



Texas Certified Family Partner Program Policy and Procedure Manual

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Via Hope invests in people and organizations who want to re-envision mental health, through workforce development, community building, system transformation, and leadership development.

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Introduction

Certified Family Partner

A **Family Partner** is a parent or legally authorized representative (LAR) who has at least one year of experience raising a child or adolescent with an emotional or mental health issue. This person may be a birth parent, adoptive parent, foster parent or family member standing in for an absent parent or a person chosen by the family or youth to have the role of parent.

- They must be at least 18 years old and have a high school diploma or GED;
- They must have at least one year of experience successfully navigating a child-serving system (i.e. mental health, juvenile justice, social security and/or special education system);
- They can articulate their lived experience to other families for the purpose of educating, role modeling and providing hope related to the recovery process;
- Their lived experience can speak to accomplishments that concern mental health issues in addition to normal parenting issues;
- They can meet the requirements for a Medicaid background check.

A **Certified Family Partner** is a person who meets all of the criteria above **and** attends an intensive 3-day training offered by Via Hope and receives a passing exam score.

Family Partner Support Services

Family Partner support is the act of a person who has had lived experience parenting a child with emotional or mental health challenges. Support includes giving encouragement, hope, assistance, guidance, and understanding that aids in recovery.

Services provided by Certified Family Partners include engagement of parents/caregivers in the treatment process, conducting support groups; participating in wraparound services; giving one-on-one support, conducting face to face meetings with parents/caregivers; and helping families navigate systems including juvenile justice, Child Protective Services, independent school districts, Social Security Administration, Snap program, food banks and other community resources.

Certified Family Partners provide supports to the parents/Legal Authorized Representative (LAR) and/or primary caregivers of the child/youth. They do not provide services directly to the child/youth. Access to quality family partner supports can be instrumental in engaging families as active participants in the child or youth's care and as equal members of the child/youth's treatment team. A Certified Family Partner's personal experience is critical to establishing a trusting relationship and earning the respect of families currently within the mental health system. Certified Family Partners can be mediators, facilitators, or a bridge between families and agencies; they ensure each family is heard and their individual needs are

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being addressed and met. Through their work with parents, primary caregivers, and/or LARs, Certified Family Partners directly impact the child or youth's resilience and recovery.

Special Considerations for Family Partner Supports

As formal members of the recovery team, Certified Family Partners should be utilized in every Level of Care (LOC) to engage caregivers as equal members of a child/youth's recovery team and to provide the following to parents/primary caregivers and/or LAR of children/youth:

- Advocacy that encourages the positive choices of the caregiver, promotes self-advocacy for caregivers and their children/youth, and supports the positive vision that the caregiver has for their child/youth's mental health and recovery;
- Mentoring through the transfer of knowledge, insight, experience, and encouragement including the Certified Family Partner's articulation of their own successful experience of navigating a child serving system;
- Role-modeling the concepts of hope and positive parenting, advocacy and self-care skills that will ultimately benefit the resilience and recovery of the child/youth (this may include the provision of Family Skills Training using the HHSC approved Evidence Based Practice(s) for primary caregivers);
- Experience in navigating the child serving systems, including mental health, special education, juvenile justice, child protective services, etc.;
- Connection to community resources and informal supports;
- Identification of the family's strengths and natural supports; and practical guidance in nurturing those relationships;
- Stewardship of family voice and choice as a member of the Wraparound team; and
- Support through the facilitation of parent support groups.

Program Administration

Program Background and Funding

Via Hope is a training and technical assistance resource for individuals in recovery, family members, youth with an interest in mental health, organizations, and mental health professionals. Our mission reads:

"We provide education, training, and consultation to empower individuals, families, and youth to develop resilience, achieve recovery, and further mental health system transformation."

Via Hope was created as part of the Texas mental health transformation process. Consequently, all of our training and technical assistance is intended to promote system transformation, and empower individuals in recovery, family, and youth voice in that system transformation. Via Hope is funded by grants from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health and by registration fees from our trainings.



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Some of our training, such as that for peer specialists and family partners, is designed to help individuals seeking to enter or advance in the workforce. Via Hope is currently the only organization that administers a training and certification program for peer specialists and family partners that is recognized by the Department of State Health Services.

Via Hope also continues education trainings on specific topics of interest that enhance the effectiveness and knowledge base of the family partner. These continuing education trainings, also called endorsement trainings, include Special Education, Wraparound, and Juvenile Justice.

Medicaid Billing

As of January 22, 2014, Certified Family Partners were added as eligible providers of certain rehabilitative services. By definition, family partners do not provide direct services to the Medicaid eligible child, but rather to the child/youth's parent/ primary caregiver(s), or legally authorized representative(s) (LAR). The change in the state Medicaid plan provides an opportunity for some of these efforts to be reimbursable when family partners are certified. However, HHSC will continue to expect that family partner and Certified Family Partner encounters will include non-billable services that are no less essential for the families served.

See the DSHS Broadcast Message 142 in Appendix #1 for further explanation

Program Contact Information

To contact Via Hope for anything regarding Certified Family Partner Training and Certification:

Via Hope
Attention: Family Partner Certification
4604 S. Lamar Blvd., Unit E-102
Austin, TX 78745
Phone: 512- 953-8160

Email: Info@viahope.org

Website: www.viahope.org

Application Process

Qualifications for Acceptance to Training

To be accepted as a candidate for Certified Family Partner, applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be 18 years of age or older;
- Have received a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate;
- Be the birth parent, adoptive parent, foster parent, family member standing in for an absent parent, or a person legally chosen by the family or youth to have the role of parent for a child or youth with emotional, mental, or behavioral health disorders disturbance.
- Have at least one year of lived experience raising a child or adolescent with emotional, mental health or behavioral health issues as a parent or LAR;
- Be far enough along in his/her parental journey and have reached a place of personal wellness to undertake the stress of training for and working as a Certified Family Partner¹.
- Have at least one year of experience navigating a child-serving system (e.g., mental health, juvenile justice, social security, or special education) as a parent or LAR;
- Be able to articulate their lived experience to other families for the purpose of educating, advocating, role modeling, providing hope related to the recovery process and success in navigating systems.
- Have lived experience that speaks to accomplishments concerning their child/youth's mental health including improvement in the child/youth's recovery and/or resiliency.
- Be able to meet requirements for a Medicaid background check.

