

master's degree and/or clinical training in an accepted mental health field which includes, but is not limited to, counseling, nursing, occupational therapy, psychology, social work, vocational rehabilitation, or activity therapy.

As part of his or her job duties, a CFSS must perform tasks described in the CFSS Scope of Activities. The Scope of Activities shows the wide range of tasks a CFSS can perform to assist the child or youth and the family in regaining control over their own lives based on the principles of *resiliency* and *recovery*. The ability to perform any or all of the tasks in the course of the CFSS's job duties is demonstrated by the mastery of *competencies* through testing and evaluation as required by the Family Support Specialist Training Programs recognized by TDMHSAS (see Section VI.A.6, page 6).

Receipt of Certification does not offer or guarantee employment or job placement. Each Certified Family Support Specialist should apply for positions available in his or her community.

V. Employment Standards for Reimbursable Services

If the delivery of the Certified Family Support Specialist service is to be rendered as a Medicaid (TennCare) covered service, then the following guidelines must be met:

- A) Applicants or active CFSS must be employed to work in the role as a paid Certified Family Support Specialist by an agency that is licensed by TDMHSAS and authorized to participate in the Medicaid (TennCare) program.
- B) Agencies that are licensed by TDMHSAS and authorized to participate in the Medicaid (TennCare) program shall:
 - 1) Establish criteria, under which they hire, train and retain Certified Family Support Specialists
 - 2) Provide supervision for Certified Family Support Specialists in accordance with acceptable guidelines and standards of practice as defined by the State and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.
- C) Each Certified Family Support Specialist providing Medicaid-reimbursable services must be under the supervision of a mental health professional as defined by the State of Tennessee. The mental health professional must work for an agency that is licensed by TDMHSAS and authorized to participate in the Medicaid program. *A mental health professional* means a board eligible or a board certified psychiatrist or a person with at least a Master's degree and/or clinical training in an accepted mental health field which includes, but is not limited to, counseling, nursing, occupational therapy, psychology, social work, vocational rehabilitation, or activity therapy.

VI. CERTIFICATION

To become a CFSS in the State of Tennessee, each applicant must meet all minimum requirements, as outlined in the FSSCP Guidelines, Standards and Procedures.

A. Certification Requirements

To become a CFSS in the State of Tennessee, all applicants must meet the following minimum requirements:

- 1) Be at least eighteen (18) years of age or older;
- 2) Hold a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED);
- 3) Self-identify as being or having been the *caregiver/family* member of a child or youth with a *mental, emotional, behavioral, or co-occurring disorder*;
- 4) Provide a statement of personal experience regarding navigating the child-serving systems as the *caregiver/family* member of a child or youth with a *mental, emotional, behavioral or co-occurring disorder*;
- 5) During the last five (5) years, have actively participated for at least twelve (12) consecutive months in service planning, system navigation, and building *resiliency* for a child or youth;
- 6) Successfully complete the *evidence-based* and/or *best practice* training currently recognized by TDMHSAS listed below:
 - o ONE of the following trainings:
 - (a) National Alliance on Mental Illness of Tennessee's (NAMI-TN) Family Education Program
 - (b) Tennessee Voices for Children's (TVC) Parent-2-Parent Training

FOLLOWED BY

- o Family Support Specialist Professional Competencies Course (TVC/NAMI-TN)

OR

- o Effective December 1, 2013, applicants may provide documentation of Certification as a Parent Support Provider through the National Certification Commission for Family Support to serve in lieu of currently required State of Tennessee trainings as noted in Section VI.A.6.
- ❖ For information on trainings, contact the Office of Statewide Systems of Care (OSSOC) at 615-770-1788 or fcfs.tdmhsas@tn.gov.
- ❖ Other *evidence-based* and/or *best practice* family support specialist training programs may be considered if appropriate documentation related to the program's curriculum, requirements, and *competencies* are approved by the OSSOC.

