

# Case Manager and Case Manager Supervisor (CCM-CCMS) Certification

## Role Delineation Study

### Scope of Service

### DRAFT Report

The 2016 Florida Legislature passed a bill requiring “each case manager or person directly supervising a case manager who provides Medicaid-funded targeted case management services shall hold a valid certification from a department-approved credentialing entity as defined in s. 397.311(9), F.S. by July 1, 2017, and, thereafter, within 6 months of hire. s. 394.4573(2)(e), F.S.”

- Case Management means those direct services provided to a client in order to assess his or her needs, plan or arrange services, coordinate service providers, link the service system to a client, monitor service delivery, and evaluate patient outcomes to ensure the client is receiving the appropriate services. s. 394.4573(1)(b), F.S.
- Florida’s Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) currently establishes the minimum qualifications for an individual to be certified by AHCA to provide Medicaid-funded targeted case management services (see Attachment A). The affected positions are:
  - Mental Health Targeted Case Management Supervisors
  - Children’s Mental Health Targeted Case Manager
  - Adult Mental Health Targeted Case Manager
- The Florida Certification Board (FCB) is a department-approved credentialing entity as defined in s. 397.311(9), F.S. FCB Certified Targeted Case Managers (CCM) will:
  - Demonstrate their professional competency by meeting a set of defined standards measuring education, work experience, and training.
  - Maintain competency by participating in annual educational events.
  - Follow ethical and professional standards in the course of carrying out their daily scope of practice.

The Targeted Case Manager Role Delineation Study Scope of Service Workshop was held on November 15, 2016 in Tallahassee, Florida. A team of subject matter experts was assembled and led through the workshop by the FCB to establish recommended minimum target audience characteristics, credential structure, and core competencies, specifically performance domains and the job tasks within each domain.

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## Proposed Credential Structure

The workshop panel recommends a single credential with endorsements, indicating specializations. For discussion purposes, we are calling the “master” credential the Certified Targeted Case Manager (CCM) with three possible endorsements. Applicants will be required to select at least one of the following endorsements:

1. Supervisor: signifies the education and work experience to supervise mental health targeted case managers serving either children or adults. Individuals seeking a supervisor endorsement, must also select a recipient group endorsement (adult or child or both). Depending on the applicant’s work experience, the resulting credential will be CCM-SA, CCM-SC, or CCM-SAC.
2. Adult: signifies the education and work experience to provide Individual Mental Health Targeted Case Management services to adults experiencing serious mental health issues. The credential and endorsement will be CCM-A
3. Child: signifies the education and work experience to provide Individual Mental Health Targeted Case Management services to children with serious emotional disturbances. The credential and endorsement will be CCM-C
4. An individual who holds both the adult and child endorsement, but not the supervisor endorsement will be issue the CCM-AC

| <b>Credential</b> | <b>Description</b>                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CCM               | Base credential that all applicants must hold. Indicates core competency in the provision of targeted case management services.               |
| CCM-SA            | Indicates CCM core competency, plus qualifications to supervise persons providing adult mental health targeted case management                |
| CCM-SC            | Indicates CCM core competency, plus qualifications to supervise persons providing children’s mental health targeted case management           |
| CCM-SAC           | Indicates CCM core competency, plus qualifications to supervise persons providing adult and children’s mental health targeted case management |
| CCM-A             | Indicates CCM core competency in providing adult mental health targeted case management services.                                             |
| CCM-C             | Indicates CCM core competency in providing children’s mental health targeted case management services.                                        |
| CCM-AC            | Indicates CCM core competency in providing adult and children’s mental health targeted case management services.                              |

Individuals may apply for as many endorsements as he or she qualifies for at the initial time of application. Individuals holding a CCM credential in certified status are eligible to apply for an additional endorsement at any time. There will be a reduced application fee and no additional exam to add an endorsement to an existing CCM credential.