Steps in Application Process

The application process for Certified Family Partner training includes a written application, two letters of reference, and a brief telephone interview. The letters of reference should be from individuals that can speak to the applicant's advocacy skills and ability to give care to a child living with an emotional or mental health condition. The letters of reference must also validate the applicants' success in navigating systems of care. The application process is designed to determine whether the individual is far enough along in their personal caregiving journey to benefit from the training and has the interpersonal and communication skills to be an effective Certified Family Partner.

The application form is found on the Via Hope website at <https://www.viahope.org/resources/cfp-training-application/>. The application is updated in advance of each training class, and is available to complete online during open registration periods. If an individual applies, is not selected, and wants to be considered for a future training, a new application for that training must be completed.

¹ Note: this requirement is not listed in State guidelines but has been the practice for family partners since 2012 and is contained in their Code of Ethics.

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It is preferred that all applications be completed online. All applications must be received by the deadline specified on the application and must be completed in their entirety. Incomplete or illegible applications are not reviewed. Applications are submitted via online submission form. Applicants must also participate in a telephone interview process. The purpose of the interview is to obtain a sense of the applicant's lived experience, and interpersonal skills (verbal communication and interaction with others during a discussion) to determine if the individual's skills are developed enough to become an effective Certified Family Partner, and to determine if the individual is ready to undertake the stresses of the profession.

There is a registration fee for all of Via Hope's workforce development training, including CFP training, which covers a portion of the total cost. The registration fee includes breakfast, lunch, and snack breaks, and all training materials. Individuals are responsible for arranging and paying for their own lodging, transportation to the training site and for their evening meals.

Expenses associated with registration, lodging, transportation and evening meals can be covered by the participant's employer, since CFPs are required at Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHAs).

The two-step application process (application and phone interview), along with the priority system described below, determines who is accepted for training.

Priority System

Enrollment is limited to a class size of twenty. If applications exceed class size, participants are selected using a priority system based on current employment status.

- First priority is given to applicants who are currently employed in a family partner position.
- Second priority is given to applicants who are currently volunteering in a family partner position.
- Third priority is given to applicants who have an offer of employment pending successful completion of the certification class.
- Fourth priority is given to other applicants who have demonstrated desire to become a certified family partner.

Following the application review and the telephone interview, a scoring guide is used when needed to determine the top 20 for the class.

Pre-requisites

There are no pre-requisites in terms of prior training, employment, or volunteer experience, although these are considered in evaluating the applications. Prior advocacy skills and community involvement related to parenting a child with a mental health condition is imperative. Employment as a certified family partner may be somewhat stressful. For this reason, individuals applying for certification training are strongly encouraged to develop personal wellness tools for self-care.

Training Program

The Certified Family Partner training is an intensive three-day course. To be eligible to take the certification exam, individuals must:

- Attend all 3 days and not miss more than 2 hours of the training for any reason.
- Actively participate in discussions and role plays utilizing personal experiences as a parent rather than clinical roles or training.

Classes begin at 8:30 am and end at 5:00 pm. The training is provided in a relaxed, casual setting. However, it is training for employment in the workplace; casual but neat attire is required. No supplies are needed for the training; all course materials are supplied.

The current schedule of CFP and related trainings, including training for supervisors of CFPs, is posted on the website at <https://www.viahope.org/events/>

Testing

For the convenience of the participants, the certification exam is administered the afternoon of the third day after training is completed. The certification exam demonstrates that the family partner has the necessary competency to execute their responsibilities. It examines the application of the skills learned in the training, but generally does not test training recall. The exam is used to determine if the applicant for certification can show understanding of the core competencies for a Certified Family Partner.

Individuals who do not pass the exam in two attempts may reapply to take the certification training again on a space available basis, with one additional attempt to pass the exam.

Continuing Education and Recertification

The certification period for a Certified Family Partner is twenty-four months. To remain certified, a Certified Family Partner must complete a minimum of twenty hours of approved Continuing Education Units (C.E.U.s) and must submit an application for re-certification. It is important that Supervisors be aware of this requirement and support CFPs in attending CFP Via Hope endorsement trainings and/or family related conferences. Without the appropriate number of CEUS, CFPs are jeopardizing their certification. If employed by an LMHA, losing certification results in the LMHA being out of compliance with the state mandated requirement to employ CFPs.

The recertification reminder with a link to the recertification application is emailed by Via Hope approximately 60 days prior to the end of the certification period. The recertification application can also be found at <https://www.viahope.org/resources/cfp-recertification-application/> and can be easily submitted online.

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There is a nominal processing fee for the recertification application. The fee may be paid by the individual or his/her employer. If an individual seeking re-certification does not meet the continuing education requirements and his/her certification expires, he or she will have 90 days to obtain the required CEUs and submit a new application for re-certification. The fee for renewal of an expired certification is somewhat higher than the regular recertification fee. If a certification has expired for more than 90 days, and the individual seeks re-certification, s/he will be required to retake the certification training and pass the certification exam again.

A list of the CEU events must be included as part of the application; however, it is not necessary to submit copies of the documentation with the application.

It is preferred that reapplication materials be submitted online at <https://www.viahope.org/resources/cfp-recertification-application/>. Once invoiced, payment can also be made online. Communication about the recertification application can be directed to recertification@viahope.org.

The applicant will receive approval of the recertification within 30 days as long as requirements such as CEUs are met.

CEUs will only be accepted on topics covered in the basic certification training or related to the Texas CFP Core competencies unless otherwise approved. CEUs may be obtained through attendance at relevant conferences, classroom style trainings/endorsements, or online courses/webinars. All Via Hope endorsements are pre-approved for CEUs. A list of additional pre-approved trainings and webinars are listed on the Via Hope Website and will be updated quarterly. If a CFP would like to obtain CEU credit outside of the pre-approved trainings, the CFP will need to complete the *Request for Training Approval for C.E.U.s* on the Via Hope website. At <https://www.viahope.org/resources/request-training-approval-ceus/>. This ensures that the training/webinar will count towards the CFP's recertification.

