Wisconsin Peer Specialist Certification Exam Study Guide

Updated Edition June 2012
Please remember you are taking the Wisconsin Peer Specialist Certification Exam from the perspective of a Peer Specialist. Your answers should be based on the Wisconsin Core Training Competencies, Wisconsin Peer Specialist Code of Conduct and the Wisconsin general job/position description for Peer Specialists.

The test is designed to evaluate your understanding and knowledge of the duties, responsibilities and roles of a Peer Specialist in Wisconsin.

Introduction to the study guide…

This guide is intended to assist you in preparing to take the Wisconsin Peer Specialist Certification Exam. It is NOT the exam itself.

Helpful hints to study for the exam:
- Review all of the materials from your training course
- Form a study group with others

Carefully review ALL of the following documents:
- Wisconsin Peer Specialist Core Training Competencies (attachment 1)
- Domains and Objectives (attachment 2)
- Wisconsin Peer Specialist Code of Conduct (attachment 3)
- General Wisconsin Peer Specialist Job/Position Description (attachment 4)
- Answer Key to the sample questions as practice (attachment 5)

REMEMBER THIS EXAM IS COMPREHENSIVE SO STUDY THOROUGHLY
INTRODUCTION TO THE EXAM - READ EVERYTHING GIVEN TO YOU IN DETAIL.

This exam is computerized and given on the internet. You do not need to be a computer expert to take the exam, but you must have an email address to log-in at the test site you are assigned to. If you do not have an email address you can obtain a free one from Hotmail, Google or Yahoo.

All exams are given at the Independent Living Centers in Wisconsin (WILC) unless otherwise indicated. To locate the nearest center to you see the map (attachment 6)

The dates for the exams will be announced in the following places:

- Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialist Employment Initiative: [www.wicps.org](http://www.wicps.org)
- UW-Milwaukee Peer Specialist Certification Exam web page: [www.sce-peerspecialist.uwm.edu](http://www.sce-peerspecialist.uwm.edu)
- United We Stand list serve: [http://groups.google.com/group/united-we-stand-wi/topics](http://groups.google.com/group/united-we-stand-wi/topics)

The exam is comprised of approximately 62 multiple choice questions. You will be given three (3) hours to complete the exam.

The exam is proctored (supervised). If you have problems using the computer, the proctor will be there to assist you.

You may not bring or use any notes, books or other resources while taking the exam.

If you are 15 minutes or more late for the exam, you will not be allowed to take it and will need to reschedule. There is an additional $25.00 fee for rescheduling your test date.

Reasonable accommodations due to disability can be arranged upon request by contacting Alice Pauser at 608-242-8484 ext 224 or 800-362-9877. This includes but is not limited to; someone reading the exam to you, physically accessible tables and computers and interpreter services.

Continued...
The exam application packet and guidelines can be downloaded at the UW-Milwaukee website www.sce-peerspecialist.uwm.edu

Applications must be received by the deadlines listed on the UWM website www.sce-peerspecialist.uwm.edu

It is recommended that you read your packet thoroughly.  
It contains important information.

The passing score is 85%.

You will receive a letter containing your test score, but not the graded test itself. Results will be mailed to you by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) within thirty (30) days of your passing the exam.
SAMPLE QUESTIONS *

1. One of the roles of the Peer Specialist assisting a service recipient is to:

   a) Tell their mental illness story in detail.
   b) Engage the service recipient in a trauma free way.
   c) Make sure the service recipient is compliant with their treatment plan.
   d) Instruct in what steps to take in order to recover.

2. Bruce, a Peer Specialist, is receiving calls from Ann, a service recipient, at 3 am for the past week. Bruce should:

   a) Take the calls from Ann in case she is in crises.
   b) Ignore the calls and hope Ann will stop calling.
   c) Talk to Ann about your work hours and when it is an appropriate time to call.
   d) Express your anger to Ann about her phone calls.

3. You are assigned to work with a service recipient of a culture that differs from your own. As a Peer Specialist you should:

   a) Decline the assignment because you have nothing in common with her.
   b) Refuse to talk about your cultural differences.
   c) Focus on recovery because culture has nothing to do with mental illness,
   d) Acknowledge your cultural differences and ask the service recipient if she would like to discuss them.

4. Sandy, a service recipient, sees Dr. Thompson, a psychiatrist. She feels that he doesn’t listen to her about the side effects of her medication. You should:

   a) Call the psychiatrist and advocate for Sandy.
   b) Tell Sandy that the psychiatrist knows best about her medication.
   c) Offer to go with Sandy to her next appointment and help her advocate for herself.
   d) Find a new psychiatrist for Sandy.

