What is CESP™ Certification?

The CESP™ program is the first in the nation to create national guidelines to validate and support the training currently provided in the field. The certification program falls under the oversight of the Employment Support Professional Certification Council (ESPCC), established by the APSE Board of Directors.

Unlike training programs that provide a certificate of completion, the CESP™ certification sets a standard of knowledge and distinguishes employment support professionals who have shown they have the skill and competence to perform the requirements of the job.

Created by subject matter experts and leaders in the field of disability employment, the CESP™ exam seeks to define the benchmarks for knowledge and competency in the field in the following areas:

1. Application of Core Values and Principles to Practice & Legislation and Funding
2. Individualized Assessment and Employment / Career Planning
3. Community Research and Job Development
4. Workplace and Related Supports
5. Ongoing Supports

Who Should get Certified?

The ESPCC developed the CESP™ for professionals who provide employment services to individuals with a variety of disabilities including intellectual, mental health, autism spectrum disorders and multiple physical & sensory disabilities.

Job coaches, job developers, transition employment specialists, job placement personnel, and employment specialists/consultants* can earn the designation of Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP™) by passing the national CESP™ examination.
Why Certification?

The CESP™ Certification Program was created in response to increasing demand for a system to identify trained, experienced employment specialists. CESP™ certification has many benefits for both programs and professionals.

For Provider Agencies and Community Rehabilitation Programs, CESP™ certification:

- Increases the visibility of competent professionals.
- Helps consumers connect with professionals they can trust.
- Creates a standard that defines the roles and responsibilities of employment support professionals.
- Improves employability and provides opportunities for salary and career advancement.
- Legitimates and enhances professionalism in the field.

For Employment Support Professionals, CESP™ certification:

- Increases your marketing edge with employers and businesses
- Assures the public and consumers of your commitment to best practices
- Validates your commitment to ethical and safety standards

The APSE website is a great source of information on the CESP™ exam. You can visit the Frequently Asked Questions section here. Exam preparation info can be found here and the dates/locations of upcoming exam are listed here. We encourage you to download and read the CESP™ Certification Handbook. It is a wonderful source of information on the content and structure of the exam. Unfortunately, we do not recommend or endorse a study guide or test preparation program. The CESP™ examination was designed to test the application of knowledge and skills one uses in their role as an employment professional. Any coursework or training that contributes to professional development would be beneficial, but not necessary, while preparing to take the exam.

Study Guide:

We do not recommend or endorse a study guide or test preparation program. The CESP™ examination was designed to test the application of knowledge and skills one uses in their role as an employment professional. Any coursework or training that contributes to professional development would be beneficial, but not necessary, while preparing to take the exam. Our suggestion is that you review the Certification Handbook, with specific attention paid to the exam Content Outline.

The exam is based on the results of a national Role Delineation Study. Subject matter experts were polled on the basic skills and knowledge they believe to be an essential
foundation to work in this field. The detailed content outline is comprised of the results of the study. Candidates should carefully review the content outline, as they prepare for the exam. Test questions are taken from the following 5 core areas identified by the study as crucial for ability to work as a supported employment specialist in the percentages indicated.

1. Application of Core Values and Principles to Practice & Legislation and Funding (13 to 17%)
2. Individualized Assessment and Employment / Career Planning (23-29%)
3. Community Research and Job Development (19-25%)
4. Workplace and Related Supports (27-33%)
5. Ongoing Support (6-8%)

SoCal APSE has a very active chapter and you may also reach out to them to see if they are planning on holding an exam in the near future:
http://apse.org/chapter/california/
http://socalapse.com/