

Request for Proposals (RFP): US Chess Coach Certification Program

Issue Date: October 3, 2025

1. Introduction and Purpose of this RFP.

The United States Chess Federation (US Chess) invites proposals from organizations or individuals (hereafter, “applicants”) to become a **US Chess Coach Certification Authority**. As detailed in Section 4 below, US Chess will use a two-phased approach to selecting Certification Authorities. ***This RFP details Phase 1 proposal requirements.*** US Chess will invite top applicants from the Phase 1 evaluation to participate in Phase 2 through which US Chess intends to select at least 3 applicants to become official Certification Authorities. Applicants who do not compete in Phase 1 cannot compete in Phase 2.

Applicants awarded Certification Authority status by US Chess will be granted non-exclusive rights to deliver instructional programs to certify coaches who successfully complete the Certification Authority’s US Chess-approved curriculum. Certification Authorities must adhere to strict standards for chess instruction, records management, and quality control outlined in this RFP.

2. Goal of the Chess Coach Certification Program.

The Chess Coach Certification Program aims to ***grow the game of chess by increasing the number of certified coaches*** across the country, ***enhancing the professionalism*** of chess coaching, and ***helping Certification Authorities and certified coaches market their services*** to the chess community and general public. US Chess’s philosophy is that a viable program of instruction is much more than ensuring a coach understands the Rules of Chess, how to analyze positions, how to prepare for a tournament, the US Chess Code of Conduct, and chess etiquette. While those topics are important and essential, examples of topic areas US Chess envisions being part of a comprehensive approach to a program of instruction include: Safe Play, Classroom Management, Principles of Effective Communication with different age/ability groups, Teaching students in different settings (individual, group, players with disabilities, etc.), Dealing with Winning and Losing, How to Create Quizzes and Exams, Lesson Preparation, Terminology of Chess, How to Successfully Advertise Your Program, Benefits of US Chess Membership, etc. Each of these topics can be subdivided into multiple subordinate topics, each with its own learning objectives. As part of this RFP process, US Chess is looking for understanding, creativity, and innovation when it comes to a program that contains initial instruction for prospective chess coaches as well as a need for continuing education.

3. Context of this Request for Proposals—Transition to a New Program.

By the end of calendar year 2027, US Chess aims to replace the existing “Certified Chess Coach” process with the new program described in this document. Coaches who already have a Level I, II, III, IV, or V certificate from US Chess and desire to transition as certified coaches under the new program will be required to complete the activities described below. Coaches who do not complete the transition requirements by December 31, 2027, will be removed from the list of certified coaches on the US Chess website.

Here are the two coach certifications the new program will award to qualified US Chess members:

Draft Document - US Chess Coach Certification Program RFP

- a) “***Certified Professional Chess Coach***” (CPCC) will be the new title for all coaches currently designated as National Coach (Level IV) and Professional Coach (Level V). CPCC is a title awarded by US Chess through a Certification Authority after the coach or coach candidate completes the Certification Authority’s US Chess-approved program of instruction. Once awarded by US Chess, a coach’s CPCC certification shall be **good for life** unless it is revoked by US Chess due to a coach’s misconduct or incompetence.
- i) US Chess will permit Level IV and V coaches to transition directly to the new program after completing the two steps listed below by December 31, 2027.
- (1) Pass a background check administered by US Chess or a Certification Authority **every three years**. The cost of the background check shall be borne by the coach.
- (2) Complete the US Chess Safe Play Training provided by the Center for Safe Sport and renew their training annually thereafter. At present, this is the same course that all US Chess-certified tournament directors must complete. The cost to complete this course shall be borne by the coach.
- ii) Other US Chess members seeking the title of CPCC will be required to complete a program of instruction offered by a Certification Authority.
- b) “***Certified Chess Coach***” (CCC) shall be the new title for all coaches currently designated as Level I, II, or III coaches. This title is awarded in the same manner as the CPCC title. CCC certification shall be **good for five (5) years** from the last day of the month when the title was awarded or until the title is revoked by US Chess due to a coach’s misconduct or incompetence.
- i) Level I, II, and III coaches may transition directly to the new program after completing the two steps listed below by December 31, 2027.
- (1) Complete a background check and US Chess Safe Play training as described above for Level IV and Level V coaches.
- (2) Complete an abbreviated program of instruction offered by a Certification Authority.
- ii) Other US Chess members seeking the title of CCC will be required to complete a program of instruction offered by a Certification Authority. Initially, a coach holding the CCC title who does not re-certify after five years will be tagged as “inactive” on the US Chess list of certified coaches until the coach re-certifies. Then, after two years in an inactive status, US Chess will remove the coach’s name from the official list of certified coaches.
- c) Because the Rules of Chess, instructional techniques, and educational tools will evolve, **US Chess reserves the right to require certified coaches to take additional instruction** that is in the best interest of the game and the chess playing community. This is similar to the continuing education requirement associated with many professional certifications.

