

## Family Specialist Credential (FSC) Entitled Application Introduction

The information provided in this document is designed to support institutions in becoming a Gateways to Opportunity Entitled Program and in maintaining program entitlement. Information provided includes an overview of the Gateways to Opportunity Family Specialist Credential and processes required to gain and maintain entitlement.

Careful review of this document will support faculty knowledge of their role in attaining and maintaining entitlement within the Gateways Family Specialist Credential. Information provided in this document, in addition to an overview of the Gateways FSC Credential and the Gateways FSC Competencies, includes:

- Entitled application processes
- Annual reporting requirements
- Candidate credentialing processes
- Entitling assurance processes
- Course substitution procedures

### Overview: Gateways to Opportunity Family Specialist Credential

The Gateways to Opportunity Family Specialist Credential reflects professional attainment of knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to build strength-based relationships with families. The Credential reflects multiple professional standards considered essential for professional practice within the field, and influence all levels of training, education and role responsibilities in Illinois.

### Standards, Guidelines, and Program Outcomes Informing Gateways to Opportunity Family Specialist Credential

- Baby TALK
- Family Development Credential—Cornell University, New York
- Gateways to Opportunity Credentials
- Head Start Performance Standards
- Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
- Maternal Infant Home Visiting Program
- Parent Community Engagement Framework

Additional program quality guidelines, program outcomes, and professional standards informing the Gateways to Opportunity Credentials include, but are not limited to:

- Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)
- Healthy Families
- Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies (IACAA)
- Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (IDCFS)
- Illinois Department of Family and Support Services (IDFSS)
- Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)
- Illinois Head Start Association (IHSA)
- Illinois Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO)
- Strengthening Families Illinois

### The Role of Competencies within the Gateways to Opportunity Family Specialist Credential

The Gateways to Opportunity Family Specialist Credential is comprised of 41 FSC Competencies. Competencies reflect knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected at different levels of employment within the field of family engagement.

Level 2 Competencies represent foundational knowledge, skills, and dispositions within the field. Competencies included at Levels 3, 4, and 5 build on this foundation. These competencies are organized under the seven Gateways Content Areas, which include:

- Human Growth & Development (HGD)
- Health Safety & Well-Being (HSW)
- Observation & Assessment (OA)
- Curriculum or Program Design (CPD)
- Interactions, Relationships & Environments (IRE)
- Family & Community Relationships (FCR)
- Personal & Professional Development (PPD)

### Levels of Entitlement

The Gateways FSC Competencies align with different levels of entitlement within the Gateways to Opportunity Family Specialist Credential.

***The Gateways to Opportunity Family Specialist Credential is available for alignment within community colleges at Levels 2, 3, and 4.***

- Institutions aligned with Level 2 are required to demonstrate where Level 2 Gateways FSC Competencies are introduced, developed, and assessed within their curriculum
- Institutions aligned with Level 3 are required to demonstrate where Level 2 and Level 3 Gateways FSC Competencies are introduced, developed, and assessed within their curriculum
- Institutions aligned with Level 4 are required to demonstrate where Level 2, 3, and 4 Gateways FSC Competencies are introduced, developed, and assessed within their curriculum.

**The Gateways to Opportunity Family Specialist Credential is available for alignment within universities at Levels 2, 3, 4, and 5.**

- Universities are entitled at Level 5, and are required to demonstrate where Level 2, 3, 4 and 5 Gateways FSC Competencies are introduced, developed, and assessed within their curriculum.

### Entitlement Processes

Institutions seeking Gateways to Opportunity Family Specialist Credential Entitlement are required to demonstrate how their program plan, content, and assessment practices align with the Gateways FSC Competencies. Demonstrating alignment with competencies includes (1) documenting how current course objectives align and (2) describing how competencies are introduced, developed, and assessed within the program.

### Competency Alignment within Social Work/Human Development and Family Studies Coursework

Illinois social work/human development and family studies faculty are required to demonstrate how their current course content aligns with the Gateways FSC Competencies. To determine alignment, faculty will need to carefully consider course content and objectives. It is important to note that competencies represent a composite of knowledge, skills, and dispositions, while course objectives are often a more micro-level representation of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Therefore, several course objectives might fit within one Gateways FSC Competency.

A master list of Gateways FSC Competencies and Descriptors is provided at <http://www.ilgateways.com/professional-development/higher-education-programs/becoming-entitled-fsc>. Note that competencies are arranged by level, which is indicated in the horizontal column at the top of the (title) page, as well as by color.

- Level 2 competencies are indicated by the color yellow
- Level 3 competencies are indicated by the color green
- Level 4 competencies are indicated by the color orange
- Level 5 competencies are indicated by the color blue

Because competencies are arranged by level, it is essential to consider the sequencing of content when aligning programs and the Family Specialist Credential.

### Leveled Competency Implications for Program Planning

Faculty designing courses within a competency-based framework must consider several factors. Leveled competencies imply a progression across courses. Each competency included in a Gateways Content Area may not be included within the same course, however, it is assumed that foundational competencies (Level 2, for example) are included in course/content sequencing prior to the introduction and assessment of higher level competencies (Level 4, for example). As faculty pursue Gateways to Opportunity Family Specialist Credential entitlement, it is important to consider competency levels and appropriately sequencing of competencies within their curriculum.

As noted, institutions are required to submit the Gateways FSC Competency Alignment Table when applying for Gateways to Opportunity FSC Credential entitlement. The Entitled Application provides an alignment table (Competency Alignment Table) for use in this process.

- Institutions entitled at Level 2 are required to complete this table for each competency in each content area at Level 2. Level 2 competencies are noted in yellow.
- Institutions entitled at Level 3 are required to complete this table for each competency in each content area at Level 2 and Level 3. Level 2 competencies are noted in yellow. Level 3 competencies are noted in green.

- Institutions entitled at Level 4 are required to complete this table for each competency in each content area at Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4. Level 2 competencies are noted in yellow. Level 3 competencies are noted in green. Level 4 competencies are noted in orange.
- Institutions entitled at Level 5 are required to complete this table for each competency in each content area at Level 2, Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5. Level 2 competencies are noted in yellow. Level 3 competencies are noted in green. Level 4 competencies are noted in orange. Level 5 competencies are noted in blue.

**Articulation Application:** When a community college is articulating competencies with a four-year institution, they are required to meet the Level 5 competencies within the articulating competency area. For example, if a community college is articulating Human Growth and Development, reporting requirements will include a description of how Level 2-5 Competencies are introduced, developed, and assessed.

In addition to program sequencing and assuring that competencies are aligned to credentials at appropriate levels, faculty need to align course and objectives to the Gateways FSC Competencies. As noted previously, competencies represent a composite of knowledge, skills and dispositions. Course objectives, comparatively, are often a more micro-level representation of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Therefore, several course objectives might fit within one Gateways FSC Competency.

### Entitlement Process: New Institutions

Institutions initially seeking Gateways to Opportunity Family Specialist Credential Entitlement are required to submit the following, which are each explained in more detail below:

- Entitled Application Form
  - Competency Alignment Table
  - Program Layouts
  - Current Plan of Study for Credential-Related Degrees and Certificates
  - Course Delivery
  - Institutional Procedure for Credential Attainment
  - Program Articulation Agreements
  - Course Substitution Procedure
  - Non-Course Requirements
  - Institutional Assurances & Signatures
  - Program Syllabi



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