CFPs do not have to formally obtain CEUs. (Some professions require a fee for CEUs, Certified Family Partners do not.) Verification of attendance through a certificate documenting the number of training hours, a conference agenda booklet with listings of the workshops attended, or if neither of those are available, a brief summary of what was learned by attending or participating in a webinar, will be accepted as documentation.

Courses that are preapproved by Via Hope include an extensive list available at <https://www.viahope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Preapproved-courses-for-CFPs9-12-18.pdf>.

Classes that enhance a CFP's core competencies are approvable. If a CFP wants to attend a course that is not on the preapproved list they can fill out the quick preapproval form available at <https://www.viahope.org/resources/request-training-approval-ceus/>. **The current preapproved list is simply those courses who happen**

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already to have been submitted through the preapproval request form Core competencies are listed in the CFP manual and include the following.

Family Partner Competencies

Texas to National Comparison of Core Competencies

Texas (Certified Family Partners)	National (Parent Support Partners)
Ethics: understand compliance with laws and regulations and duties to persons served and to the profession	Ethics
Confidentiality/HIPAA: gain understanding of parent information, confidentiality, rights and control of shared information	Confidentiality
Natural Supports: assist family members to identify and build appropriate informal and formal supports	Effecting Change
Systems of Care/Wraparound: understand the family partner’s role in bringing in the state, county and local systems of care agencies for support of the families whose children are being served. Understand the family partner’s role in the Wraparound process.	Currency on Children’s Behavioral Health treatment and prevention information
Special Education / IDEA: gain understanding of the process of special educations’ admission, review and dismissal under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	Information about the IDEA
Engagement: create stable, supportive relationships with families of the children served in treatment and recovery	Communication
Effective Role Modeling: explore and demonstrate methods of modeling effective parental skills	Parenting for resiliency
Advocacy: develop understanding of supporting while speaking for/with parents as you help coordinate and navigate multiple programs and agencies	Advocacy in and across systems

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Mentoring: develop effective skills that empower parents to build and maintain a positive parenting role	Empowerment
Self – Care: understand, identify, and develop the skills of caring for self and self-management of wellness	Wellness and natural supports
Cultural Competency: gain understanding and develop skills needed to respect the values and beliefs of individuals and families	Cultural Diversity
Meeting Preparation Skills: explore various preparation strategies and resources needed to effectively prepare for a meetings/visits and share these with parents to support them in meeting participation	

Questions on CEUs for CFPs can be directed to the CFP Coordinator at [512-953-8175](tel:512-953-8175).

Record Keeping Requirements for Certified Family Partner

It is the responsibility of each Certified Family Partner to maintain appropriate records and documentation of their own CEU training. Via Hope periodically audits a random sample of CEU records. Failure to maintain sufficient documentation is grounds for possible suspension of a Certified Family Partner’s certification.

To receive CEU credit for a training event the CFP must be able to present a certificate of completion. In the rare case that this is not provided at the training, an event registration receipt may be accepted. If neither is supplied, a copy of the materials handed out in class and signed by the instructor may be accepted as certification. It is suggested that the CFP maintain all documentation in one folder for each two year recertification period in case of audit. When recertifying, the CEU certificates must be scanned into a file called something like “CEUs_for_NAME_2016-1028. On the recertification application, when it asks to “upload” the certificates, the CFP should select “add file” and then browse their computer to the folder where they saved the scanned certificates and upload that file.

If CEU requirements are not met within the two year required period, the CFP’s certification is suspended until the CFP has completed the required CEU hours. There is a 90 day grace period. After 90 days a CFP must re-take the CFP certification class to re-establish their certification.

Endorsements

Via Hope provides trainings, referred to as Endorsements, designed to help Certified Family Partners further develop their knowledge and skills. These include Wraparound, Special Education Juvenile Justice, the trauma webinar, and other Via Hope courses listed on the preapproved list such as Intentional Peer Support or Group Facilitation. Some require personal lived experience and some do not

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(requirements are mentioned in the course description. CEUs are awarded for these trainings. Applications are available on the viahope.org website. Classes are limited to 20 participants. The trainings are interactive and explore the role of the CFP when working with a family with these needs. Certified Family Partners are strongly encouraged to attend the Endorsement trainings to meet their CEU requirements since these trainings are designed by CFPs, for CFPs and are specific to the CFP's work in specialized areas.

Reciprocity

Individuals who have taken certification training in another state or who have passed the national certification exam administered by the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health may apply for a certification through Via Hope. If it is determined that the other training and certification is comparable to that provided by Via Hope, the individual will be certified for the lesser of 1) their certification period from the other state, or 2) twenty-four months. The individual must meet the same requirements as other Certified Family Partners to be eligible to be recertified.

CFP Certification Levels

In July, 2017, The CFP Advisory Council recommended that additional certification levels be implemented, to recognize lengths of service and leadership, and potentially to be considered in hiring and determination of salary for CFPs. Agencies that employ CFPs have discretion regarding how to interpret the certification levels, along with their internal employee policies. These certification levels were approved by Via Hope and became effective on November 16, 2017².

All CFPs are considered basic level until they apply for, and are approved at one of two higher levels: Advanced, and Master. Eligibility generally occurs on a certification anniversary and application may be made at this time. However, these two processes are not linked and a CFP may apply for the Masters or Advanced Level at another time as well. In order to qualify for one of the higher levels the following criteria must be met:

Advanced Level CFP Requirements:

1. 4+ years certified as a Certified Family Partner
2. Attended or been a trainer for at least two of the CFP Endorsement trainings currently offered by Via Hope.
3. Endorsement of agency supervisor. (May not be applicable to those in contract or private service provision). A second letter of recommendation may substitute for a supervisor endorsement for contract or private service workers.

² November 16, 2011 was the date the first Texas CFPs were certified.

