

AAFCS Announces Initiative to Develop Family and Consumer Sciences Pre-Professional Competency Assessments and Industry-Recognized Credentials

The American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) national organization has a proud 98-year history of providing support and leadership for family and consumer sciences professionals. AAFCS is committed to utilizing its considerable grass roots network of members representing a broad range of business, industry, and education practice settings in collaboration with other stakeholders to launch a new program to develop and administer quality competency assessments and industry-recognized credentials for pre-professionals in family and consumer sciences careers. In addition to drawing heavily on business and industry input, this initiative will utilize information from the National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences Education and from the National Career Clusters initiative.

AAFCS has a well-established credentialing program that includes certification of professionals as Certified in Family and Consumer Sciences (CFCS). With the growing emphasis on assessment and accountability in secondary and postsecondary education, including requirements for Perkins funding for Career and Technical Education, AAFCS believes that it important to move forward by adding to the association's products and services a portfolio of assessments and industry-recognized credentials to support pre-professional level family and consumer sciences career areas and programs of study.

Assessment/Credential Development Process and Responsibilities

In initiating this pre-professional assessment and credentialing project, AAFCS assumes the major responsibility for providing staff, infrastructure, and other resources supporting the development of competency assessments and corresponding industry-recognized credentials representative of a broad range of pre-professional level family and consumer sciences careers. AAFCS recognizes that project effectiveness will depend heavily upon the involvement, contributions, and assistance of a broad range of stakeholders with an interest in assuring that secondary family and consumer sciences education programs are effectively preparing students with the knowledge and skills necessary for demanding career opportunities, therefore providing a workforce to meet the needs of business and industry in the demanding U.S. economy. These stakeholders would include representatives of business/industry providing career opportunities for students trained in family and consumer sciences programs of study; state leadership for secondary family and consumer sciences, career and technical education, and higher education programs; content specialists, and others responsible for program accountability.

Projected Products and Schedule

It is the objective of the project to target the development of assessments and credentials for those areas of family and consumer sciences where there are current voids. Nine general career areas will be targeted during the first round of development ending in June, 2009. Subsequently, additional development will occur based on need and feasibility.

The work of the Development Panels will progress according to the following schedule:

- Fall, 2007 – Spring, 2008.....Develop/pilot first assessment/credential
 1. Financial Literacy and Security
- Spring, 2008 – Fall, 2008.....Develop/pilot assessments/credentials 2 & 3
 2. Early Childhood Education
 3. Broad Field Family and Consumer Sciences
- Summer, 2008 – Winter, 2009.....Develop/pilot assessments/credentials 4, 5, & 6
 4. Education Careers
 5. Nutrition
 6. Interior Design
- Fall, 2008 – Spring, 2009.....Develop/pilot assessments/credentials 7, 8, & 9
 7. Fashion, Textiles and Apparel
 8. Culinary Arts
 9. Family Services

