

How to Become a **Certified Peer Wellness Specialist** with the Oregon Health Authority

A Peer Wellness Specialist (PWS) is an individual who has lived experience with a psychiatric condition plus intensive training. A PWS works as part of a person-driven, health home team that integrates behavioral health and primary care to assist and advocate for individuals in achieving well-being.

PacificSource Community Solutions (PSCS) employs Traditional Health Worker Liaisons (THW Liaisons) who are available to help PWS through the certification process with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA).

STEP 1

Complete an OHA-approved PWS training program

For a list of approved trainings, contact your area THW Liaison or find more information at the OHA Office of Equity and Inclusion website: [Oregon.gov/oha/OEI/Pages/THW-OHA-Approved-Training-CEU.aspx](https://www.oregon.gov/oha/OEI/Pages/THW-OHA-Approved-Training-CEU.aspx)

Or

If you have completed some or all of the certification training requirements, you may be able to count previously completed training toward certification.

Or

Provide documentation that you have worked or volunteered as a Peer Wellness Specialist for at least **3,000 hours in Oregon from January 1, 2008, to June 30, 2021.**

STEP 2

Complete the oral health training requirement

Effective May 13, 2019, Peer Wellness Specialists are required to complete the OHA's THW oral health training:

[Oregon.gov/oha/OEI/Pages/THW%20Oral%20Health%20Requirements.aspx](https://www.oregon.gov/oha/OEI/Pages/THW%20Oral%20Health%20Requirements.aspx)

The oral health training on the OHA OEI website is free of charge. After completion, the OHA will notify you by email that you have completed this requirement. Keep a copy of your proof of completion to submit with your THW certification application.

STEP 3

Email your THW certification application to:

thw.program@state.or.us

Applications are available on the OHA OEI website: [Oregon.gov/oha/OEI/Pages/THW-PWS.aspx](https://www.oregon.gov/oha/OEI/Pages/THW-PWS.aspx)

You will need to scan and attach copies of the following documents to your application email:

- Government-issued identification
- Certificates of attendance at required trainings, including the oral health training

Emailing is the fastest method. Applications sent by mail or fax may be delayed as much as 90 days.

STEP 4

Complete your background check

- Once the OHA OEI receives your THW certification application and supporting documents, you will receive an email from the Office of Human Resources Shared Services Background Check Unit (BCU) with a link to verify your information.
- If you do not receive an email within 1 to 2 weeks of submitting your application, check your spam folder for an email from the CRIMS BCU. If you still have not received an email, contact the OEI at thw.program@state.or.us.
- Pay careful attention to the instructions in the email. You only have 21 days to complete the process. If you do not complete the process within 21 days, you will need to request a new link.
- If you have lived outside of Oregon in the past five years, you will also need to submit fingerprints. Follow the instructions from the BCU.
- This background check is required even if you have had one in the past.
- The BCU will notify you and the OHA OEI once your background check is completed. If approved, the OHA OEI will then process your THW Certification application.

- OHA will notify you by email of your THW Certification approval or denial, and, if approved, will provide you with your THW registration number.
- Save this notification, as it will have your registration number and date of certification expiration.
- OHA OEI will automatically add your information to the THW registry.

Note: Steps 5 through 7 are for Peer Wellness Specialists who plan to bill PSCS. Ask your employer if you need to complete these steps.

STEP 5

Obtain a National Provider ID (NPI)

In order to bill Oregon Medicaid, you will need to obtain an NPI number: Apply on the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System website: [NPPES.cms.hhs.gov/#](https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/#).

STEP 6

Email your validation (credentialing) application to PSCS:

Credentialing@pacificsource.com

Validation is the PSCS version of provider credentialing and is only required for those billing PSCS. The application, listed as the *Medicaid Provider Validation Application*, is available on the PSCS website: CommunitySolutions.PacificSource.com/providers/documentsandforms. Contact your THW Liaison if you need help filling out the application.

STEP 7

Apply for an Oregon Medicaid ID Number

In order to bill Oregon Medicaid, you will need to obtain an active Medicaid ID number. If you do not have an Oregon Medicaid ID number, you may ask for assistance in obtaining one when you send in your Validation application. Check the box that says “*Please check if not currently enrolled with Oregon Medicaid, and assistance with enrollment is required.*”

CommunitySolutions.PacificSource.com/providers/documentsandforms

Please contact PSCS for additional assistance: ProvNetSupport@pacificsource.com.

For information on how to renew your PWS certification, visit:

Oregon.gov/oha/OEI/Documents/Recertification%20Process%20for%20Traditional%20Health%20Workers.pdf

PWS certifications are valid for three years (36 months). You must complete at least 20 hours of an OHA OEI-approved continuing education training for PWS certification renewal.

About Continuing Education Units (CEUs):

- CEUs are awarded for additional THW trainings offered by an OHA-approved training program.
- CEUs are awarded for OHA-approved trainings, events, or conferences.
- Non-OHA-approved seminars, workshops, and conferences may also count if they relate to work you do, your scope of practice and THW type. It will need to be reviewed by OHA before being accepted as a qualifying CEU.
- 10 hours of the CEUs can be from online courses (50%).
- 10 hours of the CEUs must be in class, with in-person interaction (50%).
- For questions regarding approved trainings, contact the THW program at: thw.program@state.or.us.

Additional Resources

Traditional Health Worker Toolkit: [Oregon.gov/oha/OEI/THW%20Documents/Traditional-Health-Worker-Toolkit-2019-Final.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/oha/OEI/THW%20Documents/Traditional-Health-Worker-Toolkit-2019-Final.pdf)

PSCS THW Liaisons by Region

Columbia Gorge: Kate Karlson, RN, BSN, IBCLC, kate.karlson@pacificsource.com

Lane County: Iris Bicksler, CHW, PSS, Doula, iris.bicksler@pacificsource.com

Marion and Polk Counties: Todd Santiago, MBA, PSS, todd.santiago@pacificsource.com

Central Oregon: Tanya Nason, tanya.nason@pacificsource.com