Additionally, the SME panel proposed two pathways to TCM certification: Provisional and Traditional. Both pathways allow the employer to put the individual to work and bill Medicaid for services rendered (1) during the first three months of work, (2) during the provisional certification period, and (3) when holding full certification. Specific details including provisional requirements, timeframes, and eligible applicants will be determined at a later date.

| <b>Certification Pathway</b>                           | <b>Description</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Traditional</b><br><br>Case Managers or Supervisors | Individuals who have met all certification standards at the time of application will submit the full certification application and supporting documentation at one time, take & pass the exam, and hold certification.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Provisional</b><br><br>Case Managers only           | Individuals who do not have all requirements met at the time of application can apply for provisional certification. Provisional certification is a two-part process, resulting in full certification. Provisional certification is a time-limited period which identifies persons who are completing employer-provided and supervised on-the-job training necessary to meet full certification requirements. Provisionally certified individuals are under the FCB Code of Ethics and agree to seek out and respond to intensive supervision during the provisional period. Before the provisional credential expires, the individual must apply for a credential upgrade, submitting documentation of completion of all specified requirements. Upon approval, the full credential is issued.<br><br>The Provisional model requires a partnership between the employer, the FCB and the applicant. Should an applicant separate from his or her employer during the provisional certification period, the applicant must petition the FCB to continue the certification process. |

## Core Competencies

Core competencies are the job tasks that certified individuals must be able to perform on-the-job, regardless of employer or service delivery model. Core competencies are grouped into Performance Domains, which are categories of like job tasks/responsibilities. While job tasks are grouped into discrete performance domains, it is understood that job tasks overlap and inform job tasks in other domains. Job tasks are grouped under the performance domain in which they are most frequently performed/directly aligned.

During the workshop, the subject matter expert panel used the *Florida Medicaid Mental Health Targeted Case Management Handbook* published by the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), specified Florida Statutes and panel member provided reference documents to define the target audience characteristics, performance domains and job tasks. In addition, FCB certification staff reviewed the *Case Management Society of America's Standards of Practice for Case Management* and the *Canadian Core Competency Profile for Case Management Providers*. At the conclusion of the workshop, the SMP panel identified five (5) performance domains and 26 job tasks within these domains.

The foundational principles underlying each core competency are strengths-based, trauma-informed and person-centered. Each job task must be performed with the understanding that the case management must focus on the individual needs of the client and his or her strengths as a means to achieve goals. These principles run through each of the performance domains.

## Performance Domains

1. Engagement and Assessment (Initial and Ongoing)
2. Service Planning and Development (Initial and Ongoing)
3. Coordination, Linkage and Monitoring
4. Documentation
5. Professional, Legal and Ethical Responsibilities

| Performance Domain                                     | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Engagement and Assessment (Initial and Ongoing)        | <p>Tasks in this domain are directly related to engaging the client in services and conducting an assessment to determine the client's individual strengths and needs. These competencies are performed at case initiation and throughout the life of the case to ensure the client continues to be engaged and the plan addresses immediate and relevant needs.</p> <p>There are 5 job tasks in this domain.</p>                                            |
| Service Planning and Development (Initial and Ongoing) | <p>Tasks in this domain are directly related to translating the results of assessment activities into functional services and tasks that address immediate, short-term, long-term and ongoing needs. Tasks in this domain are performed when the initial case plan is developed and throughout the life of the case to ensure the client's service plan is relevant, reflecting the client's current needs.</p> <p>There are 4 job tasks in this domain.</p> |

| Performance Domain                               | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Coordination, Linkage and Monitoring             | <p>Tasks in this domain are directly related to assisting the client to implement the case management plan and monitoring the ongoing effectiveness of the plan in meeting client outcomes. The CCM is expected to facilitate communication and collaboration with the client and meaningful collateral sources/others in order to identify and resolve any barriers, achieve goals and maximize positive client outcomes.</p> <p>There are 7 job tasks in this domain.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Documentation                                    | <p>Tasks in this domain are directly related to documenting service provision according to federal, state and agency requirements and best practices. Documentation competencies apply to all job tasks of a targeted case manager and must be demonstrated from case initiation through case termination/closure. Documentation is a practical as well as legal responsibility. The utmost care must be taken to professionally document all relevant aspects of care in a manner that provides clear, accurate and comprehensive information <i>as the client record travels with them across providers</i>. Effective documentation not only documents case management outcomes, it also can demonstrate compliance with person-centered, individualized planning.</p> <p>There are 5 job tasks in this domain.</p> |
| Professional, Legal and Ethical Responsibilities | <p>Tasks in this domain are directly related to providing legal, ethical and professional services to clients. Tasks in this domain include expectations regarding professional boundaries, use of supervision, on-going professional development, cultural competency and related competencies.</p> <p>There are 5 job tasks in this domain.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

