Operated by One Organization:**

If an organization has two or more different programs credentialed, each program will be assigned to the appropriate tier based on the planned family service capacity of the program and the appropriate annual fee will apply.

Each program will receive a 10% discount on the annual fee. To be eligible for this discount, programs must submit the IFSC Annual Fee Update Form together and indicate each program’s status as “Multiple Programs Operated by One Organization.” This discount will be reflected on the invoice.

**One Program Operated by Multiple Organizations:**

If there is one program implemented in multiple organizations, each organization’s program will be assigned to the appropriate tier based on each organization’s planned family service capacity. The peer review for both options will consist of a review of the organizational standards for each organization and a review of the program standards as implemented by each organization.

Option 1: Combined Peer Review for All

One peer review will be conducted for the program and all organizations. Each organization is assigned the appropriate tier based on each organization’s planned family service capacity.

Option 2: Individual Peer Reviews

One peer review will be conducted for each organization in the program as an individual peer review. Each organization is assigned the appropriate tier based on each organization’s planned family service capacity.

Each organization will receive a 10% discount on the annual fee. To be eligible for this discount, organizations must submit the IFSC Annual Fee Update Form together and indicate the peer review type under “One Program Operated by Multiple Organizations.” This discount will be reflected on the invoice.

Questions about tier assignments should be sent to the [IFSC Coordinator](#).