

Peer Recovery Specialists Survey 2021

Executive Summary

August 2021

This survey was conducted by University of Maryland Baltimore (UMB) Systems Evaluation Center for the Maryland Behavioral Health Administration (BHA), in collaboration with the UMB Training Center. The purpose was to explore issues affecting Maryland's Peer Recovery Specialist (PRS) workforce. Data was collected via an online questionnaire. Project respondents (n=285) were PRSs who had worked or volunteered in behavioral health settings across Maryland within the last five years. All but a few were Maryland certified, recertified, in the process of obtaining certification, or had previously been certified. More details regarding the project and results may be found in the Full Report.

Work Environment – Overall, PRSs report a positive work environment

- 88% reported that they are respected by their supervisor, 77% feel their work is valued by their organization, and 72% feel supported at work.
- 76% reported that the individuals assigned to them trust and perceive them as trained professionals.
- 86% indicated that PRS work does not negatively impact their recovery.

Job Satisfaction – The majority of PRSs are satisfied with job but dissatisfied with salary

- 81% reported feeling overall satisfied with their work as a PRS. This is driven by a belief that they can and do help others through their work.
- 58% expressed dissatisfaction with their salary. This concern was expressed through comments in the survey.

Supervision – Most PRSs get enough supervision, but quality varies

- 65% were satisfied with the amount of supervision they receive.
- In terms of quality:
 - some indicated their supervisors were: knowledgeable, supportive, timely, and communicative
 - some indicated that their supervisors were: limited in their knowledge of the PRS roles, lacking understanding of the Recovery Model, and unable to provide clear guidance and professional advice

Credentialing – Although the majority are satisfied with the process, there are several barriers and challenges

- 66% reported being satisfied with the Maryland PRS credentialing process.
- 64% reported that the most beneficial aspect of the process was a sense of accomplishment.
- The most significant barriers to Maryland PRS certification were:
 - a lack of financial incentive or other form of perceived value (42%)
 - cost (36%)
 - access to training (36%) or lack of training in specific domains (39%)
- Timely communication related to the application process was also cited as a concern by several.
- The two more prevalent methods of employer support for certification were providing resources to accommodate ongoing learning (64%) and covering training fees (56%).

Career Development – Most respondents would like to stay in behavioral health but need assistance to meet their professional goals

- 64% plan to remain a PRS, some for the rest of their career (60%).
- 78% would like to stay within the behavioral health field.
- 58% are interested in becoming a Registered Peer Supervisor.
- Adequate compensation was the most frequent reason a PRS might consider leaving PRS work or the BH field.
- To pursue their future career goals, respondents need:
 - access to training in specific domains
 - advanced education
 - better compensation

Caveats and Limitations – Results may not be generalizable to all PRSs

Due to use of a convenience sample and limited information on respondent work settings, the results of this survey may not necessarily be generalizable to all PRS in MD.