



CERTIFIED PEER SPECIALIST

Office of Health Professions

Certified Peer Specialist Rulemaking Workshop

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DOH Strategic Plan



What We Do

Ensure public safety

Create the healthiest next generation

Promote healthy living and healthy aging



How We Do Our Work

Serve our customers and continue to improve

Be efficient, innovative and transparent

Develop and support our workforce



Guiding Principles

Evidence-based public health practice

Partnership

Transparency

Health equity

Seven generations



Vision

People in Washington enjoy longer and healthier lives because they live in healthy families and communities.



Strategy

Through collaborations and partnerships, we will leverage the knowledge, relationships and resources necessary to influence the conditions that promote good health and safety for everyone.



Mission

The Department of Health works with others to protect and improve the health of all people in Washington.

Certified Peer Specialist Credential

Rules Workshop Objectives:

- Outline the process and timeline for creating the rules.
- Provide an overview of the department's disciplinary actions around the professions and address concerns about previous criminal convictions as they do not automatically disqualify applicants.
- Clarify the roles of DOH and the Health Care Authority (HCA) in crafting the credentials and developing the training and examinations.
- Gather information to develop the requirements for the profession within statutory authority of 2SSB 5555 and RCW 18.420.
- Work with stakeholders and partners to in the rulemaking process to draft the rules and solicit feedback from the peer community to address concerns.

Certified Peer Specialists

THE RULEMAKING PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Certified Peer Specialist Credential

Action Items	Date to Complete
Workshops with peers, interested parties, and partners, soliciting information and recommendations to develop draft language.	Fall 2023 – Spring 2024
Workshops to share draft language with peers, interested parties, and partners to modify and round out the draft language.	Spring – Winter 2024
CR-102 Public Hearing to present official draft language	January 2025
Collect further comments and feedback, make final adjustments to draft rule language, present final draft.	Winter 2025 – Spring 2025
CR-103 filed to implement final rule language.	May 2025
Rules go into effect and Certified Peer Specialist credential is available.	July 1, 2025

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THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS
AND APPLICANTS WITH A
CRIMINAL HISTORY

Am I disqualified due to a criminal conviction?

- There are no “disqualifying crimes” to obtain any DOH credential.
- Each applicant is reviewed independently on a case-by-case basis. Peers often have a criminal history based on life experiences.
- There can be conditions or limitations put on a credential due to criminal convictions.
- Applications are reviewed by a Case Management Team (CMT) to look at the conviction history, applicant’s explanation, and subsequent life changes. CMT includes investigators, attorneys, and the program.
- Peer Specialists have special exemptions in rule for applicants.
- The WRAMP program is designed for providers who have substance abuse concerns and requires daily check-ins and random urinalysis tests.



Certified Peer Specialists

HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY (HCA) ROLE
AND THE VETOED
CERTIFIED PEER SPECIALIST ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DOH and HCA Roles and Responsibilities

Health Care Authority (HCA)

- Develop the training and examinations for certified peer specialists, a gap training for individuals who previously took the 40-hour peer training course, and a peer supervisor training course.
- Develop a Peer Crisis Response training for designated peer crisis responders.
- Develop a program to link employers with peers looking for employment. Also developing a training for employers to show them benefits of hiring peer specialists.

Peer Specialist Advisory Committee (*Vetoed*)

- The advisory committee section was vetoed by the governor as it “goes too far into the roles and responsibilities of the authorized agency and places agency responsibilities with an outside entity.”
- The department is working to meet many of the objectives of the committee that are still necessary for the practice of the profession.

Certified Peer Specialists

WHAT RULES DO WE NEED TO
DEVELOP FOR PEER SPECIALISTS

Certified Peer Specialist: Rules to Develop



Certified Peer Specialist: Rules to Develop

Out of State Peers

Equivalency for Education, Experience, and Examination

National Certification

Who is out there? Equivalency to Washington Standards?

Continuing Education

Who can provide it, types allowed, mandatory trainings in statute

Peer Support Services

Peer Support compared to traditional counseling; Voluntary but Title Protected

Certification Requirements for Peer Specialists and Trainees

Certified Peer Specialists



- Attestation of self-identifying as in recovery for SUD or MH treatment (or the parent of someone in recovery).
- Take the 80-hour Peer Specialist training developed by the Health Care Authority.
- Pass both the written and oral examinations from HCA.
- Meet the supervised experience requirement of 1,000 hours as a Trainee under an approved supervisor



Certified Peer Specialist Trainees

- Attestation of self-identifying as in recovery for SUD or MH treatment (or the parent of someone in recovery).
- Take the 80-hour Peer Specialist training developed by the Health Care Authority.
- Pass both the written and oral examinations from HCA.
- Attest that they are working to meet the experience requirements.

Education Requirements for Peer Specialists and Trainees

What are the educational requirements for peer specialists?

- The requirements in RCW 18.420.050 are for applicants to complete the 80-hour course that is developed by the Health Care Authority (HCA) or an apprenticeship.

What about peers who are currently practicing or previously trained?

- Washington currently has over 7,200 people who have taken the previous peer training provided by HCA and passed the oral & written examination.
- The bill requires HCA to develop a gap training for people who have already passed the 40-hour course. Peers who have taken the original course will need to complete this new training to qualify for the Certified Peer Specialist credential.
- The gap training will be available online, for free, and open to anyone who would like to take it. It will not be limited to just peers that took the original 40-hour course.

