

Reasonable Accommodations for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Examination Policy (Updated 11/4/2024)

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Public Law 101-336, the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) provides "reasonable accommodations" for applicants with impairments that may affect their ability to take the required examination for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification. The Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification examination is compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 AA ("WCAG 2.1"). The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines make Web content more accessible to people with disabilities. It is the candidate's responsibility to submit a request for reasonable accommodations, in accordance with policy, for reasonable accommodations that extend beyond the WCAG 2.1 accessibility. CalMHSA is not required to provide reasonable accommodations if CalMHSA is unaware of the applicant's needs. Any information provided by an applicant will be considered strictly confidential and will not be shared with any outside source without the applicant's express written permission.

Please notify CalMHSA if you require reasonable accommodations to take the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification examination. The examination is a 120-item, multiple-choice exam administered on a computer in an on-line or in-person format. The length of time for the exam is 2.5 hours, with one scheduled break. An applicant may request reasonable accommodations by submitting the "CalMHSA Exam Accommodations Request" form completed by a qualified licensed medical provider. Medical practitioners include but are not limited to:

- a. Medical Doctor (MD)
- b. Nurse Practitioner (NP)
- c. Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO)
- d. Psychiatrist (Psych, Psychnr, P Doc, Pdoc, PsyD.)
- e. Physician Assistant (PA)
- f. Doctor of Audiology (AuD)

Only requests completed in their entirety and within policy guidelines will be reviewed.

CalMHSA will review all complete reasonable accommodation requests and will notify the applicant of the status of the request for exam accommodation(s) within 30 days from the date the request was made. Applicants will be notified via email on file when they may proceed with scheduling for the certification examination.

In the event the applicant disagrees with the decision of the request for reasonable accommodation, the applicant may file an appeal with the reason for disagreement. Information on the appeals process is found in the "Guidelines, Standards, and Procedures Manual."

Requests Process

- A. Request must be made using the CalMHSA "[Exam Accommodations Request Form](#)".
- B. Requests will be processed only for individuals with an approved application for examination.
- C. Request form must be submitted to CalMHSA via email or by mail at least 30-days before the desired testing date. The 30-day timeframe starts from the date the accommodation request is received.
 1. Email address: PeerCertification@calmhsa.org
 2. Physical address: 1610 Arden Way, Suite 175, Sacramento, CA 95815
- D. The request form must be complete and signed by a qualified licensed medical provider.
Please note that some accommodations may require the candidate to contact the test center directly to ensure accommodation is in place.
- E. Prior to making accommodation request, the [Comfort Aid List](#) should be reviewed to ensure that unnecessary requests are not made.

Reasonable Accommodation List (online and in-person testing)

The following list provides information on reasonable accommodations that may be available to candidates for the testing. Accommodations are based on the request submitted by the candidate. *Please note, some accommodations requires additional steps to ensure the accommodation is in place prior to scheduling the exam, including, but not limited to the candidate contacting the proctor prior to the exam date to confirm the accommodation. Please note, there are additional supports for test takers, referred to as "comfort aids" that **DO NOT** require prior approval by CalMHSA. Please review the ["comfort aids" list](#) for additional information.*

1. Extended testing time (one of the following options):
 - 30 minutes, or
 - 50% of original time, or
 - 100% of original time
2. A beverage is permitted during testing. Beverages must be in a transparent spill-proof sports-like bottle with a sprout.
3. A snack is allowed during testing. Must be in a clear, plastic bag. In-person exam must be delivered in a separate room.
4. Access to locker (in-person centers only). Access to snacks, beverages, necessary medication, or medical devices outside the testing space when approved to leave that space. Not permitted to access study materials, mobile phones or any non-approved electronic devices during this time.

5. Frequent and/or extended breaks. The exam clock will continue to run.
6. JAWS screen reader application* - A screen reader software application that converts information on the screen to speech. Please note that you must be able to utilize and navigate this software independently as the staff at Pearson Vue is unable to assist you with this. The screen reader accommodation is meant for individuals who routinely use screen reader software, and those who are already familiar with the functioning of it. Please confirm with the team that you understand this and would like to pursue your request for the JAWS screen reader for your exam by verifying that you are proficient with JAWS and confirm that you wish to use this software.
7. Ear plugs (online exam only). Ear plugs are permitted in the testing room. Not required to be in original packaging.
 - For in-person exam no request is needed. Candidate must use the ear plugs issued to the candidate at the in-person testing center.
8. Adjustable armless chair. An armless ergonomic chair is provided in the testing room. The height of the chair can be adjusted to improve access to the screen, keyboard, and mouse.
9. Adjustable Workstation. Must be seated at the adjustable workstation.
10. May stand or alternate sitting and standing at a height adjustable workstation. The in-person exam must be delivered in a separate room.
11. May stand and move around as needed. In person exam must be delivered in a separate room.
12. May read aloud. In-person exam must be delivered in a separate room.
13. Separate room. (In-person only) Exam must be delivered in a separate room
14. Stand. A stand is permitted in the testing room to hold reference materials.
15. A stool or footrest is permitted during testing. No request needed for medical foot stool, see Comfort Aid list [Exam Comfort Aid List](#).
16. ZoomText A software application that allows for magnification greater than 200% and the ability to change color of screen/text. Software is activated upon launching the exam. Candidates must be proficient users. Proctors are unable to assist with functionality.
17. English Dictionary. (In-person only) An English dictionary is permitted in the testing room. Markings in the dictionary are not allowed.