### Comprehensive Listing of Job Tasks

1. Facilitate the client’s understanding of the rationale, purpose and procedures associated with case management services.
2. Obtain relevant information from the client and meaningful collateral sources in order to assess the client’s current situation and identify any immediate needs, including but not limited to the safety and well-being of the client in his or her natural environment.
3. Administer the appropriate assessment instruments to gather information and initiate a process of shared decision making and goal setting focused on the client’s strengths, needs, abilities and preferences.
4. Analyze and synthesize assessment data in order to identify problems/opportunities that would benefit from case management intervention.
5. Conduct ongoing assessment throughout the life of the case to identify emerging needs and maintain case relevance.
6. With the client, translate assessment outcomes into functional domains, prioritize needs under each domain into immediate, short-term, and long-term categories, and identify appropriate case management interventions.
7. Involve meaningful collateral sources/others in initial and on-going case management service planning as appropriate and required.

8. Develop a written case management plan that reflects assessment outcomes; prioritized and mutually agreed upon needs, measurable goals and objectives, including timeframes; and case management strategies.
9. Use ongoing assessment and collaboration with the client and meaningful collateral sources/others to review and update the case management plan to reflect emerging needs and maintain relevance.
10. Develop professional networks in order to identify and maintain information about available community resources to meet client needs.
11. Make formal and informal referrals to service providers identified in the case management plan.
12. Conduct ongoing monitoring activities, including contact with the client, concerned others, and service providers to assess the effectiveness of the case plan strategies and measure progress on achieving case plan outcomes.
13. Use effective facilitation and problem-solving techniques to improve communication and relationships between all stakeholders and to reconcile potentially differing points of view.
14. Advocate for the client to promote individual choice and self-determination.
15. Assist the client to develop self-advocacy skills.
16. Appropriately terminate case management services, to include providing reasonable notice; securing client and/or significant other's acknowledgement of, and agreement to, the case termination; and, if appropriate, effectively and efficiently transitioning the client to the next level of care.
17. Use best practices for written documentation in order to record all relevant case management services activity and information in a clear, concise, observable/objective, professional and timely manner.
18. Protect the client's right to privacy and confidentiality according to laws and other governing rules when preparing and handling records, especially regarding the communication of client information with third-parties.
19. Obtain written consent to release information from the client and/or legal guardian according to agency protocols and administrative rules.
20. Document process, progress and outcome measurements in accord with the client's service plan, assuring a clear linkage between case documentation and the service plan.
21. Comply with legal, funder and agency requirements and timelines for documentation.
22. Follow established professional codes of ethics and standards of practice in order to promote the best interests of the client and the profession.
23. Perform all job tasks according to professional, ethical and legal standards.
24. Follow federal, state and other governing rules and regulations in order to promote and protect client rights.
25. Provide services that respect the varied identities people have based on race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender and gender identification, religion, spirituality, and mental, emotional and physical differences in abilities.
26. Seek supervision, training and technical assistance as necessary to maintain competence and enhance professional effectiveness.

## *Domain 1: Engagement and Assessment (Initial and Ongoing)*

Tasks in this domain are directly related to engaging the client in services and conducting an assessment to determine the client's individual strengths and needs. These competencies are performed at case initiation and throughout the life of the case to ensure the client continues to be engaged and the plan addresses immediate and relevant needs.

The CCM is expected to:

- Perform all job tasks from a client-centered, strengths-based and trauma-informed perspective.
- Use soft skills, such as active listening, motivational interviewing, and rapport building when conducting assessment activities in order to engage the client and significant others in the case management process.
- Document all assessment activities according to the competencies in the Documentation performance domain. Documentation competencies are not restated in this domain.
- Use professional knowledge and skills to determine when and how to conduct job tasks.

### **Job Tasks**

1. Facilitate the client's understanding of the rationale, purpose and procedures associated with case management services.
2. Obtain relevant information from the client and meaningful collateral sources in order to assess the client's current situation and identify any immediate needs, including, but not limited to, the safety and well-being of the client in his or her natural environment.
3. Administer the appropriate assessment instruments to gather information and initiate a process of shared decision-making and goal setting focused on the client's strengths, needs, abilities and preferences.
4. Analyze and synthesize assessment data in order to identify problems/opportunities that would benefit from case management intervention.
5. Conduct ongoing assessment throughout the life of the case to identify emerging needs and maintain case relevance.



