

**DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROGRAMS**

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**Licensing and Certification Division****COUNSELOR CERTIFICATION  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)****California Code of Regulations, Title 9, Division 4, Chapter 8, Subchapter 2.  
Requirement for Certification for Individuals Providing Counseling  
Services in Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Programs Licensed and/or Certified by  
the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs (ADP).**

- Q. *Who must register to become certified with a counselor certifying organization?***
- A. All non-licensed, non-certified individuals providing counseling services in an AOD program licensed and/or certified by ADP must be registered to obtain certification as an AOD counselor by one of the certifying organizations specified in this regulation. Counselor certification regulations will apply to all individuals providing counseling services in an AOD program licensed and/or certified by ADP.
- Q. *What if I am licensed by the Department of Consumer Affairs?***
- A. Licensed professionals, including licensed physicians, psychologists, clinical social workers, marriage and family therapists, or registered interns are not required to obtain certification.
- Q. *If I am certified by one of the certifying organizations listed in the regulations, does this mean I am certified?***
- A. Nine of the ten certifying organizations listed in Section 13035(a) are currently approved by the department to certify individuals. If you are certified by one of the nine certifying organizations you are considered a certified counselor in California.
- Q. *How long do non-certified individuals have to register with a certifying organization?***
- A. All non-licensed, non-certified individuals providing counseling services in an ADP licensed and/or certified AOD program must be registered with one of the nine certifying organizations within six (6) months from date of hire.
- Q. *How long will registrants have to complete the certification requirements?***



A. Registrants have five (5) years from the date of registration to complete the certification requirements.

**Q. *What if I am a registrant and do not become certified within five years of the date of my registration?***

A. An individual that has not completed certification within the five-year time period may not continue to be an AOD counselor at that program or any other program licensed and/or certified by ADP.

**Q. *What if a registrant has exceeded the five year limit and is continuing to provide AOD counseling as an employee or volunteer in an AOD program licensed and/or certified by the department?***

A. Any AOD program licensed or certified by the department that provides counseling by any registrant who has exceeded the five-year requirement to become certified will be subject to citation by ADP.

**Q. *What are the requirements to become certified as an AOD counselor?***

A. Requirements for certification vary by certifying organization. All certifying organizations must meet the minimum requirements of ADP:

- complete a minimum of 155 hours of specified education ;
- complete a minimum of 160 hours of supervised AOD training;
- complete 2,080 documented hours of paid or unpaid work experience providing counseling services in an AOD program;
- pass a written or oral examination (with a score of 70% or better);
- sign a statement documenting whether his/her prior certification as an AOD counselor has ever been revoked; and
- sign an agreement to abide by the certifying organization's code of conduct.

**Q. *Who will investigate complaints against counselors?***

A. ADP will investigate all complaints.

**Q. *How long will my certificate be valid?***

A. Certificates will be valid for two years, at which time it shall be required to be renewed.

**Q. *What are the requirements for renewal?***

A. Each counselor must complete 40 hours of continuing education every two years as specified in Section 13055(c).