

**Manual**

**CERTIFIED MEDI-CAL  
PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST  
SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION**

**Systems of Care Division &  
Clinical Standards and Training Division**

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## General Overview

Starting July 1, 2022, Senate Bill 803 authorized the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to seek federal approval to add Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists as a new Medi-Cal provider type and Medi-Cal Peer Support Services as a Medi-Cal benefit.

Senate Bill 803 also directed DHCS to develop State standards for Medi-Cal Peer Support Certification Programs to be implemented by counties or county-contracted entities. The California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) is the entity contracted by DHCS to develop and implement the Medi-Cal Peer Support Certification Program. The Los Angeles County, Department of Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (SAPC) values the work of Peer Support Specialists and is committed to supporting the growth of this critical part of our substance use disorder (SUD) workforce. Beginning in 2024, SAPC will provide a limited number of scholarships to a subset of applicants interested in becoming Certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists (CMPSS). Scholarships will be available on a limited basis until all funds are exhausted or December 31, 2025, whichever comes first. To be considered for a scholarship, applicants must live or work in Los Angeles County. Other scholarship requirements are listed in the SAPC scholarship requirements section below.

## History of Certified Med-Cal Peer Support Specialist (CMPSS) Scholarships

In 2022 and 2023, DHCS provided scholarships to cover the costs for candidates interested in becoming a CMPSS. If you previously applied for and received a scholarship through DHCS, contact CalMHSA to find out when you are required to use your scholarship by. Typically, you have 12 months from the date your scholarship was awarded to utilize the scholarship and become certified.

If you are unsure about your scholarship status from a previous submission, please reach out to CalMHSA for more information:

- Email: [PeerCertification@calmhsa.org](mailto:PeerCertification@calmhsa.org)
- Telephone: (279) 234-0699 during normal business hours 8am-5pm Mondays to Fridays, excluding holidays
- Website: <https://www.capeercertification.org/>

## SAPC Scholarship Requirements

Anyone who lives or works in Los Angeles County who meets the following requirements is eligible to apply for a scholarship; however, applicants already employed by a SAPC provider agency will receive priority. The minimum requirements to apply for a scholarship align with the minimum requirements for the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program. Applicants must:

- Be at least 18 years of age;
- Possess a high school diploma or equivalent degree;

- Be self-identified as having experience with the process of recovery from a mental illness or substance use disorder, either as a consumer of these services or as the parent, caregiver or family member of a consumer;
- Be willing to share their experience;
- Have a strong dedication to recovery; and
- Agree, in writing, to adhere to the [Code of Ethics for Certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists](#).

## SAPC Scholarship Coverage Overview

Interested peer candidates must apply for the SAPC CMPSS scholarship through an application. If the applicant is recommended for a scholarship, the SAPC CMPSS scholarship will cover certification fees for the following:

- CalMHSA application
- 80-hour training
- One certification exam attempt. SAPC may cover one retake exam, but this will be available on a limited basis until all funds are exhausted.

Once awarded, scholarships must be utilized within one year (365 days) of the award date. After one year, the scholarship will be forfeited, and the candidate will need to reapply.

## SAPC CMPSS Scholarship Process

1. Applicant fills out [SAPC CMPSS Scholarship Application](#) on Microsoft Forms.
2. SAPC staff will confirm receipt of application (please refer to the section titled *Deadline for Applying for SAPC CMPSS Scholarship* to get more information on the application period timeline and review process).
3. If accepted, SAPC/CalMHSA will contact the applicant to complete the [CalMHSA application](#). The applicant will receive a code, so they don't have to pay associated fees.
4. Applicant signs up for training.
5. Applicant completes 80-hour training.
6. Applicant signs up for exam with CalMHSA code.
  - Note: If applicant needs exam accommodations, they must fill out the [accommodations form](#) BEFORE they sign up to take exam. Accommodation eligibility is determined by CalMHSA. To get more information, visit CalMHSA's exam accommodations [webpage](#).
7. If the applicant passes the exam, their name and certification number will be reflected on the [CalMHSA Medi-Cal Peer Support Certification Registry](#) within 14 days from the date of the exam.

## Documents Needed for SAPC CMPSS Scholarship

Prior to applying for a scholarship, make sure you have scanned copies of the following documents ready to be uploaded to the [CalMHSA application website](#):

- Government Issued ID/License/Passport
  - Note: First and last name on the application must match exactly as it appears on your uploaded government issued ID
- High school diploma/equivalency or other advanced degree

## High School Diploma Documentation

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 there is no guarantee these contacts will have your records.

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

## Deadline for Applying for SAPC CMPSS Scholarship

SAPC will accept scholarship applications on a rolling basis. This means you may complete the scholarship application anytime during the application cycle. However, your application will not be reviewed until the end of each application cycle. Each application cycle lasts three months. See table below for application cycles and review dates.

Application cycle dates for submission	Application review dates	Applicant will be notified no later than
February 1, 2024- March 31, 2024	April 1, 2024- April 30, 2024	April 30, 2024
April 1, 2024- June 30, 2024	July 1, 2024- July 31, 2024	July 31, 2024
July 1, 2024- September 30, 2024	October 1, 2024- October 31, 2024	October 31, 2024
October 1, 2024- December 31, 2024	January 1, 2025- January 31, 2025	January 31, 2025

A member of the SAPC Peers Implementation Team will confirm receipt of application via email. Determinations for scholarships will be made by the SAPC Peer Application Review Team. Application reviews will take place during the application review dates noted in the table above.

The SAPC Peer Application Review Team will include SAPC staff from different divisions. A member of the SAPC Peers Implementation Team will notify you of the final decision and provide guidance regarding next steps. You will receive information on your application status via email within 30 days of the end of the application cycle.

## SAPC CMPSS Application

To apply for the SAPC CMPSS, first complete the [SAPC CMPSS Scholarship Application](#).

## Contact Information

If you have additional questions, CalMHSA has a document with frequently asked questions [here](#). Also, the [main CalMHSA webpage](#), [CalMHSA resource library](#), and [SAPC Peers website](#) have helpful resources.

If you prefer to talk with a SAPC staff member on the phone, or if you have other questions or concerns, please email [SAPC\\_ASOC@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:SAPC_ASOC@ph.lacounty.gov).