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## **TEMPORARY CERTIFICATION OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG COUNSELOR-INTERNS**

### **Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**July 15, 2020**

**Providers are encouraged to check the Division of Consumer Affairs [website](#) for additional information.**

**The State of New Jersey COVID-19 Information Hub is [here](#).  
The NJ Department of Health COVID-19 Information Hub for Health Care Providers is [here](#).**

Coronavirus disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) is the disease caused by a new coronavirus first detected in humans in December 2019. The State of New Jersey has implemented extraordinary measures to combat the spread of the disease, including through actions taken by Governor Philip D. Murphy to expand the capacity of New Jersey’s healthcare system to meet increased demand.

On July 15, 2020, the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs (Division) announced a [program](#) for the temporary certification of Alcohol and Drug Counselor-Interns, which is now open to interns who have completed a minimum of 150 hours of core content education, accumulated 300 hours of supervised work experience, and attended a minimum of 15 self-help group meetings.

Holders of temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certifications will be permitted to provide alcohol and drug counseling services through telehealth or telemedicine under the State’s telemedicine laws and regulations. Interns who do not hold a temporary certification are not permitted to provide such services through telehealth or telemedicine.

This document includes basic information that interns need in order to take advantage of this opportunity to help their fellow New Jersey residents during the current emergency, including additional information about eligibility requirements.

The Division has waived application fees, so it is free to apply, and aims to process each application promptly.

If you are interested in joining this effort, read our Frequently Asked Questions below and then apply [here](#).

**Q: Who is eligible to participate in the Temporary Certification of Alcohol and Drug Counselor-Interns Program?**

The program is open to interns who have:

- Completed a minimum of 150 hours of core content education,
- Accumulated 300 hours of supervised work experience,
- Attended a minimum of 15 self-help group meetings,
- A plan of supervision approved by the Alcohol and Drug Counselor Committee, and
- A plan of supervision addendum submitted by your supervisor.

**Q: How much time do I have to submit my application for a temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification?**

The Division may stop accepting new applications at any time so interested interns are encouraged to apply now.

**Q: What are the benefits of obtaining a temporary certification as an alcohol and drug counselor-intern?**

If you hold a temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification you will be permitted to provide alcohol and drug counseling services through telehealth or telemedicine under the State's telemedicine laws and regulations for as long as the certification is valid. Interns who do not hold a temporary certification are not permitted to provide services through telehealth or telemedicine.

**Q: I have the required education and supervised work experience, and attended the minimum number of self-help group meetings, but I did not previously submit a plan of supervision. May I still apply for a temporary certification?**

Yes, but only after you submit a plan of supervision that is then approved by the Alcohol and Drug Counselor Committee. If you have completed a minimum of 150 hours of core content education, accumulated 300 hours of supervised work experience, and attended a minimum of 15 self-help group meetings, you must submit a proposed plan of supervision to the Committee for approval. Your supervisor must also submit the proposed plan of supervision addendum. If the Committee approves the plan of supervision, you may then be eligible for a temporary certification.

**Q: How is the application process for temporary certification as an alcohol and drug counselor-intern different from the application process for certification as an alcohol and drug counselor?**

Applicants for temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certifications submit an abbreviated application, and are not required to complete 3000 hours of supervised work experience in alcohol and drug counseling or 270 hours of alcohol and drug education, attend 30 alcohol and drug abuse self-help group meetings, complete a criminal history background check, or pass an examination, which are requirements for certification as an alcohol and drug counselor. There is no fee for the temporary certification.

**Q: How long will it take to get a temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification, and what will my certification look like?**

If your application is complete and you qualify for certification, the Division's goal is to provide you with a certification promptly. Your certification will come in the form of an email with a temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification number stating that your temporary certification is active. You will not receive a paper certificate, but your temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification number will be displayed as "active" on the Division's [licensure look-up system](#).

Processing may take longer for some applicants.

**Q: What information will I need to apply for my temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification?**

All applicants will need to create an account to access the Division's online application system. Once you log in, the application form will ask you to provide and certify to the truth and accuracy of the following information:

- Name
- Gender
- Date of Birth
- Social Security Number
- Address
- Citizenship Status
- Educational History
- Criminal History Information
- Information about current illegal use of controlled dangerous substances

Applicants for a temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification must also have a plan of supervision approved by the Committee in accordance with N.J.A.C. 13:34C-6.2(l). The intern's qualified clinical supervisor must outline planned hours of clinical supervision, types of clinical supervision, the nature of the intern's work assignments and other specifications that the qualified clinical supervisor deems appropriate to the alcohol and drug counselor-intern's level of training, and other requirements set forth in N.J.A.C. 13:34C-6.2(b).

