Guide To The ICF Coach Credentialing Process

How to get your ICF ACC or PCC certified coach credential
With thanks to Dr. Dave DeVries, PCC who edited the first version.

Notice to Participant

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e-mail: help@crmcoaches.com

Revised September 2016
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Introduction

The focus of this Guide is to help navigate through the International Coach Federation (ICF) credentialing process. It’s designed to help Creative Results Management participants to not only understand the ICF’s requirements and next steps to attain their Associate Certified Coach (ACC) or Professional Certified Coach (PCC) credentials, but also to develop action steps to accelerate forward progress.

Receiving the ACC or PCC credential from the ICF is a significant recognition of your progress and achievement.

Intended Outcomes: Coaches will...

- Understand the requirements necessary to attain your ICF Credential.
- Identify practical steps to take to move closer to achieving your goal.
- Learn how to overcome the #1 obstacle to reaching your goal.
- Discover valuable measures you can put into action immediately.
- Explore ways to gain the support you need to succeed.

To achieve these outcomes, coaches will...

1. Consider what attaining their ICF credential will do for them.
2. Understand the eligibility requirements more fully.
3. Set a goal for when they hope to attain their ICF credential.
4. Start an ICF Folder to collect the documentation they need to apply online.
5. Seek practical support to achieve their goal.

Consider

What result do you need from this Guide?
Your Progress

One purpose of this Guide is to provide encouragement for participants as they make progress toward their credential. Identify your anticipated completion of the requirements.

Month:      Year:

Consider

How far are you in the credentialing process (hours, months)?

What step are you currently working to accomplish?

What would becoming credentialed do for you?
ICF Membership

Associations bind professions and professionals together.

The true professional is a member of his or her professional organization. By joining and maintaining membership in ICF, coaches inform others that they are part of an influential voice that is shaping the future of coaching around the globe. ICF membership opens up a world of opportunity for professional development, networking and leadership in your profession from the local to global level.

Your clients expect you to be credentialed

According to the 2006 ICF Global Coaching Study, 52 percent of all coaching clients expect the coach they hire to be credentialed.

In addition to measuring and certifying the competency of individuals and inspiring pursuit of continuous development, the ICF Credentialing Program exists to protect and serve consumers of coaching services.

By holding an ICF Credential, your clients can rest assured knowing that: 1) you have received professional training from a program specifically designed to teach coaching skills in alignment with the ICF Core Competencies and Code of Ethics; 2) you have demonstrated a proficient understanding and use of the coaching competencies as outlined by the ICF; and 3) you are accountable to the ethics and standards set forth by the ICF.

“It’s important to hold an independent credential. Research demonstrates several benefits to holding one, including higher client satisfaction.”

– Janet Harvey, MCC, 2012 ICF President

Membership Eligibility Requirements

As of April 1, 2013, individuals must have completed at least 60 hours of coach-specific training* to be a member of the ICF, in addition to paying membership dues and agreeing to abide by the ICF Code of Ethics. See more here.

*Coach-specific Training is defined as:
  • Training from an ICF Accredited Coach Training (ACTP) or a program that has received the ICF Approved Coach Specific Training Hours (ASCTH) designation; or
  • Training that is specifically marketed as teaching coaching skills and behaviors, teaches how to apply technical skills in a coach-like manner, and transfers those skills in accordance with the ICF Core Coaching Competencies.

Note: All of Creative Results Management’s training is approved by the ICF as Approved Coach Specific Training Hours (ACSTH) since September 2011. Our training meets the ICF’s strict professional coach training standards.
Associate Certified Coach (ACC)

The first level of ICF credential is called "Associate Certified Coach."

After graduating from the Coaching Mastery Certificate Program, the Coaching Workshop Certificate Program plus Electives or the Core Coaching Skills Certificate Program, you've overcome the biggest obstacle to attaining your ACC credential, which are the required training hours.

You can continue working on the rest of the requirements to apply online.

3 Application Paths

1. ACC ACTP Path – if you have completed an entire ACTP program (not just part of it). This wouldn’t apply to Creative Results Management training participants.
2. ACC ACSTH Path – if all of your training hours are from an ACSTH program. All of Creative Results Management’s training hours are ACSTH since September 2011.
3. ACC Portfolio Path – if some or all of your training hours are not ICF approved. Use this path if you took Creative Results Management’s coaching training prior to September 2011.

