

IMFOA Certification Application Process FAQ's

NOTE: THESE FAQs APPLY TO CLERK CERTIFICATION, FINANCE CERTIFICATION, ASSOCIATE CLERK CERTIFICATION, ASSOCIATE FINANCE CERTIFICATION.

Important website links

IMFOA: <https://www.imfoa.org/>

Dashboard:

<https://secure.iowaleague.org/IMFOACertifications/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fIMFOACertifications%2f>

Application: https://www.imfoa.org/index.asp?SEC=CF35140F-3DE7-4790-A467-B94C34DAC3D7&Type=B_BASIC

Requirements for New Certification(s):

- Must determine if you qualify as a Benefited member, Active member, or Associated member. See IMFOA bylaws for more details on memberships.
- Must have 3 years of Iowa Municipal clerk experience to obtain an Iowa Certified Municipal Clerk Certification (IaCMC) or Associate Clerk Certification
- Must have 5 years of Iowa governmental finance experience to obtain an Iowa Certified Municipal Finance Officer Certification (IaCFO) or Associate Finance Certification
- Must be a current member of IMFOA and have been a member for at least 3 years.
- Must have attended at least one IMFOA conference (minimum of 5 education hours) in the past four years.
- For Associate Certifications only. Must provide a Letter of Verification of employee duties from a representative of the city who has oversight of you position for
- Must submit proof of completion of the required curriculum:
 - ✓ Basic Curriculum – Completion of 50 core hours through Iowa State University Municipal Professionals Institute (MPI)
 - ✓ Flexible Curriculum – Completion of 25 contact hours required from approved course list, including the following:
 - ❖ Regional Clerk's meetings – 5 hours per year maximum
 - ❖ Athenian Program – 6 hours per year maximum
 - ❖ Associate Degree – 15 hours credit
 - ❖ Bachelor's Degree or above – 25 hours credit
 - ✓ Specialized Curriculum – Completion of 25 contact hours required from approved course list

1. I'm new at my job. How long do I have to wait to apply for certification?

- Certified Municipal Clerk Certification - You must be an IMFOA member for 3 years and have at least 3 years of city clerk, deputy clerk, finance officer, treasurer, administrator experience and you must have met all educational requirements laid out in Requirements for New Certification(s) of this document to be eligible for your Municipal Clerk Certification.
- Certified Municipal Finance Officer - You must be an IMFOA member for 3-years and have at least 5-years of city clerk, deputy clerk, finance officer, treasurer, administrator governmental finance experience and you must have met all educational requirements laid out in Requirements for New Certification(s) of this document to be eligible for your Municipal Finance Officer certification.
- Associate Certified Municipal Clerk Certification - You must be an IMFOA member for 3 years and have at least 3 years of city clerk, deputy clerk, finance officer, treasurer, administrator experience and you must have met all educational requirements laid out in Requirements for New Certification(s) of this document to be eligible for your Associate Clerk Certification.
- Associate Certified Municipal Finance Officer - You must be an IMFOA member for 3-years and have at least 5-years of governmental finance experience and you must have met all educational requirements laid out in Requirements for New Certification(s) of this document to be eligible for your Associate Finance Officer certification.

2. What is the difference between the Clerk or Finance Certification vs. the Associate Certifications?

Job titles. The Associate Clerk or Associate Finance Certification does not require the official title that the Clerk Certificate nor the Finance Officer Certificate does

3. When can I start counting my education hours?

All educational contact hours must have been obtained within the previous 8-years from the application date. This applies to both Primary and Secondary Certifications.

- All credits on an initial certification application must have been taken within the last 8 years from the application date. This applies to Primary and Secondary Certifications.
- The 50 Basics Credits are only available through the Municipal Professionals Institute (MPI).
- 25 Specialized Credits are available through the MPI, Iowa Municipal Finance Officers Association, Iowa League of Cities
- 25 Flex Credits are available through various sources.

An expired course will need to be replaced with a course of the same type. You cannot use a course number/title more than once on an application.