## *Domain 2: Service Planning and Development (Initial and Ongoing)*

Tasks in this domain are directly related to translating the results of assessment activities into functional services and tasks that address immediate, short-term, long-term and ongoing needs. Tasks in this domain are performed when the initial case plan is developed and throughout the life of the case to ensure the client's service plan is relevant, reflecting the client's current needs.

The CCM is expected to:

- Perform all job tasks from a client-centered, strengths-based and trauma-informed perspective.
- Use soft skills, such as active listening, motivational interviewing, and rapport building in order to engage the client and significant others in the service planning and development process.
- Document all service/case plan activities according to the competencies in the Documentation performance domain. Documentation competencies are not restated in this domain.
- Use professional knowledge and skills to determine when and how to conduct job tasks.

### **Job Tasks**

1. With the client, translate assessment outcomes into functional domains, prioritize needs under each domain into immediate, short-term, and long-term categories, and identify appropriate case management interventions.
2. Involve meaningful collateral sources/others in initial and on-going case management service planning as appropriate and required.
3. Develop a written case management plan that reflects assessment outcomes; prioritized and mutually agreed upon needs, measurable goals and objectives, including timeframes; and case management strategies.
4. Use ongoing assessment and collaboration with the client and meaningful collateral sources/others to review and update the case management plan to reflect emerging needs and maintain relevance.

### *Domain 3: Coordination, Linkage and Monitoring*

Tasks in this domain are directly related to assisting the client to implement the case management plan and monitoring the ongoing effectiveness of the plan in meeting client outcomes. The CCM is expected to facilitate communication and collaboration with the client and meaningful collateral sources/others in order to identify and resolve any barriers, achieve goals and maximize positive client outcomes.

The CCM is expected to:

- Perform all job tasks from a client-centered, strengths-based and trauma-informed perspective.
- Use soft skills, such as active listening, motivational interviewing, and rapport building in order to gather information necessary to assess the effectiveness of the case plan and identify opportunities for improving client outcomes.
- Document all coordination, linkage and monitoring activities according to the competencies in the Documentation performance domain. Documentation competencies are not restated in this domain.
- Use professional knowledge and skills to determine when and how to conduct job tasks.

#### **Job Tasks**

1. Develop professional networks in order to identify and maintain information about available community resources to meet client needs.
2. Make formal and informal referrals to service providers identified in the case management plan.
3. Conduct ongoing monitoring activities, including contact with the client, concerned others, and service providers to assess the effectiveness of the case plan strategies and measure progress on achieving case plan outcomes.
4. Use effective facilitation and problem-solving techniques to improve communication and relationships between all stakeholders and to reconcile potentially differing points of view.
5. Advocate for the client to promote individual choice and self-determination.
6. Assist the client to develop self-advocacy skills.
7. Appropriately terminate case management services, to include: providing reasonable notice; securing client and/or significant other's acknowledgement of and agreement to the case termination; and, if appropriate, effectively and efficiently transitioning the client to the next level of care.

## Domain 4: Documentation

Tasks in this domain are directly related to documenting service provision according to federal, state and agency requirements and best practices. Documentation competencies apply to all job tasks of a targeted case manager and must be demonstrated from case initiation through case termination/closure. Documentation is a practical as well as legal responsibility. The utmost care must be taken to professionally document all relevant aspects of care in a manner that provides clear, accurate and comprehensive information *as the client record travels with them across providers*. Effective documentation not only documents case management outcomes, it also can demonstrate compliance with person-centered, individualized planning. Documentation tasks are not sequential, CCMs use professional knowledge and skills to determine when and how to conduct job tasks.

### Job Tasks

1. Use best practices for written documentation in order to record all relevant case management services activity and information in a clear, concise, observable/objective, professional and timely manner.
2. Protect the client's right to privacy and confidentiality according to laws and other governing rules when preparing and handling records, especially regarding the communication of client information with third-parties.
3. Obtain written consent to release information from the client and/or legal guardian according to agency protocols and administrative rules.
4. Document process, progress and outcome measurements in accord with the client's service plan, assuring a clear linkage between case documentation and the service plan.
5. Comply with legal, funder and agency requirements and timelines for documentation.