Numbers 2 and 3 above apply to some of our training participants. So, we'll show you both requirements.

How to build to an ICF credential with our training

Note: The Coaching Workshop Track can be extended to PCC requirements by taking the Coaching Mastery Certificate Program. The same goes for CORE people. Instead of taking Electives to build out, you could take Coaching Mastery.
ICF ACC Credential Requirements

More information follows this chart for each area. Also, the ICF’s website defines everything.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ACC ACSTH Path</th>
<th>ACC Portfolio Path</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coach Specific Training</strong></td>
<td>60 hours. If you started our training after September 2011, then it is Approved Coach Specific Training Hours (ACSTH). Use this pathway.</td>
<td>60 documented hours. If you took CORE prior to September 2011, or will submit other non-ICF approved training, use this pathway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work with a mentor-coach</strong></td>
<td><strong>10 hours with a qualified mentor coach.</strong> If you took Coaching Mastery, you also received these mentor coaching hours, otherwise click here for Coaching Excellence (Mentor-Coaching).</td>
<td><strong>10 hours of Mentor Coaching</strong> to be documented on your online application. Click here for Coaching Excellence (Mentor-Coaching).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coaching Experience</strong></td>
<td>Client Coaching log demonstrating 100 hours (75 paid) of coaching experience with at least 8 clients following the start of their coach-specific training. At least 25 of these hours must occur within the 18 months prior to submitting the application for the credential. <a href="#">Sample Log &amp; Instructions</a></td>
<td>Client Coaching log demonstrating 100 hours (75 paid) of coaching experience with at least 8 clients following the start of their coach-specific training. At least 25 of these hours must occur within the 18 months prior to submitting the application for the credential. <a href="#">Sample Log &amp; Instructions</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance Evaluation &amp; Transcript</strong></td>
<td>Not required if all the training hours you turn in are ACSTH &amp; CCE.</td>
<td>ACC Portfolio applicants must pass an exam that consists of one recorded coaching session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coach Knowledge Assessment</strong></td>
<td>A multiple-choice, Web-based exam on the ICF Core Competencies and Ethics.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ICF Fees</strong></td>
<td>$300 for ICF Members, $500 for ICF non-members.</td>
<td>$400 for ICF Members, $600 for ICF non-members.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Professional Certified Coach (PCC)

The second level of ICF credential is called "Associate Certified Coach."

After graduating from one or more of our certificate programs plus taking Electives can get you required training hours for a PCC.

You can continue working on the rest of the requirements to apply online.

3 Application Paths

1. PCC ACTP Path – if you have completed an entire ACTP program (not just part of it). This wouldn’t apply to Creative Results Management training participants.
2. PCC ACSTH Path – if all of your training hours are from an ACSTH program. All of Creative Results Management’s training hours are ACSTH since September 2011.
3. PCC Portfolio Path – if some or all of your training hours are not ICF approved. Use this path if you took Creative Results Management’s coaching training prior to September 2011.

Numbers 2 and 3 above apply to some of our training participants. So, we’ll show you both requirements.

How to build to an ICF credential with our training

Note: The Coaching Workshop Track can be extended to PCC requirements by taking the Coaching Mastery Certificate Program. The same goes for CORE people. Instead of taking Electives to build out, you could take Coaching Mastery.
## ICF PCC Credential Requirements

