



UNITED WE HEAL

Career Pathways

Apprenticeship and Training
for Healthcare Professionals

January 21, 2025

What is United We Heal (UWH)?



- Formed in 2021,
- Focused on healthcare workforce development,
- Current UWH Programs
 - Four BOLI-registered apprenticeships (QMHA, CADDC, MA, QMHP)
 - Behavioral Health Pre-Apprenticeship (3 high schools, 7 additional in September)
 - Physical healthcare training programs with OHSU in 4 occupations

The United We Heal coalition



UWH is a non-profit, labor-management Training partnership

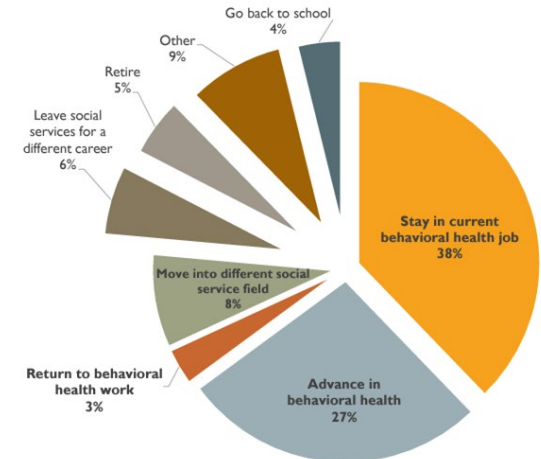
- Equal governance by labor and employer representatives;
- Labor partner, Oregon AFSCME Council 75 brings the breadth of voices and experiences of more than 3,000 behavioral health workers who are employed with non-profit organizations, many County Health departments, and the State of Oregon.
- Union and Non Union behavioral health employers participating;
- Workers trained in Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington, Clatsop, Coos, Hood River, Lane, Sherman, Umatilla, Wasco, and Yamhill counties

Why UWH? Overwhelming unmet need. More of the same won't work

Oregon has some of the worst mental health and addictions outcomes in the U.S. and the worst unmet need for SUD services.

- Studies show that turnover is driven by lack of career advancement opportunities and low wages and substandard benefits. We need to find innovative ways to support this workforce;
- MHACBO survey finds 35% of BH workers want to advance their careers in behavioral health. We need to engage these workers who are most likely to remain.

76%: Staying
24%: Ambivalent/Alternative Plans



Our Solution - Equity Designed



- **The Traditional Pathway:**

- QMHA and CADC certifications through post-secondary education causing individuals to leave work to pursue these certifications, re-entering the field with student debt; Debt relief programs support individuals whose lives have allowed them to forgo income and incur debt.

- **Apprenticeship Solution:**

- Work concurrent with classroom learning.
 - Earn while you learn - Don't leave work, Don't forgo income.
 - Free tuition - Don't incur debt,
 - Time efficient: Don't engage in non-required coursework;
 - Work experience valued as learning; Proven more effective than terminal internships;
 - Work environment aligned with US DOL Good Jobs standards;
 - Supportive services for participants (childcare/transportation/costs of living);

UWH Successes: Participants and Equity Outcomes



- Currently Registered Apprentices: 74
- Graduates: 59
- 73% High School/GED prior to entry
- Individuals with lived experience in active recovery, homelessness, serious mental illness
- Participants identify as:
 - 69% as female or gender non-binary
 - 45% as BIPOC or Hispanic/Latinx
 - 32% as a person with a disability
 - 90% identify with an underserved community
- Participants remain in employment in community mental health during and after completion, with employers whose work culture aligns with US Dep't of Labor Good Jobs standards. They receive a guaranteed wage increase per BOLI apprenticeship standard.

*Demographic statistics current as of 1/15/2025

Feedback from Apprentices



“I was pursuing my Qualified Mental Health Professional credential, but I couldn’t afford to keep paying tuition when I had no income to pay the rent. As someone with lived experience in behavioral health, I am so excited that this would make it possible for me to keep serving clients.”

“UWH positively impacted my career... I can’t wait to apply to the QMHP apprenticeship program.. The traditional route to higher ed was not accessible or affordable to me. I am appreciative of this alternate pathway that meets my needs.”

“I was in active addiction for a majority of my life... When I got sober... I realized that this was my calling. When people go through this program they don’t have a bunch of debt afterwards. So, financially it’s a huge deal. It’s made the credentialing/schooling process... way, way easier. Every chance I get I recommend it to other people. I have clients who have a significant amount of clean time and want to get in this work, so I’ve suggested this program to them.”

“I have a lot of experience of being homeless... being an addict. I want to be part of the change I want to see in the world... With 5 kids stressing at work makes a difference on how I handle my clients and can focus... I can be a better counselor. With the supportive services, like I lost my food stamps, my OHP and was struggling with car problems, [UWH] helped me with ...needing support and building my self esteem and reassuring myself that I can do this. I’m super grateful for this program.”

“I dont have the funds to go back to school in a traditional way. [As an apprentice] I didn't have to take out student loans and go back to school full time and sacrifice an income for more education, so it means a lot to me in terms of being able to advance my career.”

Next for UWH in Behavioral Healthcare Training..



QMHP - Masters degree level apprenticeship

- Recruiting now for Fall 2025:
 - Candidates pursuing acceptance with Western Oregon University;
 - Free tuition,
 - Paid Practicum and Internships in Medicaid population-serving community mental health settings;
 - Supportive services;
 - Post completion retention bonuses;
 - Clinical supervision reimbursement for employers.
- Developing future options for program modifications to further focus on crediting work experience in community mental health;