

Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies
Family and Community Development Specialist Training
Information Sheet
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Illinois Community Action Agencies established the Family and Community Development (FCD) Program in 1995 in response to a predominant need for comprehensive family assistance and case management in many areas, including prevention and intervention services for family violence, mental health problems, drug and alcohol abuse, and medical illness. With the 2008 graduating class, the number of FCD specialists now exceeds 1000 in the Illinois Network.

The FCD program goals are to cultivate self-reliance in families at risk of long-term welfare dependency and to work with communities to identify economic opportunities; all accomplished using the strengths-based approach. There are three components to the FCD program: family development, community development and outcomes-based program planning. Community Action Agency staff participates in an initial 12 day certification training covering these three components.

The FCD specialist training is conducted in collaboration with the University of Illinois-Springfield, Department of Social Work. A team of trainers guide the FCD specialist candidates through the curriculum utilizing multiple approaches: lecture, group work and discussion and modeling. Students are encouraged to form discussion groups outside the classroom to increase their comprehension and understanding of the training. Upon successful completion of the training, which includes both homework assignments and a final exam, participants are certified as Family and Community Development Specialists. Additionally, follow-up and supplemental training throughout the year is offered to the FCD specialists – focusing on customer motivation and interviewing skills.

The twelve units of the FCD Specialist training are:

- Poverty Awareness
- History of Community Action and Introduction to Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) (online unit)
- Overview of Family and Community Development and Diversity (online unit)
- Helping and Interviewing
- Assessment
- Goal Setting and Case Planning
- Group Work
- Community Advocacy and Development (online unit)
- Professional Development and Self-Help
- Intermediate ROMA (outcomes and logic models) (online unit)
- The Illinois Family Self Sufficiency Scale

Eight units are presented in classroom and four units are presented online utilizing the Moodle e-learning platform hosted by the University of Illinois-Springfield. To attain the specialist designation, all students are required to be in full attendance of all training days, complete ten reflection papers and pass the final exam.

FCD Specialists are required to recertify their status every five years. IACAA offers annual recertification training to these specialists focused on emerging issues in the Community Action field. All trainings are a part of IACAA's Professional Development initiative to provide quality, relevant training at an affordable cost.

Additional information:

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