

# Certified Family Peer Specialist

## Candidate Handbook



National Federation of Families | 9841 Washingtonian Blvd., Suite 200, Gaithersburg, MD  
20878 | 240-403-1901 | [www.ffcmh.org](http://www.ffcmh.org) | [ffcmh@ffcmh.org](mailto:ffcmh@ffcmh.org)

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## **PART 1: ABOUT THE CFPS**

Congratulations! You've taken the first step toward becoming a Certified Family Peer Specialist (CFPS).™

This handbook contains detailed information about certification and provides a step-by-step guide to the CFPS application process. Let's get started.

### **What is the Certified Family Peer Specialist (CFPS) Assessment and Certification?**

The Certified Family Peer Specialist (formerly Certified Parent Support Provider) assessment and certification is the process of demonstrating your experience, training, learning, and supervision to be assessed by a review board. The primary purpose of the certification application review is to be sure that individuals employed as Family Peer Specialists meet the highest standards of knowledge, ethics, and practice in their work with other families and caregivers.

The CFPS certification defines the knowledge, attitudes and skills that are recommended for helping families with children—across their lifespan—and other family members—siblings, spouses, parents, etc.—who are experiencing, or have experienced emotional, behavioral, mental health, or substance use challenges and/or intellectual disabilities.

Certification promotes ethical practice and creates employment opportunities for many disciplines across the United States, Canada, and around the world.

### **Why National Certification?**

National certification:

- Ensures uniformity of core knowledge by practitioners
- Endorses continuing professional development and credibility
- Advances uniform standards and scope of practice
- Promotes ethical practice

Benefits for the CFPS:

- Reliable examinations demonstrate mastery of core competencies that prepare CFPS for their careers
- Increased professional recognition and acceptance
- Job opportunities for holders of the CFPS credential

### **How was the CFPS created?**

**The National Federation of Families** (formerly the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health) collaborated with family organizations, researchers, and treatment providers to collect and organize information about the role of family support services in systems of care and other settings.

**The Parent Partner Assessment Workgroup (PPAW)** met regularly in 2009 and 2010. PPAW, through the National Federation, began developing national certification for Parent Support Providers in August 2010 and the first certificates were awarded in June 2012.

A true certification program assesses individuals against peer-developed standards and competencies and provides a credential that is time limited. A standardized certification examination must be independent of any specific course or curriculum. In addition, continued competency is enhanced through ongoing renewal requirements and adherence to the **Code of Ethics**.

### **CFPS Exam Content Outline Process**

To create this exam, a national representative group of volunteer subject matter experts participated in a **Job Task Analysis** study to identify the major categories of information and knowledge, skills, and attitudes within each domain, based on the jobs and tasks a certified individual might perform.

### **CFPS Exam Content Outline**

The CFPS exam questions were developed by considering the importance and frequency of data obtained from the Job Task Analysis study conducted in June 2011. The resulting data were converted to percentages, and the percentages were used to determine the number of questions related to each domain (now called Standard of Practice) and competency that should appear on the multiple-choice CFPS™ exam.

The **Core Competencies** include:

- Resiliency, Recovery, and Wellness
- Effecting Change
- Resources and Natural Supports
- Systems Knowledge and Navigation
- Professional Responsibilities

To learn more about the **Core Competencies**, click on this link:

<https://www.ffcmh.org/certification-competencies>

### **Why become a Certified Family Peer Specialist (CFPS)?**

**Certified Family Peer Specialists** bring personal, lived experience successfully supporting their own loved ones to assist other families/caregivers in multiple family-serving systems. The purpose is to bring their own family's voice to the planning and evaluation process of public and private services for individuals with mental health or substance use challenges—often across the lifespan.

A CFPS uses personal experience, combined with regular supervision and specialized training to help other families with loved ones experiencing emotional, behavioral, mental health, or substance use challenges, and/or intellectual disabilities, to understand their loved one's wellness and recovery needs.

A CFPS teaches and coaches other families and caregivers to speak for their values, promote the best interests of their loved ones, and become equal partners with professionals in the delivery of services. The overall goal is to decrease the stigma often associated with mental health challenges, and promote effective, strength-based services that are family-driven.

### **What is the definition of “family peer support”?**

The *focus* of the service is coaching families to advocate for their loved ones. The *scope* of the service involves supporting and assisting families to navigate through multiple agencies and human service systems (e.g., health, behavioral health, education, social services, etc.).

