



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND
RECOVERY SERVICES**

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



Workforce Education and Training (WET) Lived Experience Scholarship Program

Benita McLarin, FACHE
DIRECTOR

Jei Africa, Psy.D.
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

20 North San Pedro Road
San Rafael, CA 94903
415 473 6809 T
415 473 7008 F
415 473 3344 TTY
marinhhs.org/bhrs

Program Overview:

Marin County's Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) has set aside WET funds via the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) for vocational, training, and educational support to residents of Marin County who have lived experience with behavioral health (mental health and/or substance use) conditions, or their families, and who wish to join the behavioral health services profession.

The goal of the program is to enhance the treatment experience for mental health and substance use clients by promoting the recruitment, hiring and retention of a culturally diverse, inclusive, and engaged workforce with lived experience to work in the mental health and substance use service system.

Quarterly Award Cycle:

1. **Winter: January-March**
 - a. Not awarded this cycle
2. **Spring: April-June**
 - a. Application due: March 12, 2021
 - b. Enrollment due: June 30, 2021
3. **Summer: July-September**
 - a. Application due: June 11, 2021
 - b. Enrollment due: September 30, 2021
4. **Fall: October-December**
 - a. Application due: September 10, 2021
 - b. Enrollment due: December 31, 2021

Definition of Person with Lived Experience:

1. Someone who has ever received and/or who is currently receiving mental health and/or substance use services. This person is also commonly referred to as a consumer; Or
2. A family member of a consumer who has provided support to them before, during and after receiving mental health and/or substance use treatment services.

Criteria:

Applications are welcome from anyone who:

- Is 18 years or older
- Works or lives in Marin
- Has lived experience
- Would like to pursue a vocation and/or career in behavioral health as a peer specialist, substance use, and/or domestic violence counselor
- Must be willing to complete an internship experience as determined by the vocational training program
- Must complete and submit application and budget forms and provide a letter of reference

Requirements for Scholarship Recipient

Applicants who receive scholarship funds will be required to:

- Enroll in a vocational/training/educational program for the purpose of entering the Marin County Lived Experience Professional community within award cycle timeline.
- Participate in support opportunities (i.e. meetings with mentors) to sustain wellbeing towards successful completion of academic program.
- Provide information and periodic updates about academic and overall progress in achieving training and education goals.
- Keep receipts and invoices and be able to submit appropriate documentation for financial reimbursements.
- Keep and be able to submit documents related to the scholarship award (i.e. proof of enrollment, class attendance records, academic progress reports, etc.)

Financial Parameters

- Applicants are eligible for a one-time award per scholarship award cycle.
- Applicants can submit scholarship applications once per scholarship award cycle with some additional considerations (see FAQs for additional information).
- Qualifying expenses include:
 - Transportation cost
 - Childcare
 - Registration and/or enrollment and tuition fees
 - Educational supplies (books, pens, papers, etc.)

- Exception: no technology supplies (i.e. computers, laptops, phones, etc.)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. How does the scholarship program get funded?

The scholarship program is funded by California’s Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) also known as Proposition 63.

2. What is the goal of the scholarship program?

- The goal of the scholarship program is to empower those from diverse backgrounds with lived experience to become certified peer specialists, substance use, and/or domestic violence counselors and enter the behavioral health and recovery workforce.

3. Will I have to pay the scholarship award back?

No. The scholarship award program is intended to provide financial and mentor support for qualifying applicants to enter the behavioral healthcare field by reducing financial and other barriers that may exist for interested applicants.

4. Will the scholarship program enroll me into a school or training program of my choice?

No. The scholarship program only administers awards and provides mentoring services. It is the responsibility of the applicant to determine what certified education and training program they would like to enroll in. However, if the applicant is unsure of what program to enroll in, the program mentors are available to provide a list of training programs that are offered in the county.

5. What types of expenses can the scholarship pay for?

If awarded, scholarships can pay for tuition/enrollment fees, school supplies, transportation or childcare. It does not pay for technological supplies.

6. If I am in the early stages of my recovery, can I still apply for the scholarship?

Yes. We recognize that education and training leading to meaningful volunteer work, internship placement, and/or gainful employment is an important part of an individual’s recovery process. If accepted into the scholarship program, applicants

can work closely with an assigned mentor to sustain wellbeing and health in order to achieve one’s educational and training goals.