More information follows this chart for each area. Also, the ICF’s website defines everything.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th><strong>PCC Portfolio Path</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coach Specific Training</strong></td>
<td>125 hours. If you started our training after September 2011, then it is Approved Coach Specific Training Hours (ACSTH). Use this pathway.</td>
<td>125 documented hours. If you took CORE prior to September 2011 or will turn in other non-ICF approved training, use this pathway. CRM will provide you with documentation upon graduation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with a mentor-coach</td>
<td><strong>10 hours of Mentor Coaching</strong> to be documented on your online application. Click <a href="#">here</a> for Coaching Excellence (Mentor-Coaching).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coaching Experience</td>
<td>A coaching log demonstrating 500 hours (450 paid) of coaching experience with at least 25 clients following the start of their coach-specific training. At least 50 of these hours must occur within the 18 months prior to submitting the application for the credential. (<a href="#">Sample Log &amp; Instructions</a>).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Evaluation &amp; Transcript</td>
<td><strong>Performance evaluation</strong> (two audio recordings and written transcripts of coaching sessions to be uploaded with your application).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coach Knowledge Assessment</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICF Fees</td>
<td>ICF Members: $575 USD Non-members: $775 USD</td>
<td>ICF Members: $675 USD Non-members: $875 USD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Credential Renewals

All ICF credentials must be renewed every three years.

Renewal Requirements

1. Submission of the online credential renewal application with appropriate documentation.
2. **Participation in at least 40 hours of Continuing Coach Education (CCE)** completed in the three years since the initial award of your credential or since your last credential renewal, with at least 24 hours in Core Competencies. All of Creative Results Management courses count as Core Competencies for your credential renewal. AND you can use those training hours for your next credential too. Example, you have an ACC and take Electives with us. You can use those Elective training hours to renew your ACC and then later turn them in for your PCC application.
3. Beginning in 2016, ICF Credential-holders will be required to demonstrate completion of at least three (3) Continuing Coach Education (CCE) units in the area of coaching ethics to be eligible for renewal of their ICF Credentials. This requirement will apply to all coaches whose ICF Credentials are slated to expire on or after December 31, 2016. View the ICF Ethics CCE Course.
4. For ACC renewals only, an additional **10 hours of Mentor Coaching** above those hours required for initial credential, completed in the three years since the initial award of your credential or since your last credential renewal. This requirement is intended to promote your continued growth as a coach and help move you to the next credential level. Our Coaching Excellence (Mentor Coaching) Program will give you the 10 mentor coaching hours required, AND you'll receive 12 training hours in Core Competencies you also need to renew your credential. (See no. 2 above.)

Helpful Links:

ICF Membership Eligibility Requirements FAQs:
http://www.coachfederation.org/mer/

ICF Credential Requirements:
For definitions of Coaching Hours, Coach Specific Training, Mentor Coaching Requirements, Exam Recording, etc. www.coachfederation.org > Individual Credentialing > Associate Certified Coach (ACC) or Professional Certified Coach (PCC)

EXCEL Coaching Excellence Program (Mentor-Coaching):
http://creativeresultsmanagement.com/EXCEL

Sample Coaching Log:
http://creativeresultsmanagement.com/Resources/Documents/CoachingLogSample.xls
Mentor-Coaching

All coaches applying for any level ICF credential via the ACSTH or Portfolio Application must provide documentation showing completion of ten (10) hours of mentor coaching with a qualified mentor coach. The same sort of documentation is also part of the renewal process for the ICF credential.

The ICF definition of Mentor Coaching related to the credentialing requirements is:
“For purposes of Credentialing, mentor coaching means an applicant being coached on their coaching skills rather than coaching on practice building, life balance, or other topics unrelated to the development of an applicant's coaching skill.”

Mentor Coach Qualifications:

For ACC or PCC portfolio applicant, and ACC renewal applicants:

- Mentor Coach is ICF credentialed at the same level or higher than the credential the applicant is seeking.
- Mentor Coach is not to be under any sanctions from the ICF Independent Review Board for violations of ethical conduct.

Group coaching counts toward the mentoring requirement of 10 hours within the framework described. No more than 70 percent of the required mentoring hours (that is seven hours) can come from group coaching. Additionally, the group being mentored may not consist of more than 10 participants. Check the ICF credentialing pages for more details.

If you graduated from the Coaching Mastery Certificate Program, you will have received mentor coaching as part of the program. Your certificate has the mentor coaching information you need for the ICF application.

Creative Results Management’s Coaching Excellence Program (EXCEL) meets the ICF mentor coaching requirement for those who desire to attain their ACC or PCC credential. The focus of this program is to advance your understanding and skills in the ICF core competencies. Through a combination of group and individual sessions participants observe and practice coaching skills to build confidence in preparation for the ACC and PCC Performance and Knowledge exams and to advance coaching effectiveness.