It is strength-based and established on mutual learning from common lived experience and coaching that:

- promotes wellness, trust, and hope
- increases communication and informed decision making and self-determination
- identifies and develops advocacy skills
- teaches or coaches parenting, family relationship, self-care, and wellness/recovery skills
- increases access to community resources and the use of formal and natural supports
- reduces the isolation that families experience when their loved ones are facing emotional, behavioral, and mental health challenges
- teaches and coaches others to feel capable of advocating for themselves, their family, and their loved ones' needs

### **What is the *primary* qualification for the individual who applies for certification as a Family Peer Specialist?**

It is an individual:

- whose primary responsibility is parenting a child or acting as a primary caregiver for another family member with emotional, developmental, behavioral, mental health, and/or substance use challenges, and/or intellectual disabilities
- who can articulate the understanding of their experience with another parent or other caregiver

This person can be the:

- birth parent

- adoptive parent
- family member standing in for an absent parent (e.g., aunt, uncle, older sibling, grandparent, etc.)
- person chosen by the family to function in the role of a parent (friend, neighbor, etc.)
- sibling
- spouse
- adult child of a parent

### **How will I demonstrate that I have "lived experience?"**

The CFPS application contains questions asking for this information. There, you will describe your experiences in detail and the lessons learned from those experiences. Also required will be documentation from a supervisor familiar with your ability to articulate lessons learned.

### **In my state we use a different title other than Family Peer Specialist. Will we have to change the name the organization uses?**

**Certified Family Peer Specialist** is a title used for national certification and is intended to be broad enough to encompass all state and local titles. We know that this work is done under many titles throughout the United States and internationally.

The NFF certification will be for a “**Family Peer Specialist**.” We recommend you refer to the definition of Family Peer Specialist rather than the title your state uses to understand if you are eligible to apply for certification.

### **What training is required for a CFPS?**

The National Federation of Families defines the necessary content and competencies for the CFPS. There is no list of approved trainings or educational programs. Each applicant is responsible for providing documentation to demonstrate which competency was met by a training or educational event, self-study, internship, or mentorship.

You may also refer to your own state’s required trainings to help you prepare for the exam. This exam should NOT be a substitute for your state’s requirements.

For courses in your area, we recommend checking with your local, family-run organization and/or your county or state department of behavioral health. You may also find courses through our online list of resources:

<https://www.ffcmh.org/overview-of-resources>

You can also find some options for training we recommend here:

<https://www.ffcmh.org/training-required-for-cfpsexam>



## **Additional Training Topic Suggestions**

- Effective use of lived experience
- Reflective listening skills
- Confidentiality and ethics (including the Code of Ethics)
- Effective, assertive verbal and written communication
- Child and youth development
- Family dynamics
- Introduction to mental and behavioral health disorders
- Introduction to special needs
- Suicide awareness and prevention
- Crisis counseling
- Substance use across the lifespan
- Effects of trauma and use of a trauma-informed approach
- Social skills training
- Mentoring leadership in others
- Use of family-driven approach to emotional health
- Coaching for personal change and crisis prevention
- Use of community resources, including natural supports
- Advocacy across/within systems (education, health, behavioral health, benefits, etc.)
- Child welfare issues
- Juvenile justice and justice issues
- Networking strategies
- Medicaid and HIPAA regulations
- Statistics/data collection, evaluation, and achieving outcomes
- Local, state, and national mental health systems and resources

## **What benefits can be expected from programs with Certified Family Peer Specialists (CFPS)?**

The research-based outcomes of utilizing CFPSs in programmatic settings include parents or other caregivers who will be able to:

- find and collaborate in treatment and educational services for their loved one
- understand their loved one's health and well-being
- respond calmly and feel less stress
- support and increase the resiliency skills of their loved one
- increase school success and graduation rates
- reduce the need for expensive hospitalization and long-term residential treatment

## **PART 2: THE CFPS™ CODE OF ETHICS**

### **What is the CFPS Code of Ethics?**

The **Code of Ethics** is a series of promises in four areas of professional practice that you will affirm when you apply for the Certified Family Peer Specialist certification. By following the Code of Ethics, you will ensure that the families, parents (or other primary caregivers) you support, and the staff you interact with will experience services that meet rigorous, ethical standards.