5. You are in a staff meeting and you feel that the comments the staff are making about the service recipients are insulting. As a member of the team you should:

   a) Refuse to participate and leave the meeting.
   b) Respectfully challenge their comments and use this as a teachable moment.
   c) Report them to the client rights office of the State.
   d) Go along with it to fit in.

Continued...
6. You are working with Andy who would like to leave the group home and live in his own apartment. You should:

   a) Tell him to look for apartments on his own.
   b) Work with Andy to develop a step-by-step plan and budget.
   c) Tell him he is not ready to leave the group home.
   d) Invite him to stay with you to see how he likes apartment living.

7. Lora calls you and tells you that her live-in boyfriend just physically assaulted her. What should you do?

   a) Call the police for Lora.
   b) Talk Lora into going to a shelter for battered women.
   c) Offer to help Lora find someone with experience doing safety plans.
   d) Meet with Lora and her boyfriend to work things out.

8. According to the WI Peer Specialist Core Competencies a Peer Specialist must NOT:

   a) Have in depth knowledge of recovery
   b) Understand the impact of trauma in recovery.
   c) Take the place of a clinician.
   d) Practice Person Centered Planning.

* These are designed as sample only questions and will not appear on the exam itself.

Answer key is on attachment 5 at the end of this study guide.
Attachment 1

**Wisconsin Peer Specialist Core Training Competencies**

There are four Wisconsin state-approved curriculums for Peer Specialist Trainings. The Core Competencies were developed according to the Domains and Objectives for the Wisconsin Peer Specialist Certification Exam.

1. **Consumer as Provider (CAP)**
2. **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)**
3. **National Association of Peer Specialists (NAPS)**
4. **Recovery Innovations/Recovery Opportunity Center (ROC)**

**WISCONSIN CORE TRAINING COMPETENCIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Values:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believe in the importance of consumer-directed services</td>
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<td>Have an outlook on life that inspires hope</td>
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<td>Believe that growth and change are possible</td>
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<td>Have the capacity to care/empathy</td>
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<td>Have a non-judgmental attitude</td>
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<td>Value consumer choice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have respect for other cultures, sexual orientation, spiritual beliefs, and family culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Believe in empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have respect for confidentiality and all other consumer rights</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Personal Abilities:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Is able to utilize own experience and translate this experience to others with mental illness and/or substance abuse issues</td>
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<td>Has self awareness and is able to use self to inspire others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is able to make good decisions/be a good role model/exercise options</td>
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<tr>
<td>Possesses problem-solving skills</td>
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<td>Can help people explore choices and consequences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has self knowledge about own recovery and sets personal boundaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can support own recovery while helping someone else</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is able to let people help themselves – empower them</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognizes others strengths and challenges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is flexible, open minded and tolerant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is patient and resilient</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is able to work collaboratively/participate on a team</td>
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<td>Openness to learning and continuing education</td>
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**Knowledge:**

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<tr>
<th>In-depth knowledge of recovery</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics, boundaries, and healthy relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Owns personal strengths and weak spots</td>
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<tr>
<td>General understanding of mental illness and substance abuse, and treatments/services/supports</td>
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<td>The role of spirituality in recovery</td>
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<tr>
<td>The role of sexuality in recovery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of the impact of trauma on recovery</td>
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<tr>
<td>How to find information about a variety of community resources</td>
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<td>Consumer rights-as defined in Wisconsin by a combination of patient rights, ADA standards and civil rights as afforded to all citizens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confidentiality-HIPPA standards and client rights as determined by the WI Dept. of Health Services, Chapter 51 WI Statutes, and WI Administrative Code DHF 94 and 92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural awareness-have a basic knowledge of diverse cultures and how they may impact individual values, choices and lifestyles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stigma-knowledge of the impact of discrimination, marginalization and oppression that society places upon individuals with mental illnesses. Self Stigma is the defining of ones self by diagnosis, limitations and/or illness based perceptions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role of Peer Support Specialist –as defined by the essential functions outlined in the General Wisconsin Peer Specialist Job/Position Description</td>
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<td>Safety (Personal and Practices)-knowledge of how to encourage safe environments, relationships and interactions for the Peer Specialist and others involved</td>
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<td>Person Centered Planning-knowledge of the Person Centered Planning Principals and the central role of the service participant</td>
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**Skills:**