7) Successfully demonstrate mastery of the following *competencies* through testing and evaluation as required by one of the *evidence-based* and/or *best practice* Family Support Specialist Training Programs recognized by TDMHSAS:

- An understanding of the basic skills and knowledge needed to provide direct *caregiver-to-caregiver* support services and the ability to apply basic skills to routine tasks.
 - Knowledge of the structure of the *child-serving systems* and how they work
 - Knowledge of the *child-serving systems* and community resources and how to access them
 - An understanding of the Certified Family Support Specialist Scope of Activities
 - An understanding of the Certified Family Support Specialist Code of Ethics
 - Knowledge of the meaning and role of providing direct *caregiver-to-caregiver* support services as a Certified Family Support Specialist
 - Knowledge of how to document activities related to delivery of direct *caregiver-to-caregiver* support services
 - Knowledge of how to help *caregivers* combat negative self-talk, overcome fears, and solve problems
 - Knowledge of how to help *caregivers* articulate, set, and accomplish goals
 - Knowledge of how to teach *caregivers* to create their own family and *individualized plans of care*
 - Knowledge of how to teach *caregivers* to work with mental health or *co-occurring disorder* professionals in order to obtain the services they want
 - Knowledge of how to create and facilitate a variety of family and individual activities that support and strengthen *resiliency*
- An understanding of *resiliency* and the ability to use their personal story to help others. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - How *resiliency* is fostered in children and youth and what is helpful and not helpful
 - The ability to identify the power of a *caregiver's* beliefs and values and how they support or work against success
 - The basic definition and dynamics of the *wraparound* process
 - The ability to articulate what has been helpful and what has not been helpful in their own experience as a *caregiver*

- The ability to discern when and how much of one's personal story to share and with whom
- An understanding of healing and collaborative relationships and the ability to establish such relationships with other *caregivers* and within the workplace.
 - The dynamics of relationships, including power differentials, conflict, and trust
 - The ability to apply this knowledge to deal personally with conflict and difficult *interpersonal relations*
 - The concept of *seeking out common ground* in establishing collaborative relationships
 - The meaning and importance of family and *cultural* differences and beliefs
 - The ability to ask *open-ended questions* that direct a person to his or her strengths
 - The ability to participate in *healing communication*
 - The ability to interact sensitively and effectively with people of other *cultures*
 - The role of direct support to *caregivers* of children or youth with *emotional, behavioral or co-occurring disorders*
- An understanding of the importance of and have the ability to maintain *self-care*.
 - The dynamics of *stress* and burnout
 - The role of one's own *wellness plan*
 - The ability to identify one's own strategies for *self-care*
 - The ability to develop and utilize a personal *support network* for both personal and professional activities

8) Have a minimum of six (6) months paid and/or volunteer work in a support capacity in any or all of the following roles:

- *Family Support Provider*: a person eighteen (18) years of age or older who has been trained to act as an *advocate*, support, and care coordinator for *caregivers* of children and youth with *mental, emotional, behavioral, or co-occurring disorders*.
- *Caregiver Educator*: a person eighteen (18) years of age or older who has lived experience and has been trained to provide information and education to other *caregivers* so they can make sound decisions about the resiliency and *recovery* process and treatment. Examples include, but are not limited to, being a family education course teacher, teaching various educational topics at a psychosocial program, or providing

caregivers with educational activities that promote *resiliency* and *recovery*.

- *Support Group Facilitator*: a person eighteen (18) years of age or older who has been trained to lead self-help activities in a group setting with the goal of providing emotional support to the participants. These groups can be structured around specific support needs which include, but are not limited to, support groups for parents of children with *serious emotional disturbance* (SED) or *co-occurring disorders* (COD), and women's or men's support groups.
- *Other Relevant Experience*: a person eighteen (18) years of age or older who has other employment or volunteer experience that enhances and supports work as a Family Support Specialist. This experience may be considered if appropriate documentation related to the employment or volunteer program, mission and objective is approved by the OSSOC.

9) Either as an employee or a volunteer, be under the direct supervision of a *mental health professional*.

