

Peer Integration from a National Perspective

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What is Peer Support

- Peer support encompasses a range of activities and interactions between people who share similar experiences of being diagnosed with mental health conditions, substance use disorders, or both.
- This mutuality—often called “peerness”—between a peer support worker and person in or seeking recovery promotes connection and inspires hope.
- https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs_campaigns/brss_tac/peer-support-2017.pdf

What is Peer Support

- Peer support offers a level of acceptance, understanding, and validation not found in many other professional relationships (Mead & McNeil, 2006).
- By sharing their own lived experience and practical guidance, peer support workers help people to develop their own goals, create strategies for self-empowerment, and take concrete steps towards building fulfilling, self-determined lives for themselves.

Examples of Peer Programs

- Peer Warmlines
- Peer Run Respite
- Peer Support Workers in Schools
- Peer Support in Criminal Justice Settings
- Peers in Community Based Treatment Settings
- Peers on Mobile Crisis Teams
- Peers in ER, Crisis Receiving Facilities, Living Room Models
- Peers in Inpatient Settings
- Peers Support Workers in Crisis Lines
- Peer-led Step-up/Step-Down Programs

Implementation of Peers

- Nationally programs in general are incorporating local community and national leaders with lived experience in planning and implementation
- To match the needs of a community, these voices need to be heard before implementing a new program or updating existing programs and outdated policies
- What is good for one community may not meet the needs of another

Barriers to Implementation

- Stigma-not valuing your communities voices
- Peers May be at the table, but just because funding requires; and their opinions or suggestions fall on deaf ears
- Resistance to changes
- State or Communities bias towards certain underserved populations

Recruitment and Retention

- Start reviewing Peer applications on a case-by-case basis
- Know your State laws and background process before offering job
- Hire peers that are equitable to the communities they serve

Recruitment and Retention

- Hire multiple peers on staff, not just one and let them be supervised by a peer or someone with lived experience with a clinical person
- Have check ins together with staff to create a good organizational wellness for all employees, not just peers
- Understand Peer Role Definitions and don't assimilate them into other roles
- Make the time to listen and understand people's needs

Principles of Core Competencies

- Recovery-oriented
- Person-centered
- Voluntary
- Relationship-focused
- Trauma-informed

• [*https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/peers/core-competencies-peer-workers](https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/peers/core-competencies-peer-workers)

Supervision

- Supervision ensures that peer support workers are practicing within their role and that they are not being asked to perform tasks that are outside the scope of peer support, including clinical or case management services.
- In June 2024, the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services released a frequently asked questions document that clarified supervision requirements for peer support workers.

*National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care—A Best Practice Toolkit. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2020

*Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services: Frequently Asked Questions. 2024. <https://www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/faq06052024.pdf>

State Certifications and Requirements

- Each state still has its own set of competencies, ethics, core qualifications, education requirements, testing, fees, and recertification policies for obtaining a peer support specialist certification, meaning there is no reciprocity across states and territories.
- Mental Health
- Substance Use
- Dual
- Youth
- Family
- Forensic (Justice-involved systems; jail, prison, re-entry, State Forensic Hospital Peer Bridger)

Needs for more data for outcomes

- There is a limited amount of data and reports on the utilization of Peer Support Workers Nationally.
- Many reports do not take all States Peer Data into Account
- We need to advocate to connect people conducting data and reporting to State Office's of Recovery and their Staff (DRSS)
- Department of Labor Job Classification may help with these outcomes

Contact

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Sample of Federal Funding Opportunities Available for Peer Services:

- Substance Use Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Support Block Grant
- Community Mental Health Block Grants
- SAMHSA Discretionary Grants
- Building Communities of Recovery (BCOR) Grants
- Recovery Community Services Program (RCSP) Grants
- Statewide Family Network Grants
- Statewide Consumer Network Grants
- Harm Reduction Grants
- Targeted Capacity Expansion Special Projects Grants
- Treatment, Recovery and Workforce Support Grants
- State Opioid Response (SOR) Grants—States Only

