

Colorado Advocate Certification Program (CACP)

The certification project in Colorado has been an evolving process over the last 5 years that has been met with enthusiasm from some, and disagreement from others. The Committee worked through these challenges and has created a proposal that resolves many of the concerns expressed through the process. Throughout the progression, the underlying principle of creating a responsible set of criteria has remained constant. The Colorado Advocate Certification Program will provide the opportunity for voluntary certification through COVA. Colorado will provide for several types of certification to accommodate the many circumstances of our victim service providers. This program will encourage and recognize those that have achieved years of experience and training, while honoring the service and training of part-time and volunteer advocates. The Committee has been committed to creating an inclusionary process for those desiring certification.

Process

The Committee determined that eligibility criteria for certification should include a balance of:

- training,
- field experience,
- commitment to the ethical statement, and
- endorsement from others in the field.

Each advocate would file an application with appropriate documentation based on the criteria included in this program. COVA will recognize and accept the documentation from the National Advocate Credentialing Program of the National Organization for Victim Assistance.

Accommodation for Long Term Advocates

The Committee recognizes that advocates with many years in the field may not have training certificates for documentation. The Committee feels that a process can be put into place to accommodate long-term advocates that may be in this situation. If all efforts to locate documentation or verify course attendance have been unsuccessful, applicants may create a letter describing their training with approximate date and location. The same letter format may be used to document required direct service hours. The Committee feels that this will primarily be a concern for Advanced applicants, but may affect some Intermediate applicants as well.

Funding

While there will be costs associated with this program, applicants will find the program is affordable, especially in comparison to other certifications required in other professions. COVA will have a program that is entirely self-funded, and in fact, may generate additional income to be used as scholarships for those desiring certification.

BASIC Advocate Certification

- Verification of a minimum of 2 years (full or part-time) of active status paid or volunteer work experience in the field, and a minimum of 140 service hours. Service hours must include direct service to victims, but may also include: case review meetings, hot-line work, shadowing, case management, call out time, etc.
- Completion of 60 hours of basic advocate training including a minimum of 15 hours from each of the required subject areas,
 - ❖ Victim Issues (15 hours)
 - ❖ Advocate Skills (15 hours)
 - ❖ System Agency Response (15 hours) and
 - ❖ 15 hours maximum from the electives.

See page 6 for more information about required and elective subjects.
- Completion of the CACP application and all necessary forms
- Current supervisor must sign the application and verify experience in direct services to victims, as well as verify the training hours attended.
- Abide by and sign the Code of Ethics for Victim Advocates (see attached)
- Submission of 2 letters of recommendation that attest to the applicant's skills, ability, and years in the field. One letter must be from a current supervisor and one letter from another person in the victim services field.
- Pay the \$50 Basic certification fee

Renewal of Basic

- Renewal of certification every 2 years with 32 hours of continuing education documentation, and a minimum of 140 service hours as defined above. Continuing education must take place during the 2-year time period, and must include:
 - 3 hours of Cultural and Diversity Considerations
 - 3 hours of Victim Rights Laws (state, federal, and/or international)
- Continuing education hours may be obtained from required and/or elective topics as listed, local in-service training, seminars, community networking, continuing education coursework, and state and national conferences. The trainer or training sponsor representative must sign certificates or continuing education forms.
- Submission of CACP renewal application
- Abide by and sign the Code of Ethics for Victim Advocates
- Current supervisor must sign renewal application and verify experience in direct services to victims, as well as verify the training hours attended.

INTERMEDIATE Advocate Certification

- Verification of a minimum of 4 years (7200 hours) of active status paid or volunteer work experience in the field, and a minimum of 280 direct service hours. Service hours must include direct service to victims, but may also include: case review meetings, hot-line work, shadowing, case management, call out time, staff supervision, etc.
- Completion of 124 hours of training as follows:
- Completion of 60 hours of basic advocate training including a minimum of 15 hours from each of the following subject areas,
 - ❖ Victim Issues (15 hours)
 - ❖ Advocate Skills (15 hours)
 - ❖ System Agency Response (15 hours) and
 - ❖ 15 hours maximum from the electives.

See page 6 for more information about required and elective subjects.

