

Wyoming Peer Specialist
Qualification/Certification Requirements
Version 5: Updated August 2018

Expectations of Peer Specialists, Employers, and the Behavioral Health Division (BHD)

Wyoming Peer Specialist Overview

A person who is or has been a recipient of treatment or recovery services for a serious mental illness and/or substance use disorder qualifies holds the position of a Peer Specialist. Peer Specialists are uniquely qualified through their life experience with recovery, stability within the community, and demonstration of self-sufficiency.

Peer specialists assist a client to direct their own recovery and advocacy process; to utilize client self-determination and decision-making; to teach and support the acquisition and exercise of recovery skills needed for management of symptoms and for navigating systems; to create self-determined recovery and maintenance plans; and to utilize natural resources within the community towards sustained recovery.

As fully integrated team members working for a treatment provider, recovery organization, or healthcare organization, peer specialists provide expertise and consultation to an organization's entire team to promote a culture in which each client's point of view and preferences are recognized, understood, respected, and integrated.

The term Peer Specialist encompasses other titles including, but not limited to, recovery coach, recovery specialist, job coach, peer wellness coach, peer mentor, and peer advocate.

Medicaid covers qualified peer specialist contact for the purpose of implementing the portion of the enrolled client's treatment plan that promotes the client to direct their own recovery and advocacy process. Consistent with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) clarifying guidance on peer support services policy, dated May 1, 2013, parent/legal guardians of Medicaid-eligible children, 17 and younger, can also receive Peer Support services when the service is directed exclusively toward the benefit of a Medicaid-eligible child. Services are provided from a perspective of an individual who has their own experience with the mental health and/or substance abuse system to assist the enrolled client with meeting their treatment plan objectives.

Prerequisites:

Peer Specialists have the following prerequisites:

- Identify themselves as former or current consumer of mental health or dual diagnoses services or substance use disorder treatment and/or recovery services
- Be well-grounded in their own recovery
- Hold a high school diploma or equivalence
- Be 21 years old or older

New Applicants:

To receive a Peer Specialist certificate from the Behavioral Health Division (BHD), Wyoming Department of Health, the peer specialist will have completed a peer specialist basic competency course of no less than thirty-six (36) contact hours. The training must be pre-approved by the BHD. The course must include all of the Core Competencies for Wyoming's Peer Specialists¹.

- Provide the BHD with the Peer Specialist Certification Application Form showing that these requirements have been accomplished
 - Document the training with an agenda and certificate of completion.

Continued Qualifications:

Consistent with the expectations of CMS as well as other professions, Peer Specialists are required to obtain additional training. Peer Specialists are expected to adhere to the Wyoming Peer Specialist Profession Code of Ethics¹.

At least thirty (30) days before² your current peer specialist certificate expires, the peer specialist will submit documentation to show that, at a minimum, training has been obtained in these two areas:

1. Attend the Wyoming Peer Specialist Annual Meeting and Training during the previous 18 month with at least fourteen (14) contact hours.
 2. Attend at least five hours of other training related to the advancement of peer specialist proficiencies. These trainings must include interaction with other people in the room or virtually via a computer.
 - a. Document with an agenda, sign-in sheet, and/or other information showing attendance.
 - b. Document with an agenda, sign-in sheet, and/or other information showing attendance.
 - c. Recommended trainings are listed under the "Continuing Training" tab at <http://health.wyo.gov/peer-specialist>.
- Provide the BHD with the Peer Specialist Certification Application Form showing that these requirements have been accomplished.

The Behavioral Health Division will:

- Review Continued Qualification documentation between June 1 and July 30 of each year.
- Respond to the applicant by August 30.

¹ Wyoming Peer Specialist Core Competencies and Wyoming Peer Specialist Profession Code of Ethics are available at <http://health.wyo.gov/peer-specialists>.

² Certificates will be issued for 13 – 25 months depending upon the date upon which they are issued.

- Maintain a list of persons who have met the requirements and provide that list to Wyoming Medicaid
- Provide or approve at least one Peer Specialist training bi-annually to include at least fourteen (14) contact hours.

