



# Human Services

*A Passion for Helping People*

## **COLLEGE OF DUPAGE HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAM RECOVERY SUPPORT SPECIALIST CERTIFICATE APPLICATION PACKET**

### **Is the CRSS Certificate Program Right for You?**

Here are a few questions you might ask yourself to determine if being a CRSS is a good fit for you:

1. Am I comfortable with my present and/or past challenges with mental health or co-occurring mental health and substance use challenges being known by my colleagues and the people I serve?
2. Am I able to share information about how I am/was able to overcome these challenges? Am I willing to do so?
3. Do I feel that my experiences related to dealing with mental health or co-occurring mental health and substance use challenges have value for others going through similar challenges?
4. Am I willing to learn how to share my experiences in a way that promotes hope and supports another person in their journey toward recovery?

If you feel you can confidently answer yes to 3 out of 4 of the above, you may want to pursue the CRSS. If more than 1 of the above gives you pause, then it may not be the credential for you.

### **How to Apply for the CRSS Certificate Program**

To be considered for admission to the College of DuPage Human Services CRSS certificate program as a certificate seeking student, complete the following steps:

1. Email the CRSS Student Success Coach to get started!  
Nancy Ortiz-Romero, MSW, LSW  
[ortiz-romeron@cod.edu](mailto:ortiz-romeron@cod.edu)
2. Be admitted to College of DuPage. If you are not a current COD student, [click here to apply](#)!
3. Complete the CRSS Success Grant application online using the College of DuPage Scholarship Portal. See Page 2 for instructions.
4. Schedule a meeting with the CRSS Student Success Coach after submitting your application.

## How to Complete the CRSS Success Grant Application

College of DuPage uses a scholarship application system called AcademicWorks for all grants and scholarships, including the CRSS Success Grant. There is a 3-part process to complete the CRSS Success Grant application.

### Part I: Prepare your application

Before you start your application online, you will need to read and sign information in this application packet. You will need to upload a signed copy of the information in this packet to your online application later in the application process.

- Print a copy of this packet.
- Read the **Applicant Information** and **Code of Ethics for Certified Recovery Support Specialists** on Pages 3-7.
- Sign the **Personal Statement** on Page 8 confirming you have read and agree to the Code of Ethics.
- Read and sign the **Statement of Self-Disclosure** on Page 8.
- Complete and sign the **Application Acknowledgement** on Page 9.
- Scan a copy of Pages 8-9 and save to your computer as a PDF. You will need this PDF in Part III.

The application requires an essay in Part III (for first-time applicants only). You may want to prepare your essay ahead of time. Please write a brief essay addressing each of the following:

- Your understanding of the CRSS profession
- Why you think the CRSS is an appropriate profession for you
- Your educational and professional goals
- Include the qualities you possess that would help you accomplish your goals

### Part II: Complete the COD General Scholarship Application on AcademicWorks

Before you can apply for the CRSS Success Grant, you need to apply for the COD General Scholarship to create a profile in the AcademicWorks system.

- [Click here for a step-by-step tutorial](#)

### Part III: Complete the CRSS Success Grant Application on AcademicWorks

After you apply for the COD General Scholarship, you are ready to apply for the CRSS Success Grant! Gather the materials from Part I and follow the tutorial below.

- [Click here for a step-by-step tutorial](#)

## IMPORTANT APPLICANT INFORMATION & SIGNATURE DOCUMENTS

The following information is taken from the CRSS Student Handbook. Students who are accepted into the CRSS program are required to read the Handbook and sign an acknowledgement that they will follow the guidelines listed in the Handbook. Please read the information below and sign the acknowledgement on Page 9 indicating that you agree to adhere to the following guidelines.

### Grant Information

The CRSS certificate is supported by an Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) grant and includes classroom work and an internship. The entire program lasts approximately 1-2 years. Grant funding will support tuition, books, institution fees, clinical exam fees, as well as other cost-of-education expenses, and is available until exhausted for students meeting program eligibility criteria. If you have been awarded other financial assistance or scholarships, this may limit the amount you are eligible to receive from the CRSS Success Grant.

### Program Participation

The CRSS program is a 20-credit program consisting of 4 courses and an internship with a corresponding fieldwork course. Students must achieve a grade of C or higher in every required course to progress through the program.

1. Students admitted to the CRSS certificate program are expected to meet with the CRSS Student Success Coach at least once per semester.
2. To successfully complete the program, students must develop writing skills required of an entry level human service professional. Students must be able to complete any required documentation in written or computerized format. Proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation must be used in all written course assignments, including discussion boards.
3. Students are expected to behave in a professional manner both in class and at off-campus learning sites such as Human Services agencies, service learning, and internship sites. Students who have had serious problems due to tardiness, excessive absences, other evidence of poor time-management skills, or poor interpersonal skills, will be required to remediate their behaviors and provide documentation that they have rectified these behaviors. Failure to remediate can result in dismissal from the Human Services Program.
4. Serious non-professional behaviors in a classroom situation will be documented by all Human Services faculty and be placed in the student's file. Students have the right to view their file at any time under the guidance of a full-time faculty member. Non-professional behaviors can include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Disruptive behavior in class and/or on campus that requires intervention
  - b. Inappropriate or unprofessional behavior during class or at other locations where the student is representing the College
  - c. Verbal or physical abuse to instructors, peers, or any other individual on campus
  - d. Illegal activities such as drug use, gambling, etc. while in the program.

