

A Report on U.S. Peer Support Provider Levels of Education, Compensation, and Satisfaction *A Comparison between 2007 and 2014.*

PART I:

Review of 2007 Survey of Compensation and Satisfaction

In 2007, the National Association of Peer Specialists (NAPS) conducted a nationwide survey to gather data from peer specialists throughout the U.S. The goal was to determine the variety of tasks, how satisfied peer specialists were with their work, compensation levels, outlook for the future, and what motivated them in their work.

173 peer specialists in 35 states responded to the survey with the following data.

Average hourly wage*	Average number of weekly hours	Average number of years on the job	Average number of peers** per week	Percent with specific job training	Percent interested in more job training
\$12.13	29.5	2.8	16.7	82.7%	81.5%
*Salaries converted to hourly rates based on 2080 hours per year.					
**Includes number of peer contacts in both individual and group settings.					

Respondents reported the main motivation to work as a peer specialist was:

Money	Helping Others	Having Something to do	Other*
5.5%	73.5%	5.9%	16.7%
**Helping with my own recovery," was cited as the most common "other" response.			

Respondents rated satisfaction with the job as:

Always	Mostly	Somewhat	Not at all
31.5%	60.7%	7.1%	0.6%

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Workplace conflict was reported as occurring:

Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
4.9%	36.6%	45.7%	12.8%

Feeling respected at work was reported as:

Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
65.2%%	30.5%	3%	1.2%

Barriers to full-time employment were reported as:

Mental Health Reasons	Benefit Loss	Administrators/ managers
17%	36.7%	9.5%

Demand for services	Physical Health	Low Wages	Other*
4.1%	11.6%	6.8%	13.6%

*Personal preference to work part-time was the most frequently reported reason.

The full NAPS 2007 Survey of Compensation and Satisfaction report is located in Appendix A.

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**PART II:
2014 Peer Specialist Survey of Education, Compensation,
and Satisfaction**

In 2014, a follow-up survey was conducted with questions about location, education, training, and supervision added to the original 2007 survey.

605 peer specialists in 43 states responded between July and October of 2014. The following questions were added to the original 2007 survey:

Q2: The location where I practice peer support is (n=574):

Large urban	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Tribal
27.4%	38.5%	22.5%	24.2%	0.9%
n=157	n=221	n=129	n=139	n=5

**Other (open ended) responses (n=29) | total responses = 603.
Open ended responses included: statewide, around the country, resort, VA Medical Center, home.*

Q3: Current job title (n=481):

Peer advocate	Peer bridger	Peer coach	Peer specialist
15.4%	3.7%	7.9%	69.7%
n=74	n=18	n=38	n=335
Recovery coach	Recovery educator	Recovery support specialist	Recovery trainer
14.4%	8.5%	27.4%	5.8%
n=69	n=41	n=132	n=28

**Other (open ended) responses (n=184) | total responses = 665.*

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Open ended responses that included job titles that appear to be directly (or closely related) to peer support services, or some aspect of those services include:

(alphabetically): *adult services program coordinator, assistant peer coordinator, behavioral health technician, certified peer specialist trainer, community living specialist, community resource specialist, community health worker, community volunteer advocate, compassion fatigue educator, coordinator of child trauma and reliance, customer service advocate, director of recovery practices, eCPR facilitator, engagement specialist, facilitator, family advocate and peer specialist, family support provider, forensic peer specialist, health coach, health mentor, healthcare navigator, independent living specialist, independent recovery coach, intentional peer support program assistant, Kansas certified peer mentor, mental health aid, organizational change peer navigator, outreach specialist, peer administrator, peer and family support specialist, peer bridge, peer companion, peer counselor, peer empowerment provider, peer liaison, peer liaison coordinator, peer mentor, peer navigator, peer partner, peer personal assistant, peer program coordinator, peer recovery coach, peer specialist supervisor, peer support apprentice, peer specialist train-the-trainer, peer wellness specialist, recovery coach, recovery coach coordinator, recovery educator, recovery navigator, recovery specialist, recovery support development specialist, regional advocacy specialist, regional recovery specialist, residential recovery partner, senior mental health peer support specialist, socialization support activity director, support services coordinator, team lead, trauma support specialist, vet-to-vet facilitator, warm line operator, wellness and recovery manager.*

Open ended responses that appear to be indirectly related to peer support services, or some aspect of those services include: *12-step sponsor, administrative assistant, administrator of housing services, admissions representative, case manager, CEO, clerical support, CPRP, discharge planner, employment services coordinator, executive director, food services supervisor, instructional specialist, media consultant, medical support clerk, occupational preceptor, office manager, peer 12-step meeting liaison, program coordinator, program director, qualified mental health specialist (QMHS), rehabilitation practitioner, retired, RN, self-help center coordinator and manager, social worker, special projects coordinator, therapist, training manager, unemployed, volunteer, volunteer coordinator.*

Discussion: 219 unique job titles were provided to iNAPS in earlier surveys of over 800 peer specialists during the development of the National Practice Guidelines for peer support providers. The confusion of trying to organize and describe so many unique job titles and different job descriptions make it a challenge to fully identify and create standards of practice, which ultimately could lead to greater credibility in the field but could also limit creativity and a sense of “ownership” of the position within an organization.

