

CMS is refreshing the certified application counselor (CAC) program by implementing an enhanced application and renewal process. The new application process will promote better engagement with our CAC Designated Organizations (CDOs) and provide the assister community with an improved user experience. As we undergo updates to the application, we are temporarily suspending the acceptance of new applications for participation in this program. The online CAC program application has been removed at this time.

Once the application is updated, **ALL existing CDOs must reapply to continue participation in the CAC Program.** Existing CDOs will be able to reapply to the CAC program beginning this spring and throughout the summer. CMS will notify existing CDOs when the application is ready for them to reapply on a rolling basis beginning in April. These organizations will be invited to complete their new applications via email.

Each organization that reapplys and that is approved during this application period will be designated for two years. CDOs will still need to recertify individual CACs within the organization and ensure CACs complete the CMS assister certification training annually. At the end of each two-year CDO term, organizations must re-confirm participation in the CAC program by updating their organization information and returning a new signed agreement. CACs who re-apply during this year's process will need to re-confirm participation in 2020.

As part of the refresh effort, we are also improving the online application tool to provide new features that allow CDOs to access and update your organization's contact information in real time, as necessary (e.g., address updates, adding or removing states where assisters are working, etc.). Contact information updates ensure that CMS has the most up-to-date information for your organization, which is critical when providing programmatic updates and communications.

After processing existing CDO's applications, we will open the new online application for organizations applying to become a CDO for the first time from July to September 2018. Moving forward, we will continue this annual open application period from July to September when *new* organizations who wish to become CDOs can apply.

We are excited to refresh the CAC program and hope that assisters will benefit from these updates. We will be providing links to technical "how-to" webinars that will walk through the new CDO application in the coming months. Please watch for the invitations via email.

Questions regarding the CAC Program can be directed to [CACQuestions@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:CACQuestions@cms.hhs.gov).