4. Scope of Services a Certification Authority shall provide.

Proposals shall demonstrate the Certification Authority’s ability to handle the following responsibilities:

Draft Document - US Chess Coach Certification Program RFP

- a) **Deliver a training curriculum of sufficient rigor** to justify US Chess awarding a candidate the title of Certified Professional Chess Coach or Certified Chess Coach.
- b) **Professionally administer the coach certification process**, including assessments, evaluations, and credential issuance as well as training for employees hired to provide instruction to candidate coaches.
- c) **Meticulously maintain records** of all people who complete the certification program and report them to US Chess on a regular basis (e.g., monthly, quarterly, or after completion of a program of instruction). US Chess will not award the title of CPCC or CCC to a US Chess member until a Certification Authority informs US Chess.
- d) **Ensure their program complies** with the US Chess Code of Ethics, Safe Play Policy, and the Official Rules of Chess.
- e) **Participate in periodic program reviews** performed by US Chess to assess and validate the quality of the Certification Authority's program offerings.
- f) **Collect and remit fees** to US Chess in accordance with the applicant's proposal.

5. Phase 1 Proposal Specifications.

Acceptable Phase 1 proposals shall demonstrate compliance with the following specifications.

- a) **Provide a Cover Letter and Executive Summary:** A brief overview of the applicant's experience, capabilities, and proposed approach, as well as the applicant's readiness to take on the scope of services outlined in [Section 4](#) of this RFP.
- b) **Demonstrate Qualifications and Experience:** A detailed description of the applicant's relevant background to include the following areas.
 - (1) Chess coach / Instructor experience: Examples include but are not limited to verifiable information such as years in chess coaching, FIDE titles, and accolades received as a coach or instructor. Other experience/certifications as a coach or instructor are also relevant (e.g., school teacher, professor, sports coach, or other instructor certifications).
 - (2) Chess player, tournament director, and/or arbiter information: Examples include but are not limited to verifiable information such as years of experience, US Chess and/or FIDE titles, and accolades.
 - (3) Program or curriculum development experience: Outlines the applicant's background and/or training in developing and executing a program or curriculum of instruction (it does not have to be in Chess).
 - (4) Organizational and administrative capacity: Describes the applicant's infrastructure, people, processes, and tools the applicant will use to manage their coach certification program, including how the applicant will maintain records of people the organization eventually certifies as coaches. Sole proprietors need only describe the processes and tools they will use and how they will use them to manage the certification process and maintain coach certification records. All applicants shall assume US Chess will establish procedures allowing Certifying Authorities to periodically upload certification information to US Chess (e.g., currently certified coaches, new coaches, and coaches whose certifications have expired or have been revoked).

Draft Document - US Chess Coach Certification Program RFP

c) **Describe a Proposed Curriculum and Delivery Model:** The proposal shall provide:

