

ICASA CERTIFICATION OF RAPE CRISIS CENTERS

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SECTION I – PURPOSE OF CERTIFICATION

To ensure statewide coverage and consistency of services and provide quality assurance on behalf of the State of Illinois, the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA) certifies Rape Crisis Centers in Illinois. To be a certified Rape Crisis Center, (hereinafter referred to as Rape Crisis Center) an organization must provide services to victims of sexual violence and to communities in accordance with ICASA Policies and Procedures and Certification Requirements. A certified Rape Crisis Center may be:

- An organization that provides required sexual violence prevention and response services exclusively; or
- A program of an organization providing other services in addition to required sexual violence prevention and response services.

In order to become a certified Rape Crisis Center, an organization must demonstrate compliance with all of the requirements in each section of this document.

SECTION II – CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

I. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

A. MISSION

One of the primary purposes of the organization must be to provide comprehensive services to victims of sexual violence, their significant others and the community. This commitment may be demonstrated by a mission statement, bylaws, annual objectives, a resolution, a letter or other document approved by the board of directors of the organization.

B. SERVICES TO ADULTS

An organization must have a stated priority to serve individuals who experiencing sexual violence after reaching age 18.

C. ICASA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

An organization must be in compliance with and commit to continued compliance with all ICASA Policies and Procedures.

D. SERVICE STANDARDS – VICTIM-CENTERED AND ACCESSIBLE SERVICES

An organization must provide required services that are victim-centered, trauma-informed and accessible in accordance with ICASA Service Standards. In summary:

1. At minimum, telephone and in-person crisis intervention services and advocacy are free of charge.
2. Services are victim-centered and trauma-focused. Victims, in consultation with rape crisis workers, determines the recovery process.
3. Confidentiality with victims is assured in compliance with the "Confidentiality of Statements Made to Rape Crisis Personnel" statute.
4. Volunteers and staff attend a specialized, 40-hour training program on sexual violence that meets ICASA Standards for 40-hour training.
5. All community services include a cultural analysis of why sexual assault occurs.
6. The organization advocates to make medical and criminal justice institutions more responsive to victims of sexual assault.
7. The organization is accessible to the diverse population of its geographic service region without regard for race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, class, dis/ability, faith practices, political perspective, educational background or other attributes.

II. REQUIRED SERVICES – See ICASA Policy and Procedures, Chapter 5 for complete description of services and service standards.

An organization must be a community-based organization that provides comprehensive services, as described below, to victims of sexual violence, significant others and the community. Comprehensive services to adults are a stated priority of the organization. In addition to services for adults, at least crisis intervention and information and referral must be provided for child victims and their significant others.

24-hour Hotline or 24-hour Accessibility to Telephone Crisis Intervention – an organization must maintain a telephone line or other access to 24-hour telephone crisis intervention for victims, significant others and other individuals needing assistance. 24-hour access means that a person (not a pager, answering machine or voice mail system) must answer the phone to respond to the caller; this may be a

center staff person, volunteer or answering service worker. If necessary, the person answering the telephone may offer to have a rape crisis worker call the caller back. A patch through will be provided if the caller cannot or chooses not to be called back. If the caller agrees to accept a return call, a trained rape crisis worker must return the call within 20 minutes. If an answering service is utilized, the service must have the capacity to “patch through” the caller to a trained rape crisis worker.

Individual Advocacy

- Provide 24-hour, in-person, medical advocacy with victims at the emergency department.
- Provide 24-hour, in-person advocacy with victims who are being assisted by law enforcement.
- Provide in person emotional support and information to victims of sexual assault and their significant others during follow-up medical procedures and ongoing criminal justice proceedings.
- Promote sensitive, effective responses by medical and criminal justice institutions or with other involved agencies or individuals on behalf of a specific victim.
- Assist victims with finding the support, resources and adjunct services they need.

In-person Counseling – An organization must provide in-person sexual assault crisis intervention and sexual assault counseling to victims and their significant others.

Professional Training – An organization must conduct in-depth education, skills building, and evaluation of skills sufficient to prepare others to effectively intervene on behalf of victims of sexual assault.

Institutional Advocacy – An organization must work with the criminal justice system, medical institutions, child protective services, schools and other institutions on behalf of all sexual assault victims to ensure sensitive, effective policies and procedures for responding to sexual assault.

