

RFA: Expansion of Certified and Credentialed Peer Capacity

OVERVIEW

On October 29th, the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) released a Request for Applications (RFA) to support the retention and growth of the peer workforce in mental health. Through this RFA, OMH will provide one-time targeted investments to recruit and retain certified and credentialed peer specialists and advocates providing services in OMH licensed, funded, and designated programs.

OMH will provide a total of \$4 million in total funding to support this opportunity. This funding is available through the enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) of 10 percentage points for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) contained in the American Rescue Plan Act. According to the State's enhanced HCBS Spending Plan Quarterly Update (available [here](#)), this proposal for expanded certified and credentialed peer capacity is still pending final approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the anticipated implementation date is January 1, 2022.

The full RFA is attached. Applications are due on January 3, 2022 and will be reviewed and awarded in the order they are received.

FUNDING

OMH will provide one-time recruitment or retention funding of \$3,000 for full-time employees and \$1,500 for part-time employees. Agencies may also receive a one-time payment of \$1,000 per every full-time employee and \$500 per every part-time employee to offset paid training time, interagency group supervision, or continuing education costs related to facilitating certification or credentialing.

Payment will be based on a provider's attestation regarding the numbers of employees who qualify for the investment. Funding will be paid directly to agencies for employees who commit via an attestation to continue providing direct peer services in OMH licensed, designated, or funded programs for a minimum of one year after receiving the investment. Agencies must commit that the investment funding will be paid directly to the peer employees.

Funding may be used in combination with other workforce grant awards; however, providers must submit documentation to verify that expenses are not duplicated.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants are OMH licensed, designated, or funded voluntary operated programs that employ or intend to employ the following:

- New York Certified Peer Specialists (NYCPS);
- Credentialed Youth Peer Advocates (CYPA); or
- Credentialed Family Peer Advocates (CFPA).

Employees providing direct services as a peer specialist or advocate who are not certified or credentialed are also eligible for funding if they:

- Start the certification or credentialing training to become a NYCPS, CYPA, or CFPA within six months of receiving the funds; and
- Attain provisional certification or complete the credentialing and certification process within the required timeframe.

TIMELINE

Proposals must be submitted by January 3, 2022 and will be reviewed on a first-come, first-serve basis. Applicants will receive notification of acceptance/rejection within 30 days of submission.

OMH anticipates that funding will be allocated no later than the first quarter of 2022. Projects must be completed by March 31, 2023.

Questions may be submitted to Carol Swiderski at carol.swiderski@omh.ny.gov.