

Where to Earn Your Experience Hours for PRS Certification in Northern Virginia

Here is a list of organizations in Northern Virginia that have expressed willingness to help peers earn the 500 hours of direct peer support experience necessary for certification. This list of organizations was developed through research by members of the Region 2 committee of the Virginia Recovery Initiative (VRI) and updated by the Region 2 Coordinator for PRSs and FSPs with the Northern Virginia Regional Projects Office (NVRPO). We encourage individuals to call the contacts listed in this document.

(This document is current as of January 2024)

Organization Name	Alexandria Dept of Community and Human Services
Contact Name	Connie Juntunen, Director of Community Support Services; Nichole Rohrer, Team Leader, West End Wellness Center and TRAILS
E-mail	Connie.Juntunen@alexandriava.gov ; Nichole.Rohrer@alexandriava.gov
Phone	703-746-3629; 703-746-3550
County	Alexandria City
Briefly describe available opportunities (e.g., paid or unpaid, telework or onsite, how to apply, etc.)	Unpaid opportunities to provide peer support, including 1:1's and groups with Wellness Center, TRAILS, and other programs for persons with mental illness or co-occurring (MH/SU) diagnoses. Apply by calling or emailing Connie Juntunen or Nichole Rohrer.

Organization Name	Alexandria Dept of Community and Human Services
Contact Name	Jonathan Teumer, Team Leader Mental Health Jail Services
E-mail	Jonathan.Teumer@alexandriava.gov
Phone	703.746.5087
County	Alexandria City
Briefly describe available opportunities (e.g., paid or unpaid, telework or onsite, how to apply, etc.)	Once pandemic restrictions are lifted, there may be unpaid opportunities to provide in person 1:1's and groups at Sober Living Unit and Critical Care unit of Alexandria Adult Detention Center. Apply by calling or emailing Jonathan Teumer.

Organization Name	Arlington County
E-mail	www.governmentjobs.com/careers/arlington/
Phone	703-228-7499
County	Arlington
Briefly describe available opportunities (e.g., paid or unpaid, telework or onsite, how to apply, etc.)	For vacant PRS positions: employment is contingent upon getting certified within 6 months (12 months for part-time). The 500 hours can be received on the job. No volunteer opportunities for 500 hours.

Organization Name	Arm & Arm
Contact Name	Kelvin Manurs
E-mail	info@ArmandArm.org
Phone	(571) 245-4568
County	Prince William
Briefly describe available opportunities (e.g., paid or unpaid, telework or onsite, how to apply, etc.)	Arm and Arm has volunteer opportunities on Tuesdays and Fridays at the Peer Institute in Fairfax.

Organization Name	CHOICES in Healing & Recovery
Contact Name	Eryca Kasse, LICSW
E-mail	ekasse@choicesihar.org ; www.choicesihar.org
County	Washington, DC
Briefly describe available opportunities (e.g., paid or unpaid, telework or onsite, how to apply, etc.)	Volunteer, Group Peer Facilitators for virtual and/or in person: CHOICES Trauma-Informed 12 Steps Peer Support Group (alternative to traditional 12 steps of AA/NA); position also includes community outreach. CHOICES services adults living with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders, supporting a continuum of recovery approach (abstinence, moderation, harm reduction, MAT, etc.). Will be growing to add in-person groups in VA and MD as well as DC.

Organization Name	Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board
Contact Name	Cynthia Evans Office of Individual and Family Affairs
E-mail	CSBOIFA@fairfaxcounty.gov
Phone	703.207.7769
County	Fairfax
Briefly describe available opportunities (e.g., paid or unpaid, telework or onsite, how to apply, etc.)	<p>The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) employs approximately 40 peer specialists. These positions require obtaining peer specialist training within 3 months of hire, and certification within 1 year. Full-time positions are highly competitive, and most applicants will already have certification.</p> <p>Employment These peer specialists work in wide variety of programs including Residential programs, Outpatient, Assertive Community Treatment, Emergency services, Jail-Based, among others. Information on the peer support specialist job classification, including salary information and requirements is listed here: https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/fairfaxcounty/classspecs/969801 Full-time (merit) positions openings are listed at: https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/fairfaxcounty Part-Time (non-merit) position openings are listed: https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hr/non-merit-fairfax-county-jobs These include positions working 30 hours/week with partial benefits, and 20 hours/week with no benefits</p> <p>Volunteers Currently, the CSB does not use peer support volunteers. To learn more about peer support opportunities at the CSB, contact CSBOIFA@fairfaxcounty.gov</p>

Organization Name	GMU- Empowered Communities Opioid Project -A grant project under Mason's School of Nursing
Contact Name	Nancy Spencer
E-mail	nspence@gmu.edu
Phone	(571) 789-6890
County	Prince William

Briefly describe available opportunities (e.g., paid or unpaid, telework or onsite, how to apply, etc.)	The project has unpaid internship opportunities providing peer support at the Mason and Partners clinics held around Northern Virginia. The clinic serves individuals who are seeking medication for substance use disorder (buprenorphine, vivitrol, etc.), actively seeking both MH/SA peer interns, with heavy emphasis on SA peers.
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Organization Name	Laurie Mitchell Empowerment & Career Center (LMECC)
Contact Name	Heather Peck
E-mail	Please contact: cavila@lmecc.org
Phone	(703) 461-3886
County	Fairfax County
Briefly describe available peer support opportunities (e.g., paid or unpaid, telework or onsite, how to apply, etc.)	LMECC delivers supervision enabling people to earn their 500 hours of Peer Recovery Specialist service delivery to employees only . (No volunteer opportunities for the 500 hours .)