## *Domain 5: Professional, Legal and Ethical Responsibilities*

Tasks in this domain are directly related to providing legal, ethical and professional services to clients. Tasks in this domain include expectations regarding professional boundaries, use of supervision, on-going professional development, cultural competency and related competencies. Job tasks are not sequential. CCMs use professional knowledge and skills to determine when and how to conduct job tasks.

### **Job Tasks**

1. Follow established professional codes of ethics and standards of practice in order to promote the best interests of the client and the profession.
2. Perform all job tasks according to professional, ethical and legal standards.
3. Follow federal, state and other governing rules and regulations in order to promote and protect client rights.
4. Provide services that respect the varied identities people have based on race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender and gender identification, religion, spirituality, and mental, emotional and physical differences in abilities.
5. Seek supervision, training and technical assistance as necessary to maintain competence and enhance professional effectiveness.

## Attachment A: AHCA Certification Requirements

The following requirements are specified in the *Florida Medicaid Mental Health Targeted Case Management Handbook* published by the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA).

1. **Mental health targeted case management supervisors** must meet the following AHCA certification requirements:
  - A master's degree from an accredited university or college with a major in counseling, social work, psychology, criminal justice, nursing, rehabilitation, special education, health education, or a related human services field and three years of full time or equivalent professional experience serving the target population; or
  - A bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college and five years of full time or equivalent case management experience serving the target population and bring to the position a previous mental health targeted case management certification or have at least three years' experience with mental health case management.
  - Each supervisor must complete AHCA-approved mental health targeted case management training within three months of initially supervising case managers.
  - Each supervisor must keep an ongoing log documenting his supervision of each mental health case manager. The log must contain at a minimum the amount of supervision and length of time that the supervision took and the case manager's name and the specific target population he serves.
2. **Children's Mental Health Targeted Case Managers** must meet the following AHCA certification requirements:
  - Have a bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college with a major in counseling, social work, psychology, criminal justice, nursing, rehabilitation, special education, health education, or a related human services field (a related human services field is one in which major course work includes the study of human behavior and development) and have a minimum of one year of full time or equivalent experience working with children with serious emotional disturbances; or have a bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college and three years full time or equivalent experience working with children with serious emotional disturbances.
  - Has completed or agrees to complete AHCA-approved mental health targeted case management training within three months of initially providing Medicaid services.
  - Have knowledge of available resources in the service area for children with serious emotional disturbances.
  - Is knowledgeable of and comply with state and federal statutes, rules and policies that affect the target population.
3. **Adult Mental Health Targeted Case Managers** must meet the following AHCA certification requirements:
  - Have a bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college with a major in counseling, social work, psychology, criminal justice, nursing, rehabilitation, special education, health education, or a

related human services field (a related human services field is one in which major course work includes the study of human behavior and development) and have a minimum of one year of full time or equivalent experience working with adults experiencing serious mental illness; or Have a bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college and three years full time or equivalent experience working with adults experiencing serious mental illness. Case managers who were certified prior to July 1, 2006, who do not meet the above requirements may provide Medicaid services if they meet all other requirements.

- Has completed or agrees to complete AHCA-approved mental health targeted case management training within three months of initially providing Medicaid services.
- Have knowledge of available resources in the service area for adults with serious mental illness.
- Is knowledgeable of and comply with state and federal statutes, rules and policies that effect the target population.

## Attachment B: AHCA Minimum Training Requirements

The following requirements are specified in the *Florida Medicaid Mental Health Targeted Case Management Handbook* published by the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA). Each mental health targeted case management supervisor and individual targeted case manager must complete training that promotes the knowledge, skills, and competency of the mental health targeted case manager. The training must include the following information:

1) The core elements of case management:

- a. Assessment;
- b. Person-centered service plan development;
- c. Linking and coordination of services;
- d. Reassessment and follow-up;
- e. Wrap-around and non-traditional services; and
- f. Monitoring of services.