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Q9: Current age (n=581):

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54
2.2%	12.2%	19.2%	31.7%
n=13	n=71	n=112	n=184
55-64	65-74	Over 75	
29.0%	5.0%	0.5%	
n=169	n=29	n=3	

**Other (open ended) responses (n=12) | total responses = 593.
Open ended responses ranged from 35 to 68.*

Q10: Highest level of formal education (n=585):

Post graduate	Graduate	Bachelor	Associate
4.8%	10.9%	23.8%	16.1%
n=28	n=64	n=139	n=94
Some college	Tech/trade school	High school/GED	Some high school
30.0%	3.8%	10.3%	0.5%
n=175	n=22	n=60	n=3

**Other (open ended) responses (n=38) | total responses = 623.
Open ended responses included working toward further education and/or a professional credential.*

Q11: Gender (n=588):

Female	Male	Transgender	
64.3%	35.2%	0.5%	
n=378	n=207	n=3	

**Other (open ended) responses (n=2) | total responses = 590.
Open ended responses included CIS gendered female.*

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Q12: Sexual Orientation (n=580):

Heterosexual	Homosexual	Bisexual	Uncertain
86.9%	5.7%	5.7%	1.9%
n=504	n=33	n=33	n=11

**Other (open ended) responses (n=12) | total responses = 592.*

Open ended responses included: straight, lesbian, asexual, monk, queer, you don't need to know, what does this matter?, I will pass on this question, I do not see the need for this question, pansexual.

Q13: Race/ethnicity (n=577):

White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Pacific Islander
75.4%	15.4%	9.4%	0.5%	4.5%	0
n=435	n=89	n=54	n=3	n=26	n=0

**Other (open ended) responses (n=18) | total responses = 595.*

Open ended responses included: Human, descendant of the same primeval parents as everyone, two or more races, nice mix, Black and White, Mexican American, Chicano.

Q14: I have served in the military (n=587):

Yes	No
17.2%	82.8%
n=101	n=486

**Other (open ended) responses (n=34) | total responses = 621.*

Open ended responses included specific branches of the military.

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Q25: In addition to peer provider training, I also have (or at one time had) a certificate, credential, or license to practice in a different profession (n=544):

Yes	No
58.1%	42.5%
n=305	n=227

**Other (open ended) responses (n=238) | total responses = 682.*

Open ended responses included (alphabetically):

activities director, addictions counseling, advertising, anger management specialist, art therapist, biological science (BS), bookkeeping, business, building maintenance, broadcaster, captain of a cruise vessel, car mechanic, case management certificate, certified assessor, certified consumer credit counselor, certified corrections officer, certified domestic and sexual violence response professional, certified health education specialist, certified laughter yoga teacher, certified medical assistant (CMA), certified nursing assistant (CNA), certified optician, certified payroll clerk, certified psychiatric rehabilitation practitioner (CPRP), certified sterilizer operator, certified substance abuse counselor, certified tax professional, certified vocational rehabilitation counselor, certified work incentives benefits planner, chaplain, chemical dependency counselor, chemical officer (in charge of nuclear, biological, and chemical elements), clinical psychology, computer programmer, computer technology, contractor (home improvements), cook, engineer, cosmetology, crime scene technician, criminal justice, crisis prevention instructor, data processing, deputy constable, employment counselor, executive, fashion merchandizing, finance, food service, gerontologist, graphic designer, group therapy therapist, holistic health certificate, human resources, interior design, interpreter for the deaf, IT, jeweler/gemologist, labor studies, legal secretary, licensed insurance agent, licensed massage therapist (LMT), licensed clinical social worker (LCSW), licensed direct child welfare worker, licensed psychologist, life coach, life guard, marketing, master mechanic (ASE certification), mechanical designer, medical billing, medical doctor (MD) with board certification in internal medicine, medical secretary, medical transcription, mental health worker II, military police, navy recruiter, notary, nursing, office administration, office information management, ordained minister, paralegal, paramedic, pastor, pharmacy technician, phlebotomy, photographer, police officer, psychiatric nurse, psychiatric tech, psychotherapist, public administration, quality auditor, radiological technician, real estate, registered medical assistant, sheet metal fabricator, social service technician, sociology, sonar technician, security guard, tax practitioner, teaching certificate, telephone sales, theatre, theology, trainer, translation/interpretation, veterinarian, veterinary assistant, x-ray technician.

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**PART III:
Comparison of 2007 and 2014 Surveys**

As described in Part I of this report, the National Association of Peer Specialists (NAPS) gathered survey responses from 173 peer specialists in 35 states. In 2014, responses to an enhanced survey were gathered from 605 peer specialists in 43 states.

The following tables compare responses in 2007 to those made in 2014 for matching (or similar) questions.

