



# Career Opportunities for Peer Specialists

## Table of Contents

Peer Specialist Workforce Outlook.....	2
California will soon have State Certified Peer Specialists .....	2
Current Los Angeles employers of peers: .....	2
Organizations likely to hire Peer Specialists (per OSHPD) .....	3
Existing Job Titles (sample): .....	3
Management Opportunities: .....	3
Sample Core Competencies for Peer Specialists identified by the California Office of Statewide Health Planning & Development (OSHPD) .....	3
SHARE! Recommended Trainings for Peer Specialists.....	4
EXAMPLE Job Announcement at SHARE!.....	5
EXAMPLE Job Announcement at Los Angeles County Dept. of Mental Health .....	6
EXAMPLE Peer Specialist Career Plan .....	10

## Peer Specialist Workforce Outlook

- Current CA Peer Specialist workforce estimate: 6,000
- Peer Specialists reflect cultural, ethnic, linguistic, sexual orientation, & socio-economic diversity
- Given anticipated workforce shortages; Peer Specialists can fill this gap while increasing diversity in workforce
- Depending on service settings, ratios range from 1:10 to 1:50 of Peer Specialists to people served in public mental health
- *Self-help researcher Keith Humphreys wrote in Pillars of Peer Support (2012) that there is a growing perception that Peer Specialists save money by improving outcomes. "It's not -- like you might think-- that you don't have the money to offer recovery support services, but rather that you don't have the money NOT to offer them."*

**1:25 ratio = need 39,312 Peer Specialists**

*Source: DHCS Behavioral Health Services Needs Assessment (Feb. 2012)*

## California will soon have State Certified Peer Specialists

California is expected to have State Certified Peer Specialists, and that they will be able to bill Medi-Cal, as they do in at least 31 other states. When organizations are able to bill Medi-Cal for services, they are more likely to hire Peer Specialists

## Current Los Angeles employers of peers:

Los Angeles County Department of  
Mental Health

DMH-Contracted Agencies

Veteran's Administration

Department of Health Services

Los Angeles Housing Services Authority

SHARE!

Project Return The Next Step

Antelope Valley Enrichment Services

CHCADA Our Way

*And more...*

## Organizations likely to hire Peer Specialists (per OSHPD)

Crisis Respite Houses & Crisis Residential	Homeless Forensic Programs (AB109)
Hospitals & Outpatient Programs	Full Service
Housing & Employment Programs	Partnerships/Integrated Service Teams
Primary Care Wellness Coaching	Peer-Run Programs
Wellness Centers	Clubhouses & Drop-In Centers

## Existing Job Titles (sample):

Community Health Worker	Peer Bridger
Community Support Worker	Peer Mentor
Family Member Peer Specialist	Peer Specialist
Health Navigators	Peer Support Apprentice
Homeless Outreach	Peer Support Specialist
Housing Specialist	Recovery Support Specialist
Parent Partner	Recovery Support Worker
Peer & Family Advocate	Wellness Outreach Worker (WOW)
Peer Advocate	

## Management Opportunities:

Peer Supervisor	Program Coordinator
Peer Manager	

## Sample Core Competencies for Peer Specialists identified by the California Office of Statewide Health Planning & Development (OSHPD)

1. Wellness, Recovery, & Resiliency
2. Interpersonal Communication & Collaborative Documentation Practices
3. Professional Role Competencies (Law, Ethics, Boundaries)
4. Integrated & Whole Health Services

5. Trauma Informed & Substance Use Service Competencies
6. Diversity & Cultural Responsiveness
7. Systems Competencies & Navigation
8. Effecting Change: Education & Advocacy
9. Professional Development & Self Care
10. Wellness Coaching, Natural Supports & Local Resources

### SHARE! Recommended Trainings for Peer Specialists

1. SHARE! Advanced Peer Specialist Training [shareselfhelp.org](http://shareselfhelp.org)
  - a. Peer Services 101
  - b. SHARE! Peer Techniques
  - c. Peer Bridging
2. Intentional Peer Support -- [www.intentionalpeersupport.org](http://www.intentionalpeersupport.org)
3. Emotional CPR (eCPR) – [www.emotional-cpr.org](http://www.emotional-cpr.org)
4. Wellness Recovery Action Plan Facilitation – [mentalhealthrecovery.com](http://mentalhealthrecovery.com)
5. Suicide Prevention – Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)

## EXAMPLE Job Announcement at SHARE!

# SHARE! Peer Specialist in Collaborative Housing

SHARE!'s Collaborative Housing provides affordable, permanent, supportive housing to people with disabilities in Los Angeles. Staff support residents to thrive in a recovery-based, supportive environment.