### **Code of Ethics for the Certified Family Peer Specialist**

*By completing certification as a **Certified Family Peer Specialist** with the National Federation of Families, I pledge to:*

- Share my experience as a family member/caregiver when it may help others
- Acknowledge that each family member's experiences may be different than mine
- Take responsibility for clarifying my role as a Certified Family Peer Specialist and as a family member/caregiver of a loved one who experienced and/or is experiencing emotional, mental health, and/or substance use challenges
- Build partnerships with others involved in the care of our children
- Commit to honesty in my interactions as a Certified Family Peer Specialist and expect the same from others
- Commit to a non-judgmental and respectful attitude in my interactions with and discussions regarding families
- Commit to a non-adversarial approach to advocacy in my role as a Certified Family Peer Specialist

*In order to fulfill this pledge, the Certified Family Peer Specialist agrees to abide by the following principles, rules, and procedures:*

#### **Principle 1 – Integrity**

*In order to maintain high standards of competence and integrity as a Certified Family Peer Specialist, I will:*

1. Apply resiliency, wellness, recovery, family-driven approach, youth-guided, and peer-to- peer mutual-learning principles in everyday interactions with families/caregivers
2. Champion the family members' ethical decision-making and personal responsibility consistent with their culture, values, and beliefs
3. Champion the family members' voice and the articulation of their values

in evaluation and planning related to their loved one's behavioral health

4. Teach skills, mentor, coach, and support family members to articulate goals that reflect their needs and strengths
5. Support family members to be fully informed and prepared to make decisions and understand the implications of these decisions
6. Maintain high standards of professional competence and integrity
7. Only assist families/caregivers whose concerns are within my competency as determined by my training, experience, and on-going supervision/consultation
8. Not establish or maintain a relationship for the sole purpose of financial remuneration
9. Terminate a relationship when it becomes reasonably clear that the peer relationship is no longer the desire of the family member

## **Principle 2 – Safety**

In order to maintain the safety of all family members involved with CFPS services, I will:

1. Maintain confidentiality in personal and professional communications and ensure that family members have authorized use or release of any and all information about themselves or family members for whom they have legal authority, including but not limited to verbal statements, writings, or re-release of documents
2. Respect the privacy of the agencies and refrain from distributing internal or draft documents or private or internal conversations
3. Comply with all laws and regulations applicable to the jurisdiction in which the peer support services are provided
4. When complying with laws and regulations involving mandatory reporting of harm, abuse, or neglect, make every effort to involve the family members in the reporting process and ensure that no further harm is done to family members as the result of the reporting
5. Discuss and explain to family members the rights, roles, expectations, benefits, and limitations of the peer support process
6. Always ensure clarity about my role and the role of family members
7. Maintain positive relationships with family members, and refrain from a premature or unannounced termination of the relationship until a reasonable alternative arrangement is made for continuation of services
8. Abstain from engaging in intimate emotional or physical relationships with family members engaged in a family support relationship

9. Neither offer nor accept gifts exceeding \$25 value related to the professional service of peer support, including, but not limited to personal barter services, payment for referrals, or other remunerations. This also includes participating in personal financial transactions with family members engaged in a peer support relationship

### **Principle 3 - Professional Responsibility**

*Through educational activities, supervision, and personal commitment, I will:*

1. Stay informed on current research, policy, and developments in the field of family peer support and behavioral health which relates to my practice area and human development, health, and well-being
2. Engage in supportive relationships that include skill-building not exceeding my scope of practice, experience, training, education, or competence
3. Seek appropriate professional supervision/consultation or assistance for personal problems or conflicts that may impair or affect my work/volunteer performance, judgment, or the peer relationship
4. File a complaint with the NFF when there is reason to believe that another Certified Family Peer Specialist is or has been engaged in conduct that violates the law or this code (NOTE: Filing a complaint to the NFF is an additional requirement, not a substitute for or alternative to any duty of filing report(s) required by statute or regulation.)
5. Refrain from distorting, misusing, or misrepresenting my experience, knowledge, skills, or research findings
6. In the role of a supervisor/consultant, be responsible for maintaining the quality of my own skills as a supervisor/consultant
7. Give credit to persons for published or unpublished original ideas, and take reasonable precautions to ensure that their employer or affiliate organization promotes and advertises materials accurately and factually
8. In the role of a CFPS, maintain the highest level of professionalism as it relates to my virtual presence which includes online meetings and postings on social media and in email correspondence

### **Principle 4 - Certification Responsibilities**

*As a Certified Family Peer Specialist or recertification applicant, I will:*

1. Remain current on certification fees
2. Comply with the Code of Ethics and re-certification requirements set by the NFF
3. Only use the CFPS (Certified Family Peer Specialist) credential or

represent myself as having that credential when in full compliance with credentialing requirements

4. Cooperate with any ethics investigation by any professional organization or government agency, and truthfully represent and disclose facts to such organizations or agencies when requested or when necessary, to preserve the integrity of the peer support profession
5. Notify the NFF of any legal action with potential impact on the practice of peer support, including but not limited to: the filing in any court of information; a complaint; indictment; conviction; revocation of suspended imposition of sentence; revocation of probation/parole; filing of any charge or action before a state, tribal, or federal regulatory agency or judicial body concerning the practice of peer support or related professions; or a matter before another certification body. Such notification shall be made within sixty (60) days of the filing of such charge or action, and they shall provide documentation of the resolution of such action within sixty (60) days of that resolution.

