



# CALIFORNIA NETWORK OF MENTAL HEALTH CLIENTS

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## MHSA Workforce Education and Training (WET) TALKING POINTS FOR COUNTY PLANNING

The Workforce Education and Training component provides an opportunity for each of the counties in the State of California to develop consumer-driven services and supports by employing consumers at all levels, using clients as trainers for the new and existing mental health workforce, and modeling consumer leadership in planning, implementation and evaluation of new programs.

The state guidelines for WET direct counties to request funding in 5 categories. These talking points highlight opportunities for client involvement and leadership within the WET framework:

### Workforce Staffing

1. Each County develop a **Consumer Employment Development Plan** that details the hiring of consumers at all employment levels and includes specific positions, training programs, supports, career ladders, and retention rates for consumers who are and will be employed in the Mental Health Department. **Staff required to write and implement this plan** may include Consumer Relations (or Advocacy and Empowerment) Manager and/or Consumer Employment Coordinator Positions.
2. Counties will prioritize hiring staff with personal experience in mental health recovery to provide **Consumer Employment Training**. This training will be based on the empowerment model, with an emphasis on wellness recovery, peer support skills and the history and values of the consumer/survivor/ex-patient (c/s/x) movement.
3. **Consumer-Operated Employment Support Services** be developed, with positions such as Consumer Employment Coordinator, Peer Employment Mentor, Job Coach and Job Developer, to assist interested consumers with individualized employment strategies such as Core Gifts, job matching, personalized job design, etc. Peer-provider Support Networks and training groups are suggested strategies.
4. Counties will employ consumers who are **culturally representative of the ethnic groups served**.

### Career Pathways

5. The development of the counties' WE&T Plan specifically address the **hiring of consumers at all levels** throughout the mental health system of care, including: management, administrative, direct service. Some jobs will be identified as consumer-providers positions, whereas many will be non-identified positions. County hiring plans will include a wide variety of work schedules reflecting consumers' need for **flexible scheduling**: full-time, part-time, volunteers, job-sharing, etc.
6. Increase funding and access to **Financial Planning and Benefits Counseling** to assist new and part-time employees to manage their transition from SSI to independent earnings (for example: through Self-Help Centers, Independent Living Resource Centers, One-Stop Employment Centers).
7. Counties will ensure that all new consumer employment positions must offer a competitive or **liveable wage** for their region.
8. Counties will form **Consumer Employment Workgroups to address Personnel/Human Resources Training and Policy issues**: Client Culture, ADA and Reasonable Accommodations for Psychiatric Disability and Strategies for Consumer Employment Success. Such work may include re-defining civil service job descriptions to value personal/professional experience as equal to education, legal

assistance to expunge criminal records, etc. Client positions will be developed that are civil service positions with full benefits.

9. Innovative approaches be encouraged in the provision of **ongoing supports**. Develop models for **support alternatives** such as Peer Provider Support Networks and/or mentoring programs. Ongoing supports will include access to ongoing **training and educational supports**.

## Training and Technical Assistance

10. **Training for Clinicians and existing staff:** Training for existing staff including clinical training on, especially topics on Recovery and Psychosocial Rehabilitation Practices, which include redefining boundaries and relationships with consumers and consumer-providers. Develop new training modules for existing consumer staff to support them to increase skills, knowledge and competencies. **Ongoing training for all staff**, not just clinical staff who have licenses to maintain.
11. **Empowerment Training Programs:** CNMHC recommends that each County or region develop and implement a consumer-provider training program using existing **consumer-developed curriculums as models** such as SPIRIT and BestNow! Culturally specific programs will be developed using the BestNow! Latino Consumer-Provider Training as a model.
12. In training consumers to be mental health providers, **innovative approaches** such as on-the-job training and short-term trainings including, but not limited to conferences, workshops and certificate programs be utilized. Training funding will include travel and related expenses.

## Financial Incentives

*While many of these programs may be administered at the state level, these advocacy goals can be promoted at the county level.*

13. **Consumers working as mental health providers be major recipients** of available scholarships and stipends: **one-half** of all financial incentive funds be awarded to persons in mental health recovery. Scholarships and stipends will be offered to consumers in a variety of educational opportunities including Certificates; Associates; Bachelors; Masters, or Doctorate Degree, as well as non-traditional educational opportunities such as Certified Psychosocial Rehabilitation Practitioner (CPRP); Certification in Alcohol and Drug Studies (CAADAC); Mental Health Recovery Educator (MHRE or WRAP Facilitator).
14. Plan for Loan Forgiveness and Scholarship Programs offered by Education and Training Program Funds have as its highest priority **low-income** individuals and persons in **entry-level positions**.
15. **Career Ladders:** Opportunities for promotion be developed in all programs and organizations, as well as **supports to increase education level**, such as implementing supports for **CPRP certification**, including training and testing, and recognizing the value of the certification in job classification and pay.
16. Counties will sponsor **20/20 programs** to enable employed consumers to retain their jobs while pursuing a higher level of education for advancement.

## Internships (Work-Study, On-the-Job Training)

17. In the development of consumer employment training programs, counties will offer **work-study or internship opportunities to consumer-provider trainees**. These programs will offer short-term placements (3- 6 months) to program graduates for practical skill development while continuing to offer peer support and ongoing training through a weekly seminar.
18. Whenever possible, counties will offer opportunities for consumer provider trainees to develop recovery support skills through **on-the-job training** and mentorship. Research shows that many persons in recovery learn best in the actual work setting, rather than transferring skills from an academic environment.