10) Read, understand, and agree to the following:

- Successful completion of the required currently recognized *evidence-based* and/or *best practice* Family Support Specialist Training Programs
- The Family Support Specialist Training Program required *competencies*
- Paid and/or volunteer employment experience
- The Certified Family Support Specialist Scope of Activities
- The Certified Family Support Specialist Code of Ethics

B. Term of Certification

The term of certification shall be one (1) year.

VII. CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all required documents are accurately completed and submitted.

The completed application and other required documents, with the exception of the Employment Summary Form, must be submitted by the applicant via mail directly to:

Office of Statewide Systems of Care
ATTN: FSSCP - Certification
Andrew Jackson Building, 5th Floor
500 Deaderick Street
Nashville, TN 37243

- Required application documents:
 - Application Process Checklist
 - Completed Application
 - Statement of personal experience
 - Copy of high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) (verification upon request).
 - Completed Employment Summary Form (Applicable only to applicants who are employed). The Employment Summary Form must be completed, signed and submitted by the direct supervisor to the OSSOC if the individual is employed.
 - Copies of the certificates of completion from the required *evidence-based* and/or *best practice* Family Support Specialist Training Programs currently recognized by TDMHSAS.
 - Three (3) Completed Statement of Support Forms (Applicants should make copies of the form and ask each supporter to return the completed form to you in a sealed envelope).
 - Signed Acknowledgement of the Certified Family Support Specialist Scope of Activities
 - Signed Acknowledgement of the Certified Family Support Specialist Code of Ethics
- If the submitted application packet is not complete, a deficiency letter stating what documentation is missing will be mailed to the applicant within ten (10) business days. All documentation requested in the deficiency letter must be received by the OSSOC within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of the deficiency letter.
- An application packet not completed within thirty (30) calendar days will be closed. The applicant must then submit a new application packet with all the required documentation for consideration.
- When the application packet is complete, the file will be promptly reviewed by the OSSOC and a certification determination made. Upon successful review, the applicant will be mailed the certificate within four weeks.

The OSSOC will only discuss the application status with the applicant. Please inform all others that updates must be obtained from the applicant.

To obtain a CFSS Application and related forms, contact the Office of Statewide Systems of Care at 615-770-1788 or visit the OSSOC website at: <http://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/topic/system-of-care-initiative-for-children-youth>.

VIII. REPORTING CHANGES

A CFSS must notify in writing the OSSOC, within ten (10) business days of any of the following:

- Any change in name, address, or other contact information.

- Any change in employment or employment status.
 - An updated Employment Summary Form must be completed and signed by the immediate supervisor and faxed by the employer to the OSSOC.
 - Any change in the agency staff person responsible for providing supervision, even if agency does not change.
- NOTE:** A CFSS must at all times be under the direct supervision of a *mental health professional* as defined by TDMHSAS.
- He or she no longer provides direct *caregiver-to-caregiver support* services.
 - He or she violates the CFSS Code of Ethics.

NOTE: Failure to provide notification of any of these changes may result in, but is not limited to, termination of certification.

IX. CERTIFICATION RENEWAL

To maintain active certification status, the Certified Family Support Specialist must:

- complete and submit a Certification Renewal application annually within the current term of certification;
- if employed with an agency that is a TDMHSAS-licensed or otherwise approved agency submit employment form signed by the supervisor;
- remain under the direct supervision of a *mental health professional* as defined by TDMHSAS;
- provide documentation of the successful completion of recognized on-going CFSS education;
- have no reports of violation of the CFSS Code of Ethics; and
- submit any other documents requested by the OSSOC.

A. Certification Renewal Procedure

Each Certified Family Support Specialist is responsible for renewing his or her certification, and must submit the Certification Renewal application and all other required documentation, at least forty-five (45) calendar days prior to the end of the current certification period. Unless renewed annually and prior to expiration of certification, the certification shall expire one year from the certification date.

To obtain an application for Certification Renewal, contact the Office of Statewide Systems of Care at 1-615-770-1788 or visit the website at: <http://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/topic/system-of-care-initiative-for-children-youth>.

B. Ongoing Education Guidelines

Fifteen (15) hours of on-going CFSS education are required annually to maintain active certification and must be earned within the annual certification period. On-going