You will receive...

- Three hours one-on-one mentor-coaching sessions
- Four two-hour group mentor-coaching sessions
- Documentation for 12-15 ACSTH training hours, and 10 mentor-coaching hours
Cost:
Group Course: $900, with discounts for early registration.
Individual Course: $1800.
If you are going for a PCC, an additional $200 fee applies.

Limited Enrollment: Each EXCEL cohort is limited to ten (10) participants who have completed at least 51 hours of coaching training, and have logged at least 50+ client-coaching hours. This ensures maximum learning and individual focus.

Link: http://www.creativeresultsmanagement.com/EXCEL

Note:
- Dates & times for three hours of individual mentor coaching will be scheduled directly with your Mentor Coach following completion of the four group sessions.
- All Group Sessions must be done live voice-to-voice (ICF requirement). Missed Sessions may be made up for $150 per session.
- Maintaining your Reflection Journal throughout the EXCEL Program will reinforce your learning opportunities and skill development.

The Coaching Excellence Program (EXCEL) is a result of CRM’s commitment to advance the practice of coaching and to reinforce, and recognize the value of professional coach-specific training and credentialing for those in Christian ministry.

When will you receive Mentor Coaching?

How will your Mentor Coach be working with you?
Reflective Journaling

You are encouraged to keep a “learning log” where you record the learning and application from reflecting on your client work. This Reflective Journal for Coaches is a place to consider some of the key issues that have arisen, and your insights about how you coached and ways to improve. You can order a copy of the new Reflective Journal for Coaches at Amazon.com

Your personal reflection and self-generated feedback are powerful tools to help you improve your coaching competencies. After each coaching session take a moment to coach yourself:

- What happened in you?
- What can you learn?
- What would you like to do next time?

Example:

Working with the client I found myself feeling quite judgmental about their behaviors and underlying beliefs. While my feelings were kept hidden from the client, my thoughts were very distracting and prevented me from listening with real depth. There is also the risk that my own feelings could have an impact on the client. I am realizing how important it is for me to suspend judgment during my sessions so that I can be fully present with my coachee.

Consider

Try out reflective journaling on a recent coaching conversation.
Coaching Experience

Just a few things to keep in mind…

In keeping with the ICF Code of Ethics, you must obtain consent from your clients to release their names to ICF in the event it becomes necessary to contact them. Should ICF deem it necessary to contact clients in order to confirm they were coaching clients of the applicant, ICF will not discuss specific topics of the coaching. The simplest way to do this is to include the following in your coaching agreements:

**ICF Credentialing:** In order to be certified by the ICF as a professional coach I need to tell them who I’ve coached, but not the contents of the coaching. I will give the ICF your name, dates of the coaching relationship, total hours coached and your contact information. Rest assured, the content of your coaching will remain confidential. You may be contacted by the ICF to verify that you were indeed coached by me, but will not be asked to reveal the content of the coaching process.

**What constitutes a client-coaching hour?**

- A client-coaching hour is 60 minutes of actual coaching with someone who has hired you as a coach and not in any other capacity.

- Paid hours shall be any hours for which any kind or amount of compensation, including barter, is received.

- Only 25% of the minimum hours needed to qualify for the credential can be pro-bono hours, including complimentary sessions.

- Teaching coaching classes does not count as client-coaching hours.

- There shall be no limitation of client-coaching hours by specialization or niche.

There are three steps to reporting your coaching experience:

1. Upload your Client Coaching Log. (include name, contact information, dates, total hours paid/pro-bono)

2. Enter your total number of paid/pro-bono hours.

3. (optional) Upload your client reference letter **only** if you indicate internal or 3rd party coaching hours on your log.

**Consider**

If you haven’t already reached 100 hours, determine the month when you intend to complete your 100 client-coaching hours. Write it in the box.
Credential Application Check List

The ICF has an easy-to-use online application. Online applications are accepted year-round.

