

ACRE VS. CESP Certification, What is the Difference?

Overview

With all of the many changes taking place throughout the state and on a national level regarding supported employment, there is a need for more information and clarity on these new requirements. Certification of staff is one such PA ODP waiver requirement that went into effect, 7/1/17. Currently, there are two common certifications related to supported employment, ACRE (Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators) and CESP (Certified Employment Support Professional from APSE.)

Many have expressed confusion over the differences between the ACRE Certificate and the CESP Certification. Below are some clear differences between the two, as well as how to determine which option may be best given your individual situations.

I. The ACRE Certificate

What does ACRE stand for? ACRE stands for Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators

ACRE is a national membership organization for trainers and educators who work in the field of employment for people with disabilities. Members share a common mission of advocacy through education to improve the quality of employment services for people with disabilities.

One of the growing and expanding trainings offered through ACRE is the ACRE Employment Certificate. The ACRE Certificate Course is taught nationwide by trainers and other organizations who have undergone a rigorous curriculum review process that meets specific competency guidelines related to employment of people with disabilities. Most ACRE Certificate providers are universities and training organizations.

The ACRE Certificate Curriculum is a minimum of 40 hours in length. The endorsed curricula varies in delivery. Some courses may be in-person, some online, and some hybrid (combining both in person and online components.) All trainers and curricula follow the same competency base. Visit www.acreeducators.org for information on local organizations offering the Course. When a Course participant meets all requirements of attendance and participation, they will receive an ACRE Certificate of Completion and their name will be added to the ACRE Certificate Registry.

ACRE does not require additional training hours to maintain the certificate.

Audience: It is designed for those new to the human services field of and who need to learn the basic skills and competencies of employment of people with disabilities in the community.

Cost: The Certificate costs varies, depending on the individual curriculum. Current costs nationwide range from \$275.00 - \$700.00 per person. There are no recertification fees.

II. APSE CESP Certification

APSE is a membership organization, and is the only national organization with an exclusive focus on integrated employment and career advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The CESP Certification is a nationally accredited Certification and distinguishes employment support professionals who have shown they have the skill and competence to perform the requirements of the job. It is required that recertification take place after three years, providing documentation to APSE that a CESP professional has completed 36 hours of continuing education hours in areas related to evidence based practice. If the CEU requirement is not met, the individual must take the exam again to regain their certification status.

Audience: In order to sit for the CESP exam, which takes place throughout the country on a regular basis, a candidate must meet the following criteria:

1. Have a high school diploma, GED or equivalent;
2. Have one year of employment support experience which may include up to a maximum of three months of internship or practicum time, or nine months of work experience with a training component and;
3. Agree to and sign the Code of Conduct included in the application.

Cost: The CESP exam cost is \$159.00 per person. The CESP 3 year recertification cost is \$125.00 per person.

Please visit www.apse.org for further details regarding eligibility requirements.

Summary

In summary, the ACRE Certificate is a basic certificate of competency, confirming the certificate holder has attended and participated in an intensive 40+ hour course which focuses on best practices in employment support.

The APSE CESP is a Certification based on one's ability to pass the competency exam. Individuals holding a CESP Certification have attained best practice knowledge and skill in the field of employment of people with disabilities. In order to maintain their CESP, each person must acquire continuing education credits over a three-year period and provide documentation to APSE regarding their continued studies.

Waiver requirements link:

http://dhs.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/document/c_262841.pdf ACRE and CESP requirements are located in Appendix C on pages 75-81, 115-121.