## **PART 3: PLANNING YOUR CFPS APPLICATION AND READINESS TO APPLY**

### **How do I apply for certification and what qualifications are required?**

The NFF has gone paperless and only electronic submissions using our online application will be accepted. Click here for the application:

<https://www.ffcmh.org/certification-application>

Applicants must document that within the past **five (5) years prior to application** they have accrued:

- **A minimum of 500 hours of employment or volunteer experience** in the field of family support, without regard to the actual title used in the program where they work. Examples: parent partner, parent advocate, peer navigator, family support specialist
- **A minimum of 20 hours of supervision** to guide your understanding of your personal experience parenting or acting as a primary caregiver and your ability to separate your experiences from the experiences of other families and caregivers. This supervision required of all CFPS applicants and CFPS certificate holders is key to ensuring that all families/caregivers receive objective, appropriate, and compassionate guidance as they navigate the family-serving systems (**NOTE:** The Supervision Verification Form is submitted separately by the applicant's supervisor. Each applicant should send the link to this form to their supervisor:  
[https://ffcm.formstack.com/forms/cfps\\_certification\\_verification\\_of\\_supervisor\\_form](https://ffcm.formstack.com/forms/cfps_certification_verification_of_supervisor_form))

- **A minimum of 88 contact hours of training in the CFPS “Core Competencies”** is required to be sure that you know the most current and successful methods of assisting families/caregivers with loved ones experiencing emotional, behavioral health, substance use, or mental health challenges and/or intellectual disabilities.

Click here to view the competencies: <https://www.ffcmh.org/certification-competencies>

All relevant trainings should be recorded using the online **Certification Training Documentation Form** (a section of the CFPS application).

This form includes fields for you to provide the following detailed information:

- Titles of courses you completed during the past five (5) years
- Course presenters’ names and credentials OR job title/organization
- Dates and number of credit hours earned in each course
- Original FULL course descriptions
- Lessons learned, including specific strategies/tools and how these lessons are applied in family peer support
- Name of core competency addressed in each course
- Courses or trainings *provided by* the applicant (**NOTE:** A maximum of 20 of the 88 hours may be credited for courses provided *by* the applicant. Only one instance per training will be accepted and all elements above are required for these trainings, too.)

This training may include:

- your job in-service sessions (except those specific to your organization only, not applicable across the family peer workforce)
- conferences
- college courses (dependent on the course, partial hours excepted)
- workshops
- tutorials especially planned for CFPS applicants
- other meaningful learning experiences that prepare you to take the CFPS exam

In addition to the training and family peer work requirements, you must **describe your experience in detail** as a parent or **primary** caregiver to a loved one with behavioral health challenges, and your work with families who have loved ones with emotional, behavioral, mental health, or substance use challenges and/or intellectual disabilities on the CFPS online application. In your lived experience narrative, you will need to tell your family story with relevant details, i.e., diagnoses, systems navigated, etc. Find exemplary lived experience narratives here:

<https://www.ffcmh.org/lived-experience-exemplars>

**You must meet all eligibility requirements** as of the date of your

application. CFPS candidates must agree in writing to the terms and conditions as noted in the CFPS application, which includes agreement to abide by the **Code of Ethics**. Applications accompanied by the \$50 non-refundable certification application fee will be reviewed.

### When can I apply?

**You can apply for certification at any time** by completing the online application: Click here for the application: <https://www.ffcmh.org/certification-application>

### Do I need to submit my CEUs course completion certificates as proof of course attendance?

There is no current requirement to submit CEU completion certificates. There is however a required training hours documentation form (mentioned above) where you will be able to provide the details of your course work.

### Certification Fees

The **total certification fee for the initial three (3) years is \$400.00**. This fee covers the cost of processing the application, providing a secure exam site, on-going monitoring of the security and credibility of the exam items, and monitoring and enforcement of the ethical conduct of individuals holding the CFPS certification. It is a fee similar to other national certifications for similar work.

