

## The Endorsement Process

### Q. What is involved in applying for and earning Endorsement?

A. Achieving Endorsement involves five steps:

1. **Inquire** by downloading endorsement information from the [Early Childhood Mental Health VA website](#). ([IMH Endorsement Overview](#), [Introduction](#), [VAIMH Competencies](#), [How to Apply](#)) and/or **contact the Endorsement Coordinator** with any questions at [vaendorsement@vcu.edu](mailto:vaendorsement@vcu.edu).
2. **Register** online at [VAIMH Endorsement Application System](#) and pay the registration fee.
3. **Prepare and submit the completed professional application** along with the endorsement fee by the application deadline.
4. **A review of the professional application AND, for Categories III & IV only, successful completion of written exam.**
5. **Endorsement** - Some notable features of the VAIMH Endorsement (IMH-E®) process include:
  - Assignment of an endorsement Advisor to assist with the process;
  - Review of professional application materials by the endorsement Advisor prior to submission for official review;
  - Submission of completed professional application for review;
  - Review of completed professional application by an assigned qualified reviewer, identified and appointed by the EASy Administrator to qualify for the endorsement exam at Categories III & IV;
  - Administration of three-hour, written endorsement exam for Category III & IV candidates; exam includes multiple choice questions and vignettes to assess knowledge, skills, and competencies;
  - Review of exam by 2 assigned qualified endorsement test review professionals;
  - Endorsement approved (or not); candidates notified by phone and e-mail;
  - Endorsement certificate signed and mailed along with feedback regarding professional application (Categories I & II) or responses to vignettes in the qualitative portion of the exam (Categories III & IV); and,
  - Annual renewal of endorsement requires continued membership in VAIMH and annual documentation of 15 hours (minimum) of training experiences which promote infant mental health practice; and 12 hours of reflective supervision/consultation for endorsed members at Categories II, III & IV (Clinical).

### Q. How much does the endorsement cost?

A. Fees vary according to the category of endorsement being applied for. There is an **initial Endorsement Application Fee of \$50.00** for all categories that is paid at the time of registration.

**Membership in VAIMH (\$60.00)** is required at the time of initial application so that candidates can be notified of relevant training opportunities and receive discounts to register for trainings.

The **Application Review Fee** must be submitted at the time your professional application is sent to the VAIMH Endorsement Coordinator for final review. **The Application Review Fees are: \$50.00 for Category I, \$115.00 for Category II, and \$350.00 for Categories III & IV** (\$150 Application Review Fee + \$200 Exam Review Fee).

The costs for Categories III & IV are in line with credentialing fees that have been established by other professional organizations (e.g., Child Development Associate and Accreditation for Certified Social Workers). The credentialing fees support the overhead costs of the VAIMH Endorsement (IMH-E®) and allow us to have applications and tests carefully reviewed.

**Q. What is the value of a Competency-Based System of endorsement?**

A. Endorsement is valuable in three ways:

1. Endorsement provides a set of competencies for professional development in the infant and family field.
2. Endorsement assures that persons providing culturally sensitive, relationship-focused services promoting infant mental health standards that are approved by a highly recognized professional organization for the discipline of infant mental health.
3. Endorsement recognizes the importance of continuing education and training for professionals in the infant and family field. Those who earn the endorsement demonstrate their commitment to this principle as they provide services that promote infant mental health with a high level of quality and integrity.

**Q. Why should I apply for endorsement?**

A. Consider the following:

- To enhance your professional profile as a specialist in the infant and family field.
- To affirm the specialized knowledge and skills you have acquired through formal education experience and in-service training.
- To validate the work that you have done under the guidance and supervision of experienced mentors in the infant and family field.
- To link your professional growth and development to competency standards that reflect best practice.
- To be identified as a competent professional in a system that reflects commitment to best practice and quality care for all infants, toddlers, and families.