

## Why Certification is Essential

### The CTRS is the benchmark of quality services.

In today's demanding employment market, NCTRC certification indicates to employers that you are the qualified provider of therapeutic recreation services. It demonstrates that you have met the educational, experiential and professional requirements necessary to hold the CTRS credential.

### Important reasons to become certified:

- **The CTRS designation represents the highest national credential in the profession.**

As a practicing professional in the field of therapeutic recreation you are expected to demonstrate adherence to professional standards and ethical guidelines to assure quality services. Becoming certified as a CTRS fulfills this requirement and strengthens your professional affiliation.

- **Certification provides guidance to employers about your qualifications.**

Employers want to be assured that the recreational therapists they hire are well qualified and prepared to practice. Employers routinely use the CTRS credential as a criterion for employment.

- **NCTRC Certification elevates the stature of RT services in the eyes of the public, regulators and employment sectors.**

The demonstrated competencies of a CTRS effectively impact system outcomes of patient care. The CTRS credential provides a level of protection for consumers of RT services.

Several federal agencies and national regulatory and accreditation organizations recognize the CTRS as the benchmark credential for recreational therapists, and for its impact upon outcomes of patient care.

**Only those individuals who have met the specific qualifications to become certified by NCTRC® can use the CTRS® designation.**

## NCTRC: Dedicated to Professional Excellence

Established in 1981, the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC) is a non-profit, international organization dedicated to professional excellence for the protection of consumers through the certification of recreational therapists.

Professional recognition is granted by NCTRC to individuals who apply and meet established standards for certification, including education, experience, and continuing professional development. The Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) credential is offered to qualified individuals based on these stringent requirements.

NCTRC supports quality human service and healthcare standards and maintains recognition by the Joint Commission, the Commission for Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and Accreditation Canada. NCTRC provides credential verification services to employers and healthcare agencies. These services are strongly encouraged by NCTRC to monitor personnel adherence to the standards of the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist.

NCTRC is a charter member organization of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE). NCTRC is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

**For more information about NCTRC and to review current certification standards refer to our website: [www.NCTRC.org](http://www.NCTRC.org)**



**National Council for  
Therapeutic Recreation  
Certification**

7 Elmwood Drive  
New City, NY 10956  
Tel 845-639-1439  
Fax 845-639-1471  
email [nctrc@NCTRC.org](mailto:nctrc@NCTRC.org)  
[www.NCTRC.org](http://www.NCTRC.org)



NCTRC is a member of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) and the CTRS Credentialing Program is accredited by National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

© 2014 NCTRC. All rights reserved. Copying and distribution in any medium is prohibited without prior NCTRC written consent. NCTRC does not warrant or guarantee the provision of competent services by CTRSs; NCTRC certification helps to demonstrate the certificant has met the entry-level requirements for the profession.

CTRS is a trademark of the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification "NCTRC®", "National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification®", "CTRS®" and "Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist®" are the trademarks of the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification. All rights reserved. 2014.



# Become a CTRS

The Qualified Provider  
of Recreational Therapy



## CTRS®: The Qualified Provider

A Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist® (CTRS) is the most qualified professional to provide recreational therapy services. Highly skilled and professionally trained, the CTRS often serves as a member of the healthcare treatment team in concert with other healthcare professionals. The CTRS has acquired a specific body of knowledge that includes theoretical constructs, applied methodology, and practice that spans a wide range of disabling conditions and illnesses.



The CTRS is professionally trained to apply a critical set of competencies and skills to address the total person and the life factors that may be associated with a specific disability or illness – significantly contributing to the effectiveness and efficiency of patient care and service outcomes.

## What is Recreational Therapy?

Recreational therapy, also known as therapeutic recreation, is a systematic process that utilizes recreation and other activity-based interventions to address the assessed needs of individuals with illnesses and/or disabling conditions, as a means to psychological and physical health, recovery and well-being.

**The purpose of the RT process is to improve or maintain physical, cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual functioning in order to facilitate full participation in life.**

## There are over 15,000 CTRSs

Certification by NCTRC signifies that a recreational therapist has the skill, ability and knowledge recognized as essential for recreational therapy practice. The CTRS designation is the unifying credential for recreational therapists throughout the U.S. and Canada, with approximately 15,000 Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists in the NCTRC registry.

Recreational therapists seeking certification apply to NCTRC, and must meet established standards for certification including education, experience, and continuing professional development. CTRS certification is granted by NCTRC after the specific educational and experiential qualifications are met and testing is successfully completed.



### General Requirements for Certification

#### Education

Minimum Bachelor-level degree

#### Experience

Documented internship or work experience

#### Examination

Successful completion of NCTRC Certification Exam



*NCTRC's trademarks provide a significant degree of legal protection against unauthorized use of the certification marks. "NCTRC®", "National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification®", "CTRS®" and "Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist®" are the trademarks of National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification. In addition to federal registration of the "CTRS®" credential by the United States Patent and Trademark Office, NCTRC's trademark rights to the credential are also registered in all 50 states and Canada.*

## How to Become a CTRS®

# 1

### Academic Path

*The Academic Path is designed for the traditional academic graduate. The steps include:*

1. Completion of Bachelor degree or higher with a concentration in Recreational Therapy
2. Completion of a minimum 14 week / 560 hour internship supervised by a CTRS
3. Successful completion of the NCTRC Certification Exam

–OR–

# 2

### Equivalency Paths

*Equivalency paths are designed for applicants who have accomplished extensive work in RT in combination with designated coursework to meet the NCTRC Certification Eligibility Standards.*

#### **PATH A**

1. Completion of a Bachelor degree or higher
2. Completion of specific coursework in recreational therapy and related areas
3. Five (5) years full-time paid work experience in recreational therapy
4. Successful completion of the NCTRC Certification Exam

–OR–

#### **PATH B**

1. Completion of Bachelor degree or higher
2. Completion of specific coursework in recreational therapy and related areas
3. One (1) year full-time paid work experience in recreational therapy under the supervision of a CTRS
4. Successful completion of the NCTRC Certification Exam