

Department of Human Services

Request for Information (RFI)



Date: January 6, 2025

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Part 1. General Information

1.1 Purpose of this Request for Information

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (“Department”), Bureau of Procurement & Contract Management issues this Request for Information (“RFI”) to gather input from private, public, and non-profit organizations versed in the development of a mandated training for a new family peer specialist certification and will focus on families of adults (18 years old and older) and older adults (65 years of age and older). Once the certification training for Certified Family Peer Specialists (“CFPS”) is created, it may also be used to serve families of children with a Serious Emotional Disturbance (“SED”), however, some training is already available for this population. The Department realizes the importance of having a broad definition for the term “family” and, therefore, defines family to include not only biological, legal kin, or guardians but to encompass other significant people that the individual identifies.

Family Peer Support Services (“FPSS”) offers hope, advocacy, guidance, and support for family members supporting loved ones with a SED or Serious Mental Illness (“SMI”) throughout their lives. The benefits of providing FPSS include, but are not limited to, an increased sense of collaboration, a sense of self-efficacy, empowerment to act, and recognition of the importance of self-care. Once the CFPS certification training is created and offered, CFPSs will bring expertise based on their own experience providing support to family members with an SMI or SED, including specialized training, to support other family members in a similar situation. Working within a peer support framework that recognizes the power of mutuality and experiential understanding and training for CFPS, the certification training should address each of the following core competencies: family support and advocacy; system knowledge and navigation; crisis planning, safety and wellness; effective communication; ethical responsibilities, confidentiality, and professional skills; and cultural awareness and competencies.

Specifically, this RFI was created to assist the Department in obtaining information and resources for a training curriculum that will be used to expand peer support services across the Commonwealth to offer services to family members. The Department is seeking to create a 35-40 hour curriculum that will serve as the mandated training to be completed by all individuals who are eligible and interested in becoming a CFPS prior to applying for certification through the Pennsylvania Certification Board (“PCB”).

The Department encourages respondents and other interested parties to provide feedback in response to this RFI or any part thereof. A respondent may reply to all or any of the specific questions or topics included in this RFI.

1.2 Request for Information Timeline

Table 1: Timeline Table

Event	Date
Release RFI	1/6/2025
Respondent RFI Responses Due	2/5/2025

The Department is requesting that all responses to this RFI be submitted by 12:00 p.m. EST on the due date. Responses must be submitted electronically to the following resource account of: RA-PWRFICOMMENTS@PA.GOV.

While the Department does not intend to respond to questions or clarifications during the RFI response period, respondents may submit administrative questions related to this RFI electronically to: RA-PWRFICOMMENTS@PA.GOV using “Certified Family Peer Specialists Training question” in the email subject line. The Department may or may not respond based on the nature of the question. The Department will post all answers provided online at: <http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us>.

1.3 Disclaimers

The Department is not liable for any costs or expenses incurred by respondents in the preparation of responses related to this RFI.

This RFI is issued for information and planning purposes only and does not constitute a solicitation for future business, an offer for procurement, or any other type of current or future procurement action and is only intended to gather information and input. The Department will not award an agreement based on this RFI or otherwise pay for any of the information received.

The Department may use the information gathered through this process in the development of future procurement documents; however, the Department does not guarantee that this will occur. The Department will not return responses to this RFI. Respondents will not be notified of the result of the review, nor will they be provided copies of it. If the Department issues a procurement document, no respondent will be selected, pre-qualified, or exempted based on its participation in this RFI process.

Respondents should be aware that the responses to this RFI will be public information and that no claims of confidentiality will be honored. The Department is not requesting, and does not require, confidential, proprietary information, or other competitively sensitive information to be included as part of the RFI submission. Ownership of all data, material and documentation originated, prepared, and provided to the Department during this RFI process will belong exclusively to the Department.

