

# Certification for Peer Support as a Medicaid Benefit

## Steps for peers to become certified to bill Medicaid

Here's the process for individuals to become certified to bill Medicaid for peer support. The steps need to be completed in order.

1. Complete online self-assessment and orientation
2. Fill out, save, and print the attestation that you completed the self-assessment and orientation
3. Apply for training with a certified training entity. You can find certified training entities with the [Texas Certification Board](#).
4. Complete the core peer services training
5. Complete the SUD Recovery Coach or mental health peer training
6. Apply for certification with the Texas Certification Board
7. Complete 250 hours initial supervised work experience
8. Receive first 2-year certification

## Self-Assessment

### Do You Want to Be a Peer Specialist?

The job of a peer specialist is to help instill the hope of recovery from behavioral health challenges or dual diagnosis. Peer specialists use their experience to help others engage in recovery. A person wanting to become a peer specialist must complete a training program and pass written exams.

Peer specialists have the opportunity to be aware of and openly share what they have learned in the recovery process.

Some questions you may want to ask yourself...

- How have you handled disclosing to other people that you have faced behavioral health challenges?
- What has helped you move from where you were to where you are now? What did you do? What did others do?
- What have you learned about yourself in your recovery?

- What strengths have you have developed?
- What do you do on a regular basis to help yourself feel well?
- What are some of the beliefs and values you have or have developed that help strengthen and support your recovery?
- How has facing individual challenges impacted your life?
- How might you handle sitting in another's discomfort?
- What part does a sense of hope or resiliency play in your life and your recovery? What are some words you would use to describe this?
- How have you dealt with difficult setbacks?
- What external supports do you use, and how do they help you?

The peer specialists training draws strongly on a person's lived experience and recovery journey. This training can be intense and emotional, and peers are encouraged to carefully examine if they are prepared for this next step and have the necessary resources necessary to complete the training and examination process.

Please take the time to gauge your agreement with the following statements as a way to decide if peer specialist training is right for you at this point in your life.

- I am willing to disclose to my colleagues and peers that I have struggled with behavioral health challenges. I understand that in doing so, I help educate others about the reality of recovery.
- I have the time needed to participate in a challenging course of study.
- I have taken and completed formal schooling, adult education classes, have a GED or high school diploma.
- I am able to travel away from my home for multi-day trainings.
- I feel ready to be involved in a class that requires active participation.
- I am able to participate in a full 8-hour training day.
- I am able to discuss my own recovery story and experience with others
- I can listen to others' stories and feel empathy for their experience, even when it parallels painful experiences from my past.
- I can arrange for my own transportation needs.

Agreement with these statements does not necessarily predict program completion, but they can help you make the decision about whether you are ready for training now.

## Orientation

Are you considering becoming certified to provide peer support services in Medicaid? Here's some information to get you started.

### Description of Peer Specialist Services

<https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/peers>: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

### Concept of Recovery

[Substances Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Working Definition of Recovery](#): Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

### Evidence Base for Peer Support

[Peers](#): Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

[The Peer Specialist Workforce in Texas: training and certification, Workforce Outcomes, and Workforce Integration \(PDF\)](#), Texas Institute for Mental Health, School of Social Work, The University of Texas at Austin

[Recovery Supports Services Project, Fiscal Year 2017 Final Evaluation Report \(PDF\)](#), Addiction Research Institute, The Steve Hicks School of Social Work, The University of Texas at Austin

### Typical Workday

[A Day in the Life: Peer Support Specialist](#): The Academy for Addiction Professionals

### Employment Demographics and Careers

[Peer Support Specialist](#): Bureau of Labor Statistics

### Minimum Qualifications

To be a peer specialist who bills Medicaid in Texas you must:

- be at least 18 years of age

- have lived experience with a mental health condition, substance use issue, or both
- have a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma
- be willing to appropriately share your recovery story
- be able to demonstrate current self-directed recovery, and
- pass criminal history and registry checks (link when live)

## **Next Steps**

Once you finish reviewing this information and complete the self-assessment, you'll need to complete the form below, save it, and apply to receive training. You can find training opportunities through the [Texas Certification Board](#).

[Attestation of completion \(PDF\)](#)

## **Support Hub**

Training support may be obtained from the website of the Texas peer specialist development hub [PeerForce](#).