The following Check List will help streamline your application process for the ACC or PCC:

1. Join the ICF – the cost is $245/year. (This equals only $20 per month!). The ICF Membership fee is pro-rated depending on when you join. The membership year is April through March. http://www.coachfederation.org

2. Review the ICF’s requirements for the ACC or PCC and download a sample application: www.coachfederation.org > Individual Credentialing > Associate Certified Coach (ACC) or Professional Certified Coach (PCC)

3. Complete your coaching training program and receive documentation to submit online. If you can’t find it, login at http://creativeresultsmanagement.com and click Profile and scroll down to find a link to your certificate (and your ICF coaching training log if you were enrolled in CORE prior to September 2011).

4. Complete your mentor coaching either through The Coaching Mastery Certificate Program or Coaching Excellence (Mentor Coaching) Program. If you can’t find your EXCEL certificate (or any Electives certificates) search your email for the subject: “ICF credits for” and you’ll find them.


6. Create an ICF Folder on your desktop that includes all documentation needed to complete the application:
   a. **Your Client Coaching Log** – which you are updating after each coaching conversation.
   b. **Coach Training certificates.** If you can’t find your CORE or Mastery certificates, login at http://creativeresultsmanagement.com and click Profile and scroll down to find a link to your certificate (and your ICF coaching training log if you were enrolled in CORE prior to September 2011). If you can’t find your EXCEL or Elective certificates search your email for the subject: “ICF credits for” and you’ll find them.
   c. **Mentor coaching start, finish, and mentor coach’s name.** There’s no certificate to upload. You will select your mentor coach from a list on the online application. Then put the first date you met and the final one-on-one date you met. For Mastery participants these dates are on your Mastery graduation certificate. For EXCEL participants, use the date of the first group session and the date of your 2nd one-on-one one.
Recorded Coaching Session
(Performance Exam)

For ACC Portfolio and all PCC applicants. If you are applying for an ACC and took our training after September 2011, this is not required.

Requirement
ACC Portfolio and PCC ACSTH and Portfolio applicants must pass an exam that consists of one recorded coaching session. You will upload a 20-60 minute recording of 1 (for ACC) or 2 (for PCC) coaching sessions. You also must provide a written transcript of the call.

Coaching Sessions
The recording should be of a complete (not edited) coaching session lasting 20-60 minutes. The recording must be a recording of an actual client coaching session between you and a paid or pro-bono client. The client may not be a coach unless the coach is one of your regular clients. Sessions that occur as a part of coach training may not be used.

An ICF assessor will review your recording and evaluate you on your use of the 11 Coaching Competencies. This will typically happen within two months.

Be sure to carefully read the information at the ICF’s website.

Here are some general points to keep in mind:

1. Focus on Determining the Outcome of the Session. (You’ve already learned how to do this well – you’ll do great on your exam!)
2. Check-in to see how things are going in middle of the session (e.g. where do you want to go next? where are you now?) Check-in about progress and learning along the way.
3. Don’t rush questions. Remember to pause. Good questions flow out of good listening.
4. Allow for your client’s participation in directing the session. Don’t rush to action since self-awareness/learning is a key aim in your coaching.
5. Remember to ask questions that serve the client – not for your own curiosity.

We are confident that our graduates have been exposed to all the skills they need to do well in their ACC examination. Passing the PCC takes a much higher skill level than ACC. We suggest working with a mentor coach prior to submitting recordings. Ask your mentor coach to review your recordings to find the ones most likely to pass.
Coach Knowledge Assessment

The Coach Knowledge Assessment consists of multiple-choice questions. All applicants must take this, regardless of which application they use.

Procedure
Once an applicant’s credential application is reviewed for number of training hours, mentor coaching hours and client coaching hours, ICF staff will contact the applicant via email with an invitation to take the Coach Knowledge Assessment (CKA). The invitation will contain log in and password information with instructions on how to access the online test portal. The invitation remains in effect for 60 days, and an applicant can take the test at any time during this 60-day period.

You can prepare for the CKA by reviewing the ICF Core Coaching Competencies and Code of Ethics. You can find a few sample questions at the ICF’s website in the credential application section. Our Coaching Excellence (Mentor Coaching) program will prepare you for this exam.

Go here to watch a video on the CKA.

People tell us it takes a full two hours to do the online exam. Be rested and somewhere you can concentrate. None of our participants have reported failing this exam. Though most have said it’s challenging.

