

To: Child Development Division
From: Becky Millard, Northern Lights at CCV
Re: Recommending Unified Criteria for Training Approval
Date: 3/17/22

Summary: Northern Lights recommends restructuring training criteria to focus on ensuring the organization providing the professional development meets the quality, verification, and content criteria rather than focusing on the training modality. This restructuring would allow greater consistency across various types of trainings, as well as creating a better alignment with trainings provided by schools and the Agency of Education.

Northern Lights at CCV uses established criteria to identify if individual trainings can be entered into the Bright Futures Information System (BFIS). These criteria can generally be grouped into three categories – quality criteria, verification criteria, and content criteria. As use of new training delivery modalities has evolved over the years, Vermont has worked to establish appropriate criteria in these three categories which is then applied by Northern Lights when training documentation is received.

At present, Northern Lights must apply multiple, overlapping sets of criteria when evaluating whether a training can be entered into BFIS. While these sets of criteria were developed based on the best information available at the time, Northern Lights has identified that having different sets of criteria for different modalities may be resulting in unintended inequities in training review and approval. We believe these differing criteria have limited our ability to recognize certain training opportunities that may meet an appropriate quality threshold, and artificially limited approval of certain training content depending not on the quality of the material but on how the training was provided.

Additionally, some training organizations use a blend of formats e.g. Online Anytime trainings accompanied by in-person or Online Real-Time sessions. These blended formats are often a good fit for participants and may result in improved learning opportunities, but are not easily approved given the limitations of the current system.

In addition to the above, having different criteria for different training modalities is both difficult to clearly describe and difficult for the field to parse and utilize. Northern Lights always aspires to meet the guiding principles of the professional development system, one of which is that components of the system are both clear and known. We do not feel confident this area of the professional development system currently meets either of these expectations.

Below are charts describing various components of training review and approval for in person, online anytime, and online real-time trainings. In the chart below, red indicates few or no criteria and/or a low threshold that must be met, yellow indicates some criteria and/or a medium threshold that must be met, and green indicates many criteria and/or a high threshold that must be met. Please note these colors are to illustrate the differences in how criteria is applied for different modalities, not to indicate that any set of criteria is better or worse than another.

Quality, Verification, and Content Criteria

	In Person	Online Anytime	Online Real-Time
Who can offer	Anyone	Only pre-approved organizations and trainings	Only sponsors, AHE, AOE, school districts
Approval process	None	IACET ¹ : automatic IHEs ² : automatic All Others: Complete online application	None
Quality Criteria	Non-Sponsor: None Sponsor: Must use IR trainer	Array of design and implementation quality criteria	Sponsor: Must use IR trainer Others: None
Verification Criteria	Non-Sponsor: Certificate with 4 pieces of data Sponsor: Verified attendance	Includes ways to check learning; attendance or participation verified	Verified attendance using sponsor or streamlined sponsor system
Content Criteria	Must meet at least one CKA and be related to age group	Must meet at least one CKA and be related to age group	Must meet at least one CKA and be related to age group

In the following chart, green indicates this type of training organization can offer the corresponding type of training, and red indicates they cannot:

Which Trainings Can Count by Type of Training Organization

	In Person	Online Anytime	Online Real-Time
IACET	Counts (certificate)	Counts (automatic)	Cannot Count
IHE	Counts (certificate/transcript)	Counts (automatic)	Cannot Count
Approved Sponsor	Counts (attendance)	Cannot Count (unless submit application)	Counts
NAEYC	Counts (certificate)	Cannot Count (doesn't meet verification criteria)	Cannot Count
Better Kid Care	n/a	Counts (completed application)	Cannot Count
Public Schools	Counts (certificate or attendance)	Cannot Count (unless submit application)	Counts

Northern Lights recommends restructuring criteria to focus on ensuring the organization providing the professional development meets the quality, verification, and content criteria rather than focusing on the training modality. This restructuring would allow greater consistency across various types of trainings, as well as creating a better alignment with trainings provided by schools and the Agency of Education.

Important Caveat: The current system requires all trainings to meet at least some verification and content criteria, but allows in person trainings that do not meet quality criteria to still count in the system. Ultimately, Northern Lights would recommend adjusting the system so all trainings must meet at least some quality criteria, but we are not advocating to change this baseline at present. We believe a change of this magnitude has the potential for negative impact on the field at a time when they are already experiencing great stress and frustration. We wish to note here that this is an item that should be revisited at a future date.

