



YPA Professional Credential Renewal and Continuing Education FAQ

The New York State Youth Peer Advocate (YPA) Provisional and Professional Credentials are administered by YOUTH POWER! of Families Together in New York State. Individuals who provide Youth Peer Support and Training (YPST), or would like to be a YPST service provider are eligible to apply. Applicants who meet all of the requirements will receive a Credential. **The YPA Professional Credential must be renewed every two years.** For more information on the YPA Credentials or to obtain an application form, please [click here](#). If you have any additional questions, please call our office at 518-432-0333, ext. 18.

When does my YPA Professional Credential expire?

All credentials will expire with no exceptions on a YPA's 31st birthday and cannot be renewed. The YPA Professional Credential expires two years from the date it was awarded. When you renew your YPA Professional Credential, it will be valid for another two-year period. It is the responsibility of each YPA to submit the required YPA Credential Renewal paperwork no more than 90 days and no less than 30 days prior to the expiration date of their YPA Professional Credential. This will include documentation of continuing education and the YPA Professional Credential Renewal Form.

When does my YPA Provisional Credential expire?

All credentials will expire with no exceptions on a YPA's 31st birthday. The YPA Provisional Credential will expire 18 months from the date it was awarded. During the 18 month timeframe you must fulfill the requirements and apply for your YPA Professional Credential. **A YPA Provisional Credential is not renewable.** To see if you are eligible for an extension we recommend that you contact the Workforce Development Department. If you do fulfill all of the requirements for a YPA Professional Credential during the 18-month period, you can apply for a Professional Credential. A Professional Credential must be renewed every 2 years. For further questions on your Provisional Credential, please refer to the Provisional Credential FAQ.

What if my Professional Credential Expires?

Once your Professional Credential has expired, you may not identify yourself as a Credentialed Youth Peer Advocate or use YPA-C after your name. Additionally, you will not be eligible to seek reimbursement by any payor that requires you to be credentialed to provide YPST services. If less than six months has elapsed since the expiration date of your credential, you can renew your Professional Credential by submitting the renewal application, along with the late fee of \$10.00. If your Professional Credential has been expired for more than 6 months you may apply to reinstate your credential. Please contact us about the reinstatement process. If a late fee will create an undue hardship for you, or if you have additional questions or concerns about the late fee.

Is there an 'inactive status' option available for YPAs who need to take an extended leave?

YPAs with a current Professional Credential can apply to freeze their credential for up to 12 months. During this time the advocate's credential is inactive, you will not be able to work as a Credentialed Youth Peer advocate. After the freeze period has ended, an advocate can apply to have their credential re-activated. At this time a new credential with a new expiration date will be issued. If you need to freeze your credential for more than 12 months please contact us.

What is required to renew my YPA Professional Credential?

In order to apply for renewal, you will complete a renewal application, which includes the following:

- Contact information update
- Documentation of continuing education
- Signed Code of Ethics statement

Is continuing education required for renewal?

Yes. To be eligible for renewal, YPAs must submit evidence of completion of a minimum of 20 hours of continuing education over the two-year period. It is important for YPAs to enhance their skills, deepen their understanding of different services and systems, and keep up with new developments in the field.

What qualifies as continuing education for YPAs?

Training qualifies if it is relevant to the role of a Youth Peer Advocate. This can include online and in-person training for which you receive a certificate of completion. YOUTH POWER! of FTNYS staff often sponsor training, these events would qualify as continuing education. Additionally, relevant independent studies, relevant college courses, and in-service workshops you develop may be considered towards your continuing education with prior approval. If you have any questions about what is acceptable, please contact us.

Are there any specific required YPA Continuing Education courses?

Not at this time. However, as we continue to evaluate competencies required to perform the role of a Youth Peer Advocate, as well as trending challenges, it is likely we will require certain training modules as a condition of renewal. When this happens, the required training will be made available. We invite each YPA to explore possible areas for continuing education to further one's own learning goals and provide input to YOUTH POWER! of FTNYS, the YPSAC, as well as other YPAs (i.e. - through learning communities such as Peer Leader Support and Development meetings (PLSD)).

If I conduct a training myself, does that count?

Yes, if it is related to the work of YPAs. You will receive credit for the number of hours of the training you deliver and you can only receive credit once, not every time you deliver the training. If the specific training is going to be longer than 6 hours, please check with us for approval. Again, please attach the agenda and handouts. Use the same form that you would use if you attended training, just note that this was a workshop you provided.

Can I do an independent study, get credit for a college course, another Professional Credential or certificate program?

Yes, you may complete an independent study, get credit for a college course, another Professional Credential or certificate program if it relates to your role as a YPA. Please seek prior approval from your supervisor and check with our office about your eligibility. You would use the same form as if you attended a training (you can modify your answers appropriately). Please also document the actual meetings you attended and/or books or websites you reviewed during your studies or course work. If you developed any written materials, please attach these. If approved, your studies or course work can count for a maximum of 6 continuing education hours.

How do I submit evidence that I have fulfilled the continuing education requirement?

Every time you attend training or complete some other form of continuing education, fill out a YPA Continuing Education Form and attach your course, workshop, or webinar agenda and a certificate of completion, if one was issued. Prepare a separate YPA Continuing Education Form for each training you attended. Collect these and include them with your YPA Credential Renewal Application.

We strongly recommend that you complete the continuing education forms and have them signed at the time you complete the actual continuing education activities. This way, you will avoid struggling to track down agendas and signatures when the time comes for you to renew your YPA Professional Credential.

Can I renew my YPA Professional Credential if I am not working or do not have a formal supervisor to sign my Continuing Education forms?

Yes. The same renewal rules apply, but instead of a supervisor's signature, you will need to provide documented proof for your continuing education hours. Valid proof includes, but is not limited to, signed attendance sheets, a certificate of completion/attendance, with your name on it, a workshop agenda with the presenter's signature, or signed note from the presenter confirming your attendance. If you have any questions about proof of attendance, please contact our office.

How do I know how many credit hours to record?

You should record the number of hours you spend in active training. For example, if you attend a 2 hour workshop, you would record 2 hours. If you attend a 4 hour training with an hour lunch break, you would receive credit for 3 hours. If the course awards formal approved Continuing Education Units or CEUs (such as are required for social workers), use that number as a guide.

Does the trainer need to sign this form?

No, but your supervisor does. You should have the presenter sign your form if you do not have a supervisor.

Do I use the same form for conferences?

You may use the same form for conferences. Please list the plenary sessions and workshops you attended under the training description. You can attach the conference brochure or cut and paste the workshop descriptions and attach those. Determine the continued education hours based on the length of the workshops. For the FTNYS Annual Conference and University of YOUTH POWER! we have a specific form that makes it easy for you to record the sessions you attended.



Let's Work Together to Make the YPA Profession Stronger!

If you have a great idea for a webinar, consider developing something to share with your colleagues. We can help you promote the webinar through the YPA listserv. This will count as continuing education for you and for others.

All YPA Professional Credential and Continuing Education Forms can be found on the Families Together in NYS website www.ftnys.org under the Workforce Development tab.