- (1) A narrative outlining the applicant's philosophy and approach to creating and delivering instruction to candidates seeking the title of CPCC or CCC. The narrative shall include the proposed way or ways the applicant intends to deliver their program of instruction (e.g., online, in-person, or both; self-paced, entirely instructor led, or hybrid, etc.). The applicant shall also describe the assessment methodology that will be used to evaluate each candidate and award their certification (e.g., written exam, graded delivery of one or more classes, both, or other methods).
- (2) The applicant **must address each of the 8 instruction program scenarios below**. Areas to address in each scenario include, but are not limited to, organization of the plan of instruction, a list of topics, learning objectives, length of the program, where and how candidates are evaluated during and upon completion of instruction, etc. Applicants are allowed to provide additional scenarios. If a procedure used in one scenario is the same as a procedure the applicant describes in an earlier scenario, the applicant may refer to the earlier scenario with a sentence such as, "Using the same procedure we describe in Scenario X ...". For more information about potential topics of instruction, see Section 6 of this RFP.
 - (a) **Scenario 1:** Transition existing Level IV or V coaches and award the CPCC title.
 - (b) **Scenario 2:** Transition existing Level I, II, or III coaches and award the Certified Chess Coach (CCC) title.
 - (c) **Scenario 3:** Transition existing Level I, II, or III coaches and award the Certified Professional Chess Coach (CPCC) title.
 - (d) **Scenario 4:** Award the CPCC title to coaches already titled as a CCC.
 - (e) **Scenario 5:** Award the CCC or CPCC title to US Chess members already titled by FIDE as a Developmental Instructor, National Instructor, or FIDE Instructor.
 - (f) **Scenario 6:** Award the CCC or CPCC title to US Chess members already titled by FIDE as a FIDE Trainer or FIDE Senior Trainer.
 - (g) **Scenario 7:** Award the CCC title to US Chess members who lack US Chess or FIDE coach certification.
 - (h) **Scenario 8:** Award the CPCC title to US Chess members who lack US Chess or FIDE coach certification.
- (3) A narrative outlining the proposed plan of instruction for training the applicant's employees who will provide the instruction to candidates. The Phase 1 requirement is a high-level overview of this plan; details will be required from applicants selected to participate in Phase 2 of the RFP.

Note: For Phase 1 of the RFP, US Chess **does not desire or require** applicants to submit samples of course materials, student handouts/exercises, instructor materials, written exams, or other similar training products. Such products, if submitted, will not be evaluated as part of Phase 1. These items will be required if the applicant is selected to participate in Phase 2 of the RFP process.

Draft Document - US Chess Coach Certification Program RFP

- d) **Discuss Information Security:** This shall describe applicant's processes and tools to ensure the security of all candidates' and certified coaches personal information as well as assurances to not sell or provide their information to any third party other than US Chess without the express written consent of the candidate.
- e) **Provide a Plan for Quality Control and Risk Management:** This plan shall explain the internal procedures and metrics the applicant will apply to their own certification program to ensure it meets US Chess's and the applicant's standards. The plan also shall identify relevant risks that the applicant's program must manage for their program to be successful and how the applicant intends to monitor those risks.
- f) **Describe a Pricing and Financial Model:** US Chess assumes Certification Authorities will charge a fee for candidate coaches to complete their program and existing coaches to transition to the new program. For the purposes of this RFP, offerors shall assume US Chess will charge a fee to each person being certified as a coach. US Chess has not determined the amount of this "coach certification fee" and it may differ based on the level of certification being awarded by the Certification Authority.
- g) **Provide Professional Letters of Recommendation (LoR):** The applicant must provide at least two (2) but no more than five (5) professional references (one LOR per reference). Each letter must also give the name, address, phone number, and email contact information of the person who signs the LOR. US Chess reserves the right to contact the individuals who sign the LORs. US Chess will notify the applicant if any of their points of contact cannot be reached. If an applicant's contacts cannot be reached, US Chess will provide instructions to the applicant for obtaining replacement LORs.
- h) **Provide the US Chess Affiliate ID:** For this RFP each applicant is required to be a US Chess Affiliate in good standing with US Chess. An applicant competing as sole proprietors need only provide their US Chess member ID number. If the applicant is establishing a new Affiliate for the purposes of this RFP, the name of that affiliate shall not be worded to assume or imply that the affiliate has achieved Coach Certification Authority. For example, an affiliate name such as "Chicago Chess Coach Certification Authority" or "Western Coach Certification" is inappropriate.
- i) **Proof of Safe Play Training:** For this RFP the person whose name and signature are on the Cover Letter of the proposal must have a Safe Play Certificate of Training from the Center for Safe Sport (e.g., the same course required of all US Chess Tournament Directors). The certification must be current as of the date proposals are due to US Chess. This criteria can be satisfied by including a sentence such as, "The undersigned completed Safe Play Training on April 5, 2025." Applicants are not required to provide a copy of their training certificate because US Chess can verify an applicant's status with the Center for Safe Sport.