### Responsibilities:

- Makes housing placements
- Develops personal recovery relationships with Collaborative Housing residents to help with achieving their goals, conflict resolution, and maintaining their housing
- Supports owners and residents to develop a culture of recovery, establish policies, structure, schedule and activities
- Enroll and orient participants and get informed consent for data collection
- Connects residents to all SHARE! programs
- Connects residents to community resources
- Works with volunteers, participants and owners to develop good neighbor relations
- Finds new placements for residents who want or need them
- May be on call for problems that may arise after hours

### Qualifications:

- Minimum one year of sobriety/abstinence required, 2-5 years preferred
- Experience supervising volunteers
- 3 – 5 years of current personal experience attending self-help support groups
- Knowledge of I2-Step programs
- Sober Living/Collaborative Housing experience a plus
- BA degree a plus
- Self-starter, able to take a project and run with it
- Bilingual any language a plus, especially Spanish
- Honesty, Willingness, Open-mindedness, Desire to grow
- CCAPP, CAADAC or LADC not required.

**TO APPLY:** Please send your resume and a cover letter detailing your passion for self-help support groups, your personal experience attending self-help support groups and why you want to work at SHARE! to: [jobs@shareselfhelp.org](mailto:jobs@shareselfhelp.org) or 6666 Green Valley Circle, Culver City, CA 90230 or FAX to (310) 846-4089.

*Disclaimer: the above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by people assigned to this job. All staff may be required to perform duties outside of their normal responsibilities from time to time as needed.*

SHARE! is hiring for multiple positions. All SHARE! job postings are at [www.shareselfhelp.org/programs/share-jobs](http://www.shareselfhelp.org/programs/share-jobs)

## EXAMPLE Job Announcement at Los Angeles County Dept. of Mental Health



### **WELCOME TO THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

### **MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATE**

#### Salary

\$28,133.52 - \$40,941.84 Annually \$2,344.46 - \$3,411.82 Monthly \$28,133.52 - \$40,941.84 Annually

#### Location

Los Angeles County, CA Los Angeles County, CA

#### Job Type Full time

Department MENTAL HEALTH

Job Number b8111D

### **OPEN COMPETITIVE JOB OPPORTUNITY**

**FILING START DATE: 01/05/2017 at 8:00 a.m.**

This examination will remain open until the needs of the service are met and is subject to closure without prior notice.

#### **DEFINITION:**

Provides a variety of peer support, advocacy, and other recovery services to clients transitioning to community living.

#### Essential Job Functions

Within the context of the program population served, communicates, represents, and promotes the mental health services consumer's perspective within the continuum of care.

Orients consumers' family members, significant others, and caregivers of mental health consumers to the mental health system in order to assist these parties to navigate the

system and receive necessary services.

Facilitates consumer, family member, and caregiver access to departmental and community resources and services provided by other community and public agencies by assisting with scheduling appointments and transportation; or by accompanying the consumer to meetings that affect their receipt of services in order to provide advocacy and support in meeting consumers' needs.

Assists clients in developing independent living skills in activities such as housekeeping, cooking, shopping, budgeting, using public transportation, and attending to personal grooming and hygiene, etc. through demonstration and coaching.

Assists clients with housing needs by facilitating access to residential care or permanent housing.

Facilitates clients' participation with multi-disciplinary teams by assisting in formulating service goals and plans for achieving such goals.

Conveys community and client cultural patterns and attitudes to mental health professional staff.

Assists clients with obtaining and completing appropriate application forms for various benefits and services.

Leads recovery dialogues and discusses common transitional experiences.

Acts as interpreter for client population.

Recruits and trains volunteer mentors for clients transitioning into community living settings.

Participates in conferences/meetings within the Department of Mental Health.

Accompanies clients to appointments and self-help activities.

Attends seminars and in-service trainings in connection with related duties as assigned.

## Requirements

### **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:**

**OPTION I:** Six months of full-time paid or volunteer experience\* in mental health advocacy, performing duties such as interacting with clients or patients concerning mental health or social service matters, answering questions and providing information about mental health/social services and disability benefits, and coordinating group facilitation

**-OR-**

**OPTION II:** Completion of a recognized peer, parent, or family advocate training program\*\*.

**LICENSE:**

A valid California Class C Driver License or the ability to utilize an alternative method of transportation when needed to carry out job-related essential functions.

**PHYSICAL CLASS:**

2 - Light. Light physical effort which may include occasional light lifting to a 10 pound limit, and some bending, stooping or squatting. Considerable walking may be involved.

**SPECIAL REQUIREMENT INFORMATION:**

\* Experience is evaluated on the basis of a verifiable 40-hour workweek. Work performed part-time will be prorated on a month-for-month basis.

\*\* To qualify for Option II, a copy of the Training Certificate must be submitted with the application at the time of filing or within 15 days from date of application submission. Mental Health advocate training programs are offered by various Peer Run Organizations, Family Run Organizations, and Nationally accredited associations for delivering Mental Health Advocacy.

**DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Experience in referring clients to appropriate public agencies.

Additional Information

**SPECIAL INFORMATION:** Past and present mental health clients and family members who meet the minimum requirements are encouraged to apply.

