

Specialized In-Service Training

Q. I have attended well over 30 hours of in-service training, but I'm not sure if all of it will be accepted. Should I submit a list of every in-service training I have ever attended?

A. All in-service training hours that meet criteria toward endorsement must be related to the [VAIMH Competency Guidelines](#). Be sure to list which specific knowledge or skill area is covered at each training (e.g., attachment, separation and loss, cultural competence, etc.). For a training to count toward endorsement, at least one competency must have been covered. It is important to remember that endorsement reflects training specialization in the promotion of culturally sensitive, relationship-based practice promoting social and emotional well-being in the first years of life or infant mental health (birth to age 3).

Although the minimum requirement is 30 hours, we expect endorsement candidates to document that they have achieved competency in all of the categories (as identified at your desired category of endorsement) via college coursework, on-the-job training, in-service opportunities, and Reflective Supervision/Consultation. If there are still gaps in your competencies with only 30 hours, try to include as many others as you can to fill in those gaps.

Q. How far back can I go when including trainings that meet criteria for endorsement?

A. Any training that was attended post-degree can be counted toward requirements. Some candidates may have been in the field for many years and are encouraged to include all the trainings that have shaped their practice in infant-family work. However, it is not necessary to submit a comprehensive list of every training ever attended. ***The list should reflect a balance of breadth and depth across the competencies and the promotion of infant mental health.***

Q. Are only VAIMH-sponsored trainings eligible for endorsement?

A. The training does not need to be sponsored by VAIMH to be eligible to count toward your minimum for endorsement. In fact, many trainings that you attend for professional licensing or agency requirements may also qualify for endorsement (e.g., an ethics training for social workers, training about family-centered planning, doula training, etc.).

A specialized training that is eligible for endorsement should meet the following criteria:

1. Is culturally sensitive, relationship-focused, and promotes infant mental health;
2. Relates to one or more of the competencies in the [VAIMH Competency Guidelines](#); and,
3. Is specific to the category of endorsement for which you are applying.

Q. I was reading the endorsement requirements for trainings at Category II and it states I need “30 clock hours of relationship-based education training pertaining to the social and emotional development of infants, toddlers, and families”. Under the Continuing Endorsement Requirements section, it states “15 hours per year of relationship-based education training, approved by the organization, specific to the social and emotional well-being of infants, toddlers, and families”. Are these two separate requirements, or do they overlap?

A. The minimum of 30 clock hours that is required with your initial application for endorsement can have been earned over the course of your career, even if they were attended many years ago.

In order to **renew endorsement**, a minimum of 15 additional hours of specialized in-service training is required annually. Annual endorsement renewal is based on the calendar year from January to December. All endorsement renewal documentation will be due by **January 1st** each year, with the exception of those members who earned endorsement after January of the previous year. Annual documentation of endorsement renewal requirements need to be submitted by the due date in order to remain active on the VAIMH Endorsement Registry.

Q. Are there any in-service trainings, conferences, or courses that are mandatory while working toward endorsement?

A. No, but we do strongly recommend that you carefully review the [VAIMH Competency Guidelines](#) to identify the skill and knowledge areas for the category for which you are applying. We expect candidates to document competency in these areas either through coursework, work experience, Reflective Supervision/Consultation, and/or in-service training. It is important to seek out in-service training/conference offerings that will fill in any competency gaps you might have. Some skill areas (such as empathy, compassion, and self-awareness) will be documented in the three reference ratings that you will include with your application.

Trainings that do not meet criteria would be focused primarily on school-aged children, adolescents, or the elderly.

Q. I heard from a colleague that I could count only one conference in my Professional Application. Is that true?

A. That is true. Candidates must document a minimum of 30 hours of relevant in-service training and are encouraged to include all relevant conferences they have attended. However, only one conference (with many workshops) may be counted toward the 30-hour minimum. VAIMH recognizes that conferences are an important way to be exposed to new material, but believes a balance of lengthier, more intense in-services of six hours or more helps to build skills.