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4. At least one letter of recommendation, one of which must be from the supervisor or master level CFP. (As noted above, an additional letter of recommendation can be submitted in the event the CFP does not have a supervisor, such as in the case of contract or private service provision.)
5. Verification from supervisor that all agency trainings are up to date. (For contract or private service provision this requirement does not apply.)
6. No disciplinary actions at agency (verbal or written plan of improvement in the last 12 months). The CFP agrees to notify the Via Hope CFP Coordinator within 14 days of receiving any formal notification of disciplinary action. If a CFP at or above advanced level receives disciplinary action, Via Hope will determine whether the action affects the level. This determination may involve input from the CFP Advisory Council.
7. Show evidence of leadership skills. Leadership skills are evidenced by participation in activities such as but not limited to being a current or past member of the CFP Advisory Council; a trainer or apprentice for Via Hope trainings; chair or vice chair of CRCG; or mentorship or Director/Lead of other CFPs (must be documented in letter of recommendation); or service on national or statewide committees relevant to family partners.
8. Earned at least 40 total hours of CEUs (minimum 20/renewal period) relevant to Certified Family Partner work since initial certification. **NOTE!!! A CFP does NOT need to take extra CEUs! If applying for advanced certification, for example, they simply need enough CEUs to retain their certification. If they have more they do not need to document them. No extra credit is given for more than needed to maintain their certification.**

Master Level CFP Requirements:

1. 6+ years certified as a certified family partner
2. Attended or been a trainer for **ALL** CFP Endorsement trainings offered by Via Hope.
3. Endorsement of agency supervisor. (May not be applicable to those in contract or private service provision. A third letter of recommendation may substitute for a supervisor endorsement for contract or private service workers.)
4. Letters of recommendation from at least two people, one of whom must be the supervisor. (As noted above, an additional letter of recommendation can be submitted in the event the CFP does not have a supervisor, such as in the case of contract or private service provision.)
5. Verification from supervisor that all agency trainings are up to date. (For contract or private service provision this requirement does not apply.)
6. No disciplinary actions at agency (no verbal or written plan of improvement in the last 24 months). The CFP agrees to notify the Via Hope CFP Coordinator within 14 days of receiving any

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formal notification of disciplinary action. If a CFP at or above advanced level receives disciplinary action, Via Hope will determine whether the action affects the level. This determination may involve input from the CFP Advisory Council.

7. Must have a leadership role in the community and /or center. Leadership roles are evidenced by participation in activities such as but not limited to being a current or past member of the CFP Advisory Council; a trainer or apprentice for Via Hope trainings; chair or vice chair of CRGG; mentorship or Director/Lead of other CFPs (must be documented in letter of recommendation); service on national or statewide committees relevant to family partner work or known as a leader in the CFP community.
8. Earned at least 60 hours of total CEUs (minimum 20/renewal period) relevant to family partner work since initial certification. **NOTE!!! A CFP does NOT need to take extra CEUs! If applying for master level certification, for example, they simply need enough CEUs to retain their certification (60 at 6 years, or 80 at 8 years). If they have more they do not need to document them. No extra credit is given for more than needed to maintain their certification.**
- 9.

Guiding Principles and Code of Ethics

Guiding Principles for Certified Family Partners

Via Hope's certification process for Family Partners in Texas assures families, employers, and the public that individuals certified by Via Hope as Certified Family Partners are qualified and have developed competencies in a set of educational principles and experiences needed to perform the responsibilities of a Certified Family Partner. Via Hope has adopted the Certified Family Partner Code of Ethics below to ensure that all Family Partners, certified or seeking certification, conform their behavior to the highest standards of ethical practice.

Via Hope is the governing body that investigates and sanctions Certified Family Partners who breach this Code of Ethics. Certified Family Partners, or those seeking certification should **thoroughly familiarize** themselves with the Code and guide their behavior accordingly.

Code of Ethics

The principles in the following Code of Ethics guide Certified Family Partners in the various roles, relationships and levels of responsibility in which they function professionally.

Upon Certification, a Certified Family Partner agrees to comply with the Code's provisions.

1. The primary responsibility of a Certified Family Partner is to help caregivers achieve their family's needs, wants, and goals.

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2. The Certified Family Partner shall maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct.
3. The Certified Family Partner shall conduct himself/herself in a manner that maintains his/her own wellness.
4. The Certified Family Partner shall openly share with caregivers, other Certified Family Partners and non-caregivers his/her experiences as a caregiver of a child or youth with *emotional, behavioral or co-occurring* disorders as appropriate for the situation in order to promote and support resiliency and recovery.
5. The Certified Family Partner shall respect at all times the rights and dignity of those he/she serves.
6. The Certified Family Partner shall never intimidate, threaten, harass, use undue influence, use physical force, use verbal abuse, or make unwarranted promises of benefits to the individuals he/she serves.
7. The Certified Family Partner shall not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate in any form of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical disability, military and/or veteran status, or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition, or state.
8. The Certified Family Partner shall promote thoughtful, informed decision making for those he/she serves in all matters.
9. The Certified Family Partner shall respect the privacy and confidentiality of those he/she serves.
10. The Certified Family Partner shall comply with mandated reporting requirements for abuse and neglect of children and vulnerable adults.
11. The Certified Family Partner shall promote and support services that foster hope and resilience and maintenance of a child or youth with mental illness in the home, school, and community.
12. The Certified Family Partner shall be directed by the philosophy that parents and caregivers should be equal partners in the treatment of their children.
13. The Certified Family Partner shall be directed by the knowledge that all individuals have the right to live and receive services in the least restrictive and least intrusive environment.
14. The Certified Family Partner shall not enter into dual roles³ or relationships or commitments that conflict with the interests of those he/she serves and takes them out of the scope of their activities

³ Dual roles include, but are not limited to: a CFP changing roles with a family (including past, present or potential future service). For example, a CFP providing financial management, billing or reception or taking on the role of a Certified Peer Specialist (CPS), QMHP, Case Manager, Wraparound Facilitator or Community

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15. The Certified Family Partner shall never engage in sexual and/or intimate activities with any individual he/she serves.
16. The Certified Family Partner shall not abuse prescription medications or alcohol or use illegal substances under any circumstances.
17. The Certified Family Partner shall keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to resiliency, family-driven care, and child/adolescent issues and will share this knowledge with other Certified Family Partners.
18. The Certified Family Partner shall not accept gifts of significant value from those he/she serves.
19. The Certified Family Partner shall provide direct caregiver-to-caregiver support services as defined by the Scope of Activities.