The **non-refundable** portion is the **\$50.00 processing fee** for the application. Once the application is complete and the applicant has been approved, an **exam fee of \$350.00** must be submitted **prior** to taking the exam. If the applicant receives a passing score, there is no additional fee for three (3) years.

**Recertification** will *not* require an exam and will therefore be a lower fee of **\$250.00 (NOTE: Recertification is reviewed later in this handbook.)**.

### Fee Payment Options

**There are three (3) payment options:**

1. Online at <https://www.ffcmh.org/certification-application>
2. Credit card payment by phone, assisted by National Federation staff (240- 403-1901) or via a secure link e-mailed to you
3. Check mailed to:  
National Federation of Families  
9841 Washingtonian Blvd., Suite 200  
Gaithersburg, MD, 20878

### Fees:

- Initial application processing fee (**non-refundable**) \$ 50.00

• Initial Examination/Certification fee	\$ 350.00
• Recertification fee	\$ 250.00
• Re-test or Reinstatement fee	\$ 150.00
• Insufficient funds check or credit card processing fee	\$ 50.00

## Fee Refunds

The \$50.00 application processing fee is **not** refundable. It is possible to completely withdraw the application before testing or re-testing and receive a partial refund of the \$350.00 certification exam fee.

## PART 4: APPLICANTS WITH SPECIAL REQUESTS OR CIRCUMSTANCES

### Can I request CFPS exam accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?

If you have a disability covered by a national disabilities program (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act), and you wish to request an accommodation for a qualified disability, please complete our “**ADA Request for Accommodations Form**”: [https://49bf42da-b858-4965-a674-2901508f2c7d.usrfiles.com/uqd/49bf42\\_294dbc65712f4df9999907af98004a59.pdf](https://49bf42da-b858-4965-a674-2901508f2c7d.usrfiles.com/uqd/49bf42_294dbc65712f4df9999907af98004a59.pdf)

The information you provide, along with any documentation regarding your disability and your need for exam accommodations is strictly confidential. Documentation is sufficient if it substantiates that the individual has a disability and needs the reasonable accommodation requested.

Sufficient medical documentation describes the nature, severity, and duration of the impairment, the activity, or activities that the impairment limits, as well as the extent to which the impairment limits the employee's ability to perform the activity or activities, and should substantiate why the accommodation is needed.

**NOTE:** The exam site nearest you may be unable to provide special accommodations. Depending upon your request, you may need to travel to a different site than the one nearest you, and some accommodations may require an additional fee.

If you have questions about your special accommodation needs, please contact the NFF at the earliest possible date before submitting your application.



### **Will I be considered for CFPS certification if I have a police record?**

NFF will not be performing a background check on any CFPS candidates. A police record does not affect one's ability to become nationally certified as a Family Peer Specialist; however, employers often conduct a background check on individuals working within the health and human services field before they are hired.

### **Is the exam offered in languages other than English?**

Currently, the exam is available in English only. A candidate may arrange for a translator. The costs associated with a translator will be the responsibility of the candidate.

### **CFPS Quality Assurance Policies**

The NFF is committed to protecting and defending the CFPS credential. Every applicant and CFPS certified through the NFF must adhere to the CFPS Code of Ethics. When it is believed that an applicant or a CFPS has violated the Code of Ethics, a supervisor may complete the **Ethics Complaint Form**. A person using the Ethics Complaint form should attach all necessary documentation in support of this complaint. Upon receipt, the NFF will determine whether to investigate the inquiry.

**Click here for the ethics complaint form:**

[https://ffcm.formstack.com/forms/certified\\_family\\_peer\\_support\\_complaint\\_form](https://ffcm.formstack.com/forms/certified_family_peer_support_complaint_form)

The NFF CFPS Ethics Board has the power to but is not obligated to investigate all allegations of unprofessional and unethical conduct that may be harmful to the public, colleagues, or that otherwise may be contrary to the objectives of the CFPS Code of Ethics. If, during the course of its investigation, the CFPS Ethics Board determines that there may be additional violations of the code, the CFPS Ethics Board may investigate and determine the remedy for the violation.

Matters involving fraudulent use of the credential will be investigated and aggressively pursued by the National Federation of Families to protect the credibility of the CFPS.

The CFPS Ethics Board reports its findings to the Executive Director of the NFF and determines candidate status. The full protocol for CFPS Ethics Breach can be found at the bottom of this webpage: <https://www.ffcmh.org/certification-cfps-code-of-ethics>

## **PART 5: APPLICATION REVIEW PROCEDURES**

### **What happens to my application packet once I submit it?**

Applications received with all required documentation, meeting all eligibility requirements, and for which payment has been received, will be processed, and then

reviewed by the NFF review board.