6. Phase 1 Evaluation Criteria.

- a) Phase 1 proposals will be assessed and scored based on their technical merit using the table below. "Technical Merit" is discerned by evaluating the adequacy or inadequacy of the applicant's responses to each of the six (6) specifications in RFP [Sections 4a–4f](#), as well as the nine (9) specifications in RFP [Sections 5a–5i](#). A proposal that omits a response to any of these 15 specifications will be considered non-compliant.

Draft Document - US Chess Coach Certification Program RFP

Metric	Adjectival Score	Numeric Score
Adequately addresses all 15 specifications in paragraphs 4 and 5	Exceptional	4.6-5
Adequately addresses 13-14 of the 15 specifications with no more than 2 of the 15 specifications inadequately addressed	Strong	4.0-4.5
Adequately addresses 11-12 of the 15 specifications with no more than 4 of the 15 specifications inadequately addressed	Acceptable	3.0-3.9
Adequately addresses 8-10 specifications or inadequately addresses 5 or more specifications	Weak	2.0-2.9
Adequately addresses 7 or fewer specifications or inadequately address 8 or more specifications	Unacceptable	1.0-1.9
One or more of the 15 specifications is not addressed by the proposal	Non-compliant	0

- b) An “adequate” response to a specification will:
- Fully addresses the specification and is clearly written.
 - Thoroughly addresses specifications calling for detailed explanations of methods, processes, etc. by:
 - ♦ Showcasing the applicant’s understanding of the context and challenges of the specification.
 - ♦ Proposing thorough and realistic methods, clear timelines, etc. to meet the specification.
 - ♦ Not using unsupported assertions.
 - ♦ Presenting a “low risk solution” to the specification. (Risk is considered low when the response conveys that the solution is very likely to be successful.)
 - Uses words and phrases consistent with the vocabulary of chess and coaching.
- c) An “inadequate” response to a specification:
- Partially addresses the specification and/or is poorly written (e.g., it is hard to follow the logic, or it is difficult to understand what the applicant is trying to say).
 - Fails to convey the applicant’s understanding of the context and challenges of the specification.
 - Proposes unrealistic methods, procedures that have “gaps”, timelines that will be difficult to achieve, etc.
 - Uses unsupported assertions.
 - Expresses a poor understanding of “risk” relative to the specification. (Risk is considered unacceptable when the response conveys that the solution is marginal or likely to be unsuccessful.)
 - Uses words and phrases US Chess’s evaluators are not likely to understand.
- d) In Phase 1 all applicants shall assume that **US Chess will evaluate their proposals “as is”**. US Chess reserves the right to contact an applicant to request clarification of their proposal and/or if there is a problem contacting the applicant’s LOR references.

7. Comments on Phase 2.

- e) US Chess desires to have **at least 5 applicants compete in Phase 2** with the goal of selecting at least 3 as a Certification Authority. All Phase 1 proposals that score “Exceptional” will be invited to Phase 2. If less than 5 proposals from Phase 1 rate as

Draft Document - US Chess Coach Certification Program RFP

Exceptional, US Chess will select from among those scoring Strong and Acceptable (in that order) to ensure there are at least 5 applicants for Phase 2.

- f) Applicants US Chess authorizes to participate in Phase 2 should expect requirements for their proposals to provide:
- All course materials for at least one complete program of instruction. Phase 2 instructions will clarify what course or courses from the 8 program scenarios in Section 5c2 of this RFP.
 - Resumes, US Chess ID, and proof of Safe Play training for all instructors the applicant intends to use in their Certification Course(s).
 - A detailed employee training plan describing how the applicant's instructors will be trained.
 - A detailed cost structure showing course costs per candidate. The cost structure can vary based on the candidate's program of instruction. Phase 2 instructions will also address the "coach certification fee" to be charged each person being granted the title of CCC or CPCC.

