



DIRECT CARE WORKER REGISTRY

Direct care workers (DCWs) are responsible for the care of thousands of clients, patients, residents, or tenants in health care facilities throughout Iowa. DCWs provide assistance with daily activities, administer medications, and ease the burden for Iowa's elderly and persons with disabilities. In Iowa, only **certified nursing assistants** (CNAs) are placed on the Direct Care Worker Registry. CNAs may apply to be added to the registry so they are eligible for work in an Iowa **long-term care** (LTC) facility; **CNAs are only required to be on the registry if they are seeking employment in an LTC facility** (nursing home, skilled nursing facility, or a skilled or swing bed unit of a hospital).



TO GAIN PLACEMENT ON THE REGISTRY

- 1 The CNA candidate must take and complete the 75-hour course.
- 2 The candidate must pass both a written and a skills test within four months of their hire date.
- 3 Both tests must be passed within three attempts. If a candidate does not pass the written OR skills test after three attempts, they must retake the 75-hour course AND begin a new testing cycle.
- 4 Upon successful test completion, registry staff will receive notice from the testing entity and the CNA will be placed on the registry.

TO REMAIN ACTIVE ON THE REGISTRY

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requires that a CNA perform at least eight hours of nursing or nursing-related duties every 24 months. Additionally, **LTC facilities only** are required to provide and CNAs are required to complete at least 12 hours of in-service training per year.

Long-term care facilities are the only entities mandated by state and federal law to verify eligibility and report qualifying employment to the registry. Non-LTC entities are not required by state or federal law to verify eligibility or report LTC-eligible employment. However, the only way a CNA can remain active on the Iowa Direct Care Worker Registry is if their Iowa employer reports their hours to registry staff.

Before the CNA's status on the registry expires, an LTC facility or other qualifying federally-certified entity (hospice, hospital, home health care agency, or ambulatory surgical center) can report employment for a CNA by logging in to DIA's Health Facilities Database/Direct Care Worker Registry. Facilities should consider electronic verification of employment status at least yearly prior to their annual survey, but they may do so more often. If an entity does not update CNA new hires as outlined, the registry will not accurately reflect the CNA's current status. Likewise, if a CNA has been married or divorced since they were placed on the registry, their last name may not be current in the database. **It is a CNA's responsibility to make sure that all of their personal information is up to date.**

REPORTING HOURS BY OTHER FACILITIES OR AFTER EXPIRATION

Assisted living programs, intermediate care facilities, residential care facilities, and group homes **cannot** report CNA hours electronically. Administrators or directors of nursing for those facilities will need to provide a job description and an attestation letter on facility letterhead to registry staff showing the CNA has performed at least eight hours of paid, nursing or nursing-related duties. The facility must provide enough details to show that the CNA has met the LTC employment guidelines.

Once a CNA's status has changed from "active" to "expired" on the registry, the employer (facility administrator or director of nursing for any entity type) must send a letter to registry staff, on the facility's letterhead, which includes a testament that the CNA performed at least eight hours' worth of nursing or nursing-related duties while the CNA was in the facility's employment — after the date they were last verified, but before they expired on the registry (list the specific duties) — as well as the CNA's:

- Full name
- Registry ID number
- Hire date
- Separation date

GOOD TO KNOW: A CNA cannot report their own hours to the registry, nor can the CNA provide a letter verifying employment from the facility to DIA directly.

LOSS OF ACTIVE STATUS WITH NO QUALIFYING WORK

If a CNA performs no qualifying work for two years, the CNA will have to retake both competency tests to get their status updated on the registry and to be eligible to work in Iowa. Contact DIA for more information. Individuals who are found guilty of abusing, neglecting, or mistreating residents by a court of law or who have had a finding of abuse, neglect, mistreatment, or misappropriation of resident property will be designated as **not eligible for employment** on the registry.

RECIPROCITY & EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION

When a CNA wants to transfer **to** Iowa from another state registry, they must complete the Iowa Direct Care Registry application, which is found — with instructions — on the DCW page of the DIA website (dia.iowa.gov). If you wish to transfer **from Iowa to another state registry**, please first contact the registry in that state.

Potential employers, verification companies, and other states' registry staff can check the Iowa DCW Registry to verify the status of a CNA by first and last name, city, county of residence, and registry number. This registry number is the only unique identifying number that DIA can publicly share or confirm. Registry staff **will not** search by date of birth or any part of a Social Security number; please do not email this type of information to the registry.

THE FINE PRINT

- Iowa Code Chapter 135C (Health Care Facilities)
- 42 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 483 Subpart D



MORE INFO

Scan this QR code with your smartphone to visit the Direct Care Worker Registry page on the DIA website.