SAMHSA 988 Grants

- Cooperative Agreements for States and Territories to Improve Local 988 Capacity
- Support for 988 Tribal Response Cooperative Agreements
- Cooperative Agreement for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and Disaster Distress Helpline
- Cooperative Agreements for 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Crisis Center Follow-Up Programs
- Treatment, Recovery, and Workforce Grants
- Bureau of Justice COSSUP Grants
- Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Grants

Medicaid Options for Funding Peer Support Workers

- State Plan Rehabilitation Service Options
- Health Home State Plan Option
- Section 1915 (i)
- Section 1115 Demonstration Waivers
- Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Demonstrations¹⁰⁸

Some additional resources regarding funding for peer support workers in crisis services to review include:

- Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC)—In July 2019, released an issue brief outlining Medicaid’s role as a payer of recovery support services and states’ coverage of recovery support services.
- National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP)—In August 2022, released a blog detailing various ways states are incorporating peer support workers into crisis services as well as how states are funding peer services within crisis services.

Funding Resources Quoted

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Block Grants. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2023. <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/block-grants>
- Community Mental Health Services Block Grant. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2022. <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/block-grants/mhbg>
- Grants. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2023. <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants>
- Building Communities of Recovery. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2022. <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/ti-19-003>
- Recovery Community Services Program—Statewide Network. SAMHSA, 2022. <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/ti-17-006>
- Statewide Family Network Program. SAMHSA, 2022. <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grantannouncements/sm-15-001>
- Statewide Consumer Network Program. SAMHSA, 2020. <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-15-002>
- Harm Reduction Grant Program. SAMHSA, 2022. <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grantannouncements/sp-22-001>
- Targeted Capacity Expansion Special Projects Grants. SAMHSA, 2022. <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/ti-22-002>
- Treatment, Recovery and Workforce Support Grants. SAMHSA, 2023. <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/ti-23-021>

Funding Sources Quoted

State Opioid Response Grants. SAMHSA, 2023. <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grantannouncements/ti-22-005>

Cooperative Agreements for States and Territories to Improve Local 988 Capacity. SAMHSA, 2023. <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/fg-23-006#:~:text=States%20and%20territories%20are%20expected,988%20infrastructure%20and%20effective%20coordination>

Support for 988 Tribal Response Cooperative Agreements. SAMHSA, 2023. <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/fg-23-005>

Cooperative Agreement for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and Disaster Distress Helpline. SAMHSA, 2021. <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-21-005>

Cooperative Agreements for 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Crisis Center Follow-Up Programs. SAMHSA, 2023. [https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/fg-23-003#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20program,Lifeline%3B%20\(2\)%20providing%20enhanced](https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/fg-23-003#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20program,Lifeline%3B%20(2)%20providing%20enhanced)

Treatment, Recovery, and Workforce Support Grant. SAMHSA, 2022. <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/ti-20-013>

Funding Sources Quoted

- Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program (COSSUP). Washington, DC, U.S. Department of Justice, 2023. <https://www.bja.ojp.gov/program/cossup/about>
- Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) Program for Paraprofessionals. Health Resources and Services Administration. (n.d.). <https://www.hrsa.gov/grants/find-funding/HRSA-21-090>
- Section 223 Demonstration Program to Improve Community Mental Health Services. Medicaid. (n.d.). <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/financial-management/section-223demonstration-program-improve-community-mental-health-services/index.html>
- McMullen EK: Recovery Support Services for Medicaid Beneficiaries With a Substance Use Disorder. Medicaid and CHIP Payment Access Commission, 2019. 110Falkner S, Manz J, Antezzo M: States' Use of Peers in the Mental Health Crisis Continuum. Portland, ME: National Academy for State Health Policy. <https://nashp.org/states-use-of-peersin-the-mental-health-crisis-continuum/> Accessed October 31, 2023.