Professional Standards

The following Professional Standards set forth the minimum standards of conduct which all Certified Family Partners are expected to honor. Failure to comply with an obligation or prohibition set forth in the standards may result in disciplinary action.

A Certified Family Partner shall meet and comply with all terms, conditions, or limitations of the family partner professional certification which they hold.

A Certified Family Partner shall not perform services outside of their area of training, expertise, competence, or scope of practice.

A Certified Family Partner shall not fail to obtain an appropriate consultation or make an appropriate referral when the family's problem is beyond the area of training, expertise, competence, or scope of practice of the Certified Family Partner.

A Certified Family Partner shall not in any way participate in discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, socio-economic status, political belief, psychiatric or psychological impairment, physical disability, or the amount of previous therapeutic or treatment occurrences.

A Certified Family Partner that has any physical, emotional, psychological or substance use issues that interfere with her/his professional functioning shall seek assistance in regaining their wellness.

Living Support (CLS) to a family they serve concurrently, have served in the past or may serve in the future as a CFP.

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A Certified Family Partner has a responsibility both to the families and participant(s) served and to the organization within which the service is performed to maintain a high standard of ethical conduct.

The Certified Family Partner shall not discontinue professional services to a family nor shall the Certified Family Partner abandon the family without facilitating an appropriate therapeutic closure of professional services for the family.

A Certified Family Partner shall not reveal confidential information obtained as the result of a professional relationship, **without the prior written consent** from the recipient of services, except as authorized or required by law.

Complaints and Sanctions

If anyone has firsthand knowledge that a Certified Family Partner has violated the Code of Ethics or the Professional Standards, they should notify the CFP's employer and file a complaint with Via Hope. It is the employer's responsibility to handle issues related to job performance. Via Hope is responsible only for responding to violations of the Code of Ethics or Professional Standards. When a complaint is filed with Via Hope against a Certified Family Partner, the CFP is provided an opportunity to respond to the complaint.

Complaints can be filed online on the Via Hope website at <https://www.viahope.org/resources/ethics-complaint-violation-form/>

Cooperation

Upon discovery or knowledge of an alleged violation, the reporting agency or individual should contact Via Hope within 30 days to determine whether a complaint has been filed with Via Hope.

Timeline of Complaint process

After Via Hope receives a complaint, the Family and Youth Leadership Manager (or other designated Via Hope staff member) reviews the allegation and, if determined to be credible, contacts the individual by phone to notify them that a complaint has been filed against them. The CFP will be asked for their preferred email address and told to look for an email that will be coming with a return receipt. The Via Hope Family and Youth Leadership Manager will then send the subject of the complaint a certified letter with electronic return receipt within five (5) business days. Via Hope will provide the individual with a written summary of the substance of the complaint (minus the identity of the person filing the complaint); after Via Hope contacts the individual who is the subject of the complaint, the individual has ten (10) business days to respond using the Certified Family Partner Ethics Complaint Response form. At www.viahope.org/

Once the timeframe for submitting a response has concluded, Via Hope forwards both the original complaint and the response (if provided) to the CFP Advisory Council Ethics Subcommittee (along with any attached evidence or documentation); before sending to the Ethics Subcommittee, Via Hope will

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redact the names of any involved parties (including the subject of the complaint, the filer of the complaint, any witnesses, and/or associated organizations). After receiving the Complaint and associated documentation, the Ethics Subcommittee has seven (7) business days to meet (in person or by conference call) to discuss the complaint and recommend an appropriate sanction, if additional information is needed, the Ethics Subcommittee will have an additional 7 days for Via Hope to gather additional information and resubmit to the subcommittee for review. Within five (5) business days of the Subcommittee's convening, the Chair of the Ethics Subcommittee must complete the Certified Family Partner Ethics Subcommittee Recommendation form and send it via email to the designated Via Hope staff member.

Categories of Complaints and Types of Sanctions

The Subcommittee may conclude that the Complaint falls into one of four categories: (1) Unfounded, (2) Credible with No Sanction Recommended, (3) Credible with Sanction Recommended, or (4) Insufficient Evidence for Ethics Determination.

If a complaint is deemed founded, there are several eight potential sanctions, listed below.

1. A Corrective Action Plan (developed by the Ethics Subcommittee) that identifies a certain number of steps that must be completed to avoid suspension or revocation of a person's certification, with a timeline for completion;
2. Mandated Mentoring or Check-Ins with a Current Council Member or Master Level CFP;
3. Additional Required Training According to the Stated Area of Need Identified by the Ethics Subcommittee along with an appropriate timetable;
4. Suspension or revocation of Advanced or Master Level Certification with specification of length of suspension/revocation and action to take at end of that time period
5. Suspension of Via Hope Family Partner Advanced or Master Level Certification (that may be accompanied by a Corrective Action Plan that the person must complete in order to have their Certification reinstated);
6. Revocation of Via Hope Family Partner Certification with an opportunity to reapply to the training (within a timeline determined by the Ethics Subcommittee);
7. Revocation of Via Hope Family Partner Certification with no opportunity to reapply; and
8. Any combination of the sanctions listed above.

If a complaint is deemed unfounded, if no sanction is recommended, or if any sanction other than permanent disqualification as a Certified Family Partner is recommended, the Family and Youth Leadership Manager will send the individual a signed letter that includes instructions for appealing the sanction to the Executive Director of Via Hope within two (2) business days of receipt of the final recommendation by the CFP Ethics Subcommittee. If a permanent disqualification is recommended, the Executive Director will send a letter to the individual. In either scenario, the individual who is the subject

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of the complaint may appeal the decision to the Chair of the Via Hope Certified Family Partner Advisory Council.

If Via Hope is notified of a situation where a Certified Family Partner has engaged or is currently engaging in behaviors or activities that it deems as a significant breach of the Via Hope Code of Ethics, Via Hope retains the discretion to provisionally revoke a Certified Family Partner's certification until the Certified Family Partner Ethics Subcommittee makes a final recommendation. This action is unlikely given that any revocation of a certification affects the employing agency.

Employment

Job Description Components

Every family partner should have a written job description just as any other employee. Development of job descriptions is the responsibility of employers; however, they should be consistent with the HHSC contract.

See Appendix #2 for components of a job description.

See Appendix #3 for an example of a generic CFP job description.