4. What courses will count towards certification?

A course list can be found on the IMFOA website. Follow this [link to the sign in screen and click Courses on the far left](#). Approved courses for certification will be listed. Any courses not listed must be pre-approved by the curriculum committee before they are submitted with your application. To obtain possible pre-approval of your course, please present your agenda, workshop description or course syllabus to: Curriculum Review Committee Chairperson, Trish Gleason at Tgleason@cityofdubuque.org or send it to 50 West 13th St., Dubuque, Iowa 52001 for approval.

5. How do I keep track of the courses I have completed?

There are two different ways to track your education hours.

- If Course attendance is taken and provided to IMFOA, where it is entered into a tracking system. Access to the dashboard is located on the bottom right corner of the IMFOA website's home page. Follow this [link](#) to access log in screen.
- Or you will receive a paper certificate or an email congratulating you on the completion of a course. Certificates and emails must include hours to be used.

Note: When applying for your certification you must submit proof of attendance. Either your dashboard or certificates of attendance, act as your proof. **You don't need to submit both.**

6. Can I use my college degree toward educational credit hours?

Yes, college degrees in any of these fields: business or public administration, urban affairs municipal management, political science, records management, finance, accounting, urban planning and personnel administration may be used as flex hours on your **Initial** certification.

- Associate Degree qualifies as 15 flex hours
- Bachelor Degree qualifies as 25 flex hours.

If you'd like to use a degree that is not on this list, pre-approval is required. Submit a copy of your official transcript of your degree to the certification review committee for pre-approval. If approved, you **MUST** submit the official transcript along with any approval documentation when submitting your official certification application.

7. What happens if my application does not include the correct documentation education hours?

If your application does not meet the requirements for certification, your application and fee will be returned to you and we will advise what additional documentation is needed. You will be able to resubmit the application when you have met those

requirements. Proof of attendance (either dashboard or certificate of attendance, you don't need both) must be submitted with the application for each educational event attended. A \$15 resubmission fee will be assessed on insufficient applications that are returned to you.

8. What does my \$125 application fee cover?

Your application fee covers:

- A framed certificate.
- A lapel pin.
- Administrative costs to maintain certification and renewal database for tracking attendance at educational events

9. What is required to apply for a second certification?

- Submit the appropriate application for the certification certificate in which you are applying for completing the “Specialized Curriculum” section of the application. You cannot use a course number/title more than once on an application.
- Submit proof of completion of 25 specialized educational contact hours for the certification certificate you are applying for. You do not need additional basic or flex hours for a second certification.

NOTE: This process applies only to when you have your Iowa Certified Municipal Clerk's (IaCMC) Certification and want to apply for your Iowa Municipal Finance Officer (IaMFO) Certification or vice-versa. This does not apply to any recertification processes.

10. If I am applying for my secondary certification and didn't use a workshop or class as proof for my primary certification, can I still use it.

Yes, providing the completion of the class(es) are within the prior 8-years.

11. Can I use the same education hours on two different applications?

No, education hours may only be used once. Each certification application requires education hours to accumulate hours separately.

12. What if I have one certification and didn't use a workshop or class for the previous certification, can I still use it.

Yes, you can use it for a new certification but not a recertification. Your recertification classes are required to be after the date of your signed certification application. If you signed your certification application for your clerk's certification on March 24th, you can only use classes, workshops or agendas from March 25th forward for your clerk's recertification.

Renewal Certification(s) and Expired Certification(s):

13. How do I apply for recertification?

Requirements for Recertification(s)

Certifications expire four years from approval date.

These four years are referred to as your renewal period.

Example: Clerk Certification approved 4-22-19 expires 4-21-23
Finance Certification approved 5-15-20 expires 5-14-24

- Must have maintained your membership with IMFOA.
- Must have attended at least one IMFOA conference (minimum of 5 education hours) in the past four years.
- Must submit proof of completion of the required 60 educational contact hours. The 60 hours of education contact hours must have been obtained within the **4-year recertification period**. The recommendation is to earn 15 hours per year per certification. (Either your dashboard or certificates of attendance, act as your proof. **You don't need to submit both.**)
- Submit \$50.00 certification renewal fee.

14. Can I use classes or workshops for two different applications?

No, you can only use a class for certification or recertification. Each certification application requires education hours to accumulate hours separately.

