

HOUSING SERVICE WORKER CERTIFICATION AND RESEARCH (HSWC) PROJECT

PROVIDER OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT MEMO

WHAT IS THE HOUSING SERVICE WORKER CERTIFICATION AND RESEARCH PROJECT (HSWC)?

The Housing Service Worker Certification and Research Project (HSWC) is being developed because Metro and the counties recognize the major challenges the Metro region's service providers are facing in staff training, recruitment and retention, and we want to ensure that providers have the tools they need to support new staff on day one.

As former service providers ourselves, Metro's Regional Capacity Team understands the challenges that frontline agencies face in training new staff. Our aim is to create accessible pathways for housing service workers to gain the essential training and tools they need to deliver high-quality, trauma-informed services. Through conversations with Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington county, Metro staff have heard feedback on the need for more robust and consistent training opportunities throughout the region. In a collaborative effort to address these concerns, Metro, alongside the three counties, is currently in the design phase of the HSWC project, and we are seeking your input on some very important aspects of this future program.

HSWC GOAL

Our goal is to ease the burden on providers by developing a training program tailored to the needs of the region. We want to:

1. Ensure there is a baseline level of service delivery across providers,
2. Support agencies in retaining their employees,
3. Build a strong pipeline for these vital positions.

HOW WE GOT TO THIS POINT

The below course descriptions were developed by surveying staff at Metro, Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington Counties who were previously service providers. These answers were then organized and condensed by the Regional Capacity Team, grouping related trainings into one of the 5 potential course descriptions that we are seeking your feedback on.

YOUR FEEDBACK IS VITAL

In order to ensure that the HSWC is tailored to the needs of the region's providers and that it adequately provides sufficient training opportunities for front-line staff, who provide some of the most important services that we offer, we need your feedback.

Please take a moment to review the HSWC Possible Course Descriptions on the following pages. After you've reviewed the potential course descriptions, we encourage you to complete the HSWC Provider Survey. You can [ACCESS THE HSWC SURVEY HERE](#), or you copy and paste the following link into your web browser: <https://forms.office.com/r/zhp0BRUZRy>.

HOUSING SERVICE WORKER CERTIFICATION POTENTIAL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

DOCUMENT INSTRUCTIONS

After reviewing the below HSWC potential Course Descriptions, you can [ACCESS THE HSWC SURVEY HERE](#), or you copy and paste the following link into your web browser:
<https://forms.office.com/r/zhp0BRUZRy>.

Your input will help us design a program that truly supports our region's service providers. We need your feedback to ensure these potential course descriptions cover the needs of providers in the field today. These descriptions are subject to change based on the feedback we receive from current service providers.

SUBSTANCE USE, RECOVERY, AND MENTAL HEALTH

The "Substance use, Recovery, and Mental Health" subject area for front-line housing service workers would provide essential tools and strategies to effectively support individuals facing complex mental health/substance use disorder challenges. Participants would explore crucial topics such as crisis intervention and emergency response protocol, including planning and procedures for handling urgent situations. Additionally, the subject area would cover life skills development and building resiliency to empower both clients and service providers in navigating the recovery journey.

Learning outcomes may include:

- Boundary Setting
- Bystander Intervention
- Crisis Intervention
- Conflict Resolution
- Emergency Response; Emergency Action Planning and Procedures:
 - Naloxone administration,
 - First aid,
 - CPR, etc.
- Fundamentals of Harm Reduction

BASICS OF HOUSING SERVICE WORKER CASE MANAGEMENT

The "Housing Service Worker Case Management" subject area would equip front-line housing service workers with the skills necessary for effective case management. By exploring the history of housing issues in Oregon and current strategies to address inequities, participants would gain insights into effective case planning, motivational interviewing, and working with specific populations, enhancing their ability to offer comprehensive and empathetic and culturally appropriate support. This subject area would cover maintaining client confidentiality and ethical standards, as well as essential areas such as benefits navigation. This subject area would also address practical aspects of client care, including managing bed bugs and lice, and understanding hoarding behaviors

