



ADMH

Prospective Community Provider-Certification Orientation Frequently Asked Questions

Why do I need an orientation to become certified? Based on Alabama law, any community program providing services to people living with developmental disabilities, mental illness, and/or substance use disorders, must be certified by the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH). Certification standards are outlined in the Alabama Administrative Code (state law). ADMH established a certification process to ensure services provided in the community meet those quality and safety standards.

What if I don't know what population I want to provide services to? Each service area (mental illness, developmental/intellectual disabilities and substance use disorders) has separate and specific certification standards that you are required to meet prior to providing services. You are also required to become certified in each area you intend to provide service (if you are providing to more than one population or multiple services, you will need to be certified in each area/service.) Before registering for orientation, you must decide what service population you want to become certified in so that you will receive appropriate information on the minimum certification standards for that population. See definitions for the ADMH service populations below. Links to the certification standards for each of these populations are listed at the bottom of this page.

Definitions of the ADMH Service Populations:

Mental Illness Services

Generally refers to services provided for individuals living with clinical diagnosed disorders that are characterized by disruption of mood, thought, and/or behavior that interferes with daily functioning.

Substance Use Disorder Services

Generally refers to services that address the treatment or prevention of a maladaptive pattern of substance use (typically alcohol or drugs) leading to clinically significant impairment or distress.

Developmental / Intellectual Disability Services

Generally refers to services provided for individuals living with intellectual disabilities characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem solving) and adaptive behavior during the developmental period or prior to the age of 18.

How do I start my business? The ADMH certification process is a means to ensure that providers are meeting required certification standards. It does not include, nor does ADMH have a role in determining legal status of your business. As you are considering whether you want to become a community provider, you should:

- Go to the Alabama Secretary of State website to review requirements for becoming a business in Alabama.
- Develop community partnerships by reaching out to other community providers and organizations who have an interest in the people who may need the services you plan to provide.
- Establish a business plan to determine how your agency will obtain clients and receive payments for services provided by your agency.

Will I be certified after orientation? No. The ADMH provides a two-phase orientation process to assist you in understanding the certification application process and to provide you with information you can use to determine whether your program has the current capacity to meet certification standards.

Once I am certified, when will I get paid by ADMH? Certification by the ADMH is not a means of obtaining clients for the services your agency is certified to provide, nor is it a means of obtaining funding or payment for the services your program is certified to provide.

What if I want to invest in property or other areas of my program before achieving certification? You may invest in your program at any time, but you may not provide services to people until the program is certified. Achieving certification does not mean that you will receive clients to be served by your program nor does it guarantee your program will receive any funding for services. It only means that the program meets the ADMH minimum standard requirements for providing services. You must identify the source/s of revenue that will keep your program running. Therefore, you should make sure that your business plan is viable before making major investments.

I want to know the certification expectations now...I don't want to wait until the orientation to get started! There is a lot of reading to make sure that your program plans meet the requirements of a certified community program. Below you will find links to the Alabama Administrative Code and the certification standards for each service area. Although attending the *Prospective Community Provider—Certification Orientation* is a required part of the certification process, you don't have to wait to get started planning and learning about the process.

- Alabama Administrative Code—Developmental Disability Community Provider Standards Alabama <http://bit.ly/2CMf7Fs>
- Alabama Administrative Code—Mental Illness Community Provider Standards <http://bit.ly/2gg4IJL>
- Administrative Code—Substance Abuse Community Provider Standards <http://bit.ly/2D0fmAO>