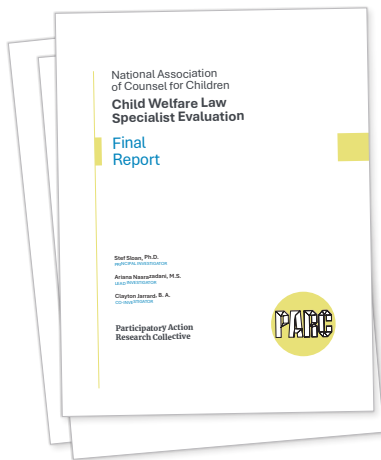


NACC Child Welfare Law Specialist Certification

NOW IS THE TIME TO GET YOUR CWLS CREDENTIAL



Take a deeper dive into the CWLS evaluation reports ▶

NACC
National Association
of Counsel for Children

NACCchildlaw.org

Certification@NACCchildlaw.org

NEWLY RELEASED INDEPENDENT EVALUATION SHOWS IMPACT OF CWLS CERTIFICATION

As the Child Welfare Law Specialist (CWLS) certification program approached its 20-year anniversary, NACC sought out an independent evaluation of the program's efficacy. Led by the Participatory Action Research Collective, and co-designed by lived experience experts, the survey study found that:

- ✓ **CWLS scored higher than non-certified attorneys on four of five key quality categories** including Advocacy and Procedural Competence, Legal Knowledge and Statutory Expertise, Individualized Case Planning, and Holistic Approaches.
- ✓ **The CWLS credential can improve an attorney's earning potential across all areas of law.** CWLS were more likely to earn higher incomes for child welfare legal representation and also had higher earnings in other fields of practice than non-certified attorneys.
- ✓ **CWLS preparation can directly impact legal practice and increase confidence.** CWLS reported that preparing for the CWLS exam improved the quality of their practice and boosted their self-confidence.
- ✓ **CWLS reported receiving training and continuing legal education from a wider variety of sources** than non-certified attorneys, exposing practitioners to a broader array of ideas, novel legal strategies, and networking opportunities.

OTHER BENEFITS OF CWLS CERTIFICATION

A copy of *Child Welfare Law and Practice* (the Red Book) is included at initial application and every five years at recertification.

Ongoing NACC membership is free while in good standing as a CWLS.

CWLS receive discounts on NACC conferences and training registration as well as free access to NACC's monthly webinars and member listserv.



NOW IS THE TIME TO GET YOUR CWLS CREDENTIAL

Eligibility and Application Requirements at a Glance*

- 25% or more of each of the last three years practicing child welfare law
- CLE hours in child welfare law and related topics
- Good standing and disciplinary history
- Writing sample showing legal analysis in the field
- Peer review responses
- CWLS exam
 - 60 multiple choice questions
 - 2 essay questions
 - 3 hours and 55 minutes; AI-proctored online

*Not available in ME, OK, PA, WV. State-specific requirements apply in CA, IN, SC.

Endorsed by NCJFCJ and the U.S. Children's Bureau

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges has endorsed the CWLS program and the U.S. Children's Bureau also encourages this professional certification.
[ACYF-CB-IM-21-06](#)

WHAT ARE CWLS SAYING ABOUT THE CREDENTIAL?

*"I feel **more 'polished'**, more professional. I feel like I am **on top of cutting-edge issues.**"*

*"I **learned more** things about child welfare law by studying to get the CWLS than I did from my practice in the area!"*

*"Preparing for the exam was a **thorough education** on the history and current status of child welfare law. [U]nderstanding the laws/policies that were enacted and the justification for those laws in the historic context gave me a much better appreciation of the current state of child welfare law."*

*"[I have] **more confidence, more perspective** on policy."*

*"I am **more knowledgeable** about things like ICWA, educational advocacy, permanent guardianship, and I have a network of CWLS attorneys I can call on when I encounter something unfamiliar or challenging."*

*"Holding myself out to be an expert makes me **stay on top of changes in the law.**"*

*"It has helped 'credentialize' me for future employers, providing a baseline indicator of my competency. [It] is an indicator of my own personal motivation and passion for the work, making me a **more attractive job candidate.**"*

"It has placed me in the company of many, many CWLS whom I respect and admire."

HOW CAN GETTING CERTIFIED IMPACT THE QUALITY OF YOUR PRACTICE?

Passing the CWLS exam is a required component of the certification process. The breadth and depth of knowledge needed to pass is substantial, and exam preparation can start impacting your practice from day one. The exam tests:

- Overarching Legal Structure and Themes (including the history of child welfare law and federal legislation);
- Legal Case from Beginning to End (investigations, removal, adjudication, reunification, permanency, and appellate advocacy);
- Discrete Issues (such as educational advocacy, trafficking, confidentiality, ICPC, immigration, and dual-status youth);
- Lawyering Roles (including agency, child, and parent representation as well as multidisciplinary advocacy); and
- Lawyering Skills (including trial skills, evidentiary issues, and systems-level advocacy).

Learn more and apply online at NACCchildlaw.org/CWLS-certification.