Estimated Timeline
You will receive an invitation to complete the CKA within 2 weeks of your application being reviewed. The invitation will come via email with further instructions on completing the CKA.

You will receive an immediate score after you finish the CKA. After you pass, you will wait for final approval of your credential. If you applied for an ACC ACSTH Path, you’ll hear something in 1-2 weeks. If you needed to turn in recording(s) (ACC Portfolio or PCC) it will be 3-6 more weeks before you get final word on your credential.
Practical Support

1. **Identify the support you need to attain your credential.**
   Don’t go it alone. Find a partner or group of coaches who can encourage your toward your goal.

2. **Write down your plan.** Have a specific plan that will enable you to attain your ICF credential by the end of the year. Know which steps you are working on, and what you need to do to complete that step.

3. **Post your goal publicly.** Tell as many people as possible that you are working to achieve your ICF credential this year. They will add encouragement.

4. **Report on your progress.** Each month, tell the same group of people how you have progressed toward your goal. As you get closer to submitting your application online, you may want to report your process weekly.

5. **Join a local ICF Chapter.** Check the ICF website to locate one in your area. The chapter meetings and activities will provide encouragement personally, and offer a supportive environment as you pursue your credential. Find a chapter.

6. **Anticipate your celebration!** Plan in advance how you will celebrate. Think of the satisfaction you will have at attaining your goal and reward yourself when you are done.

Consider

How will you pursue the support you need to attain your goal?
Next Steps

Write down three important steps that you can take in the next 30-60 days to move toward your goal!

1. 

2. 

3. 

Credentialed CORE Graduates and Faculty

*Over 150 of our graduates are now credentialed with the ICF!* Imagine what it will be like add your name to the list!

**MCC**

- Kim Z. 
- Your Name Here!

**PCC**

- Dawn A. 
- Dave D. 
- Craig C. 
- Walt H. 
- Gary R. 
- John R. 
- Katie R. 
- Bryan W. 
- Keith W. 
- Lori W. 
- Your Name Here!

**ACC**

- Takeshi T. 
- Kirk K. 
- Mark T. 
- John L. 
- Ruth C. 
- Dick G. 
- Michael S. 
- Stan T. 
- Karen N. 
- John V. 
- David G. 
- Michael S. 
- Kevin S. 
- Bethany E. 
- Kristen C. 
- Martin K. 
- Scott S. 
- 100 others… 
- Your Name Here!
Suggested Action Steps

- Review the ICF Credentialing Process and identify your next steps toward attaining your credential.

- Make your goal public! Let people around you know your intention to achieve this goal!

- Create your ICF Folder. Include all the documents required to submit your application.

- Find the support you need to succeed.

- Register for CRM’s Coaching Excellence Program once you’ve reached 50+ coaching hours.

- Prepare to record a coaching session, if needed.

- Write to us to let us know when you pass! Send a photo of you holding your ICF credential and we’ll post it on our social media. (email: help@crmcoaches.com)

Questions:

Creative Results Management is committed to advance the practice of coaching and to reinforce and recognize the value of professional coach-specific training and credentialing for those in Christian ministry.

If you have any questions or comments, please don’t hesitate to email us.
FAQs

What is the ICF and how is Creative Results Management connected to it?
ICF is a commonly used acronym for the International Coach Federation. Founded in 1995, the ICF's core purpose is to advance the art, science, and practice of professional coaching. As the leading global coaching association, the ICF is working toward this goal by setting high standards, providing independent certification, and building a worldwide network of credentialed coaches. All Creative Results Faculty hold ICF credentials, and are highly committed to training excellence in line with ICF standards. All of our training is ICF approved as Approved Coach Specific Training Hours (ACSTH).

Do my training hours count toward my coaching hours?
No. Only hours of actual coaching with someone who has hired you as a coach and not in any other capacity will count toward your credential.

What if I don’t have a record of all my coaching hours? Can I still count those hours?
No. You can only submit the hours for which you have accurate records.

Can CCEUs be used as "coach-specific training hours"?
Yes, Continuing Coach Education Units may be used as coach-specific training hours or to renew your ICF credential if they are in the area of Core Competencies.