

## Peer Counselor Apprenticeship

### Occupational Overview for Employers

Expand and enhance your skilled behavioral health workforce today! The Health Care Apprenticeship Consortium (HCAC) training program for Peer Counselors enables clients to identify goals that promote resiliency and recovery, and develop activities and services to achieve personal recovery milestones.

A Peer Counselor brings their own model of resilience to benefit a wide range of clients, and enables them to overcome obstacles associated with substance use and other behavioral health disorders.

### Benefits of Apprenticeships

Apprenticeship programs, in addition to adding new staff, are proven to build retention of current staff mentor/preceptors and increase their leadership skills. Apprentices “learn while they earn”—working full time while gaining skills taught by experienced teachers, coaches, and assigned mentor/preceptor Peer Counselor. Apprentices earn college credit by completing a 1 – 1.25 year program through our educational partners, and also sign a two-year post-graduation service commitment agreement. Healthcare Apprenticeship positions typically attract more than 30 qualified candidate applications per opening.

Learn more by [visiting our website](#), and by watching these informative short videos:

[Healthcare Apprenticeship Consortium - Overview](#)

[Healthcare Apprenticeship Consortium -Employer Apprenticeship Implementation](#)

### Program Details

The Peer Counselor apprenticeship program involves:

- **250 hours** of classroom and lab sessions
- **2,000 hours** of work experience
- Passing the Washington State Health Care Authority Certified Peer Counselor test.

### Process

Healthcare organizations employing Peer Counselor apprentices must complete simple Training Agent and Non-Discrimination agreements to register as an employer (“Training Agent”) with the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council ([we provide guidance to help you complete this requirement](#)).

Peer Counselor apprentices are supervised by the lead provider at the facility, and work with other staff (or designated skills staff) who are trained as mentor/preceptors. Mentors at each location assist facility providers with apprentices’ On-the-Job learning. Classrooms (virtual real-time) and Labs (in-person) are hybrid, with access available throughout Washington and adjoining communities.



**Employer program cost: \$3,750** per candidate (regular cost)

**OR \$0 per candidate** (for employers who complete grant-based requirements) \*

Limited grant is funding available to cover the entire cost for early-bird employer applicants

\*[Contact us](#) to learn about how to meet the requirements for grant-funded employer incentives.

## Timeline

Peer Counselor apprentice cohort (depends on hiring sequence & background-check timing per employer):

### 2 – 3 months before program starts

- Sign agreements (TAA, EEO, etc.)
- Determine clinic, shift & lab details
- Establish implementation processes

### 1.5 – 2 months in advance

- Candidate recruitment
- Mentor training
- Finalize OJT Plan
- Applicant review & interviews

### 2 weeks in advance

- Enrollment & onboarding
- Mentor & apprentice assignment
- Register apprentices with regulatory agency(s)

### Program starts

- Orientation
- Classes and clinic begin

The Peer Counselor apprenticeship program is governed by and accredited through the Health Care Apprenticeship Consortium's Program Standards (#2169) with the State Apprenticeship Council (approved 01/2022). Copies of our program standards are available upon request.

### The Health Care Apprenticeship Consortium

The Consortium is open to all healthcare employers in Washington. The Health Care Apprenticeship Consortium (HCAC) is an all-employer (signatory and non-signatory) and multi-union Washington State-registered Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee, with program administration by the SEIU Healthcare 1199NW Multi-Employer Training and Education Fund.

**For more information, visit [healthcareapprenticeship.org](https://healthcareapprenticeship.org)**