Year of survey	Average hourly wage <i>*Note 1</i>	Average weekly hours <i>*Note 2</i>	Average years on the job	Average # peers per week served	Percent received job training	Percent seeking more job training
2007 n=173	\$12.13	29.5	2.8	16.7	82.7%	81.5%
2014	\$13.53	32.2	3.8	19.75	93.3%	<i>*Note 3</i>
	n=288	n=570	n=515	n=523	n=524	

Notes:

- 1) On the 2014 survey, the average hourly wage was reported as follows:
n=412 (68% of the total 605 respondents) provided earnings information.
n=288 (69% of the 412) reported in the form of hourly wages.
n=134 (31% of the 412) reported earnings as an annual salary.

Of those reporting hourly wages:
41% earn between \$10 and \$15 and 12% earn less than \$10 per hour.

Of those reporting annual salaries:
n=117 reported less than \$50,000, averaging \$32,628.
n=17 reported salaries more than \$50,000:
6 described their role as administrator, 2 as director, 2 as manager, 4 as program director, 3 as supervisor, and 2 as researcher.
(Multiple roles could be selected on the survey.)
- 2) Average weekly hours: n=345 (60%) reported 36 hours or more and n=225 (40%) reported less than 36 hrs.
- 3) This question was changed in the 2014 survey.

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The greatest reward for working as a peer support provider was reported as:

Year of survey	Money	Helping others	Having Something to do	Helping with my own recovery*
2007 n=173	5.5%	73.5%	5.9%	16.7%
2014 n=521	2.1% n=11	86.0% n=446	1.9% n=10	10.4% n=54

*"Helping with my own recovery," was cited as the most common "other" response in the 2007 survey and was used as the fourth option in the 2014 survey.

Peer support providers rated their overall job satisfaction as:

Year of survey	Always (Very Satisfied)	Mostly (Satisfied)	Somewhat (Dissatisfied)	Not at all (Very Dissatisfied)
2007 n-173	31.5%	60.7%	7.1%	0.6%
2014 n=516	55.4% n=286	33.0% n=171	5.6% n=29	2.1% n=11

*Omitted the neutral category, "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied," which had 19 responses (3.6%) in the 2014 survey to better match answer choices on the 2007 survey.

Peer support providers reported feeling respected by their supervisor and colleagues at work (as an equal member of the team and not a patient or client):

Year of survey	Frequently (Strongly Agree)	Sometimes (Agree)	Rarely (Disagree)	Never (Strongly Disagree)
2007 n-173	65.2%	30.5%	3%	1.2%
2014 n=512	44.3% n=226	35.0% n=180	7.4% n=38	2.8% n=14

*Omitted the neutral category, "neither agree nor disagree" which had 52 responses (10.1%) in the 2014 survey to better match answer choices on the 2007 survey.

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Barriers to full-time employment:

Year of survey	Mental Health Reasons	Benefit Loss	Administrators/managers
2007	17%	36.7%	9.5%
n-173	Demand for services	Physical Health	Low Wages
	11.6%	36.7%	6.8%

Other responses (13.6%) included a personal preference to work part-time

Barriers to full-time employment (continued):

Year of survey	Against medical advice	Benefit loss*	Past issues
2014	22.2% n=34	60.1% n=92	5.8% n=9
n-153	Stigma and discrimination	Lack on the job experience	Lack formal credential
	8.5% n=13	7.2% n=11	9.8% n=15
	Need more education	Trying it before making a commitment	Planning to move out of this field
	8.5% n=13	9.1% n=14	2.6% n=4
	There are no paid / full-time positions	Enjoy working part-time	Volunteering is rewarding
	47.7% n=73	41.8% n=64	15.7% n=24

**2014 Composite of open ended responses: fear of losing cash benefits (SSI or SSDI = 30.7%), housing benefits (6.5%), and medical benefits (22.9%) = 60.1%*

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Acknowledgements

An Agency version of the survey was adapted from a statewide survey of New Jersey peer/consumer providers developed by Peggy Swarbrick of the Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey (CSPNJ) Wellness Institute for the Mental Health Association in New Jersey (MHANJ) and CSPNJ. For copies of the original survey contact: pswarbrick@cspnj.org. To view the results, visit: [New Jersey Statewide Provider Agency Survey Results](#)

The 2014 surveys were approved by the iNAPS Board of Directors: Andy Bernstein, Anthony Stratford, Lisa Goodale, Diann Schutter, Dwayne Mayes, Gladys Christian, Gayle Bluebird, Lisa St. George, Matthew Federici, Mike Roaleen, Mike Weaver, Peter Ashenden, and Kasey Moyer. We also thank Larry Davidson of Yale University, Andy Bernstein of University of Arizona (UA) Camp Wellness, Matthew Federici of the Copeland Center for Wellness and Recovery, Lisa Goodale of the Depression Bipolar Support Alliance, Lori Ashcraft of Recovery Opportunity Center, and Rita Cronise of iNAPS and Rutgers University for contributions during the development and review of this survey.

Additional data analysis was provided by Kenneth J. Gill, Ph.D., CPRP (Chair and Professor in the Dept. of Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Counseling Professions at Rutgers University) and C. Carina Teixeira, Ph.D. Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Boston University.

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APPENDIX A

To view the 2007 survey results:

<https://na4ps.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/2007-survey-report.pdf>