In addition to the approved plan of supervision, the intern's qualified supervisor must file a proposed plan of supervision addendum.

**Q: How can I apply for a temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification?**

Please click [here](#) to complete a temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification application.

Note: For "profession," select "Marriage and Family Therapy."

**Q: Is a criminal history background check required prior to obtaining a temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification?**

No. You will not need to complete a criminal history background check as part of your application for a temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification. You will still need to complete a criminal history background check when you apply for your certification as an alcohol and drug counselor.

**Q: I have been arrested or convicted of a crime. Can I still participate?**

You may not be eligible for this program if you have been arrested or convicted of certain crimes. If this applies to you and you still wish to have the Committee consider your application, you must submit a statement with your application detailing the circumstances of the arrest(s) or convictions(s). This information may result in the denial of your application, as a matter of the DCA Director's discretion. Such information also may delay the Division's processing of your application.

**Q: If I have a criminal history, what information will I need to submit?**

Applicants for a temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification who have a criminal history will need to submit a detailed narrative and description of the disposition of the charges. The Committee will review and determine whether further information is needed. When applying for the standard certification, in addition to undergoing a criminal history background check, the applicant will need to provide additional documentation, such as court and police records, as required by the Committee.

The Committee reserves the right to review an applicant's criminal history at the time of any future application for certification as an alcohol and drug counselor or as a licensed clinical alcohol and drug counselor. Granting a temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification does not prevent the Committee from denying a standard certification application based on an applicant's criminal history disclosed in any application.

**Q: How long will my temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification be valid?**

The Temporary Certification of Alcohol and Drug Counselor-Interns Program will automatically expire upon the end of the public health emergency and the state of emergency declared by Governor Murphy in Executive Order No. 103 (2020), whichever is later, but it may be terminated earlier by the Director of the Division.

**Q: Will I still need to meet all the requirements for certification as an alcohol and drug counselor after obtaining a temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification?**

Yes. The holder of a temporary certification as an alcohol and drug counselor-intern is required to fulfill all remaining statutory and regulatory requirements in order to obtain a certification as an alcohol and drug counselor. Specifically, interns will need to:

- Complete 3000 hours of supervised work experience in alcohol and drug counseling;
- Complete 270 hours of alcohol and drug education;
- Attend 30 alcohol and drug abuse self-help group meetings;
- Successfully complete an oral examination;
- Successfully complete a written examination; and
- Undergo a criminal history background check.

**Q: Will I need to pay two application fees—one for my standard certification and one for my temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification?**

No. The Division will not charge fees for temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certifications. You will only need to pay one fee, at the time you apply for your certification as an alcohol and drug counselor.

**Q: Will I need to pay for and undergo two criminal history background checks—one for my temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification and one for my certification as an alcohol and drug counselor?**

No. The Division will not require temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certificate holders to undergo a criminal history background check at the time of application for a temporary certificate. You will only need to undergo the criminal history background check at the time you apply for your standard alcohol and drug counselor certification.

**Q: Where will I be able to work once I have a temporary alcohol and drug counselors-intern certification?**

As a temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certificate holder, you are permitted to work in substance use disorder facilities licensed by the Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or other approved settings as set forth in the approved plan of supervision, subject to scope of practice and supervision requirements of the Alcohol and Drug Counselor Committee.

**Q: As a holder of a temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification, will I be able to provide alcohol and drug counseling services through telehealth and telemedicine?**

Yes. A temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certificate holder may provide alcohol and drug counseling services through telehealth or telemedicine pursuant to N.J.S.A. 45:1-61 et seq.

For more information about the use of telehealth services during the COVID-19 pandemic, click [here](#).

**Q: As a holder of a temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification, will I need to be supervised?**

Yes. Holders of temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certifications must comply with all scope of practice and supervision requirements imposed upon counselor-interns by the Alcohol and Drug Counselor Licensing and Certification Act, N.J.S.A. 45:2D-1 through -17 and the regulations promulgated thereunder, N.J.A.C. 13:34C. Supervision of alcohol and drug counseling services provided by temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certificate holders must be provided by a qualified clinical supervisor in compliance with the requirements of N.J.A.C. 13:34C-6.2.

**Q: As a holder of a temporary alcohol and drug counselor-intern certification, will my work experience count towards my required hours of supervision for standard certification as a certified alcohol and drug counselor?**

Yes. Hours of supervised work experience completed by alcohol and drug counselor-interns while holding a temporary certification shall count toward the requirement to complete two years of supervised work experience, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 45:2D-5(a)(2) and N.J.A.C. 13:34C-2.3(b)(3).