7. How are applicants selected to receive a scholarship award?

Decisions to offer scholarship awards to applicants come in two different ways, the application and the interview process. Applications and interviews provide the program an opportunity to determine the interest, readiness and commitment of the applicant to enter into an education and training program in the behavioral health and recovery field. Scholarship selection occurs in alignment with BHRS’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

8. I am interested in becoming a peer specialist, substance use, and/or domestic violence counselor, but I am not ready to enroll in school. Can I still work with a mentor in the scholarship program to help me prepare to enroll in an education and training program in the future?

Yes. The program has a team of talented and diverse mentors with lived experiences who can help to prepare you to become ready to enroll in an education and training program of your choice in the future.

9. Once I complete and obtain a certificate from my chosen education and training program, can the program help me find a volunteer position or internship?

Yes. The scholarship program mentors will be available to support you to find volunteer or internship opportunities. Most certified peer education and training programs in the county offer volunteer and/or internship opportunities for their students upon successful completion of coursework. A credentialed field placement coordinator will be available in your training program to assist you in finding an appropriate internship placement in order to obtain the necessary clinical hours you will need to become a state certified substance use counselor.

10. Can the scholarship program help me find a job when I complete or obtain my certificate from my education and training program?

No. While many of the program’s past scholarship awardees and graduates have successfully found employment immediately after completion of their chosen education and training program, the scholarship program is not designed to provide employment-related services. However, the scholarship program can refer awardees and graduates to receive employment-related help such as resume writing, interviewing skills and access to job opportunities.

11. If I get awarded a financial scholarship and I don't complete my education and training program, will I have to pay the scholarship program back?

No. Financial scholarships given to the applicant do not need to be paid back in the event that the applicant does not successfully complete their program. However most education and training programs will work with students to develop an educational completion plan in the event that the student is at risk of failing or dropping out.

12. Can I get the full amount of my financial scholarship request if I get awarded?

It depends. The amount of financial scholarship award given is based on two factors:

- The number of applications submitted and their requested amount.
- The awardee's ability to partially pay their total expenses.

In the spirit of fairness, the scholarship program is committed to ensure that all scholarship awardees are given financial support in an equitable manner.

13. I'm already enrolled in and currently taking courses in an education and training program that will enable me to become a peer specialist, substance use and/or domestic violence counselor, and I have already paid my tuition fee in full. Can I apply for the scholarship to get reimbursed for my tuition fee?

If you have paid your tuition in full prior to applying for the scholarship award, the scholarship program cannot reimburse you for the tuition that you already paid. However, if you have an outstanding tuition balance that you have yet to pay in full, the scholarship program may be able to pay the remaining or a part of the balance if you are accepted in the scholarship program. Reimbursement may be approved on a case by case basis for recent courses taken in an ongoing education or training program.

14. If I get a financial scholarship award, will I directly receive the scholarship amount that I have been awarded?

Tuition/Enrollment fees are typically paid directly to the education and training program where you are enrolled. Any other scholarship funds that you have been awarded (such as supplies, books, transportation or childcare) are reimbursed to you once you pay out-of-pocket and submit a simple form and receipts.

15. I was awarded a financial scholarship last year. Can I re-apply again?

Yes. However, priority will be given to applicants who have not received financial scholarships in the past. If funds are still available after scholarships have been awarded, previous awardees' applications will be considered.

16. I am not a legal resident and/or not legally authorized to receive government benefits. Can I still apply for a scholarship?

Unfortunately, applicants who are not legal residents are not able to receive government benefits or state funds for this type of scholarship. However, we would like to support you on your journey towards becoming a peer specialist and are happy to provide any related (informal) guidance or consultation.

17. What is an example of the scholarship award cycle and what happens if I cannot enroll in a program during the award cycle?

If the application to the scholarship program is due on Friday March 12, 2021 and you are awarded the scholarship for the April – June award cycle, you will be expected to enroll in your education and training program by June 31, 2021. Awards are released to the education and training program after enrollment so, if for whatever reason you are unable to enroll in your program by the end of your award cycle, the funds won't be released and you will have to re-apply.

18. Who should I ask to write a letter of reference?

A letter of reference can be provided by someone who is familiar with your work, education, recovery, your involvement with behavioral health systems, and your career pathways and goals. This could be, but isn't limited to, a teacher, a mentor, someone who you have worked with, a former boss, etc.

19. How can I apply?

You can apply online at: www.MarinHHS.org/WET or by filling out the paper copy of the application that includes the budget form and a letter of reference.