



Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification- FAQ's & Frequent Errors in Applications

General FAQs

Applications for Certification

1. Why is it important to use my full legal name?

The Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification document will be issued under the applicant's full legal name. The legal name used on the application will be used to generate the certification. For this reason, the spelling of your full legal names must be accurate.

Reasons for Requests for Revision:

Program staff may ask for revisions to an application when the spelling of a full legal name does not match an applicant's attached personal identification document (e.g., driver's license, identification card, or passport).

Program staff may also ask for revisions when the required personal identification document is unreadable, expired, or invalid. The government-issued identification must be legible and valid to qualify. Identification that has expired or is unreadable will not be accepted. The document must include a picture of the applicant to qualify.

TIP TO AVOID REVISION REQUESTS:

Before saving the application make sure your full legal name is spelled correctly. Ensure that the government-issued identification document is readable, valid, and includes a picture. And, before clicking submit, applicants should verify that the correct document (e.g., driver's license, identification card, passport) has been attached to the application before it is submitted.

Applicants should revise errors on their application by directly updating the information on the application. For more information on how to revise an application, please visit:

[How-to-Revise-Your-Application-8.10.22-Copy.pdf \(capecertification.org\)](https://www.capecertification.org/How-to-Revise-Your-Application-8.10.22-Copy.pdf)



Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification- FAQ's & Frequent Errors in Applications

2. What if I do not have copies of my transcripts or diploma, or the school attended is no longer open, what is accepted as a substitute for those items?

The California Mental Health Services Authority has identified the following available resources:

To obtain a transcript from a California public school, you will need to contact the school directly. If the school is closed, we suggest contacting the local school district or the [County Office of Education](#) for assistance.

To obtain a transcript from a California private school, contact the school or one of its staff directly. Contact information for private schools may be obtained from the [California School Directory](#), or from the Private School Directory data files, which are posted on the [CDE Private School web page](#).

If the school is closed, you may contact [Parchment](#), which is a private company that offers transcript recovery services. Please note that there is no guarantee that these contacts will have your records.

If you are unable to obtain your high school records and you've tried the recommendations mentioned above, you may want to consider taking a high school equivalency test (HSET). More information about HSETs are available on the [CDE High School Equivalency Tests \(HSET\) web page](#).

Reasons for Requests for Revision:

Program staff may ask for revisions to an application when diploma, educational transcripts or degrees are missing - or when an unrelated document is attached instead.

TIP TO AVOID REVISION REQUESTS:

Upload a clear and readable copy of your diploma/degree or transcript.

Before clicking submit, applicants should verify that the correct document (e.g., high school diploma, equivalent degree, advanced degree, transcript) has been attached to the application before it is submitted.



Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification- FAQ's & Frequent Errors in Applications

3. Can the requirement for high school diploma or GED be waived?

No, this is a state requirement for certification.

4. What is the cost of the application for certification?

This information is under development. The California Mental Health Services Authority is working directly with the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to identify the fee.

Training

5. Okay, my general path application was approved. What are the next steps?

Now that your application for initial certification has been approved, visit the [Training Vendors](#) section of the certification website to view a list of CaIMHSA approved vendors. Click the training vendor icons to read agency biographies and register for an approved Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification training.

Please note that our approved Training Vendor list is currently under construction. We will continue to update the website with information on approved training vendors, so please check back regularly for updates.

6. How long do applicants have to complete training after receiving a scholarship?

Scholarships will expire on ~~November 30~~ December 31, 2022. Awardee must be registered for the examination prior to ~~November 30~~ December 31, 2022. All forfeited or expired scholarships will be returned to a "general pool inventory" and awarded to applicants on the waitlist. No extensions will be granted for expired scholarships.

Exam

7. Is there an exam for person who apply through the grandparenting pathway and those who apply under the initial certification?



Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification- FAQ's & Frequent Errors in Applications

The exam is the same for both grandparenting and initial applicants.

8. How do I request reasonable accommodations for the exam?

Applicants seeking certification may request testing accommodations on the CalMHSA Certification website. Accommodations requests will be part of the exam registration process.

