

# Alabama Department of Public Health Bureau of Health Provider Standards

## Activity Certification

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

**1) Question:** Can my work as a nursing assistant count toward the two year requirement for activities?

**Answer:** No, you must meet the requirements listed in regulation F249 or in Chapter 420-5-10-.08(1)(f)2. The regulations require at a minimum 2 years of experience in a social or recreational program within the last 5 years, 1 of which was full-time in a patient activities program in a health care setting;

**2) Question:** I worked in the activity's department as an assistant in another state can that count toward my two years of experience in Alabama?

**Answer:** Proof of employment in a social or recreational program within the last 5 years one of which was full-time in a patient activities program in a health care setting can be provided for consideration in Alabama along with other required information for certification listed previously.

**3) Question:** What does reciprocity mean? Does Alabama offer reciprocity?

**Answer:** Reciprocity is defined as a mutual exchange of privileges, specifically, recognition by one institution of the validity of licenses or privileges granted by the other.

**Answer:** See question/answer #2. Proof of certification in another state and proof of experience, education or training which meets the regulation must be provided for consideration.

**4) Question:** How can I become an activity director?

**Answer:** You must meet the following requirements:

Be licensed or registered, if applicable, by the State in which practicing; and be eligible for certification as a therapeutic recreation specialist or as an activities professional by a recognized accrediting body on or after October 1, 1990; or have 2 years of experience in a social or recreational program within the last 5 years, one of which was fulltime in a patient activities program in a health care setting; or be a qualified occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant; or have completed a training course approved by the State.

**5) Question:** Are CEUs (Continuing Education Units) required for activity directors?

**Answer:** CEUs are not required to maintain the certification issued by The Alabama Department of Public Health. However, CEUs always enhance your skills set, enable you to implement best practices and provide a program of activities that reflect current practices in meeting the needs of the population you serve. If you are certified, registered, or licensed by any other organization you should contact that organization regarding their CEU requirements

**6) Question:** Can my certification in Alabama be used in another state?

**Answer:** The activities certification issued by the Alabama Department of Public Health is valid **only** in the State of Alabama. However, if another State wishes to recognize this certification as an acceptable credential that is their right to do so, but the state of Alabama has no responsibility in another States credentialing process.

**7) Question:** Is a test required to become certified as an Activities Director?

**Answer:** The State of Alabama does not require a test as part of the certification process. Applicants must meet the requirements listed in the Federal Regulation F249 or State Regulation 420-5-10-.08(1)(f)2.

**8) Question:** What is a qualified recreational therapist?

**Answer:** A qualified recreational therapist is someone who is nationally certified as a certified therapeutic recreation specialist (CTRS), usually referred to as recreational therapists. Qualified professionals are certified through the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC): <http://www.nctrc.org> which requires a bachelors degree or higher from an accredited university, a formal internship and the passing of a national certification examination. In addition, a CTRS must maintain their credential every five years through the NCTRC recertification process.

**9) Question:** What are the training courses approved by the State?

**Answer:** The State of Alabama does not offer any approved courses. However, the National Certification Council for Activity Professionals (NCCAP) is one of the certifying bodies recognized by Federal law, and incorporated in many state regulations. The State of Alabama also accepts the NCCAP certification. NCCAP is the national organization that exclusively certifies activity professionals who work with the elderly primarily in long term care settings. NCCAP certification is recognized by CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) as an organization that certifies activity professionals who work specifically with the elderly. NCCAP offers a 90 hour basic course for activity professionals.

**10) Question:** Is there a cost to apply for activities certification?

**Answer:** No. The State of Alabama does not currently charge a fee for this service.

**11) Question:** Does the State offer classes for certification?

**Answer:** The state does not offer classes for certification.

**12) Question:** If I lose my certificate can I get another one?

**Answer:** Yes. A signed request must be submitted in writing by the applicant.

**13) Question:** Is there a cost to replace the certificate

**Answer:** No, there is no charge for a duplicate copy of the activities certificate

**14) Question:** Do you offer temporary certification?

**Answer:** No, temporary certification is not offered. All applicants must meet the Federal and State requirements for certification to be granted.

**15) Question:** Are there classes you can take to become certified?

**Answer:** The State of Alabama through the Department of Public Health does not offer classes for certification. The National Certification Council for Activity Professionals (NCCAP) is one organization that offers classes. This organization is recognized by Federal law and many State agencies. The Alabama Department of Public Health recognizes certification offered by successful completion of this organization's certification standards. Proof of completion of these classes and successful achievement of certification must be provided in applying for certification with the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Certification Information through this organization can be found at [nccap.org](http://nccap.org). The Alabama Department of Public Health has no jurisdiction over the NCCAP certification process.

**16) Question:** Is there an application form to complete to apply for certification?

**Answer:** The State of Alabama does not currently have an application form. The application process includes submission of letters of recommendation from the nursing home administrator or director of nursing and supervisor of the activity department, a resume, copies of diplomas or other training/continuing education documents, job description signed at the time of employment as activity assistant. etc., (refer to previously listed required documents).

**17) Question:** How will I know if I meet the requirements for certification in Alabama?

**Answer:** Applicants will receive a response to their application from the Alabama Department of Public Health Bureau of Health Provider Standards via phone, e-mail or postal mail within 30 days of date stamped receipt of application. This response will

include a congratulatory letter and certificate or a letter, email, etc with explanation why certification is denied. Applications will be retained in the Bureau for thirty (30) days from the date stamped of receipt. Requests for additional information or other application issues must be received within 30 days from the date of the Bureau's response to the application. Application will not be retained beyond 30 days. Applications exceeding the 30 day period will require re- application for reconsideration.