



Core Training Application Guide

Thank you for your interest in Consumer Connections Core Training! This guide will walk you through the application process, expectations, requirements, and selection process step by step. Please read carefully to ensure a successful application.

Application Process

A **completed application package** consists of:

1. **Submitting the online application** during the designated application period.
2. **Completing an interview** via our online scheduler.
3. **Employer referral form (if applicable):** If you are employer-referred, your supervisor must submit an Employer Referral Form on your behalf to complete your application package.

Note: If you are employer-referred and the Employer Referral Form is not submitted, your application package will not be considered complete.

Step 1: Online Application Submission

Applications are available during specific periods only. To submit your application:

1. Complete the online application form provided.
2. Once submitted, you should receive:
 - A **success message** confirming your application was successfully submitted.
 - An **email copy of your answers** sent to the email address you provided.

If you do **not** see the success message or receive a copy of your answers, your application did not go through. Please resubmit to ensure completion.

Step 2: Schedule Your Interview

The success message after submitting your application will also include a link to our **online scheduler** for interviews. Please use this link to schedule your interview promptly.

Important: Consumer Connections will send you a confirmation email within **5 business days** of receiving your application. This email will confirm receipt of your application and provide the link to schedule your interview again for your convenience.

Rescheduling or Missed Interviews

If you need to reschedule your interview, you can do so directly through **Calendly** using the link in your automatic confirmation email from Calendly.

Missed Interviews:

- If you miss your scheduled interview, you may use either the **Calendly reschedule link** from your confirmation email or the **original scheduling link** to schedule a new interview.
 - **Note:** Missing a scheduled interview without notifying us in advance (a “no show”) creates a significant burden on program operations.
 - A staff member has set aside time to meet with you at the date and time you chose, and that time slot could have been used for another applicant.
 - **No shows** will be factored into your score during the application review process.
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Step 3: Completing the Interview

Interviews typically last **30 minutes** and are a key part of the application process. They provide an opportunity for both you and Consumer Connections to determine if Core Training is the right fit. Here’s what to expect:

1. **Program Overview:** The interview begins with Consumer Connections providing detailed information about:
 - The Core Training program
 - The CRSP credential
 - How the training aligns with your career goals

2. **Question & Answer Opportunity:** You will have a chance to ask any questions you may have about the program or the process.
3. **Interview Questions:** The interviewer will ask a series of questions to get to know you better and to learn information that may not have been captured in your application. Topics may include:
 - Your reasons for applying to Core Training
 - Your career goals and how Core Training fits into them

Preparation Tips:

- There is **no preparation required** for the interview.
 - Please do not feel nervous—this is a friendly, supportive conversation.
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Expectations and Requirements

- **Timely Submission:** Submit your online application and schedule your interview as soon as possible.
 - **Employer Referral (if applicable):** If you are referred by an employer, ensure your supervisor submits the Employer Referral Form to complete your application package.
 - **Accuracy:** Double-check your email address when applying to ensure you receive all correspondence.
 - **Email Monitoring:** Sometimes our emails may go to your spam or junk folders. We recommend monitoring these folders while your application is in progress.
 - Add the domain **@mhanj.org** to your safe senders list to ensure our emails reach your inbox.
 - If you believe you have successfully applied but have not received any correspondence from us, please contact us immediately at **consumerconnections@mhanj.org** to verify the status of your application.
 - **Communication:** Stay attentive to your email for updates and instructions from Consumer Connections.
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Understanding Employer Referral vs. Self-Referral

Applicants to Core Training fall into one of two categories: Employer-Referred or Self-Referred. These designations affect how your application is processed and how it is evaluated during selection.

What Does “Employer-Referred” Mean?

An applicant is considered Employer-Referred only if all of the following criteria are met:

- The individual is **currently employed** in a **paid, designated peer support position** (e.g., peer, peer specialist, peer recovery specialist, etc.).
- The position is within the **New Jersey behavioral health system**, specifically in **mental health or co-occurring services**.
- The employer is **actively supporting** the applicant’s participation in the training, including allowing time for live class attendance and upholding other training-related obligations.

A **peer support position** is one in which the **primary role** of the employee is to use their **own lived experience with mental health or co-occurring recovery** to support others on their recovery journey.

Simply having lived experience while working in a non-peer role—such as a case manager, counselor, or general support staff—**does not meet** this definition.

To complete an employer-referred application package, the applicant’s **supervisor must submit an Employer Referral Form**. Consumer Connections will send this form directly to the supervisor using the contact information you provide on your application, typically within a few business days of processing your submission. You are not responsible for sending the form yourself, but please ensure the contact information for your supervisor is accurate and up to date.

Why This Matters

When we evaluate applications, our overarching goal is to identify individuals who are likely to **enter into the peer workforce immediately** upon completing the training. From that standpoint, someone who already holds a peer position already meets this Core Training criterion. As a result, we typically require less evidence or explanation from employer-referred applicants to assess immediate workforce readiness.

That said, employer-referred applicants must still meet the **same foundational eligibility criteria** as all other applicants—such as having relevant lived experience, the ability to use technology, and a readiness to engage fully in training.

What If I Don't Qualify as Employer-Referred?

All applicants who do not meet the specific definition above are processed as **Self-Referred**. This includes:

- Individuals who have lived experience and are pursuing peer support as a career path but are not yet employed in a formal peer role
- Individuals who may be working in non-peer roles within the behavioral health system
- Individuals in **non-paid** peer support roles (volunteer, intern, etc.)
- Individuals who are working in peer roles in SUD-only programs
- Individuals who are working in peer roles in a mental health or co-occurring setting, but who do not have the support of their employer in attending this training

Self-referred applicants are fully eligible and are evaluated based on their readiness to enter the peer workforce, the strength of their application package, and their fit with the goals of Core Training.

Selection Process

Consumer Connections is a workforce development program, and as such, we are required to prioritize applicants who are likely to enter the workforce—get hired and maintain employment—imminently upon completing Core Training. We assess for indicators such as a clear and concrete work goal, employment history, current job status, experience working or volunteering as a peer, and evidence of long-term commitment to responsibilities like caregiving, volunteer work, or community involvement. Because we consistently receive far more applications than we have available seats, not being accepted may simply mean that other applicants scored higher during this round. Additionally, since peer supporters are expected to draw from lived experience and serve as role models, applicants who are still early in their recovery may not yet be ready for the demands of the role, even if they show promise.

1. **Application Review:** All submitted applications are reviewed for completeness. Incomplete applications will not be considered.
 2. **Interview Assessment:** Candidates are assessed during their interviews for readiness and suitability for Core Training.
 3. **Notification Day:** Final decisions are made after all interviews are completed. You will receive your determination on the prescheduled notification day communicated during your interview. You will not receive any updates prior to that date.
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Final Notes

- Each cohort or session of Core Training has a **unique applicant pool**. When you submit an application, you are only applying for that specific session.
- Your (potential) acceptance (or not) into Core Training is valid **only for that session**. Due to variations in the number of applicants, quality of application packages, and other factors, an acceptance into one session is not a guarantee of acceptance into future sessions.
- If you are not accepted, we encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity to speak with a member of our team to receive **feedback** on why you may not have been selected. These discussions can be extremely helpful and provide you with actionable steps that could result in a favorable outcome in the future.
- Applicants are encouraged to reapply as many times as they would like, as long as Core Training aligns with their career goals.

We are here to support you in your journey, and we appreciate your interest in our program!

Please direct all questions to Consumerconnections@mhanj.org