Information and Referral – An organization must respond to telephone or in-person requests for information about sexual assault. The center will share additional sources on the subject of sexual assault or explain services which may be helpful to a victim, significant other or interested individual.

Prevention – An organization must engage in community-wide sexual violence prevention including prevention education, coalition building, community mobilization, policy change and social norms change. The focus of these prevention efforts is to change the rape culture.

III. **NEED AND LOCAL SUPPORT**

A. **NEED FOR SERVICE**

To become a certified Rape Crisis Center, an organization must use data regarding population of service area and incidence of sexual violence to demonstrate the need for the comprehensive services of a Rape Crisis Center.

B. **GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA**

ICASA expects its rape crisis centers to collaborate with one another. The Certification Committee and Governing Body may provide technical assistance or recommendations to programs regarding service provision by multiple providers in the one area. The absence of a written collaborative agreement between providers located in the same area will not affect certification eligibility. Funding for ICASA subgrants will be subject to ICASA's Geographic Service Area policy.

C. **LOCAL SUPPORT**

Applicants for certification as a Rape Crisis Center must provide substantiation from other organizations and individuals in the service area that it provides quality services that meet community needs. Organizations must include other responders to sexual violence (e.g. medical and criminal justice personnel, schools, human service agencies).

D. **COLLABORATION**

Cooperation, coordination and mutual engagement with a broad base of local community service agencies and groups, including those charged with response to sexual violence, must be demonstrated through networking agreements and letters of support for the organization and its rape crisis services.

IV. **FISCAL MANAGEMENT**

A. An organization must comply with all ICASA Fiscal Policies and Procedures.

B. An organization must have a sexual assault program budget that is distinct within the overall agency budget.

- C. An organization must demonstrate compliance with generally accepted accounting standards and governing audit standards and have adequate segregation of duties and internal controls.
- D. An organization must undergo annual external audit and have satisfactorily responded to any audit findings from previous years' audits.
- E. An organization must show that the Board of Directors reviews the annual audit and reviews fiscal reports at each regular board meeting.

V. **STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE**

- A. An organization must operate its principal place of business or service activity in the State of Illinois.
- B. An organization must be an incorporated, not-for-profit entity. The center must be registered by the IRS as a 501(c)3, tax-exempt organization.
- C. The organization must have a Board of Directors with at least six members and be representative of the diversity of the service area.
- D. No person shall on the ground of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, class, dis/ability, faith practices, political perspective, education background or other attributes be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, subjected to discrimination under, or denied employment in connection with, any undertaking funded in whole or in part with sums made available under ICASA grants.
- E. If a rape crisis center is a single service organization, an organization must have an executive director. If part of an umbrella organization, an organization must have a sexual assault program manager and executive director.
- F. An organization must have space designated exclusively for sexual assault program activities.
- G. An organization must demonstrate implementation of an affirmative action policy vis-a-vis its governing body and the employment practices of the organization.
- H. An organization cannot include the mission and function of a Child Advocacy Center as a part of its service programs in Illinois.

SECTION III – APPLICATION AND CERTIFICATION REVIEW PROCESS

I. APPLICATION

The certification process requirements, application and instructions will be posted on the ICASA website. An organization may download this information or request a copy from the ICASA office.

An organization that wishes to be a certified Rape Crisis Center must complete the application and submit paper copy of the application packet to the ICASA office. An organization may apply for certification at any time throughout the year.

The certification timelines stipulated in steps II – VII, may be extended up to 30 days at the discretion of the Certification Committee. Executive Committee must approve any extension beyond this 30-day period.

II. STAFF REVIEW OF APPLICATION

Upon receipt of an application, ICASA staff will review the application within two (2) business days of receipt to determine if all required materials are present. If not, the application will be returned to the organization with information about how to remedy deficiencies.

III. CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE

- A. If staff determines all application materials are present, staff will contact the Chairs of Contracts Review Committee and Program Committee within one (1) business day to create a Certification Committee. The Certification Committee will be comprised of one representative from Contracts Review Committee and two representatives from Program Committee. At least two ICASA staff will provide support to the Committee.
- B. Staff will send a copy of the certification application to each member of the Certification Committee within one (1) business day of determining committee composition.

