

OVERVIEW  
ADVANCING PEER CERTIFICATION IN VERMONT  
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH-PROPOSED GRANT IN AHS FY22 BAA

**Purpose**

The purpose of the proposed grant award is to begin developing a process for incorporating the input of stakeholders regarding a statewide peer support specialist certification program in Vermont. The proposal is part of the Governor’s Recommended Budget Adjustment Act, as one-time appropriations from section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan Act for Medicaid Home- and Community-based Services (Global Commitment Funds) to the Department of Mental Health.

**Total GC appropriation \$6,171,000 – this grant: \$30,000**

**Deliverables**

- A recommended design for statewide, peer support specialist certification program based on stakeholder consensus and/or vote
- Identification of key issues and risks
- Work plan identifying next steps to continue progress toward implementation

**Proposed Design**

**Phase One**

- The grantee will convene a minimum of six, one-hour meetings, via Zoom, with stakeholders to solicit recommendations for the design of a statewide, mental health peer support specialist certification program in Vermont.
- During each meeting, stakeholders will be either randomly assigned or assigned by interest groups to breakout rooms. Each breakout room will have a facilitator/scribe. Zoom polling will be used to capture recommendations.

*Topics of proposed meetings include:*

**TOPIC AND PURPOSE**

1.	Overview of mental health peer specialist certification program.
2.	Peer support, peer support services, and assessment-based versus professional certification program
3.	Screening
4.	Training
5.	Certification
6.	Incorporating peer support specialists into the continuum of care

*The grantee will also use strategies and tactics to incorporate each of the meeting topics and decision points for those unable to attend the Zoom meetings.*

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Phase Two

The grantee will convene a working group to draft a recommended work plan for the next steps in developing and implementing a statewide, peer support specialist certification program. The work plan will be based on recommendations from the six, Zoom meetings.

The volunteer working group will have broad, stakeholder representation and meet at least three times via Zoom. The grantee will facilitate the working group.

*Proposed Stakeholder Groups*

The grantee will include the following stakeholder groups in the process:

- Service users
- Peer support specialists
- Ex-patients, psychiatric survivors, neurodiverse, Mad activists
- Recovery community
- Family networks and organizations (e.g., Vermont Family Network, Vermont Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health)
- Hospitals, DA/SSAs
- Private insurers
- Mental health clinicians, including inpatient and outpatient providers and emergency department personnel
- State Agencies, e.g., Department of Corrections, Department of Public Safety