 - ❖ Completion of an additional 64 hours of training including
 - 6 hours of Cultural and Diversity Considerations and
 - 6 hours of Victim Rights training
- Completion of the CACP application and all necessary forms
- Current supervisor must sign the application and verify experience in direct services to victims, as well as verify the training hours attended.
- Abide by and sign the Code of Ethics for Victim Advocates (see attached)
- Submission of 2 letters of recommendation that attest to the applicant's skills, ability, and years in the field. One letter must be from a current supervisor and one letter from another person in the victim services field.
- Pay the \$50 Intermediate certification fee

Renewal of Intermediate

- Renewal of certification every 2 years with 32 hours of continuing education documentation and a minimum of 140 direct service hours as defined above. Continuing education must include:
 - 3 hours of Cultural and Diversity Considerations
 - 3 hours of Victim Rights Laws (state, federal, and/or international)
- Continuing education hours may be obtained from required and/or elective topics as listed, local in-service training, seminars, community networking, continuing education coursework, and state and national conferences. The trainer or training sponsor representative must sign certificates or continuing education forms.
- Submission of CACP renewal application
- Abide by and sign the Code of Ethics for Victim Advocates
- Current supervisor must sign renewal application and verify experience in direct services to victims, as well as verify the training hours attended.

ADVANCED Advocate Certification

- Verification of a minimum of 8 years (14,400 hours) of active status paid or volunteer work experience in the field, and a minimum of 560 service hours. Service hours must include direct service to victims, but may also include: case review meetings, hot-line work, shadowing, case management, call out time, staff supervision, etc.
 - Completion of 156 hours of training as follows:
 - Completion of 60 hours of basic advocate training including a minimum of 15 hours from each of the following required subject areas,
 - ❖ Victim Issues (15 hours)
 - ❖ Advocate Skills (15 hours)
 - ❖ System Agency Response (15 hours) and
 - ❖ 15 hours maximum from the electives.
- See page 6 for more information about required and elective subjects.*
- ❖ Completion of an additional 96 hours of training including
 - 12 hours of Cultural and Diversity Considerations and
 - 12 hours of Victim Rights training
 - Submission of documentation reflecting supervisory experience of victim advocates
 - Completion of the CACP application and all necessary forms
 - Current supervisor must sign the application and verify experience in direct services to victims, as well as verify the training hours attended.
 - Abide by and sign the Code of Ethics for Victim Advocates (see attached)
 - Submission of 2 letters of recommendation that attest to the applicant's skills, ability, and years in the field. One letter must be from a current supervisor and one letter from another person in the victim services field.
 - Pay the \$50 Advanced certification fee

Renewal of Advanced

- Renewal of certification every 2 years with 32 hours of continuing education documentation and a minimum of 140 service hours as defined above. Continuing education must include:
 - 3 hours of Cultural and Diversity Considerations
 - 3 hours of Victim Rights Laws (state, federal, and/or international)
- Continuing education hours may be obtained from required and/or elective topics as listed, local in-service training, seminars, community networking, continuing education coursework, and state and national conferences. The trainer or training sponsor representative must sign certificates or continuing education forms.
- Submission of CACP renewal application
- Abide by and sign the Code of Ethics for Victim Advocates
- Current supervisor must sign renewal application and verify experience in direct services to victims, as well as verify the training hours attended.

ALL TRAINING SUBMITTED FOR CERTIFICATION MUST REFLECT THE COVA CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR VICTIM ASSISTANCE SERVICE PROVIDERS

Required Subjects:

Victim Issues Required:

Domestic Violence
Sexual Assault
Assessing Risk/Safety Planning
Child Victimization
Victim Trauma Response
Overview of Offender Behavior

Advocate Skills Required:

Crisis Intervention/Trauma Response/Impact
Ethics/Confidentiality/Legal Privilege/Mandatory Reporting
Role of Advocate (community, system)
Public/Private Resources
Communication/Boundaries/Beliefs/Values
Cultural and Diversity Considerations
Case Management/Report Writing
Understanding Vicarious Trauma

System Agency Response Required:

Understanding Criminal Justice/Civil Systems
Protection Orders
Victim's Rights Act
Allied Professionals
Victim Compensation/Financial Issues
Cross Training

Electives (or additional training in required areas)

Victim Issues:

Death Notification
Child Exposed to Violence
Grief process
Crime specific advocate training (i.e. Homicide, Financial Crimes, Trafficking)
Population specific advocacy (i.e. elderly, disabled, hate crime victims)

Advocate Skills:

Victim/Witness Protection from Intimidation
Legal and Legislative Updates
Mass Crisis Response

System Response:

History of Victim Rights movement
Other: Media Relations/Program Evaluation/Use of Technology

Other topics not listed may be used in the electives category.