Organization Name	NAMI National
Contact Name	Dawn Brown
E-mail	dbrown@nami.org
Phone	(703) 524-7600
County	Arlington
Briefly describe available opportunities (e.g., paid or unpaid, telework or onsite, how to apply, etc.)	<p>During an average 4-hour shift, a volunteer can expect to help between 12 to 20 Help Seekers with a wide variety of concerns and conditions. Currently, all Helpline volunteers from across the nation work remotely which requires only a computer with a strong and stable Wi-Fi connection. All volunteers are either living with a mental health condition or they are a family member/caregiver. Shifts are M-F from 10 AM - 10 PM, ET.</p> <p>Information about the Helpline is available at www.nami.org/help.</p> <p>There are several steps involved in becoming a Helpline volunteer:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Reviewing the volunteer description at https://nami.applicantpro.com/jobs/2464083.html and be willing to commit to completing 20 hours of onboarding training within a three-week period. 2.) Completing the application located at the above link. 3.) Accepting an interview with a Helpline staff member. 4.) If both agree that serving for the HelpLine is a good fit, join the NAMI HelpLine volunteer team by completing your onboarding and committing to one or more shifts per week.

Organization Name	NAMI Prince William
Contact Name	Patricia Victorson
E-mail	mvictors@verizon.net
County	Prince William
Briefly describe available opportunities (e.g., paid or unpaid, telework or onsite, how to apply, etc.)	NAMI Prince William has limited volunteer opportunities as support group leaders and/or educators. Currently these are positions that require training which happens once a year. Trainees must have "lived experience" with mental health conditions, either as a peer in recovery or a family member.

Organization Name	NAMI Virginia
Contact Name	Mary Beth Walsh, Director of Adult and Family Programs
E-mail	Mwalsh@namivirginia.org
Briefly describe available opportunities (e.g., paid or unpaid, telework or onsite, how to apply, etc.)	NAMI Virginia provides a Peer Support Specialist Certification Guide that shares details of what NAMI offers to support Peers in obtaining needed experience hours for certification. Contact Mary Beth Walsh for details.

Organization Name	HopeLink Behavioral Health
Contact Name	Brittney White
E-mail	bwhite@hopelinkbh.org
Phone	(571) 585-8808
County	Fairfax, Loudoun, Arlington
Briefly describe available opportunities (e.g., paid or unpaid, telework or onsite, how to apply, etc.)	<p>PRS, Inc. hires individuals who are already a CPRS or on track to becoming a CPRS. A person can obtain the 500 hours needed for certification while employed. We proudly support peers in professional development and growth.</p> <p>We are able to point peers to other community opportunities for volunteer hours but do not have volunteer position open for peers at this time.</p>

Organization Name	PathForward
Contact Name	Harry Ayling, LCSW, ACS
E-mail	hayling@pathforwardva.org
Phone	703-228-0472
County	Arlington County
Briefly describe available opportunities (e.g., paid or unpaid, telework or onsite, how to apply, etc.)	The Homeless Services Center (HSC) at PathForward has volunteer opportunities Monday-Wednesday for peer supports who need to acquire experience towards the 500 hour requirement for certification. The HSC is located at 2020A 14 th Street N in Arlington, Virginia. This is a dynamic setting and a great learning environment for aspiring peer supports. Interns will be working one-on-one with residents but will have opportunities to facilitate groups if appropriate. One hour per week of clinical supervision with the behavioral health therapist will be provided. The HSC provides much more than emergency housing. They focus on restoring clients to stability and maintenance of functioning. Apply by calling or emailing Harry Ayling.

Organization Name	PWC CS
Contact Name	Laura Lungarelli
E-mail	LLungarelli@pwcgov.org
Phone	571-235-6181
County	Prince William County
Briefly describe available opportunities (e.g., paid or unpaid, telework or onsite, how to apply, etc.)	For vacant PRS positions: employment is contingent upon getting certified within 6 months. The 500 hours are only received through employment. Some positions are grant funded (temporary positions.)

Organization Name	Recovery Program Solutions of VA
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Contact Name	Michelle Hurrell
E-mail	mhurrell@recoveryprograms.us
Phone	Main phone # 703-964-6073; leave a message: "PRS seeking 500 hours/mentorship" referred to Michelle Hurrell.
County	Fairfax, Alexandria, Arlington, Loudoun, Prince William
Briefly describe available opportunities (e.g., paid or unpaid, telework or onsite, how to apply, etc.)	<p>Anyone from the region can volunteer for PRS hours at any of the following programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arlington Peers Helping Peers in Recovery • Consumer Wellness Center • South County Recovery and Drop-In Center • Virtual Groups & Zoom Chats • Merrifield Peer Resource Center <p>The volunteers would go through an official background check and application process by HR. After together determining what program is a good fit, the volunteer would be connected to the respective Program Coordinator for that program for orientation, scheduling, training, etc.</p>