PART 2. Background

2.1 Background Information

The Department, in collaboration with the PCB and peer support services stakeholders, are creating a certification for the family peer specialists to include specific required areas of training. Table 2 provides the various categories, with proposed timeframes, that have been identified as essential

in the mandated training. In addition, the Department is looking to gain additional information regarding the similarities and differences between personal recovery and wellness with a Certified Peer Specialist (“CPS”) versus family recovery and wellness with a CFPS.

Table 2: Proposed CFPS Training Components:

Please note that the term “virtually,” for this RFI, is defined as an interactive training where the facilitators and participants are on camera and the training is being facilitated live, sometimes also referred to as video conferencing.

Topic Area	Minimum Timeframe
Welcome and Introductions	1 hour
Laying the Groundwork	3 hours
Family Support and Advocacy	6 hours
System Knowledge and Navigation	4 hours
Communication	6 hours
Crisis Planning, Safety, and Wellness	6 hours
Ethical Responsibilities, Confidentiality, and Professional Skills	5 hours
Multi-Cultural Humility	4 hours
Summary, Review, and Testing	3 hours
Welcome and Introductions	1 hour
Laying the Groundwork	3 hours

Request for Information

Through this RFI, the Department is seeking to gather information from private, public, and non-profit organizations versed in the development of training curricula, specifically a 35-40 hour training, that will be mandated for the new Family Peer Specialists certification and that will focus on families of adults (18 years old and older) and older adults (65 years of age and older).

The Department is evaluating options for a training curriculum for the new CFPS certification program that aligns with the following:

1. The curriculum must be created to be trained by a minimum of two facilitators at a time, for each training.
 - a. One facilitator must have lived experience, which is defined as follows:
 - i. Have been directly affected by a family member who has a mental health diagnosis,
 - ii. Gained personal knowledge through direct, first-hand involvement in assisting a family member with a mental health diagnosis,
 - iii. Coordinated care for their family members across multiple systems/services, including but not limited to mental health, physical health, substance use disorders, probation and parole, and education.
 - b. One facilitator must have training experience.

2. Training may be in person or using a virtual platform. Training done via a virtual platform shall include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Video must be used by the participant and the facilitator or facilitators, or the presentation must be interactive (for example: interactive case scenarios where the individual must choose an appropriate response and if their response is incorrect, it will explain why it is incorrect and prompt them to choose another option.) Rather than having participants complete an online, self-paced examination, the Department recommends a polling option be used.
 - b. The trainer must create a live, virtual agreement that will be signed by each participant before the start of their registered training.
 - c. Self-study or reading materials are not permitted to count toward the training hours unless it is homework, a prerequisite project for the class, or the training vendor describes how the self-study time will be interactive.
3. A formal examination must be provided at the end of the training for each participant to complete.
4. A certificate of attendance must be given to each participant who successfully completes the training and examination. The certificate must have: the participant's name; the exact title of the training, as listed on the application; the name of the approved training vendor, the date of the training; the total number of hours awarded to each participant, and the signature of an approved facilitator.

PART 3. Request for Information Submission Format

Through this RFI, the Department is soliciting information and comments regarding ***Training for the Certified Family Peer Specialist Curriculum***. All interested respondents are asked to respond in writing to this RFI, per the items outlined below.

3.1 Response Submission

Please prepare responses simply by providing straightforward and concise language and descriptions. All responses should be produced in 12-point font. Please limit your response to no more than 20 pages, not including the cover letter or attachments. Please refrain from sending marketing materials to the Department.

3.2 Cover Letter

Please include a cover letter with the following information:

1. An introduction to the respondent's organization, background, and interest in FPSS.
2. General information about the respondent and respondent's organization, to include an address and a point of contact along with a telephone number and an e-mail address.

3.3 Conceptual Solutions and Strategies Response

The Department does not have a suggested structure for a response to this RFI. This RFI is to gain all types of information and data, so no template is required.

Submissions should be no more than 20 pages, one sided, in length for the reviewers to read the submission and record the information timely. If a submission would be more than 20 pages (i.e., a training curriculum); the Department asks that a summary or overview of suggestions or training be provided. The Department's Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services ("OMHSAS") will reach out to those that submitted a RFI response if the Department has additional questions.