2) Relevant topic areas:

- a. Community resources with emphasis on the development of natural support systems;
- b. Benefits and entitlement programs;
- c. Use and purpose of clinical and functional assessment tools;
- d. How to work with families;
- e. Human growth and development;
- f. Identification and treatment of serious mental disorders and co-occurring substance use related disorders;
- g. Psychotropic medications including side effects and access to medications;
- h. Confidentiality;
- i. Information regarding the ramifications of abuse and neglect;
- j. Issues identified by the provider's quality improvement program;
- k. Principles of recovery and empowerment including self-directed care options;
- l. Eliminating barriers and stigma reduction;
- m. Available community resources for adults (e.g., supported employment, drop-in/self-help centers, supported housing/housing resources in the community, and Florida Assertive Community treatment (FACT));
- n. Supplemental security income (SSI) program application and renewal process;

- o. Available community resources for children (e.g., child care options, community based care agencies, therapeutic foster care, specialized therapeutic foster care (STFC), statewide inpatient psychiatric program (SIPP), behavioral health overlay services (BHOS), therapeutic group care, schools, child's natural support systems, and children's medical services (CMS));
- p. Principles of resiliency in children;
- q. Evidence-based practices;
- r. Development of Service Plans;
- s. Time management; and
- t. Advocacy and communication skills.



## Attachment C: FCB Credential Development and Administration Process

The Florida Certification Board follows procedures and standards established by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) to ensure valid, reliable and legally defensible certification programs and examination instruments. We facilitate the credential development process with guidance and active participation from the governing agency, stakeholder associations and other industry experts to ensure a quality program that meets the specific needs of the profession and the population it serves. The FCB follows a 7 step process when developing credentials.

Step 1: Conduct a Role Delineation Study

Step 2: Validate the Scope-of-Service

Step 3: Establish the Examination Blueprint

Step 4: Build Examination Instruments

Step 5: Set Standards

Step 6: Open Program

Step 7: Maintain Program

The FCB facilitates a Role Delineation Study (RDS) workshop of subject matter experts (SME), who are professionals and experts in the field, to guide the content of the credential by establishing performance domains, core competencies and other knowledge/skill/ability expectations and characteristics of persons who are eligible and competent to hold the job and credential. The result of the RDS is a valid, reliable scope of service and examination blueprint, which is a statistical document that shows the distribution of exam items over the various domains of knowledge.

The exam is a written demonstration of content knowledge and its practical application in every-day situations. However, passing an exam is not a sole indicator of competency. The SME team recommend standards which the FCB validates during the application process to assure all applicants have completed the minimum education, training and experiences necessary to qualify for certification. Typical standards include:

- Formal Education
- Content Specific Training
- On-the-Job Experience
- Supervised Experience
- Letters of Recommendation

Applicants who provide verifiable documentation of achievement of each standard is approved to sit for the certification exam. The certification exam is developed to effectively assess the practical knowledge needed to perform the established scope of work. The SME team is very involved in the development of the item bank, exam instrument and passing score. Once the exam is administered to applicants, the SME's continue to oversee the validity and reliability of the exam instrument by reviewing and responding to items demonstrating specified psychometric benchmarks.

Applicants who earn a passing score on the credential are awarded certification and enter the credential maintenance phase. To maintain certification, professionals must complete a minimum number of CEUs each certified period, renew the credential before expiration and follow the FCB Code of Ethics at all times. The SME team also recommends the minimum CEU requirement, receives and makes recommendation for action on applicant issues outside of standard policy, and receives and takes action on founded allegations of ethical misconduct of the certified population.

The FCB's subject matter experts are critical members of the stakeholder team responsible for developing, administering and maintaining a valid and reliable certification program that meets the needs of the public, employers, and the certified profession.

### *Online Application and Testing*

FCB maintains an online certification application, award and renewal database; however, hard copy applications are received for persons unable to access or use computers. The Application Portfolio includes:

- Online account and application
- Verifiable documentation of education, training and experience and other certification standards
- Statement of criminal background
- Signed assurance and release
- Signed Code of Ethics acknowledgement
- Examination/Testing Standards
- Recertification/Renewal Standards
- Professional and Ethical Standards

Testing is on-line at FCB established test sites. The FCB provides cloud-based test registration and administration services, allowing us to establish testing sites virtually anywhere that meets minimum requirements. Special accommodations are provided to applicants who meet Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines.

### *Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct*

All certified individuals must follow to the FCB Code of Ethics. FCB formally investigates all allegations of ethical misconduct and conducts a full hearing when allegations are founded. Sanctions range from financial penalties, to suspension, to decertification. Individuals found in violation of ethical standards are published in the search results of FCB's certification verification system, allowing the public, employers, and the certified professional to monitor certification status and any history of ethical or professional misconduct in real time.