5. Students are expected to resolve grievances professionally as follows:
  - a. The student should contact the instructor first.
  - b. If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved, the student may then contact the CRSS Project Coordinator to request a meeting in an attempt to achieve resolution.
  - c. Students must then abide by the decision of the CRSS Project Coordinator.
6. Graduates of the CRSS certificate program must be able to communicate effectively in a variety of settings with supervisors and with client's representative of multi-cultural backgrounds. We expect our graduates to exemplify the qualities and standards stipulated by the Illinois Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Professional Certification Association (<https://iaodapca.org>)

### Field Placement/Internship

The internship is the last step in the CRSS certificate program after all required coursework has been completed.

Students meet with the Student Success Coach and begin to secure an internship site **the semester prior** to the anticipated start date. During this meeting, the following steps take place:

- Students select possible internship sites from a list of approved sites provided by the CRSS Project Coordinator
- Students prepare a degree audit and request a permit to enroll in HUMAN 2251: Fieldwork 1
- Students fill out the Internship Stipend Acknowledgement and Internship Clothing Stipend Acknowledgement forms to receive financial support during their internship

Students will need to go through an interview process for their preferred internship site. Each internship site has a different process, and the Student Success Coach and Project Coordinator will provide support during this process.

Once students have secured an internship site, they will enroll in HUMAN 2251: Fieldwork 1. Students will attend HUMAN 2251 at the same time as they are completing their internship hours. HUMAN 2251 is a once per week virtual class.

Internships should be completed within one semester if possible. If an internship will take longer than one semester, students are responsible for scheduling another advising meeting with the Student Success Coach to confirm the next steps in continuing the internship process, including the HUMAN 2251 continuation process.

### CRSS Exam

Upon completion of all required coursework and the 300-hour internship, a student will have satisfied the Illinois Certification Board's standards for CRSS/CPRS training. Students will need to take and pass a state CRSS exam in order to be credentialed by the Illinois Certification Board (ICB).

### Non-Discrimination Policy

*The College will not discriminate in its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, religion or creed, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation, arrest record, military status or unfavorable discharge from military service, citizenship status, use of lawful products while not at work, physical or mental handicap or disability.*

## CODE OF ETHICS FOR CERTIFIED RECOVERY SUPPORT SPECIALIST

A code of ethics is a set of guidelines which are designed to set out acceptable behaviors for members of a particular group, association, or profession. The CRSS code of ethics serves to:

1. Protect consumers of recovery support services
2. Set a professional standard
3. Increase confidence in the profession
4. Identify core values which underlie the work performed
5. Create accountability among CRSS professionals
6. Establish occupational identity and maturity

ETHIC	IMPORTANCE
CRSS professionals will, when appropriate, openly share their stories of hope and recovery and will likewise be able to identify and describe the supports that promote their recovery and resilience.	Science has shown that having hope is integral to an individual's ability to recover. Hearing stories of recovery helps people develop hope, particularly when those stories are relevant to others' lives and helps them to identify supports for their own recovery.
CRSS professionals will practice safe and healthy disclosure about their own experience through general sharing focused on providing hope and direction toward recovery.	The experience of recovery and what is helpful is different for each person. Sharing one's recovery story can promote hope but must not be prescriptive.
CRSS professionals will maintain high standards of personal conduct and will also conduct self-care in a manner that fosters their own recovery.	As a role model, a CRSS professional's integrity and health choices influence the practices of persons served.
CRSS professionals will fairly and accurately represent themselves and their capabilities to individuals they serve and to the community.	The goal is to get a person to the right source of support for their current need. Damage occurs when a professional misrepresents what services they are qualified to provide.
CRSS professionals will keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to recovery and openly share their knowledge.	Persons served deserve to make choices based on the best information possible. Information and understanding regarding mental health recovery is ever evolving and expanding.
CRSS professionals will not abuse substances under any circumstances.	As a role model, a CRSS professional's integrity and health choices influence the practices of persons served.
CRSS professionals shall only provide service and support within work hours and locations approved by the agency.	Persons must be afforded protection from abuse, misconduct and conflicts of interest which are more likely to occur outside the scope of professionally sanctioned hours and settings.
CRSS professionals will be guided by the principle of consumer self-determination while	While personal responsibility and individual choice are cornerstones of recovery, these are