CFP Communications

Individuals who pass the exam and become a Certified Family Partner are added to the master list of CFPs and invited to participate in monthly conference calls co-hosted by the Via Hope Family Coordinator and the HHSC Children's Behavioral Health Unit.

CFP Advisory Council

Purpose

The purpose of the CFP Advisory Council is to provide advice and guidance to Via Hope staff on issues including but not limited to:

- Policy issues related to the Via Hope CFP certification process.
- Changes in the curriculum for certification training.
- Development of additional Endorsement trainings.
- Resolution of ethics complaints.
- Other program development activities as identified.

Membership

The Council shall have a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 15 members. Members must be currently employed or volunteering in at least a half time position as a Certified Family Partner. If working in at least a 75% time position, the CFP must have at least 1-year experience; if working in a less than 75% time position, the CFP must have a minimum of two years' experience to be eligible. This employment may be in a child-serving organization, community mental health center, state hospital, other private mental health provider, similar organization, or private service provision.

The Council shall have a diverse membership. Factors to be considered include ethnicity, age, geographic location, rural or urban location, length of experience, and participation in other Via Hope initiatives, such as endorsement trainings, conferences, and work groups. In general, no more than one member shall be employed by the same organization at any one time. An exception may occasionally be made for very large organizations representing both rural and urban counties. In no event shall there ever be more than two Council members from the same organization. New members will be notified at least one month in advance of the next Council meeting.

Some Council activities involve the entire Council membership, while others may be delegated to standing committees. One standing committee is the Ethics Subcommittee, which is responsible for receiving, reviewing, and acting on complaints filed against Certified Family Partners. The Council may choose to operate as a committee of the whole in reviewing ethics complaints. Another subcommittee is the Mentoring Subcommittee. At times, temporary subcommittees may be formed, such as for the purpose of updating a certification or endorsement training, or to design events such as legislative informational events.

The Council shall select a chair and vice chair who shall be responsible for facilitating the meetings, with the assistance of Via Hope staff. The Council shall also serve as a subcommittee of the Via Hope Recovery Stakeholders Committee, and the Council chair or vice chair shall be a member of that Committee.

Officers

The Council, in collaboration with Via Hope, shall select a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. The Chair, or the Vice Chair in their absence, shall jointly facilitate the meetings with Via Hope staff. The Secretary shall take notes and submit draft minutes to Via Hope for review and distribution. The Council shall also serve as a subcommittee of the Via Hope Recovery Stakeholders Committee, and the Council Chair and Vice Chair shall be members of the Via Hope Recovery Stakeholder's Committee.

Both the Chair and Vice Chair shall have a minimum of one year's experience on the Council. With approval of Via Hope, other leadership experience chairing meetings dedicated to policy issues may be substituted for services on the Council.

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The Chair shall serve for one year (four meetings). The Vice Chair shall be elected by a vote of the Council and serve for one year (four meetings). The Vice Chair shall then assume the role of Chair and a new Vice Chair shall be elected. The Secretary shall be elected by a vote of the Council at the same time as the Vice Chair and shall serve for one year (four meetings). The Secretary is not required to have prior service on the Council.

Relationship to Via Hope

The council is an advisory group that makes recommendations to the Director and staff of Via Hope. It does not have authority to establish policy; however, the Council's recommendations will be seriously considered. Via Hope will develop the agenda for each meeting, with input from the Council and its officers.

With respect to the Ethics Committee, the Committee's recommendations, regarding complaints shall be communicated directly to the Director of Via Hope. If the Director agrees with the Committee's determination that the individual has committed a violation of the ethics code, the Director shall notify the individual of the violation and sanction. The individual shall have an opportunity to appeal the decision.

Nominations

Individuals shall nominate themselves for vacant positions on the Council. A notice will be sent to all Certified Family Partners whenever there are one or more vacancies. Nominations will be transmitted to all CFPs and selection will be determined by majority vote. If there is a tie between two potential members, Via Hope will select the member, in consultation with Council officers.

Voting

The Council may vote on various issues in order to establish a recommendation to Via Hope. Voting will be based on majority vote of members in attendance. If a vote needs to occur in between scheduled meetings, votes will be determined electronically by a deadline established by the Council and Via Hope. The results of any vote shall be reported to Via Hope as the Council's recommendation. Tie votes will be reported as no recommendation.

Term of Service

Council members shall be appointed for two year terms beginning in April, and officers shall be appointed for one-year terms. A member may serve only two consecutive terms (four years) unless they are elected as Vice Chair in the final year of their second term, in which case they may serve an additional year (five years total).

Once a member has served for four or more years a minimum of two years must elapse before they may apply for an additional term.

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Occasionally, members leave the Council before their term ends. When members are selected between terms to replace these members they will serve the remainder of that term. If the remaining term is more than one year, they shall be eligible to serve one additional term. If the remaining term is less than one year, they shall be eligible to serve two additional terms.

Meetings

The Council shall meet in person a minimum of twice per year with an additional two meetings in person or via conference call or video. Meetings will occur in April, July, October, and January, usually on the second Friday. The Recovery Stakeholder's Committee meets the day before, usually on the second Thursday. Council members may have additional meetings and conference calls as necessary and as requested by Via Hope. A member who fails to attend two of the meetings in the first year of the term may be replaced for the remainder of the term. Via Hope will notify that member in writing, and an application process will follow, in order to replace that member. Members may be asked to help develop and review written products in between meetings. Committees may meet independently of the full Council.

Resignation and Dismissal

If a Council member intends to resign for any reason, they should notify the Via Hope Family and Youth Manager and CFP Coordinator by email as soon as possible. Via Hope will notify the Chair and Vice Chair and schedule an election to fill the vacancy. Applications to replace the member will be distributed to all CFPs for a vote.

The CFP Advisory Council was created by Via Hope to solicit input on policy issues affecting the CFP community as a whole. Via Hope reserves the right to request the resignation of Council members who repeatedly engage in inappropriate and unproductive behavior as defined by Via Hope. Resignations are considered effective as of the date notification of such is provided in writing by Via Hope.