**NOTE:** To avoid delay of your application, please be sure to complete all sections on the required forms. Incomplete applications or non-payment will delay the application review process. (This will not disqualify applicants from taking the exam later.) CFPS candidates must agree to the terms and conditions as noted in the CFPS application, which includes agreement to the CFPS Code of Ethics.

When the NFF review board has approved your application, you will be eligible to take the exam. The CFPS exam, combined with your application materials will demonstrate that you have mastered the skills required to become a Certified Family Peer Specialist.

### Is an exam required?

Yes, passing the national CFPS exam is required for certification. You will be authorized to take the computer based CFPS exam once you have met the eligibility criteria of lived experience, training, work experience, and agreement of adherence to the Code of Ethics.

### When is the exam available?

The exam is available year-round at sites throughout the United States and its territories, Canada, and internationally. Click here to view the Pearson VUE website and learn more about the exam process and locations:

<https://home.pearsonvue.com/cpsp>

### How will I know that I've been approved to take the exam?

Once the NFF review board approves your application, an NFF staff member will notify you via email whether your application has been approved and if you are eligible to take the CFPS exam.

### How long does the review process take?

The review process can take 4-6 weeks, with an average of one month. **NOTE:** Applicants must take the exam **within 6 months of being approved**. Scheduling after the 6-month period will require prior approval from the Certification Commission for Family Support.

### How do I register for the exam?

**Below are the steps:**

1. Once your application is approved, an NFF staff member will notify you by email that your application has been approved and will ask you to confirm your contact information, also by email.\*
2. Once that information is received and the exam fee of **\$350.00** is paid, you'll be registered with the **Pearson VUE** test center.

3. Within a few days of your having been registered with Pearson VUE, you will receive an eligibility status email from Pearson VUE providing a unique candidate ID number and test registration instructions. The email notification includes the ID number and contact information for scheduling your exam at a Pearson VUE test center location, date, and time convenient for you. (Please see below for Pearson contact information.  
**NOTE:** If the Pearson notification email does not arrive within a few days, please check your Spam/Junk box.)

**\*IMPORTANT:** The contact information you provide to the NFF must match EXACTLY what is on your photo ID that you plan to present at the test center. If the information does not match, you run the risk of being denied entrance to the exam.

**Be sure to notify the NFF of any name or contact information changes.**

Click here for our change of information form: <https://www.ffcmh.org/change-of-information-form>

**You can schedule your exam by phone or online:**

- **Phone:** 1-877-839-7768 (Ask for CFPS [or CPSP].)  
Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Central Time
- **Online:** [www.pearsonvue.com/cpsp](http://www.pearsonvue.com/cpsp)

**NOTE:** You will need to establish an account with Pearson VUE using the candidate ID provided.

## **PART 6: TAKING THE CFPS EXAM**

### **Where are the exam centers located and when are exams available?**

The national CFPS exam is administered through **Pearson VUE** test centers, located worldwide, and available year-round at testing sites in both urban and rural areas. In some locations, the site is only available during standard 9-5 work hours. Some sites have evening and weekend hours. When you call or schedule your exam online with the test center, you will have the opportunity to select a test center location nearest you.

### **What happens on the day of the CFPS exam?**

Candidates should report to the Pearson VUE test center at the address they chose and are advised to make sure they know the exact location prior to the exam date to prevent getting lost and arriving late. Allowing extra time for a traffic delay, a flat tire, or poor weather conditions is also strongly recommended. **Plan to arrive at least 30 minutes before your appointment.**

Candidates will also be required to provide a signature and may have their digital photo taken when checking in. Some sites require fingerprints.

While not required, the NFF advises that the exam taker bring their email confirmation to the test center. However, it is sufficient to have the valid ID mentioned above with the name and address on the ID matching the information on the scheduling confirmation email you will receive.

**NOTE:** Candidates must check in using **ONE (1) form of valid ID, which must be a government-issued photo ID with signature** (driver's license, government-issued photo ID, or passport).

### **Hazardous Weather or Local Emergencies**

In the event of hazardous weather or any other unforeseen emergencies occurring on your exam day, Pearson VUE will determine whether circumstances require rescheduling of the testing date and time. Every attempt will be made to administer the exam as scheduled.

Examples include:

- Disaster resulting in an officially declared "local state of emergency"
- Sudden illness or injury (A doctor's verification may be required.)
- Death of immediate family member within two (2) business days prior to the exam date (A copy of the death certificate or obituary may need to be provided for consideration of the cancellation and rescheduling fee to be waived.)

