

Becoming a Certified Recovery Support Specialist

What is a Certified Recovery Support Specialist?

A Certified Recovery Support Specialist (CRSS) is a professional who is trained to incorporate their unique personal experience in their own recovery to help facilitate recovery and build the resilience of persons with mental illnesses or those dually diagnosed with mental illness and substance use disorder. The core CRSS domains are advocacy, mentoring, recovery support and professional responsibility.

Requirements to Obtain a Certification

- Minimum of a High School Diploma or GED
- 100 hours of Training and Education broken into 3 categories:
 - 40 hours- CRSS Specific
 - 6 hours- Professional Ethics and Responsibility
 - 54 hours- Core Functions
- 100 hours of Supervised Practical Experience
- 2000 hours (one year) of Work Experience
- Successful score on the CRSS Written Examination

Application Process

Once you have fulfilled your required Training and Education, Supervised Work Experience and Work Experience hours, you may fill out an application to sit for the CRSS licensing examination. You can find instructions on how to complete the application [here](#). If your application is accepted, you will then be required to pass the CRSS Written Exam that measures proficiency in recovery support services domains.

Opportunities after Receiving your CRSS

Peer support positively impacts self-esteem and confidence, engagement in self-care and wellness, sense of hope and inspiration, and decreases the need for future hospitalization, which is why many mental health organizations are now hiring full-time CRSS' as Peer Support Specialists. Available positions vary from site to site and include opportunities running peer support groups, providing peer support on a Warm Line and working in Living Room locations providing one-on-one peer support. There are also multiple sites that offer CRSS internships, where individuals working towards their CRSS can obtain their required hours.

More Information

For specific information about how to obtain certification hours for Training and Education, Supervised Practical Experience and Work Experience, please go to the Illinois Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Professional Certification Association, Inc. website [here](#) or call NAMI Chicago's Helpline at 833-NAMI-CHI (626-4244) and ask to speak to a CRSS.