Experience Requirements for Certified Peer Specialists

The statute requires 1,000 hours of experience as a Peer Specialist Trainee under the supervision of an Approved Supervisor.

- The approved supervisor can be a Behavioral Health Provider as defined in RCW 71.24.025 or a Certified Peer Specialist who meets the definition in RCW 18.420.010.

What about experience obtained prior to the credential being available?

- As previously noted, there is a large population of peers currently practicing in Washington. Some are credentialed as Agency Affiliated Counselors, some are not.
- It is not practical to require everyone to get the 1,000 hours of experience, especially when they may have years of experience as a peer counselor.

How do we want to address experience earned prior to the new credential being available?

Approved Supervisors for Certified Peer Specialist Trainees

- The approved supervisor can be a Behavioral Health Provider as defined in RCW 71.24.025 or a Certified Peer Specialist with 1,500 hours of experience, 500 hours of joint supervision of peers with another supervisor, and the HCA Peer supervisor training.
- RCW 71.24.025 defines peers as osteopathic physicians, physicians and physician assistants, psychologists, substance use disorder professionals, licensed counselors (MFT, MHC, SW), and nurses (registered & ARNP).

How do we want to address experience earned previously and identify who is eligible to provide supervision for that experience?

Requirements for Peers coming from other states

- Almost every state has some kind of peer credential, and the ones that don't typically have peer counselors who can practice without a credential.
- Requirements may vary; however, the standard seems to be 40-hours of peer training and the requirement for lived experience.
- Since the standard training (40-hours) is less than the Washington standard and the training standards are not necessarily uniform from state-to-state, the department will need to look at what requirements these applicants may need to meet in order to obtain the Certified Peer Specialist credential.

How do we want to address training and experience earned in other states?

National Certifications

What are the national certifications for peers? Are there more?

- **National Association of Peer Supporters:**
 - Doesn't credential or hold requirements for membership
- **National Certified Peer Specialist:**
 - Highschool Diploma, 40-hours of training, 3,000 hours of work experience (not 'supervised' experience), 3 Professional Recommendations, Examination
- **NAADAC National Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist :**
 - Highschool Diploma, 60-hours of contact/training, 200 hours of direct practice (supervisor attested), 2 References, NCPSS Examination

Are there other Peer Organizations?

State or National?

Continuing Education for Certified Peer Specialists

- RCW 18.420.050 requires 30 hours of Continuing Education (CE) every 2 years.
- Every 6 years Peer Specialists are required to obtain:
 - 3 hours of Suicide Prevention
 - 6 hours of Law and Ethics
- Health Equity Continuing Education recently added, at least 2 hours every 4 years.
- Questions we need to answer:
 - Law and Ethics – 2 hours every 2 years or 6 all at once? More than 2 hours each renewal cycle?
 - How much needs to be peer specific?
 - What other areas are allowed? SUD or MH courses, supervision, employer training?
 - Non-counseling activities such as teaching a CE course, speaking at a conference?
- Who is eligible to provide courses for Continuing Education Credit?

Continuing Education for Certified Peer Specialists



In-State Organizations

- Health Care Authority (HCA)
- Peer WA?
- Other trainers or College courses?



National Organizations

- National Certified Peer Specialist
- NAADAC Peer Recovery Support Specialist



Non-Peer Organizations

- Substance Use Disorder Counseling (NAADAC & SAMSHA)
- Mental Health Counseling (NBCC, ASWB)

Are there other CE providers who may qualify – state or national?

Peer Support Services from Certified Peer Specialists

- Obtaining the credential is voluntary, so individuals may provide Peer Counseling without obtaining the Peer Specialists certification from DOH.
- Peer counseling is unique in practice compared to traditional counselors. We can expand in rule what is allowed or prohibited as a certified peer specialist, within the definition of Peer Support Services as defined in RCW 18.420.010:
 - “... The person provides the interventions through the use of shared experiences to assist a client in the acquisition and exercise of skills needed to support the client's recovery. Interventions may include activities that assist clients in accessing or engaging in treatment and in symptom management; promote social connection, recovery, and self-advocacy; provide guidance in the development of natural community supports and basic daily living skills; and support clients in engagement, motivation, and maintenance related to achieving and maintaining health and wellness goals.”

Peer Support Services from Certified Peer Specialists

How might we want to look at better defining Peer Support Services and things that may be included or excluded from the profession?

- Note difference between traditional counseling and what peers provide.
- Outline boundary concerns?
 - Meeting with clients outside of a clinical setting?
 - Joining clients for their activities with family or friends?
 - Note actions that are not acceptable, such as being roommates or dating a former client.
- The better we can define this and outline practices that are acceptable and those that are not will help with disciplinary actions on complaints and provide clarity for the peer specialists in the practice of the profession.

Are there other actions or concerns
unique to the practice of peers?

Regulations and Resources

- 2nd Substitute [Senate Bill 5555](#)
- Peer Specialist Webpage: [Peer Specialist | Washington State Department of Health](#)
- Certified Peer Specialist Statute [RCW 18.420](#)
- Uniform Disciplinary Act
[RCW 18.130](#)
- Standards of Professional Conduct (including Mandatory Reporting Requirements)
[WAC 246-16](#)
- Health Care Authority Peer Website:
[Peer counselors | Washington State Health Care Authority](#)

Questions?



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