Additional Optional Endorsements

Mastery Endorsement:

A Peer Specialist may apply for a Mastery Endorsement if they have completed two or more community-based advocacy or leadership accomplishments during the twelve proceeding months. Mastery endorsement is in addition to other requirements and represents accomplishment of significant contributions outside of the normal scope of work. Application for a Mastery Endorsement must be renewed with Continued Qualification applications. Mastery must be documented with up to three pages of information (i.e. newspaper clippings, certificate of attendance, documentation letter).

Sample Mastery Endorsement Projects

- Play a key role in the establishment of a local advocacy group (any community topic)
- Serve on the board of directors for a non-profit or governmental organization (any topic)
- Obtain a WRAP® Facilitator Certification (requires the WRAP 5-day training) and assist three or more people in development of their WRAP
- Provide public testimony to a board, council, legislature, or other formal advisory group related to the services or situations that promote recovery or prevention
- Serve as a mentor for another Peer Specialist to include a minimum of 20 mentorship hours (telephone or face-to-face correspondence)
- Lead training or present at a statewide, regional, or national conference on any recovery topic
- Other activity that shows exceptional commitment or skills related to consumer issues.

Whole Health Endorsement:

A Peer Specialist may apply for a Whole Health Endorsement. Whole Health Endorsement is in addition to other requirements. Application for a Whole Health Endorsement must be renewed with Continued Qualification applications. These are the requirements:

- Only once, complete a formal training of at least fourteen (14) contact hours with a curriculum designed to help the peer specialist help others promote mind-body recovery and resiliency, whole health, and/or self-management of chronic health conditions as approved by the BHD³
- Present the curriculum to at least four (4) peers/families during the previous twelve (12) months to include at least eight (8) weeks of in-person group sessions, each lasting at least one hour
- Have attempted at least one health activity during the eight-week period as a participating member of the group

Forensic Peer Specialist Endorsement:

A Peer Specialist may apply for a Forensic Peer Specialist Endorsement. Forensic Peer Specialist Endorsement is in addition to other requirements. Application for a Forensic Peer Specialist Endorsement must be renewed with Continued Qualification applications. These are the requirements:

- Initial Endorsement:
 - Complete a formal training designed for Forensic Peer Specialists with at least sixteen (16) contact hours as approved by the Division

³ Whole Health Action Management (WHAM) is an example of an approved whole health curriculum.

- Work as a peer specialist with at least two (2) persons who are on probation or parole, in the community, or in a jail or prison during the previous twelve (12) months to include at least eight (8) 1-hour sessions of in-person peer specialist services (group and/or one-to-one) provided.
 - For continued qualifications
 - Work with at least one (1) community judicial system organization to implement a process that promotes recovery over incarceration (i.e. put into action a portion of the Sequential Intercept Model)
 - Work as a peer specialist with at least two (2) persons who are on probation or parole, in the community, or in a jail or prison during the previous twelve (12) months to include at least eight (8) 1-hour sessions of in-person peer specialist services (group and/or one-to-one) provided.
 - Complete eight (8) or more Forensic Peer Specialist CE's **or** participate as an instructor of the Forensic Peer Specialist training during the previous twelve (12) months
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For all peer specialists who are hired, the Employer will:

- Establish the criteria under which they will hire, train, and retain Peer Specialists
- Provide a supervisor responsible for employment support for the Peer Specialist
- Encourage the supervisor to obtain training related to the Peer Specialist program
- Maintain the integrity of the Peer Specialist role within the organization
- Respect the Peer Specialist position as a fully integrated team member who provides highly specialized and individualized services and promotes client self-determination and decision-making

How to Apply

Download and complete the Application Form for Credentialing that is here:

<https://health.wyo.gov/peer-specialists/>

Mail the completed form to

Behavioral Health Division, Wyoming Department of Health
Attn: Peer Specialists
6101 Yellowstone Road, Suite 220
Cheyenne, WY 82002