

Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health Counselor Apprenticeship

OVERVIEW

As part of the Promising Leaders in the Care Economy (PLACE) Hub, FHI 360 is partnering with New Ways to Work to develop a Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health Counselor Apprenticeship. This apprenticeship equips direct services employers with the resources they need to recruit workers with life experiences relevant to the communities they serve. Through a combination of paid on-the-job learning (OJL) and coursework, apprentices will gain an alternative, rigorous, and rewarding point of entry into a profession that traditionally requires post-secondary education. Upon completion, program participants receive a national credential from the U.S. Department of Labor.

In turn, care economy employers gain access to a skilled, diverse, and continuously evolving workforce pool that helps supports the needs of the individuals they serve.

IMPACT ON THE CARE ECONOMY

Due to shortages in the mental health field, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 19% growth in employment from 2023 to 2033.

Compounding the issue are the traditional requirements of postsecondary education, supervised clinical hours, and state licensure, which stand as potential barriers to individuals interested in entering this field.

The Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health Counselor Apprenticeship serves as a career pipeline that can strengthen the overall mental health workforce by training those eager to help their communities despite their limited access to conventional career pathways.

WHAT APPRENTICES LEARN

Registered Apprenticeships consist of 2,000 hours of paid OJL and 150 hours of coursework, wherein Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health Counselor apprentices will learn active listening, relationship-building, research skills, healthcare system navigation, and more. Apprentices going through the program benefit from:

- An alternative, fulfilling career path into the mental health industry.
- A means of simultaneously learning different concepts and applying them at work while getting paid.
- A nationally recognized credential from the DOL.

EMPLOYER BENEFITS

Registered Apprenticeship programs offer many benefits for employers. The U.S. Department of Labor has found that employers utilizing apprenticeship programs:

- Hire, train, and retain more highly skilled, entry-level workers (with apprentice retention rates at 90%)



- Better utilize diversity, equity, and inclusion in their organizations.
- Improve productivity and profitability through efficient application of employee skills to employer needs.
- Can adapt to address specific needs of employees through customizable training options.

FHI 360 provides all related training instruction and supports supervisors and mentors. Employers recruit, supervise, pay, provide training release time and mentor apprentices, with apprentices getting a midpoint pay increase and a position as a standard employee at the apprenticeship's conclusion.

CONTACT

For more information on the Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health Counselor Apprenticeship and FHI 360's apprenticeship efforts, please contact apprenticeship@fhi360.org

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About NIWL: FHI 360's National Institute for Work and Learning (NIWL) advances access, equity, and excellence in education and workforce systems. We focus on two key drivers of individual well-being – education and employment – to improve lives. NIWL seeks to strengthen the capacity of public and private organizations, providing information, resources, and support needed to make decisions, strengthen programs, and improve outcomes for individuals.

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