

Orientation Page: Oregon Consumer Advisory Council Membership Application Information

Complete information about applying, your advocacy as a councilmember and the council

Please read this thoroughly before you begin your application.

Alternative ways to apply to the council

We want to support you in this application process. **The written application is just one way to apply for membership.** People with lived experience come with different strengths, limitations, and communication styles.

The application process has traditionally been written. But in the name of equity we are committed to giving everyone the options they need to be comfortable applying. You do not have to be a great writer to be a great councilmember.

If you want to be a member, what is most important is that you communicate that in a way that you are most comfortable with.

Other possible ways to apply to the council could include (but are not limited to):

- Write your responses in bullet points
- Make a video or audio recording of your responses
- Have someone interview you, in a question and answer format
- Make a slide show (for example, PowerPoint) illustrating your responses
- Draw a comic about your lived experience, and why you'd be a good fit

If you have another idea, please let us know. We are open to hearing it!

Contact Walter Bailey with any ideas or questions at walter.i.bailey@oha.oregon.gov or 503-510-5069.

Being a member and advocate on the council

The council works as a collective of members. We work on our projects, both individually and collaboratively, in our spare time. They include:

- Advocacy for state-level health policy,
- Networking with other advocates, and
- Helping other behavioral health consumers like us have their voice heard within the system.

Our projects can change behavioral health policy at the state level.

We, the members are survivors — above all, people in recovery. Many of us are:

- People who have been through the court system,
- People who have been homeless,
- People who have been traumatized or
- People who have supported our friends in recovery.

We are people who:

- May have been mistreated by systems,
- Might have been unable to access treatment, or conceivably,
- Think that they have had privileges that their friends have not had.

Some of us have also had supportive or positive experiences with the behavioral health system. Many of us have often been dismissed, ignored, been denied civil rights, violated, shamed, or harmed.

Members are free to tailor their work with the council to suit their own needs and individual talents. You will get the most out of the council by pursuing projects in your free time. We value people who:

- Like to work on projects and be part of a team with other members of the council,
- Reach out to Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Office of Recovery & Resilience staff and other councilmembers for information and support,
- Communicate with other councilmembers about their work.

The Oregon Health Authority is here to help you!

Our work also includes:

- Sending written policy and program recommendations to OHA's Behavioral Health Director, who directs Oregon's mental health and addiction programs;

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- Inviting OHA staff to full council meetings to talk about their programs;
- Building connections with peer advocacy groups as well as learning from each other's experiences;
- Writing suggestions for OHA budget and policy decisions such as the biennial request budget sent to the Governor.

About the Oregon Consumer Advisory Council

As stated above, the council makes recommendations to OHA's Behavioral Health Director . OHA is the state agency charged with ensuring all people and communities can achieve optimum physical, mental, and social well-being through partnerships, prevention, and access to quality, affordable health care. They oversee programs involving public health, mental health and addiction services, and programs including the Oregon Health Plan.

Regular council and subcommittee meetings structure the council's work. All council meetings are open to the public. The public can attend meetings and provide comments at the end of every meeting. Public meetings have other requirements. For example, the council must make all decisions by public vote.

The council is part of state law. The law states that the council must have between 18 and 25 members who identify as current or former consumers mental health and/or addiction services, or parents of youth under age 14 who participate in those services. Importantly, the council must also represent Oregon's diversity.

OHA's most important goal is related to health equity — OHA has set a goal to end health inequities by the year 2030.

Council logistics

- **Your safety and trauma-informed participation.** Since all council meetings are public under Oregon law, OHA must provide agendas in advance so that the public has notice of the meeting and how they can attend. All council votes are public. OHA must record the votes in meeting minutes, which are published online. Please be aware that the names of councilmembers are public and will be on the council website.
- The full council meets during even numbered months. The members meet for presentations, questions and answers to the group from other members and OHA staff. Sometimes the council invites an outside expert to present on a topic of interest. During odd-numbered months, the full council has a planning and strategy meeting, which builds on our work in the full council.
- In addition to full council meetings, the council has subcommittees that meet every month to work on various issues. The subcommittees currently include the Executive Committee, the Peer Delivered Services Committee; the Trauma-Informed Systems Committee; the Tools, Technology, and Access Committee; and the Development

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and Membership Committee. Committees and their focus of attention can change from time to time, depending upon current issues, events, and the direction of trends in the state. They change when the timing and the issues seem to necessitate action.

- The Office of Recovery & Resilience now has Outreach Specialists who also support councilmembers and the council at large. They support our advocacy and growth.
- Council “leadership,” such as the chairs for council and its subcommittees, play an organizing role.
 - The council has a chair and two vice-chairs. They lead the full council meetings and the Executive Committee meetings. They also plan the full council agendas. Each subcommittee also has one or two chairs.