Learning outcomes may include:

- Benefits Navigation
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, AKA “Food stamps”)
 - The Supplemental Income Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
 - Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI)
 - Oregon Health Plan (OHP)
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
 - ID/Birth Certificate assistance
 - Housing Vouchers
 - Energy Assistance
- Financial Wellness/Education
- Data
 - Google Suites/Microsoft
 - HMIS
 - Community Services
- Causes of homelessness/poverty
- Fundamentals of Case Management including:
 - Assertive Engagement
 - Motivational Interviewing
 - Power Dynamics
 - Progressive Assistance
 - Conflict Resolution/Crisis Intervention
 - Ethics and Conflict of Interest
 - Financial Education
 - Strength-based approach
- History of Housing in Oregon/Portland 101
 - Particular focus placed on Oregon’s history of systemic racism in housing

BASICS OF HOUSING SYSTEM NAVIGATION

The "Basics of Housing System Navigation" subject area would be designed to empower front-line housing service workers with foundational knowledge and practical skills for navigating complex housing systems. Participants would gain insights into the intricacies of affordable housing, including the application of various types of housing vouchers and the principles of Housing First. This subject area would cover critical topics such as the causes of homelessness and poverty (generally), emergency response planning, and the application of trauma-informed approaches when addressing domestic violence and other crises. Additionally, attendees would learn about community resources, fair housing laws, and the history of housing issues in Oregon and Portland, which are crucial for effective housing navigation and client advocacy in the Portland-metro area. With a focus on housing solutions and rapid rehousing, participants would also become proficient in managing paperwork and understanding income eligibility for subsidized housing.

Learning outcomes may include:

- Housing systems, including:
 - Housing vouchers

- Fair housing law
- Eviction Navigation/Prevention
- Rapid Rehousing
- Permanent Support Housing
- Causes of Homelessness/Poverty (generally)
- Coordinated Entry
- History of Housing in Oregon/Portland 201
- The Principles of Housing First
- Housing Navigation Practices

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" subject area would be designed for front-line housing service workers to deepen their understanding and application of inclusive practices in their daily work. Participants would explore the fundamentals of diversity, equity, and inclusion, including cultural humility and the importance of cultural responsiveness in supporting clients from various identity groups. This subject area addresses implicit bias, power dynamics, and the ethics of working with diverse populations, emphasizing respect for lived experiences.

Learning outcomes may include:

- Fundamentals of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, including:
 - Cultural Humility,
 - Culturally Responsive
 - TIC Mandatory Reporting,
 - Working with people with intersectional identities
- Harm Reduction
- Honoring Lived Experience
- Implicit Bias
- Power Dynamics

TRAUMA INFORMED CARE AND SELF-CARE

The "Trauma Informed Care and Self-Care" subject area would be crafted for front-line housing service workers to provide essential strategies for both client support and personal well-being. This subject area would focus on the foundations of Trauma Informed Care, teaching participants how to apply trauma-sensitive approaches when working with individuals experiencing homelessness, poverty, domestic violence, substance use disorder, and other significant challenges. Emphasis is placed on developing robust self-care practices to combat compassion fatigue and maintain resilience. This subject area would also cover practical aspects such as creating safer spaces, integrating harm reduction principles, and understanding power dynamics, equipping service workers with the skills to support both themselves and their clients effectively.

Learning outcomes may include:

- Coping strategies.
- Boundary Setting
- Compassion Fatigue
- Foundations of Trauma Informed Care and Trauma Intervention Programs



600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736
oregonmetro.gov

- Person Centered Thinking
- Safer Spaces and Planning
- Self-Care
- Employee Resiliency and Self-Care
- Resiliency

PLEASE NOTE: This document, and the HSWC survey, can be translated based on the needs of the region's providers. We want to make this process as accessible and inclusive as possible and Metro encourages participants to contact the Regional Capacity Team regarding access needs. If you or a colleague would like to make a request, please email justin.barrieault@oregonmetro.gov.