IV. CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE REVIEW OF APPLICATION

The Certification Committee will convene in-person or by conference call within five (5) business days of receipt of the application in the ICASA Office. The Certification Committee will review the application to determine next steps.

Based on its review of the application, the Certification Committee will:

Initiate Certification Review – The Certification Committee will initiate a Certification Review if it determines that the application indicates compliance with all certification requirements.

Once the Certification Committee initiates a Certification Review, it will send notice, within two (2) business days of its meeting, to the organization’s Executive Director. The notice will explain next steps in the certification process.

OR

Reject the Application – The Certification Committee will reject the application if it does not indicate compliance with certification requirements. If the Certification Committee rejects the application, it will send a letter to the application organization within two (2) business days of its meeting, stating its decision, the reasons the application was rejected and potential remedies to deficiencies.

V. **CERTIFICATION REVIEW**

The Certification Committee will gather information from the applicant organization, other certified Rape Crisis Centers and representatives of the service area described by the organization.

A. **PROCESS**

The Certification Committee will conduct an in-depth review of the applicant organization to determine compliance with ICASA Certification Requirements. The review will include on-site visit, interviews, document review and other verification of services.

B. **SITE VISIT(S)**

The Certification Committee or its designees will conduct a site visit(s) at the applicant organization. The Certification Committee will give the organization at least three (3) business days’ notice of any site visit(s). During the site visit(s), the Certification Committee may review any program and fiscal records and other materials. The Committee may also interview staff, board members, volunteers and community members.

C. **INTERVIEWS**

The Certification Committee or its designees may interview anyone involved with or served by the organization or anyone who may have information relevant to the organization. The Certification Committee has discretion about

whom it interviews and where interviews occur. Interviews may occur in person or by phone.

D. DOCUMENT REQUEST

The Certification Committee will review all documents at site that are relevant to compliance with ICASA certification requirements. The Committee may require that the organization submit additional documentation and will establish a deadline(s) for the receipt of the documentation. Document requests may be made throughout the certification review.

E. TIMELINE

The Certification Committee shall complete its Certification Review within fifteen (15) business days of its meeting initiating the Certification Review.

VI. CERTIFICATION REPORT

Within seven (7) business days of completion of the review process, the Certification Committee will convene to review the information gathered during the application review and issue its Certification Report.

The Certification Report will summarize the organization, the certification review process, findings, and recommendation regarding whether to certify the applicant organization as a Rape Crisis Center.

The Certification Report will be sent to the organization's Executive Director and ICASA Governing Body within three (3) business days of the Committee meeting. Correspondence will include the date that the ICASA Governing Body will convene to act on the report.

VII. GOVERNING BODY REVIEW (EXECUTIVE SESSION)

A. GOVERNING BODY ACTION

The Governing Body will convene at a meeting to occur within fourteen (14) business days of issuance of the Certification Report to act on the report.

B. APPEAL

If the organization disagrees with the findings and recommendation of the Certification Committee, it may respond to the Certification Report. The response must be written and sent to the ICASA office at least one (1) business day before the Governing Body meeting to review the Certification Report.

The organization will be permitted to present to the Governing Body during its meeting. The presentation will not exceed 30 minutes.

VIII. **CERTIFICATION FEE**

An organization applying for ICASA-certification as a Rape Crisis Center will pay a non-refundable application fee of \$750 at the time of application. If the organization becomes an ICASA-certified Rape Crisis Center, this application fee will be applied toward the total annual certification fee of \$1,500. Every Rape Crisis Center will pay an annual certification renewal fee of \$1,500.

IX. **CERTIFICATION STATUS REVIEW**

A. **RENEWAL**

In order to retain ICASA-certification as a Rape Crisis Center, an organization must demonstrate compliance with all ICASA Policy and Procedures, participate in all routine and special monitoring and corrective action required by ICASA and pay the annual certification renewal fee of \$1,500 by the end of each fiscal year.

B. **LOSS OF CERTIFICATION**

1. Any funder, Certified Rape Crisis Center or ICASA Committee may request a review of an organization's certification status. Questions or concerns about an organization's certification will be referred to the ICASA office.
2. Review Process – The review will follow the certified review process delineated in Sections V-VII of this policy (ICASA Certification of Rape Crisis Centers). In addition to interviews with center representatives and documentation requests directed to the center, the Certification Committee will interview the party that initiated the review and request documentation from that person/organization.