

Frequently Asked Questions

What does Continuous Improvement for School-Age Care (SAC) Programs mean?

Ignite Afterschool, in partnership with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families and the SAC community, created Minnesota's new School-Age Care Accreditation Program. Embedded within and a central component of I-SAC Accreditation is a Continuous Program Improvement (CPI) process ~ using data to make improvements to programming.

SAC sites involved in the program will participate in Community of Practice Coaching Sessions and will be guided through the CPI process to develop Improvement plans based on their data findings.

Who is the target audience for this School-Age Care Accreditation Program?

Any community based organization, non-profit, early learning center, or school district providing services for school-aged children is eligible to participate in this program. School-age care Accreditation is for programs serving children in Kindergarten through 6th grade.

Does an entire organization apply and work towards Accreditation or is it by site?

I-SAC Accreditation is by site.

For SAC programs that have multiple sites, is it recommended to have multiple sites apply?

There is no right or wrong answer here. It depends on the organization and the capacity to take on Accreditation. It can be helpful to have a few, select sites start the Accreditation process, and allow the additional sites to learn from those going through it.

How many sites will be accepted each year? Will that ever change?

I-SAC has the capacity to accept 30 sites each year to join the program. Ignite will continue to work with DCYF and the SAC community to determine participation interest with the goal of being able to increase capacity to meet the demand.

If our site doesn't participate this year, when is the next opportunity to participate?

Applications will open each year for I-SAC in early spring.

What is the cost?

- CPI Program Fee: \$250
 - Covers coaching sessions
- Accreditation Site Visit Fee: \$2,000
 - \$250 CPI fee is applied to your accreditation site visit for first year seeking accreditation
 - There is a possibility of DCYF reimbursement for up to half of the accreditation fee when accreditation is achieved. You can find more information [here](#).
- A La Carte Fees/Costs
 - PDX Access – \$99
 - 1 staff training of trainers for 2 building blocks
 - Access for 7 frontline staff. \$10 for each additional staff

How do sites receive a higher CCAP reimbursement?

The Child Care Assistance Program can pay up to 15 percent above the program's standard maximum rate, but not more than the provider's charge, if providers submit proof that they hold certain current early childhood development credentials or are accredited by an approved organization. Use the [CCAP Quality Differential Rate Request Form DHS-4795 \(PDF\)](#) to identify qualifying credentials and/or accreditations, and request the higher rate. You can find more information [here](#).

Do you have to participate in the Accreditation Program in order to have access to Ignite's Professional Development Exchange (PDX)?

No! PDX is open to all youth development professionals in the state of Minnesota ~ regardless of involvement with the I-SAC Accreditation program. Learn more [here](#).

What is the timeline, cost, and requirements once a SAC site is Accredited?

Once a site is Accredited, this status lasts for four years before having to go through the process again. The first year sites participate in coaching sessions with Ignite and there is a cost of \$250/year for this involvement.

In years 2 - 4 of the Accreditation cycle, there is not a fee to Accredited sites as they participate in a Continuous Program Improvement cycle on their own and join a community based M3 Huddle. Submission of an improvement plan annually is a requirement to maintain accreditation. Ignite will offer quarterly coaching sessions for

sites that would like to participate. At the end of year 4, an Accreditation site visit is required in order to remain Accredited.

What time and day will the Coaching sessions occur?

Once Community of Practice groups are established, there will be communication and input from SAC programs as to what works best regarding time and date for coaching sessions.

Who are the Coaches?

I-SAC coaches have a wide range of experience and expertise within School-age Care, OST programming and youth development. Coaches who lead a Community of Practice cohort will not be the person conducting the Accreditation Site Visit.

What is the value of Accreditation vs. going through the Continuous Improvement/M3 Cycle alone?

When Accredited, a site has the ability to showcase their Accreditation Certificate at their site and Ignite will provide sample announcement language for sharing with families and the community. Accreditation shows a commitment to high quality practices. Staff can take a sense of pride that they have contributed and will continue to contribute as the site puts intention around continuous improvement.

In addition, sites who reach an Accredited status are eligible to receive a higher CCAP reimbursement.

When/where can we access the Quality Navigator?

The I-SAC Quality Navigator is a public document that can be found on our website:

<https://igniteafterschool.org/i-sac> We welcome SAC sites to take a look at what's inside!