8. Terms and Conditions.

Each selected Certification Authority will enter into a formal agreement with US Chess **for at least 5 years' duration**. US Chess envisions key terms and conditions of the agreement may include:

- a) A semi-annual report to US Chess providing the names and number of candidates certified in the past 6 months, the names of certified coaches whose status will expire in the next 6 months, and a statement testifying that all the Certification Authority's instructors have completed Safe Play training and required Background Checks.
- b) An annual review by US Chess of the Certification Authority's performance.
- c) A firm commitment to keep all instructors certified in Safe Play, to remain knowledgeable of the Rules of Chess, and to abide by the US Chess Code of Ethics. All the Certification Authority's instructors shall undergo Background Checks every two (2) years.
- d) Permission to use a specially designed logo provided by US Chess that signifies their status as a Certification Authority.
- e) A termination clause wherein the applicant or US Chess can end the agreement with 30 days of written notice to the other party. Unless conditions warrant, termination by US Chess of a Certification Authority's agreement does not affect the certifications the Authority has awarded.
- f) Data privacy, reporting, and compliance requirements.

9. Phase 1 Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions.

- a) Offerors are required to upload their Phase 1 Proposal information using the Google Form found at the following link: (provided with launch of Phase 1). For Phase 1, this is the only method of proposal submission allowed. US Chess will confirm receipt. Offerors must include in their Phase 1 proposal all information they want reviewed by US Chess. Documents received by mail or email will not be added to an offeror's proposal.
- b) The deadline for proposal submission through the Google Form is [TBA]. Applicants should not wait until the last minute to send their proposals.

Draft Document - US Chess Coach Certification Program RFP

- c) The applicant's proposal must "stand on its own"; proposals may not contain links to websites or external sources as part of responding to the specifications of the RFP. US Chess will not evaluate proposal information where the offeror is referring US Chess to one or more external links. In a similar way, US Chess will not accept "Letters / Emails of Recommendation" or other testimonials from third parties that arrive separate from the offeror's proposal.
- d) Offerors shall complete all portions of the Google Form, or their proposal will be considered incomplete.
 - 1) **(Required) Cover Letter and Executive Summary.** See Section 5a.
 - 2) **(Optional) List of Acronyms:** If used, this list should identify acronyms that are unique to your proposal. There is no need to provide a comprehensive list of acronyms that are common in the chess community.
 - 3) **(Required) Responses to the Remaining Sections of the Google Form.**
 - Qualifications and Experience (see Section 5b of this RFP).
 - Proposed Curriculum and Delivery Model (see Section 5c).
 - Philosophy and approach narrative (see Section 5c1).
 - Details for each of the 8 instruction program scenarios (see Sections 5c2a through 5c2h).
 - Instructor training (see Section 5c3).
 - Information Security (see Section 5d).
 - Plan for Quality Control and Risk Management (see Section 5e).
 - Pricing and Financial Model (see Section 5f).
 - Signed, Professional Letters of Recommendation (see Section 5g). These documents must be uploaded as separate files as part of your proposal.
 - US Chess Affiliate (or Member) ID (see Section 5h).
 - Proof of Safe Play Training (see Section 5i).

10. Glossary of Terms relevant to this RFP.

CCC: Certified Chess Coach

CPCC: Certified Professional Chess Coach

Certification Authority: A designation awarded to an applicant whose proposal successfully passes Phase 1 and Phase 2 RFP evaluation.

Level I, II, III, IV, and V: Refers to the five levels of coach certification awarded by US Chess under the existing Chess Coach Certification Program. These designations will be retired at the end of calendar year 2027 and replaced by CCC and CPCC.

11. Additional Information and Questions.

- a) All questions and comments regarding this RFP **must be submitted in writing** to US Chess via a separate Google Form found at this link: ([Survey](#)). Your input must arrive no later than **(10/13/2025)**.
- b) **The US Chess response to all questions will be shared publicly and will be viewable by all potential applicants**; however, the name of the applicant or the applicant's organization

Draft Document - US Chess Coach Certification Program RFP

will remain private and will not be shared. Offerors who feel their question(s) may reveal proprietary information or other competitive information about their proposed approach to the Coach Certification Program ***may schedule a separate one-on-one Zoom meeting*** with a US Chess representative. In any one-on-one sessions US Chess reserves the right to make public the answers to certain questions if the answer is not deemed to be proprietary or competition sensitive by US Chess.

- c) US Chess reserves the right to modify this RFP when it is in the best interest of the proposal and evaluation process.