9. Will the exam be available in multiple languages?

The exam will be available in 17 threshold languages for California counties as determined by the Department of Health Care Services. Alternative language exams are anticipated in the Spring of 2023.

10. Will there be an exam preparation guide for persons interested in seeking certification? If so, what will the preparation guide include?

Yes. A preparation guide will be published to this website soon. The preparation guide is still being finalized but will include sample questions.

11. What is the "initial administration" of the exam and how can applicants interested in seeking certification participate in the pilot administration of the exam?

The initial administration of the exam is open to individuals who meet requirements for certification and are interested in participating as "early test takers" of the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist exam. Persons seeking certification during that timeframe may self-select to participate as an "early test taker" at the time of registration. The early test taker will be notified of their score and exam results of pass/fail via email notification approximately 30 days after taking the exam.

12. How many questions are on the exam and how long does it take to complete?

The Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification exam is 120 questions, multiple-choice exam questions. The exam takes 2.5 hour to complete and includes a ten (10) minute scheduled break in the middle.



Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification- FAQ's & Frequent Errors in Applications

Certificant Registry

13. What is the Certificant Registry and who will have access to the information from the Certificant Registry?

The Certificant Registry is a searchable database, open to the public, with the name of all persons who have been certified in California. It will include the status of the certification, certification number, date of certificate issuance, certificate renewal date, and any actions taken by certifying entity.

Employment

14. Will I be guaranteed employment once I am a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist?

No. The California Mental Health Services Authority does not guarantee employment.



Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification- FAQ's & Frequent Errors in Applications

Grandparenting Applications

The following items are applicable to applicants who are applying for certification under the Grandparenting path.

15. Letters of Recommendation

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification requires three (3) letters of recommendation as follows:

- a. From a supervisor on agency letterhead
- b. From a colleague/professional
- c. Self-recommendation describing current role and responsibilities as a peer

Reasons for Requests for Revision:

Program staff may ask for revisions to an application when required letters of recommendation are missing or incorrect document is attached instead.

TIP TO AVOID REVISION REQUESTS:

Applicants are encouraged to verify that each individual letter has been attached to their application. For the letter of recommendation from a supervisor, the applicant should make sure the letter is on agency letterhead and includes the date and the applicant's full legal name. Letters that do not meet this requirement will not be accepted.



Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification- FAQ's & Frequent Errors in Applications

16. Proof of Employment

The following standards must be met to qualify for certification under the grandparenting path:

A. Be in a peer worker role, either paid or unpaid, as of January 1, 2022.

AND EITHER

- 1 year of paid or unpaid work experience (1550 hours) as a peer specialist
OR
- 1550 hours of paid or unpaid work experience in 3 years, with 500 hours completed within the last 12 months, as a peer specialist.

Forms of documentation to prove applicants have met this employment requirement can be any of these (listed in no particular order):

- Pay stubs that list hourly wage and the year-to-date earnings for this year (2022) at the time of application, and the last two years (2021, 2022) if they equate to 1,550 hours
- A print-out from Human Resources which states the date of hire and either the number of hours worked per year over the past three years, or states that the specific 1,550 hours requirement has been met in the past three years.
- A letter from a current or past employer on company letterhead that attests to:
 - Date of hire
 - Whether work status was full-time or part-time
 - How many hours worked per week, AND
 - That the specific employment hours requirement has been met by listing which requirement was met.

For example:

Happy Hansen has worked **Full Time** for **XYZ Peer Agency** **since (date of hire)** and meets the requirements of being **employed in a Peer role as of January 1, 2022.**

Happy has met the requirement of **One (1) year of paid or unpaid work experience with a minimum accumulation of 1550 hours of experience in a peer role as of (specific date).**



Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification- FAQ's & Frequent Errors in Applications

Reasons for Requests for Revision:

Program staff may ask for a revision to an application when documentation submitted does not sufficiently demonstrate proof of meeting the employment requirement.