Compensation

Via Hope will reimburse members for travel costs to attend meetings. Via Hope will also provide one night's lodging the night before for those Council members living more than 30 miles from the meeting site. However, there is no payment for individual's time spent attending meetings. Via Hope will work with employers to encourage them to allow CFPs to participate on work time.



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Appendices

- #1 DSHS Broadcast MSG #142
- #2 Job Description Components
- #3 Sample CFP Job Description



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Appendix #1: DSHS Broadcast MSG # 142

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

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Broadcast MSG # 142

March 25, 2014

To: Executive Directors and Behavioral Health Directors
Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHAs)\
Value Options, NorthSTAR
North Texas Behavioral Health Authority

From: Ross Robinson, Director
Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Program Services Section

Re: Certified Family Partners Approved as Providers of Certain Rehabilitative Services

Summary

This broadcast message provides information regarding the requirements to become a certified family partner, and the billing requirements for certain rehabilitative services provided by a certified family partner. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) have reviewed and approved the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) proposed state plan amendment (SPA) to the Texas State Medicaid Plan (SMP) submitted by the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) under Transmittal Number 12-006.

This adds certified family partners as eligible providers of certain rehabilitative services. By definition, family partners do not provide direct services to the Medicaid eligible child, but rather to the child/youth's primary caregiver(s), parent(s), or legally authorized representative(s) (LAR).

Background

The Mental Health and Substance Abuse division of DSHS recognizes the valuable role family partners play in assisting parents and caregivers to foster resilience and recovery of their children and youth. As mentors and role models, certified family partners can be ideal providers of family skills training, and/or medication training and support to the caregiver/parent/LAR, which benefits the child or youth. The change in the SMP provides an opportunity for some of these efforts to be reimbursable. However, the department will continue to expect that family partner encounters will include non-billable services that are no less essential for the families served.



Via Hope Certified Family Partner

Requirements for Certified Family Partners

• According to TAC Chapter 419, Subchapter L: Mental Health Rehabilitative Services, certified family partners are defined by the following:

“A person who provides peer mentoring, education, and support to the caregivers of a child or adolescent who is receiving mental health community services and:

- is 18 years of age or older;
- has received a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate issued in accordance with the laws applicable to the issuing agency;
- has at least one year of lived experience raising a child or adolescent with an emotional or mental health issues as a parent or LAR;
- has at least one year of experience navigating a child-service system (e.g., mental health, juvenile justice, social security, or special education) as a parent or LAR; and
- has successfully completed the certified family partner (CFP) training and passed the certification exam recognized by the department.”

- Via Hope provides the family partner training and certification that is presently recognized by the DSHS.

• Beginning September 1st, 2013, family partners must achieve and maintain Family Partner Certification through Via Hope within one year of assuming the role of Family Partner or within one year of the date of hire.

• A certified family partner must receive supervision from a Qualified Mental Health Professional-Community Services (QMHP-CS) or higher.

• A certified family partner must meet the training standards set forth by DSHS for services which they deliver (i.e., certified family partners must be trained in accordance with DSHS requirements to deliver the skills training protocol “Nurturing Parenting”).

Outlining “Certain Rehabilitative Services” for Which Certified Family Partners Are Eligible Providers

• Skills Training and Development Services:

- Certified family partners may provide this service to the primary caregiver or legally authorized representative (LAR) of a Medicaid eligible child. This service shall address the serious emotional disturbance and symptom-related problems that interfere with the child/youth’s functioning, provides opportunities for the child/youth to acquire and improve skills needed to function as appropriately and independently as possible in the community, and facilitates the child/youth’s community integration and increases his or her community tenure.
- Nurturing Parenting is the allowable protocol for skills training provided to the caregiver/LAR. As certified family partners may only provide direct service to parents/LAR, Nurturing Parenting is the only protocol they may provide.



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• **Medication Training and Support:**

- Certified family partners may provide education and guidance about medications and their possible side effects as described in 25 TAC, Part 1, Chapter 419, Subchapter L, Mental Health Rehabilitative Services, to caregivers and/or the LAR of a Medicaid eligible child.

- The department approves the use of the materials that are available on the department’s internet site at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/rnhsalpatient-farnily-ed/>.
An Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider

Codes for these services:

Server type K is identified with Peer Providers, which now include Certified Family Partners. Below are the procedure codes and modifiers that will allow server type K:

SERVICE	PROCEDURE CODE	MODIFIER
Medication Training and Supports in response to a MH crisis	H0034	ET and HA
Medication Training and Supports in response to a MH crisis, TCOOMMI funded	H0034	ET, HA, and HZ
Medication Training and Support, child and adolescent, individual	H0034	HA
Medication Training and Supports, TCOOMMI funded	H0034	HA and HZ
Respite Care Services for MH Crisis Resolution	T1005	ET and HA
Respite Care Services	T1005	HA
Skills training and development, child, adolescent, individual	H2014	HA
Skills Training and Development, Individual as part of Supported Housing	H2014	HA and U2



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Skills Training and Development, Individual as part of Supported Employment	H2014	HA and U3
Skills Training and Development, Individual, TCOOMMI funded	H2014	HA and HZ
Skills Training and Development, Individual as part of Supported Housing, TCOOMMI funded	H2014	HA and HZ and U2
Skills Training and Development, Individual as part of Supported Employment, TCOOMMI funded	H2014	HA and HZ and U3
Skills training and development, child, adolescent group	H2014	HA and HQ
Skills Training Development, Individual as part of Supported Housing, Group	H2014	HA and HQ and U2
Skills Training and Development, Individual as part of Supported Employment, Group	H2014	HQ and U3
Skills Training and Development, Group	H2014	HA and HQ and HZ
Family Training, Individual	H2019	HA
Family Training, Group	H2019	HA and HQ

NOTE: Remember that all training provided by Certified Family Partners must be provided directly to the LAR and not the child in order to be reimbursable.

Questions regarding this broadcast message may be directed to Felicia Mason-Edwards MA, MFT, Child and Adolescent Services, at 512-206-4696 or Felicia.mason.edwards@dshs.state.tx.us



Via Hope Certified Family Partner

Appendix #2: Job Description Components

The major responsibilities of a Certified Family Partner include but are not limited to:

Advocacy

A Certified Family Partner actively supports the parents of a child in mental health services. While the case manager is there for the child, the family partner is there for the caretaker of that child.

