

Getting Started with Gateways to Opportunity® Credentials for Applicants

Credential Flowchart

Here is what you can expect when applying for your Credentials, from beginning to end. Remember this varies by applicant. The best way to move the process forward is to ensure you do your research and know which Credentials to apply for and have the paperwork complete.

1. Register

Suggested time: 1 day

Your Role

Become a Gateways Registry Member. Visit the Gateways Registry for quick and easy access.

- Save your username and password.
- Save the log in page to your bookmarks.

INCCRRA's Role

You will receive an email that welcomes you to the Gateways Registry.

2. Research

Suggested time: 1 week (varies by applicant)

Your Role

Research which Credential(s) you may be interested in. Review specific information about applying, requirements, and the forms you will need.

Decide if you should apply through the Entitled or Direct Route:

- Entitled means that you have completed coursework at a college or university who has aligned their coursework with the Credential requirements. You can find a list of entitled institutions on the Gateways website.
- Direct means that you will compile existing information that documents your Education and Training, and Work and Practical Experience in early care and education.

The following Credentials are available:

- ECE Level 1-6
- Family Child Care 2-5
- Family Specialist Care 2-5
- Illinois Director I-III
- Infant Toddler 2-6
- School-Age and Youth Development (SAYD) 1-5
- Technical Assistance 1-6

3. Apply

Suggested time: 1-2 weeks (varies by applicant)

Your Role

1. Download the Direct or Entitled Credentials Supplement Application or apply online through the Gateways Registry.
2. Fill out the Supplement Application and the Information Update Form.
3. Enclose payment if required (see supplement applications for details).
4. If applying via Direct Route, include your form to document Work and Practical Experience, certificates for training that you have completed in the last several years, and copies of valid First Aid and/or CPR trainings. You may also submit a copy of your valid Food Service Sanitation certificate.
5. Apply online through the Gateways Registry OR Mail the application and the documents noted above to:
INCCRRA/Applications
1226 Towanda Plaza
Bloomington, IL 61701
6. Request your official transcripts be sent to Gateways from the accredited college or university that you have attended. Official transcripts, sealed in their original envelope, may be sent to the address above or to transcripts@inccrra.org if your college or university offers an online official transcript service. If INCCRRA already has your most current official transcripts on file, you do not need to resend them. Copies of foreign evaluations may be accepted, but only from the evaluation services found at <http://www.naces.org/members.html>

4. Application Processed

Suggested time: minimum of 30 days (varies by applicant)

INCCRRA's Role

After receiving all required application documents, INCCRRA will begin to process your application.

- Once all coursework, trainings, and work experience have been reviewed, the applicant will receive notification.
 - If the applicant is eligible for a Credential, the credential certificate and/or award letter/email will be sent. Awarded Credentials will also appear on the Professional Development Record.
 - If the applicant does not meet Credential requirements an eligibility status update will be sent via email. A counselor will work with the applicant to identify training and/or coursework needed to obtain a Credential. An application can remain in a pending status for up to five years while additional requirements are met.

5. Credential Awarded

Suggested time: varies by applicant

Your Role

You will receive notification of your Credential award and your awarded Credential will be on your Professional Development Record. Credentials are valid for up to five years.

INCCRRA's Role

When all Credential components have been met and approved, Credential(s) will be awarded.

Tips and things to know:

- INCCRRA will send you an update on your application via email every 2 months.
- Check your Registry membership.
 - Ensure that your email address is accurate and working.
 - Ensure your phone number and place of employment is current.
 - If anything changes, update your registry information as soon as possible to ensure that INCCRRA can continue to help you.
- Check your email filters. Gateways emails often have attachments, so they can end up in junk or clutter folders. Adding Gateways to your approved contact list can help prevent future emails from ending up in your junk folder.
 - If you have not heard from Gateways within 60 days, check these folders, or call or email us.