15. When should I send in my renewal application?

Renewal application and required proof of educational contact hours may be turned in no earlier than 60 days prior to current certificate expiration date and no later than 90 days grace period after the expiration date

16. My certification expired 731 days (two years ago); can I still renew my certification?

Yes, with additional educational hours required. Each year past the renewal certification expiration date requires an additional 15 hours of continuing education.

- 91 days to 365 days past expiration date, will require submitting proof of an **additional** 15 hours of continued education beyond the original 60 hours of required continued education.
 - (60 hours + 15 hours = 75 TOTAL required continued education hours for submittal)

- 366 days to 730 days past expiration date, will require proof of additional 30 hours of continuing education hours beyond the original 60 hours of required renewal certification education hours.
 - (60 hours + 30 hours = 90 TOTAL required continuing education hours)
- More than 2 years (731 days) past expiration date will be assessed a \$75.00 penalty fee in addition to the already established required fees for a total of \$125.00. A new certification renewal date will be assigned
 - The following must be included in your application along with proof of completion of the Institute: 75 flex hours, with 25 of these hours being accrued within the last 2 years 25 specialized hours accrued within the last 3 years You also must have these requirements:
 - a. Currently a Municipal Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Finance Officer, Administrator, or Treasurer.
 - b. For Iowa Certified Municipal Clerk certification, you need 3 years of active clerk experience.
 - c. For Iowa Certified Municipal Finance Officer certification, you need 5 years of active experience.
 - d. You must be a current member of IMFOA for last 3 years
 - e. You must have attended at least one IMFOA conference with the past 4 years. (Minimum of 5 hours)

17. What if my clerk certification expires and my finance certification has not or vice versa?

If you let one of your certifications expire, that does not affect your other certification as they operate independently of each certification.

18. What if I become a City Clerk or Finance Officer and have Associate Certification and want Clerk Certification or Finance Certification?

You would complete an application for a new certification for City Clerk or Finance Officer or both. You would have to be city clerk for 3 years or finance officer for 5 years before submitting an application.

19. I have my Associate Certificate. I have now been appointed to a City Clerk or Finance Officer position. What do I do now?

Once you complete the experience requirement; 3 years for Clerk Certification or 5 years for Finance officer Certification.

Simply complete and submit all documentation requirements of the New Clerk or Finance Officer application.

Your Associate Certification becomes the proof of completion of the 100 hours of required curriculum:

- Basic Curriculum – Completion of 50 core hours through Iowa State University Municipal Professionals Institute (MPI)

- Flexible Curriculum – Completion of 25 contact hours required from approved course catalog
- Specialized Curriculum – Completion of 25 contact hours required from approved course catalog

20. How do I renew my Clerk or Finance certification, if my position changes?

Your new position must still be within a city governmental entity. Your renewal will be based on your current title/position.

Example: The renewal of a certified clerk that is now a manager's assistant would renew as an associate clerk and not clerk.

The renewal of a certified clerk who is now a City Administrator would renew as a certified clerk / administrator.

The renewal of an associate who is now eligible for Clerk or Finance may renew for that certification

21. How do I handle a break in service from city government?

Break in service is defined as a period of time during which an employee does not receive compensation either in the form of monetary perks or anything having monetary value for services rendered from a city governmental entity.

Initial certification - you must meet the employee experience requirement with the most current year of service being actively engaged as a clerk, finance officer, or deputy clerk before applying for your initial certification.

Experience Example: Worked 2 years (2019 and 2020) for the City of Winerville as city clerk. Left that employer to homeschool my children for 1 year (2021). Returned to work for the City of Winerville in (2022) as city clerk. You may apply for the clerk certification in 2023 and/or the finance certification in 2025.

Renewal Certification - you must complete 25 hours of specialized education contact hours plus 15 continuing education hours per certification for each year you missed.

Example: Employed by the City of Winerville as the City Clerk for 7 years (2000 to 2007) Received clerk certification in 2003 and Finance certification in 2005. Left employment to work at local law firm for 3 years (2008 to 2010) Returned back to the City of Winerville in 2011. Must submit Clerk renewal certification in 2011 with 25 hours of specialized education hours and 45 continuing education hours. In 2013 Must submit finance certification with 25 hours of specialized education hours and 70 continuing education hours.