



First Nations Wellness/Addictions Counsellor Certification Board

Update

FNWACCB has a National mandate to provide certification services to all front line workers working in addictions, mental health and prevention. We welcome invitations to provide more information about the certification process, our board of directors and any other information that is significant. The FNWACCB would like to thank all of the front line addictions workers, mental health workers, prevention workers and all others who play such an important and valued role in the healing and wellness of Native people. We

recognize that there are sacrifices that you make in the work you do to help others. We also thank you for your support of FNWACCB and our endeavors to certify all front line workers in our communities.

We have been made aware that there may be a salary increase for some front line workers who attain certification by a certain date or time. While this is very good news, please keep in mind that FNWACCB does not have anything to do with decisions regarding salary increases. We are a certification board and any raises in salary based to certification must be discussed with your employer, agency, Band or NNADAP representative. We do not have any involvement in any monetary benefits as a result of being certified. The FNWACCB does not discuss or release any information on applicants and/or certified counselors without a specific written *consent to release information form* (available on website) signed by the applicant/certified counsellor.

Grandfathering: Our cutoff date for grandfathering (application, all documentation and fees required – **no testing**) for Indigenous Certified Addictions Specialist certification was to end on March 31, 2009. We realize that there are people in some provinces in Canada who may not have had the opportunity to apply before the cut off date for grandfathering and we are recognizing that we could extend the dates for them. The Board has decided to grandfather in applications from all regions until further notice.

What is FNWACCB

The mission of the First Nations Wellness/Addictions Certification Board is to be the national certifying body for First Nations and Inuit Addictions/Mental Health Workers; thereby assisting First Nations communities in ensuring competent and qualified staffing for their programs and services.

- One of the fundamental Guiding Principles of the First Nations Wellness/Addictions Counsellor Certification Board is that the standards for certification of “*Indigenous Certified Addictions Specialists*” should be established by First Nations.
- The Board ensures that there are measurable standards that are met for anyone applying for the achievement and maintenance of competence among “*Indigenous Certified Addictions Specialists*”.
- Certification for “*Indigenous Certified Addictions Specialists*” is necessary because of the special skills and knowledge that are needed to work effectively within First Nations communities.
- Certification provides a measure of competence which will be recognized far beyond First Nations communities, and constitutes an important step to ensure the continuation of First Nations Wellness and Addictions Programs.

The goals of the National Certification Board are:

- to ensure a level of excellence in individual performance;
- to establish standards that are relevant to traditional First Nations healing philosophies and which are comparable to and generally accepted in the field; and,
- to gain reciprocity with the National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counsellors (NAADAC), the International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium/Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (ICRC/AODA), the Canadian Addictions Counsellors Certification Federation (CACCF) and their national board, as well as the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse (CCSA), and others to be determined by FNWACCB.

As both the literature and research evidence has proven, certification:

- attests to the professional qualifications and competence of the Counsellor;
- defines the roles of Wellness or/and Addictions Counsellor;
- recognizes special skills, cultural/traditional and addictions specific knowledge required to work effectively within First Nations communities;
- supports standards that are recognized by various addictions counseling organizations and authorities on a national and international level; and,
- places Indigenous Certified Addictions Specialist on par with their peers internationally

What is unique about FNWACCB and how is certification proceeding?

The standards that are set out for certification by various Addictions Counseling Certification Bodies at the national and international levels are met or surpassed by the FNWACCB Standards. As well, The FNWACCB incorporates traditional/cultural competency into its standards.

Why should I consider certification by the FNWACCB? There are several reasons why you should consider becoming certified.

- The greatest, most rewarding one is to gain recognition that your experience and training counts for something – this goes a long way in gaining respect from your peers, employers, and institutions.
- As well, Certification attests to the professional qualifications and competence of you, as the Counsellor – all based on an internationally recognized set of standards.
- Unique to FNWACCB is the assessment of traditional and cultural knowledge and training as it relates to an individual's competency to work with Aboriginal communities, families and individuals.
- In today's world, along with recognition comes increased employment opportunities, transferability of training and skills, job mobility and career advancement.

Who can apply for certification by the FNWACCB? FNWACCB candidates include Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Wellness and Addictions Counsellors, Coordinators, and Managers that work in over 800 First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and more than 60 Treatment Centres nation-wide. These specialists represent the front-line management and staff that address the mental wellness and addictions counseling requirements of First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and treatment centres from coast to coast. To date, the FNWACCB has granted certification to two hundred and fifty six (256) applicants from British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec and Saskatchewan and are reviewing a further one hundred and fifty (150) applicants from across Canada. The Board reports annually to the Registrar of Societies and is actively engaged in ensuring that FNWACCB certified Wellness/Addictions Counsellors are on par with their peers nationally and internationally.

Reciprocity: The First Nations Wellness/Addictions Counsellor Board believes that it is important that we provide top quality certification for our front line workers. Part of that commitment is the ongoing work to see that we are recognized nationally and internationally. We are working with other certification boards to ensure that we are all meeting the high standards that are important for certification. Through our ongoing talks we are working towards having baseline standards that are comparable to all criteria of the International Certification Boards that include our cultures, traditions and counseling methods.

What if I do not meet the certification requirement of the FNWACCB? In other words, where can I obtain the necessary training? If you are unsure if you meet the requirements for Certification, please refer to the manual that outlines our requirements. If you have been working in a treatment centre or community agency maybe you have the knowledge of addiction and working with addicts and may be able to be certified based on your work experience and knowledge. This is consistent with international standards where there are requirements for both education and work experience that are taken into consideration for certification. There are several ways that you can gain the formal education necessary - perhaps there are courses available in your community or on-line that you could take to meet the requirements for certification. A compilation of *Addictions Specific Training in Canada* is available free-of-charge on the NNAPF website at www.nnapf.org and on our website at www.fnwaccb.ca

Who can I contact for more information on Certification processes, media presentations or other information?

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