### **Rescheduling Process**

Candidates who inform the Pearson Vue test center at least one business day before their scheduled exam may be able to postpone their exam until a later time within the next 30 days.

### **No-Shows or Late-for-Appointment Policies**

Candidates who are late or do not arrive for the testing appointment, or who do not cancel or reschedule their testing appointment will lose the fees submitted. They will be required to complete and submit a retest application along with the retest fee to the NFF.

## **PART 7: EXAM RESULTS**

### **When will I receive my exam results?**

A score report will be provided at the test site upon completion of the exam. Your overall score will only be either "Pass" or "Fail"—not a numerical score.

Additionally, you will be provided with a “Pass” or “Fail” as a summary for each information domain of the exam. You will not be told how many actual questions you passed or failed. No results will be provided over the phone.

The following information appears on a score report:

- Candidate Name
- Candidate ID
- Exam Title
- Minimum Passing Score (69 percent)
- Exam Date
- Result (Pass/Fail)
- Test Site

### When will I receive my CFPS credentialing certificate?

Generally, you can expect to receive your certificate within 7-14 business days after NFF has received your *official* score.\*

**\*NOTE:** At the beginning of each month, Pearson VUE test center emails the NFF its official monthly score report listing the test candidates from that month and their pass/fail status. (The NFF is proud to be a good steward of the environment and has gone paperless, so certificates will be emailed.)

### What if I do not pass the CFPS exam?

If you do not pass the exam, you may be eligible to take the exam two (2) more times. A retest will be allowed by submitting a **CFPS Exam Retake Request Form** and retest fee.

Click here for the retest form: <https://www.ffcmh.org/exam-retake-request>

Once the Retest Application is complete, an authorization ID number will again be provided for scheduling another exam through: [www.pearsonvue.com/cpsp](http://www.pearsonvue.com/cpsp)

**NOTE:** There is a minimum waiting period of **60 days** before retaking the exam. You are allowed **90 days** from the retest approval notification to complete the retest.

After three (3) unsuccessful attempts, you must wait **six (6) months** before starting the application process again. This period allows you time to prepare adequately for the retest and prevents over-exposure to the exam.

### Name, Address, Email, Phone, or Other Contact Information Changes

Candidates and those already certified should be sure to notify the NFF of any contact information changes while maintaining certification. This is the only way that the certification office can notify you about important certification and recertification information.

Click here for the contact information update form:  
<https://www.ffcmh.org/change-of-information-form>

### **What if I think the CFPS exam was not fairly administered?**

Appeals of the denial of initial certification can be made for:

- The technical accuracy and grading of questions
- Fairness of the execution of the certification testing procedures

**NOTE:** Requests for an appeal must be made no later than **thirty (30)** days after the applicant is denied certification. E-mail [certification@ffcmh.org](mailto:certification@ffcmh.org) to file an appeal.

### **Exam Security**

All exam materials are the property of the NFF. Removal of any material from the exam room by unauthorized persons is prohibited. Any attempt to reproduce or memorize all or part of the exam is prohibited by law. Breach of exam security by an applicant will be considered a violation of the CFPS Code of Conduct.

### **Statement of Non-Discrimination**

The National Federation of Families does not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.

### **Confidentiality**

The NFF follows required best practices concerning confidentiality of candidates, certificate holders, score results, and all certification related materials, except those considered public information.

Information about candidates and their exam results is confidential. Studies and reports concerning candidates will contain no information identifiable with any candidate, unless authorized by the candidate.

All personal data including applications, payments, scores, and contact information maintained by the NFF or its testing partners is stored in confidential electronic and hard copy files with access limited to authorized and designated staff.

Information that is considered public and subject to release upon a written request includes:

- whether the individual is an applicant or holds the CFPS credential
- the expiration date of the individual's CFPS credential
- whether or not the individual's CFPS credential is in good standing
- whether the individual's CFPS credential has been suspended, revoked, and there is a public recommendation for remediation to good standing

## **PART 8: RECERTIFICATION**

### **What is the Recertification process?**

Recertification is required within **three (3) years**. Recertification does *not* require taking a second exam. It does require providing documentation of continuing education or training.