¹ IACET is a nationally recognized accreditation for training organizations

² Institutions of Higher Education

Proposed Training Criteria:

1. Training organization meets quality criteria
 - a. Training content is grounded in research and follows developmentally appropriate practices
 - b. Training has clear, measurable learning objectives
 - c. Training incorporates adult learning principles
 - d. *For instructor-led trainings:* Instructor holds appropriate qualifications to lead training
 - e. *For self-directed trainings:* Training was designed by highly qualified individuals
2. Training documentation meets verification criteria
 - a. Training documentation includes all detail required for verification:
 - i. The name and logo of the organization/school/program offering the training; and
 - ii. Training title and description of content; and
 - iii. Date of training, start time, and total number of training hours; and
 - iv. The name of the participant
 - b. Training documentation is provided via certificate, transcript, or verified attendance depending on the type of training organization
3. Training meets content criteria
 - a. Training content must relate to at least one knowledge area from a State-recognized set of professional standards and competencies³
 - b. Training content must be relevant for working with early childhood, school-age, and/or children and their families

Assessing Training Criteria

To meet Quality Criteria, training organizations must meet one of the following:

1. IACET accredited training organization
2. Institution of Higher Education (IHE) or organization affiliated with an IHE
3. Northern Lights-approved sponsor of professional development
4. Agency of Human Services, Agency of Education, or Vermont school district or independent school
5. Training organization approved via online submission process administered by Northern Lights
6. Training is offered by a regulated CBCCPP, ASP, or FCCH (non-sponsor)

Each training organization that meets Quality Criteria must also meet the corresponding Verification Criteria noted below. All verification documentation must also include the training title and description of content which indicate the Content Criteria are met:

Type of Training Organization	Verification Criteria
IACET accredited	Training certificate including IACET seal
IHE or affiliated organization	Official or unofficial transcript issued by registrar OR Training certificate including name of organization
Approved sponsor	Verified attendance and DPD ⁴ form
AHS, AOE, school district, or independent school in Vermont	Verified attendance and training detail (may also opt to use Sponsor process or certificate process)
Approved online training organization	Must be pre-approved and listed on the Northern Lights website Training certificate including name of training organization
Regulated program (non-sponsor)	Training certificate including name of program

³ Can use the early childhood, afterschool, or public school standards and competencies

⁴ Documentation of Professional Development

Applying the Criteria:

Northern Lights at CCV reviews documentation to ensure quality, verification, and content criteria are met.

If documentation is incomplete but it looks like the training may meet criteria, Northern Lights will contact the training organization to request more information. If unable to reach the training organization, Northern Lights will contact the individual and encourage them to have the training organization contact us.

If the documentation indicates the training does not meet criteria, Northern Lights will contact the individual directly.

1. IACET-accredited training organization
 - a. **Quality:** Training certificate includes IACET seal
 - b. **Verification:** Training certificate includes required verification components
 - c. **Content:** Training title and description meet content criteria
2. IHE or affiliated organization
 - a. **Quality:** Training certificate includes IHE name and logo on certificate OR training is documented on an IHE transcript
 - b. **Verification:** Training certificate/transcript includes required verification components
 - c. **Content:** Training title and description meet content criteria
3. Northern Lights-approved Sponsor
 - a. **Quality:** Organization has an active, signed sponsor agreement with Northern Lights
 - b. **Verification:** Attendance and DPD include all required components
 - c. **Content:** Training title and description meet content criteria
4. AHS, AOE, Vermont school district, Vermont independent school
 - a. **Quality:** Training documentation includes name of agency/district/school
 - b. **Verification:** Certificates or attendance and training detail include all required components
 - c. **Content:** Training title and description meet content criteria
5. Regulated CBCCPP, ASP, or FCCH (non-sponsor)
 - a. **Quality:** Training documentation includes name of regulated program
 - b. **Verification:** Certificates include all required components
 - c. **Content:** Training title and description meet content criteria
6. Other Training Organizations
 - a. **Quality:** Listed on Northern Lights website as pre-approved organization
 - b. **Verification:** Certificates include all required components
 - c. **Content:** Training title and description meet content criteria

Applying the Criteria: Specific Examples

1. NAEYC: Currently does not meet Quality criteria
 - a. **Quality:** Has declined to complete the online submission form. Could be listed on Northern Lights website as pre-approved organization at direction of AHS or AOE.
 - b. **Verification:** Certificates need to include all required components
 - c. **Content:** Training title and description need to meet content criteria
2. Better Kid Care: Meets criteria
 - a. **Quality:** Affiliated with an IHE (Penn State)
 - b. **Verification:** Organization provides monthly reports directly to Northern Lights for entry
 - c. **Content:** Training title and description need to meet content criteria