

HUMAN SERVICES- RECOVERY SUPPORT SPECIALIST

This program will provide the training necessary for individuals to qualify to take the Certification Exam to become either Certified Recovery Support Specialists (CRSS) or Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists (CPRS). Individuals with either of these Certifications will work as peer support specialists in a variety of mental health, dual diagnosis, and substance abuse treatment services. Peer support specialists will work with clients in three core areas: patient advocacy and aiding patients with personal advocacy; mentoring patients in recovery; and recovery/wellness support. This program is both for people entering the field and for people already working in either the Substance Use Disorder (SUD) or mental health fields who wish to transition from their current role, either clinical or administrative, to work as a Recovery Support Specialist (RSS).

Note: To be eligible for the State exam, you must have lived experience as a consumer of mental health, substance abuse, or dual diagnosis services.

Accreditation

The RSS program will be reviewed for accreditation by the Illinois Certification Board during 2023.

Entrance Requirements

None.

Program Requirements

Students must provide their own transportation to and from field experience sites.

Transferability

There is pathway for students who complete the Recovery Support Specialist Program, to move into the Associates or Applied Sciences in Human Services. The Associate of Applied Science in Human Services transfers to many four-year institutions. See a list of these institutions at <https://elgin.edu/areas-of-study/human-services>

- Demonstrate the ability to form a helping relationship with a person in recovery from a mental illness, a substance use disorder, or a combination of both (dual diagnosis) by successfully performing the tasks assigned to an RSS during classroom-based role-plays and Field Experience as assessed by their site supervisor through a written evaluation.
- Employ the ability to develop a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) by creating a personal WRAP plan and by working with individuals in recovery on the creation of their own WRAP during their Field Experience as assessed by their site supervisor through a written evaluation.

- Exhibit the ability to function as an advocate for persons in recovery by identifying ways in which they have advocated for themselves, and by functioning as an advocate for assigned individuals during their Field Experience as assessed by their site supervisor through a written evaluation.
- Display essential helping skills through classroom-based role-playing and through working successfully with individuals during their Field Experience as assessed by their site supervisor through a written evaluation.
- Make evident an understanding of mentoring through identifying the impact of mentors in their own lives and by functioning as mentors during their Field Experience as assessed by their site supervisor through a written evaluation.
- Exhibit an understanding of appropriate boundaries and ethical conduct through successfully passing classroom evaluations, and by demonstrating ethical conduct during their Field Experience as assessed by their site supervisor through a written evaluation.
- Demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes central to being an RSS through the completion of classroom assessments and the State's Certification Exam.

Recovery Support Specialist-Basic Vocational Specialist

Course	Title	Credit Hours
First Semester		
RSS 101	History and Core Functions	3.5
RSS 103	Professional Techniques	3.5
RSS 105	Professional Responsibilities	3.5
Total		10.5
Second Semester		
RSS 107	Field Experience I	3
Total		3
Third Semester		
RSS 109	Field Experience II	3
Total		3
Program Total		16.5

Human Services-Recovery Support Specialist Courses

RSS 101 History and Core Functions (3.5) 3.5,0

RSS 101 is the first in a series of three classroom experiences, and two Field Experiences. In this course we will examine the history of Recovery Support Specialists. We will also explore essential helping skills, advocacy, and mentoring. Finally, we will explore the mental health disorder, substance abuse disorder, and dual diagnosis treatment continuums. Special Note: Only individuals with lived experience as consumers of mental health, substance use disorder, or dual diagnoses services are eligible to take the State exam leading to Certification. (1.2) Proficiency Credit: Not Available Pass/No Credit: Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$483 (effective 2025/26 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: Admission into the Recovery Support Specialist Program

Semester(s) Offered: Fall and Spring

RSS 103 Professional Techniques (3.5) 3.5,0

In this course, students will study various clinical components necessary to be an effective Recovery Support Specialist. Topics include Harm Reduction, Stages of Change and Motivational Interviewing, Trauma Informed Care, Cognitive Behavioral and Strength-Based Interventions, Behavioral Modification Techniques, Working with Families, and Working with Youth. Special Note: Only individuals with lived experience as consumers of mental health, substance use disorder, or dual diagnoses services are eligible to take the State exam leading to Certification. (1.2) Proficiency Credit: Not Available Pass/No Credit: Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$483 (effective 2025/26 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: Admission into the Recovery Support Specialist Program

Semester(s) Offered: Fall and Spring

RSS 105 Professional Responsibilities (3.5) 3.5,0

In this course students will explore their professional responsibilities as Recovery Support Specialists; review relevant state statues, and study the Code of Ethics for Recovery Support Specialists. Self-care, recovery support strategies, and crisis intervention will also be presented. Lastly, preparations for Field Experience will be implemented. Special Note: Only individuals with a lived experience as consumers of mental health, substance use disorder, or dual diagnosis treatment may sit for the State of Illinois certification exam. (1.2) Proficiency Credit: Not Available Pass/No Credit: Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$483 (effective 2025/26 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: Admission into the Recovery Support Specialist Program

Semester(s) Offered: Fall and Spring

RSS 107 Field Experience I (3) 1,10

In this course students will conduct a field experience in an Substance Use Disorder, and/or Mental Health Disorder and/or Dual Diagnosis treatment program. Students will begin to learn, in vivo, the profession of a Recovery Support Specialists. Special Note: Only individuals who have lived experience as consumers of a mental health disorder, substance use disorder, or dual diagnosis may sit for the state exam. (1.2) Proficiency Credit: Not Available Pass/No Credit: Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$414 (effective 2025/26 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: Consent of Program Staff. Grade of C or better in RSS 101, RSS 103, and RSS 105.

Semester(s) Offered: Fall, Spring and Summer

RSS 109 Field Experience II (3) 1,10

In this course is a continuation of RSS: Field Experience I. Students conduct a field experience in an Substance Use Disorder, and/or Mental Health Disorder and/or Dual Diagnosis treatment program. Students will begin to learn, in vivo, the profession of a Recovery Support Specialists. Special Note: Only individuals who have lived experience as consumers of a mental health disorder, substance use disorder, or dual diagnosis may sit for the state exam. (1.2) Proficiency Credit: Not Available Pass/No Credit: Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$414 (effective 2025/26 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: Consent of Program Staff. Grade of C or better in RSS 107.

Semester(s) Offered: Fall, Spring and Summer