The recertification fee for a **three (3) year** period is **\$250**. **Recertification requirements include submission of these items:**

- **Recertification Application** <https://www.ffcmh.org/recertification>
- **Training Hours Documentation Form** showing **44 contact hours** of training (continuing education credits) related to the CFPS competencies
- Your signature indicating that you have read and understand the CFPS **Code of Ethics**
- **Recertification fee** of \$250.00

## **PART 9: INVOKING INACTIVE STATUS**

A Certified Family Peer Specialist whose certification is in good standing with the NFF and is in good standing with their employer or volunteer agency may request inactive status for **up to three (3) years** if unable to meet the requirements of recertification due to, but not limited to, the following:

- A decline in physical health and/or mental health
- Extenuating personal circumstances
- Loss of or change in employment/volunteer status
- Birth of a child
- Military deployment
- Other extenuating employment/volunteer circumstances

Inactive status will *not* be granted for failure to comply with the ongoing education guidelines of certification or reported violations of the [Code of Ethics](#).

When you petition for a reinstatement of active status, you will be required to document a minimum of 44 contact hours of training, demonstrate continued good standing with the Code of Ethics, and pay the recertification fee of \$250. During the inactive status period, you will be restricted from utilizing the term “nationally Certified Family Peer Specialist” in any manner until you return to active status.

To invoke inactive status complete, sign, and date the Invoke Inactive Status Form: <https://www.ffcmh.org/invoke-inactive-status>

## **PART 10: COMPLAINTS & CERTIFICATION REVOCATION**

An employer may file a complaint against either a Certified Family Peer Specialist or CFPS applicant, and the National Federation of Families may deny, suspend, or revoke a certification on several grounds. An individual wishing to file a complaint about a CFPS must contact that CFPS's employer to do so.

For more information, please refer to these resources:

- [CFPS Code of Ethics Breach Protocol](#) (Scroll to bottom of page)
- [CFPS Complaint Form](#)
- [Certification Revocation Appeal Form](#)

## **PART 11: CERTIFICATION & EXAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is certification?**

Certification is the process through which an individual voluntarily submits their credentials for review based upon clearly identified competencies, criteria, or standards. The primary purpose of certification is to ensure that individuals employed in any state in this field meet the highest standards of performance.

### **What is a "Certified Family Peer Specialist?"**

A Certified Family Peer Specialist™ can articulate lessons learned from their own "lived experience" parenting a child—of any age—or acting as a primary caregiver for another family member with an emotional, behavioral, mental health, and/or substance use challenge. This individual has specialized training to assist and support families with loved ones experiencing emotional, developmental, behavioral, mental health, and/or substance use challenges. A Certified Family Peer Specialist partners with child- and family-serving systems to improve family outcomes and strives to eliminate stigma.

### **Why is there a certification fee?**

The **total** certification fee for the first three (3) years is **\$400.00**. This is the cost of processing the application, provision of a secure test site, on-going monitoring of the security and defensibility of the exam items, and monitoring and enforcement of the ethical conduct of individuals holding the CFPS certification. It is a fee consistent with other national certifications for similar work. The fee supports the process of your certification and covers testing and related administrative expenses, including subcontracts to psychometricians for essential tasks and built-in securities to ensure a fair and valid exam. **Recertification will not require a test and will therefore be a lower fee of \$250.00.**

### **When is the application due and how often is the exam given?**

Applications can be submitted at any time because the test is available year-round



and upon request.

### **How many questions are there and how long is the test?**

There are **120 questions** on the exam. **Two hours and fifteen minutes (2.25 hours)** are allotted to allow candidates time to review the Non-Disclosure Agreement and Training Tutorial before the exam begins.

### **Where and how can I find training venues?**

Trainings are available through a variety of agencies and online resources. You may find available courses by contacting resources listed on our website:

[www.ffcmh.org/resources](http://www.ffcmh.org/resources)

Click here to view more information about training for the CFPS credential:

<https://www.ffcmh.org/training-required-for-cfpsexam>

### **Is there a practice test with sample questions?**

Our website offers a short list of sample questions in the sample test:

<https://www.ffcmh.org/certification-practicetest>

### **Will I be able to see my score?**

Scores are provided as pass/fail only.

### **Are there any other study guides besides the NFF 12-question practice test?**

The practice test is the only guide provided by the NFF, but other guides may be available online. We suggest you check with your place of employment, as well as city, county, or state departments of behavioral or mental health for other options.

### **Are NFF scholarships available for certification/recertification?**

Currently, there are no scholarships available through the NFF. We suggest researching scholarship opportunities in your area.

If you have any additional questions regarding certification or recertification, please contact our main office at 240-403-1901 / [certification@ffcmh.org](mailto:certification@ffcmh.org)

**Additional FAQs can be found on this webpage:**

<https://www.ffcmh.org/certification-faq>

**We wish you the best of luck with your CFPS application!**