

Peer Specialist Tompkins County

Department: Mental Health Department

Classification: Non-competitive

Labor Grade: White Collar Grade 5, E5

Approved: 6/2022 by RP

Revised: 2/2024; 3/2026; 5/2026

By: HB, Deputy Commissioner of Human Resources

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Completion of a high school diploma or GED

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

At time of application:

Must be a Certified Peer Specialist with NYS Academy of Peer Services Credentialing at time of application

Valid NYS Driver's license at time of application and maintenance of such license for the duration of employment.

At time of Appointment:

Publicly self-identify as a person who has direct personal experience living a life of recovery, overcoming the challenges resulting from a diagnosis of mental illness.

Current or former recipient of mental health or dual diagnosis services

Not currently hospitalized

Have sufficient knowledge of recovery, overcoming challenges resulting from a diagnosis of mental illness to assist others with recovery.

Certification and necessary continuing education requirements must be maintained throughout employment with Tompkins County.

Tompkins County Government centers diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are committed to the empowerment of employees and residents to dismantle systemic barriers that inhibit inclusive governance and the provision of government services to all. Guided by our values of Respect, Accountability, Integrity, Equity, and Stewardship, we strive to build a workplace and community rooted in trust, belonging, and opportunity for all.

Learn more about our Strategic Plan and Institutionalizing Equity Report, which embed equity across our operations.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:

This work involves the responsibility for providing peer support services to adults struggling with mental health both in the agency and the community. The work involves participating as a part of a multi-disciplinary team to plan and provide appropriate treatment interventions to assist individuals in regaining and retaining psychiatric stability and a wide range of other functional abilities. The Peer Specialist, in consultation with other mental health professionals and paraprofessionals, is responsible for meeting the needs of the individuals assigned, within their scope of practice. This work requires general computer skills and the ability to speak comfortably in a small group of peers. The work is performed under the direct supervision of the Program Director, or their designee. The work is assigned in the form of clear-cut assignments and completed following standard written procedures and guidelines. Supervision of others is not a function of this position. Supervision will be provided by a Certified Peer Specialist in addition whenever available. The incumbent will perform all related duties as required.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

- Provides the perspective of and advocacy for the service recipient in program development and the carrying out of rehabilitative group sessions or one on one activities.
- Works with individuals to identify and give voice to their own recovery path, meeting people with compassion and empathy.
- Assists clients in developing empowerment skills and combating stigma through self-advocacy
- Teaches and role models the value of every individual's recovery experience
- Provides supportive case management services, involving assistance with completing tasks independently- such as making phone calls to community providers with individuals, filling out paperwork or attending appointments/meetings.
- Provides verbal and written information clearly and accurately.
- Assists clients in problem solving, decision making, and goal planning (both creation and adjustment of person-centered goals or Wellness Recovery Action Plans).
- Participates in a multi-disciplinary team to discuss efficacy of and revise treatment/program strategy and methods.
- Participates in ongoing learning experiences as required and/or to obtain or maintain NYS Academy of Peers Credentialing.
- Prepares, maintains and organizes a variety of records and reports, commensurate with position, to support clients' recovery.
- Physical demands of the job vary, location where work will be performed varies across the community including, but not limited to clients' homes, hospitals, schools, community agencies, transportation vehicles, as well as in the office. Work is primarily sedentary with some walking, carrying and lifting light items and accessing transportation.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

- Identifies as a service recipient and uses their lived experience to connect with individuals served
- Ability to build a fund of knowledge of the local community service agencies and their available programs.
- Working knowledge of and skill to teach the activities involved with daily living skills such as money management, cooking, shopping, sports and purposeful leisure activities and the barriers associated with access/completion of these activities created by mental illness and/or substance use.
- Knowledge of the signs and symptoms of mental illness and active substance use.
- Ability to work with individuals who live with mental health and substance use concerns/barriers.

- Ability to recognize and get appropriate help in emergency and crises situations.
- Ability to maintain successful working relationships with people both within and outside the agency.
- Ability to provide support to people in the areas of emotional, social, economic, and vocational problems.
- Initiative; tact; good judgment; emotional stability; maturity; patience.
- Ability to successfully work with and serve a diverse local community.
- Ability to understand and follow oral directions.
- Must be friendly, personable, pleasant, and outgoing. Working well as part of a team.
- The employee's physical and mental condition shall be commensurate with the demands of the position, either with or without reasonable accommodation.
- The employee models appropriate self-care and use of Wellness Recovery Action Plans in the work environment.
- Adheres to the values and ethics of NYS OMH Certified Peer Specialists

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Originally Created 6/2022