A Certified Family Partner speaks and advocates to help meet the needs of the parent, advocates for the positive choices of the parent and advocates for the positive vision that a parent has for themselves and their family.

A Certified Family Partner assists the caretaker in identifying where they may need to be an advocate for themselves and their child. Some places that caregivers advocate will include but are not limited to: local mental health agencies, school, probation, child protective services.

A Certified Family Partner assists in identifying strengths that support self-advocacy.

A Certified Family Partner models appropriate advocacy skills.

A Certified Family Partner provides families with resources and information to encourage the family in their advocacy efforts.

Mentoring

Following in the footsteps of those who have paved the way before us helps us in progressing rapidly towards our goals.

Mentoring believes in the unlimited potential of another person.

It is a transfer of knowledge, insight and experience and encouragement from one person to another. Articulating our lived experience to another parent is how we share what has worked for us AS OPPOSED TO TELLING A PARENT WHAT TO DO.

Certified Family Partner are role models and guides and through the mentoring process we build trust with our families.



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Certified Family Partner assist the family in problem solving through mentoring and modeling appropriate skills.

Role modeling

Certified Family Partners do not forget where they came from or how they got where they are.

Certified Family Partners are always looking to help others who are in the same or similar place we once found ourselves in and help them along their journey toward empowerment.

Certified Family Partners have learned the skill of advocacy and are willing to teach others so they too will experience wellness and recovery.

The position of Certified Family Partner sends a message of hope and success to families, the position says to families “You can do this”.

Certified Family Partners remain professional while helping families to feel they are an equal part of their child’s recovery team.

Certified Family Partners role model options of parenting skills, advocacy skills, and self-care skills.

Support group facilitators

Certified Family Partners facilitate support group meetings. These meetings bring families together that share the same or similar interest and experiences. Support groups:

- Encourage the sharing of knowledge
- Help people make connections
- Allow people to learn from one another
- Help end the isolation felt by so many families

Always remember to support your Certified Family Partner in support group efforts by:

- Providing them a budget for food, door prizes, etc. (Food can be as simple as cookies and punch).
- Extending staff support. Have case managers rotate coming to meetings to work with children by showing a movie, playing games or even holding chat sessions (that works well with teens). Other ideas for childcare are local college students in the field, high school students needing community service hours, or local church groups looking for community involvement opportunities.



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Participants in wraparound process

Certified Family Partners are members of the wraparound team.

Certified Family Partners ensure that the family's voice and choice are heard not only in the choice of appropriate level of care, but also in their choice of needs, strategies, team members and their vision for their family.

Certified Family Partners help identify the family's strengths.

Certified Family Partners are able to see "all sides" and help the family work toward a solution.

Certified Family Partners are able to share their lived experience in a way which professionals can not only learn from, but also apply the learning in a positive way to benefit the family.

Certified Family Partners are able to support families as peers with a common background and history rather than the experts.

Certified Family Partners are able to build bridges, encourage collaboration and break down walls.

Certified Family Partners can assist the family in making informed choices.

Certified Family Partners can clarify communication and help families' decisions be clearly communicated to other team members.

Certified Family Partners can interrupt bias if it occurs.

System navigators

Certified Family Partners have "lived experience" navigating the mental health system. As a result of a caregiver receiving a diagnosis from a mental health system for their child they more often than not will have to navigate at least one other child serving system such as the education system, juvenile justice, and social security disability or child protective services. This lived experience is priceless in helping other families along their journey.

Community Resource Locater



Via Hope Certified Family Partner

Certified Family Partners know the community in which they live and the communities of the families they serve. The community is the area in which they live, shop, worship, and children attend school.

Certified Family Partners get connected to these communities and have a wealth of knowledge about the availability of resources such as food banks, clothing banks, financial assistance etc.

This resource is not only for the families they serve but also for other members of the facility in which they serve.

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Appendix #3: Sample CFP Job Description

Certified Family Partner

Job Purpose

Certified Family Partners provide supports to the LAR and/or primary caregivers of the child/youth and do not provide services directly to the child/youth. Access to quality family partner supports can be instrumental in engaging families as active participants in the child or youth's care and equal members of the child/youth's treatment team. A Certified Family Partner's personal experience is critical to establishing a trusting relationship and earning the respect of families currently within mental health system. Certified Family Partners can be a mediator, facilitator, or a bridge between families and agencies; they ensure each family is heard and their individual needs are being addressed and met. Through their work with primary caregivers, parents and/or LARs, Certified Family Partners directly impact the child or youth's resilience and recovery.

Duties and responsibilities

- The Certified Family Partner is member of the recovery team who provides support and advocates for families to assist in engagement, empowerment, self-advocacy, and wellness as they actively participate in the family's recovery process.
- Certified Family Partners assist families in making informed decisions that drive families toward wellness and recovery.
- As a supportive partner, the Certified Family Partner has a strong connection to the community and is knowledgeable about resources, services and supports for families.
- The Certified Family Partner's lived experience is critical to earning respect and establishing trust as they mentor and coach families to find and develop their voice and learn how to use it effectively in their treatment, wellness and recovery.
- The Certified Family Partner assists families in making informed decisions on a routine basis, in crisis and during the wraparound process.
- The Certified Family Partner provides general consultation to staff.



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Qualifications

Via Hope, the training and credentialing entity recognized by HHSC, has stated the following minimum requirements to be a Certified Family Partner: They must be a parent or legally authorized representative (LAR) who has at least one year of experience raising a child or adolescent with an emotional or mental health issue. (They may be a birth parent, adoptive parent, foster parent or family member standing in for an absent parent or a person chosen by the family or youth to have the role of parent);

- They must be at least 18 years old and must have a high school diploma or GED;
- They must have at least one year of experience successfully navigating a child-serving system (i.e. mental health, juvenile justice, social security and/or special education system);
- They can articulate their lived experience to other families for the purpose of educating, role modeling and providing hope related to the recovery process;
- Their lived experience can speak to accomplishments that concern mental health issues in addition to normal parenting issues;
- They can meet the requirements for a Medicaid background check.

A Family Partner must become certified within one year of their hire date based on attendance and passing exam score at the 3 day intensive Via Hope CFP Training.