TIP TO AVOID REVISION REQUESTS:

Applicants should count the number of employment hours they have documented and submit applications after the total 1550 hours have been met. Letters that are not on agency letterhead, are unsigned, do not specify hire date (month and year at minimum), hours worked, full-time or part-time status, or the specific employment hours required will not be accepted. Applicants who have worked for more than one agency in the accumulation of 1,550 paid/unpaid work experience should submit documentation from each agency. Applicants should count the total hours noted within the letters before clicking submit.

17. For the “Peer Training” requirement under the grandparenting process, what training types are considered to meet this requirement?

Peer training under this requirement consists of trainings that addresses any of the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies and trainings that focus on peer recovery and resiliency. Following are some example areas of focus:

- Mental health advanced care planning
- Advanced peer support specialist practices
- All DHCS approved training focusing on recovery and resiliency.
- All county sponsored training focusing on recovery and resiliency.
- Evidence-Based Training (i.e., Mental Health First Aid, Motivational interviewing, Suicide awareness, harm reduction models of care)

Reasons for Requests for Revision:

Program staff may ask for revisions to an application when attached training documentation does not meet the standard of peer training.



Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification- FAQ's & Frequent Errors in Applications

TIP TO AVOID REVISION REQUESTS:

Applicants should check the certificate of completion for clear information on the training topic to ensure that it meets the standard of a peer training and, if not listed, attach supporting documentation such as course descriptions and/or agendas to confirm the training meets the standard.

For more information on acceptable peer training examples, please visit: [Copy-Grandparenting-Checklist-for-Peers-5.12.22-1.pdf \(capecertification.org\)](https://www.capecertification.org/Copy-Grandparenting-Checklist-for-Peers-5.12.22-1.pdf)

18. For the “continued education hours” requirement under the grandparenting process, how was the 2-year requirement determined?

This requirement was determined following the community input sessions held by the California Mental Health Services Authority in October 2021. Additionally, the 2-year requirement is in alignment with the recertification process.

29. For the 20 continued education hours requirement under the grandparenting process, must the 20 continued education (CE) hours be completed prior to submitting the application for certification?

The 20 Continuing Education (CE) hours must be completed **prior** to submitting the application. **Proof of course completion must be submitted** with application.

20. What educational elements shall a training course cover to qualify to meet the 6-hour law and ethics course under the continued education requirement?

Below are **examples** of law and ethics course elements that would apply toward meeting this requirement:

- Legal and ethical issues when working with children
- Legal and ethical issues when working with disabled adults and older adults
- Legal responsibilities for mandate reporting
- Information on advanced mental healthcare directives
- Professional conduct and boundaries



Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification- FAQ's & Frequent Errors in Applications

- Ethics and counseling in addiction and recovery
- Legal and ethical responsibilities covering confidentiality

Reasons for Requests for Revision:

Program Staff may request a revision when CEs fall short of the 20-hour requirement, including 6 hours of law and ethics. CE course training must have been taken in the last 2 years (2020-2022).

CEs can be in relevant professional competencies obtained via relevant in-state, out of state or national educational forums. The 6 hours for law and ethics shall be considered part of the twenty (20) hour continued education requirement.

CE training submissions must be completed within 2 years prior to the date of application for certification (2020-2022). CE submissions dated outside of the 2-year standard will not be counted towards the CE certification requirement, and if hours are insufficient, applicants will receive a revision request.

For more information on acceptable forms of documentation for CEs, please visit:

[Copy-Grandparenting-Checklist-for-Peers-5.12.22-1.pdf \(capeercertification.org\)](#)

TIP TO AVOID REVISION REQUESTS:

Make sure the certificate of completion, email of attendance, transcript or other acceptable forms of proof include:

- Applicant's full legal name
- Name of training
- Trainer's name and/or training entity
- Training hours completed
- Date of completion
- Date of expiration (if applicable)



Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification- FAQ's & Frequent Errors in Applications

Applicants should check the certificate for clear information on the training hours and, if not listed, attach supporting documentation such as course descriptions and/or agendas that list start and end times to confirm the full number of training hours completed.