also considering the needs of others and society. The primary responsibility of CRSS Professionals is to help individuals they serve achieve their goals, based upon their needs and wants.	balanced by the need for support and safety not only of the individual, but of others and the greater society.
CRSS professionals will advocate for the full involvement of individuals they serve in communities of their choice with services in safe and least restrictive environments possible.	Recovery is the process by which persons with mental illnesses live, work, learn and participate fully in their communities. All individuals have the right to live in a safe and least restrictive environment.
CRSS professionals must not discriminate against individuals based on race, religion, age, sex, disability, ethnicity, national ancestry, sexual orientation or economic condition.	Individuals have the right to be treated with equality and esteem.
CRSS professionals will never intimidate, threaten, harass, financially exploit, use undue influence, physical force or verbal abuse, or make unwarranted promises of benefits to the individuals they serve.	Even when providing peer support services, the CRSS professional is at least implicitly in a position of power as a staff person and must be careful how that influence, or perceived authority might place pressure upon individuals.
CRSS professionals will avoid relationships or commitments that conflict with the interests of individuals they serve, impair professional judgment, imply a conflict of interest, or create risk of harm to individuals they serve. When dual relationships are unavoidable, it is the responsibility of the professional to seek supervisory consultation to conduct him/herself in a way that does not jeopardize the integrity of the helping relationship.	Even when providing peer support services, the CRSS professional is at least implicitly in a position of power as a staff person and must be careful how that influence, or perceived authority might place pressure upon individuals.
CRSS professionals will never engage in romantic or sexual/intimate activities with the individuals they serve. They will not provide services to individuals with whom they have had a prior romantic or sexual relationship.	The real and perceived power between a human service professionals and the persons they serve creates an imbalance of power that is advantageous to the professional and disenfranchising to the person served. This removes the possibility for a genuine consensual relationship. Relationships of this type also cloud the professional's needed objective judgment, which reduces the quality of services the person deserves.
CRSS professionals will not accept gifts of significant value from individuals they serve. They do not loan, give, or receive money or payment for any services to, or from, individuals they serve.	Even when providing peer support services, the CRSS professional is at least implicitly in a position of power as a staff person and must be careful how that influence, or perceived authority might place pressure upon individuals

	to give. A gift of significant value from a consumer is essentially payment for a service that is already being paid for by other means. Receiving a gift from an individual may also unintentionally impact the treatment of that individual and other persons served in an unfair manner.
CRSS professionals will, at all times, respect the rights, dignity, privacy and confidentiality of those they support. CRSS Professionals will respect confidential information shared by colleagues in the course of their professional relationships and interactions.	Individuals have rights, including the right to privacy, and CRSS professionals should not only honor, but advocate for the necessity and enforcement of such rights.
CRSS professionals have a duty to inform appropriate persons when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to an individual they are serving or another identifiable person. CRSS Professionals working in the human services field are mandated reporters of abuse, neglect and exploitation.	The professional has a duty not only to protect persons served, but also other individuals and society at large.
CRSS professionals will avoid negative criticism of colleagues in communicating with individuals they serve and other professionals.	CRSS professionals must use their influence for constructive purposes and not engage in activities that detract from the recovery support of persons with mental health challenges. Persons served benefit from a thoughtful, team-based approach where their welfare is the primary concern.

*Adapted from the Peer Specialist Code of Ethics and Professional Standards by Colorado's Northeast Behavioral Health Partnership (2011)*

## PERSONAL STATEMENT

As a Certified Recovery and Support Specialist, I shall always strive to maintain the highest standards in all services I provide, valuing competency and integrity over expediency or ability, providing services only in those areas where my training and experience meet established standards. I shall always recognize that I have assumed a heavy social and vocational responsibility due to the intimate nature of my work, which touches the lives of other human beings.

My signature below indicates my agreement with and willingness to abide by this Code of Ethics.

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**Signature**

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**Date**

## STATEMENT OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

A Certified Recovery Support Specialist (CRSS) is a mental health consumer who has been trained and certified to help other consumers identify and achieve specific life goals. The CRSS cultivates the consumer's ability to make informed, independent choices, and assists consumers in gaining information and support from the community to make their goals a reality.

As a CRSS, an individual accepts and agrees that his or her experience as a mental health consumer will be known by their colleagues, consumers and others with whom s/he may share that s/he has achieved this certification. Additionally, a CRSS will follow the "Model Code of Ethics" outlined in the Illinois Certified Recovery Support Specialist Model.

"I understand the terms stated above, and I accept and agree to these terms. I understand that, upon successful completion of the application and examination, I will be issued a certificate as a Certified Recovery Support Specialist (CRSS) under the terms stated above."

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**Signature**

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**Date**



**COLLEGE OF DUPAGE HUMAN SERVICES  
CRSS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM  
APPLICATION ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

**APPLICANT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**HOME ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

- I acknowledge that I have read all of the information in this packet and will adhere to the ethics and guidelines of the program as stated in this packet.
- I further understand that failure to comply with the requirements of the CRSS certificate program may result in cancellation of my application and dismissal from the program.
- I understand that the Illinois Department of Human Services is providing funds with the CRSS Success Grant to assist individuals successfully obtain the Certified Recovery Support Specialist (CRSS) credential. Funds provide tuition, books and other support and are available to eligible students until exhausted. I am not required to receive funds from the CRSS Success Grant to obtain the Certified Recovery Support Specialist (CRSS) credential.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**