18. English/Spanish Dictionary (In-person only). An English/Spanish Dictionary is permitted in the testing room. Markings on the dictionary are not allowed.
19. Glucose meter and testing supplies are permitted during testing.
20. Liquid medicine is permitted during testing.
21. Sunglasses are permitted during testing.
22. Sign language interpreter** - only for communication with staff. (See personal assistant below for other options)
23. Nursing mother accommodation (In-person exam). Permitted to access locker for necessary medical equipment; may also be approved for additional time/breaks or to leave the testing center.
24. Access to Nursing Mother Space (in-person exam only). Candidate will need a designated space to pump. May access necessary medical equipment to pump.
25. Admission Signature Not Required. This accommodation is required if a person is unable to sign during the admissions process.
26. Waiver of Palm Vein. Waived from providing palm vein captures during the admissions and proctor process.
27. Other (must be specified) ***: _____
28. Personal Assistant****:
Personal Assistant Request(s) will require the personal assistant to fill out two additional forms. Once CalMHSA receives the initial accommodation request, additional forms will be provided. The following are accommodations pertaining to the personal assistant request.

Personal Assistant Type	Description
Reader Only & Separate Room	<p>Candidate will bring a personal assistant Reader that will be present during the exam to read directions and test questions. The Reader may not answer or explain any content-related questions.</p> <p>-In-Person Exam must be delivered in a separate room.</p> <p>-Online Exam will require the personal assistant to fill out two additional forms.</p>
Reader/Recorder & Separate Room	Candidate will bring a personal assistant Reader/Recorder that will be present during the exam to read directions and test questions. They

	<p>will also input answers as dictated by the candidate. The Reader/Recorder may not answer or explain any content-related questions.</p> <p>-In-Person Exam must be delivered in a separate room.</p> <p>-Online Exam will require the personal assistant to fill out two additional forms.</p>
Recorder & Separate Room	<p>Candidate will bring a personal assistant Recorder that will be present during the exam to input answers only as dictated by the candidate.</p> <p>-In-Person Exam must be delivered in a separate room.</p> <p>-Online Exam will require the personal assistant to fill out two additional forms.</p>
Sign Language Interpreter & Separate Room -In-person ONLY.	<p>A <u>provided</u> Sign Language Interpreter that will be present to facilitate communication with test center staff and to sign test questions. The interpreter may not answer or explain any content-related questions.</p> <p>-In-person ONLY. Exam must be delivered in a separate room.</p>
Translator & Separate Room -In-person ONLY.	<p>A <u>provided</u> translator will be present to read directions and test questions. The Translator may not answer or explain any content-related questions. Exam must be delivered in a separate room.</p> <p>-In-Person ONLY - Specify Language</p> <p>Clients must schedule their exam at least 16 business days before the exam date to ensure a translator is available.</p>

** Details for “JAWS screen reader application” category: Candidates with a JAWS screen reader reasonable accommodation request must receive pre-approval by CalMHSA, prior to scheduling for the exam. The use of JAWS screen reader software is required by Pearson VUE (proctor) for on-line and in-person testing. For on-line testing, candidates are responsible for having the JAWS screen reader software prior to the start of the exam. For in-person test, the JAWS screen reader software is available at no-cost to candidate with pre-approval by CalMHSA. The candidate is responsible for knowing how to use the screen reader software. **CalMHSA is not responsible for the provision of JAWS software or training on how to use the software.** The proctor is NOT permitted to guide the candidate through how to use the screen reader software. The screen reader accommodation is meant for individuals who routinely use screen reader software, and those who are already familiar with the functioning of it. Please confirm with the team that you understand this and would like to pursue your request for the JAWS screen reader for your exam by verifying that you are proficient with JAWS and confirm that you wish to use this software.*

Candidates must contact the proctoring agency (PearsonVue) to confirm the reasonable accommodation, prior to the exam date.

*****Details for "Sign Language Interpreter" category: A sign language interpreter will be provided and will be present to only facilitate communication with test center staff and will not be allowed in the testing room. If the interpreter will be necessary to complete the exam, please fill out the "Personal Assistant" category.***

******Details for "other" category: Specific information must be entered in this section. The information must be legible. CalMHSA shall review the accommodation requested and may contact the candidate directly for further inquiry. Candidates may be required to contact the proctoring agency (PearsonVue) to confirm the reasonable accommodation, prior to the exam date.***

******* Personal assistant(s): A personal assistant will be present to provide assistance with the accommodation as specified above. A personal assistant may not answer or explain any content-related questions. The exam must be delivered in a separate room. Additional forms are required to be completed prior to scheduling the exam. CalMHSA will provide the forms to Candidates.***