**AVAILABLE SHIFT:** Appointees may be required to work any shift, including evenings, nights, weekends and holidays.

**EXAMINATION CONTENT:** This examination will consist of an evaluation of training, experience and desirable qualifications based upon application information weighted 100%. Candidates must achieve a passing score of 70% or higher in order to be placed in the eligible register.

**VACANCY INFORMATION:** The resulting eligible register for this examination will be used to fill vacancies throughout the Department of Mental Health.



**ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION:** The names of candidates receiving a passing grade on this examination will be placed on the eligible register in the order of their score group for a period of at least twelve (12) months following the date of promulgation on the eligible register.

Applications will be processed on an as-received basis and promulgated to the eligible register accordingly.

No person may compete in this examination more than once every twelve (12) months.

**APPLICATION AND FILING INFORMATION:**

Applicants are required to complete and submit an online Los Angeles County Employment Application AND Supplemental Questionnaire in order to be considered for this examination. Paper applications, resumes, or any unsolicited documents will not be accepted in lieu of completing the online application and Supplemental Questionnaire.

Fill out your application completely. The acceptance of your application depends on whether you have clearly shown that you meet the minimum requirements. Utilizing verbiage from class specifications and minimum requirements serving as your description of duties will not be sufficient to meet requirements. Doing so may result in an incomplete application and you may be disqualified. Indicate any relevant education, training, and experience in the spaces provided on the application so we can evaluate your qualifications for the job. For each job held, give the name and address of your employer, your job title, beginning and ending dates, number of hours worked per week, description of work performed, and salary earned. **If your application is incomplete, it will be rejected.**

This examination will remain open until the need of the services are met, and is subject to closure without prior notice. We must receive your application by 5:00 pm, PST, on or before the last day of filing.

All information is subject to verification. We may reject your application at any time during the examination and hiring process, including after appointment has been made. **Falsification of any information may result in disqualification or rescission of appointment.**

<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/lacounty/jobs/1606305/mental-health-advocate>

# Plan for Success



Where would I like to be in five years? Where would I be living? What would I be doing? How would I be feeling? What would let me know that I succeeded in life? My goals reflect what I want, not what others want for me.

If I am successful, where will I be in five years? What would be a desirable result, even if I have no idea how to accomplish it?

*Dreaming, I ask myself, "What does success mean to me?"*

As I dream, I acknowledge that for every problem, there is an infinite number of solutions. My Plan includes time spent learning about how to achieve my goals and developing the skills to achieve them. What do I need to accomplish my goals? How might I learn more about how to get there? Who might be able to support this goal, and how can I meet such people?

In 5 years I will be BE PROMOTED TO A MANAGEMENT ROLE IN PEER SERVICES

4 Years Pursue training to acquire the skills needed to be a manager

3 Years Continue to pursue training to improve my skills and discuss my goal of being a manager with my supervisor and organization

2 Years Excel in my job as a Peer Specialist. Stay informed about developments in the field, such as California State Certification and the possibility of peers billing their services to MediCal. Continue to explore self-help support groups as new issues arise.

1 Year Complete Peer Specialist certification training and internship and get a job as a Peer Specialist. Celebrate a year in my self-help support groups.

6 months Talk to other Peer Specialists to find out how they got their jobs and what they like about them. Complete the Steps or work on the methods and tools of my self-help support groups such as Recovery International.

3 month Talk to more people who work in the mental health field to find out about the Peer Specialist role and increase my network. Look for additional training opportunities such as WHAM!, WRAP, eCPR, Intentional Peer Support and Suicide Prevention: Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR). Get a sponsor or mentors in my self-help support groups.

1 month Start volunteering or interning at my favorite places while continuing to visit and research places. Start certification training program. Select the self-help support groups that I would like to make a commitment to.

2 weeks Visit places that hire Peer Specialists to find the one that might be the best fit for me such as clubhouses, transitional houses, Wellness Centers, Client-Run Centers, Homeless outreach efforts. Keep business cards, notes and names and email or phone numbers of the people I meet.

1 week Research some of the job opportunities for Peer Specialists on online job hunting services. Start attending self-help support groups to find the groups that are the best fit for me. Select three different groups to attend.

Tomorrow Apply for a Peer Specialist training program such as SHARE! Advanced Peer Specialist Training

Today Talk to people who work as Peer Specialists. Research self-help support groups of particular interest in mental health consumers, including Recovery International, Emotions Anonymous, CoDependents Anonymous, Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families, Debtors Anonymous or others.

To be successful, I need a plan. Now that I have the plan, I can commit to doing something each week to further my goals—each small step a cause for celebration. I am 80% more likely to achieve my goals if I write them down and tell at least one other person. I share my commitment with my self-help group, a friend, a case manager, a family member or whoever I choose.

The more people I know, the more likely I am to achieve my goals. Most people achieve their Five-year Goals within two years.

# **I am worth it!**

*I deserve to have my dreams come true.*