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<tr>
<th>Communication: ability to listen and to communicate clearly with others</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to communicate clearly in writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to assess strengths and needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to ask questions to get to know the person</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skills: continued</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to find resources</td>
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<td>Ability to identify people in crisis and make referrals</td>
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<td>Ability to Advocate for others</td>
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<td>Ability to find information about mental health treatment options and alternatives</td>
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<td>Ability to use own history in useful way</td>
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<td>Ability to foster a relationship and engage them in their recovery</td>
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<td>Ability to interact with people in a way that is trauma free</td>
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<td>Ability to recognize limitations and boundaries and ask for help/make referrals</td>
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<td>Ability to be a successful employee (e.g. following personnel policies)</td>
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<td>Ability to provide age appropriate services and supports</td>
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This Core Competencies document was developed and written by the Peer Specialist Subcommittee of the Wisconsin Recovery Implementation Task Force in 2008 with funding from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, Medicaid Infrastructure Grant # 93.768, Department of Health Services/Pathways to Independence.

Updated by Peer Specialist Committee July 15, 2011 and reformatted July 18, 2011
Attachment 2
DOMAINS AND OBJECTIVES (TEST BLUEPRINT)

The Peer-Support Specialist will know and practice these Domains and Objectives.

1. SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND THE ROLE OF THE PEER-SPECIALIST
   Use his or her own experience to inspire the consumer while supporting his or her own recovery.
   Engage the consumer in a trauma-free way.
   Recognize the consumer’s strengths and personal challenges and emphasize building on the positive.

2. ETHICS AND BOUNDARIES
   • Understand and maintain confidentiality.
   • Understand and maintain appropriate boundaries.
   • Recognize when to seek guidance or consultation.

3. CULTURAL AWARENESS
   • Respect other cultures, races, religions, and sexual orientations.

4. ADVOCACY AND ABILITY TO LOCATE INFORMATION
   • Have fundamental knowledge of the mental health and substance abuse system in Wisconsin.
   • Have fundamental knowledge of mental health conditions, treatments, services, supports, and consumer rights with an emphasis on age-appropriate services.
   • Know how to find information about entitlements, community resources, the mental health and substance abuse system, mental health conditions, treatments, services, supports, and consumer rights.
   • Advocate for the consumer.
   • Educate the consumer to be a self-advocate.

5. TEAMWORK
   • Work collaboratively and participate on a team.
   • Listen and communicate clearly.
   • Observe and recognize when to report behavioral changes.

6. CONSUMER CHOICE AND EMPOWERMENT
   • Understand and practice person-centered planning that values informed consumer choice.
   • Believe in empowerment, and that growth, change, and overcoming stigma are possible.
   • Teach conflict resolution and problem-solving skills as a means to empowerment.

7. CRISIS AND SAFETY
   • Know how to identify and work with people in crisis and make referrals.
   • Know how to keep self and others safe during and after a crisis.

8. RECOVERY
   • Understand the process of recovery and how to pass on recovery-related information and tools to the consumer.
   • Understand the positive and negative impact of life events, such as spirituality, sexuality, grief and loss, stigma, and trauma, on recovery.

Funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, Medicaid Infrastructure Grant #93.768, Department of Health Services/Pathways to Independence
Wisconsin Peer Specialist Code of Conduct
The following principles will guide Peer Specialists in their various role relationships and levels of responsibility in which they function professionally.

1. The primary responsibility of Peer Specialists is to help service recipients understand recovery and achieve their own recovery needs, wants, and goals. Peer Specialists will be guided by the principle of self-determination for each service recipient.

2. Peer Specialists will conduct themselves in a manner that fosters their own recovery and will maintain personal standards that are respectful to self and community.

3. Peer Specialists will be open to share with service recipients and coworkers their stories of hope and recovery and will likewise be able to identify and describe the supports that promote their recovery and resilience.

4. Peer Specialists have a duty to inform service recipients when first discussing confidentiality that contemplated or actual harm to self or others cannot be kept confidential. Peer Specialists have a duty to accurately inform service recipients regarding the degree to which information will be shared with other team members, based on their agency policy and job description. Peer Specialists have a duty to inform appropriate staff members immediately about any person’s possible harm to self or others or abuse from caregivers.

5. Peer Specialists will never intimidate, threaten, harass, use undue influence, physical force or verbal abuse, or make unwarranted promises of benefits to the service recipients they support.

6. Peer Specialists will not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate in any form of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, disability, or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition or state.

7. Peer Specialists will advocate with service recipients so that individuals may make their own decisions in all matters when partnering with professionals.

8. Peer Specialists will never engage in any sexual/intimate activities with service recipients they support. While a service recipient is receiving services from a Peer Specialist, the Peer Specialist will not enter into a relationship or commitment that conflict with the support needs of the service recipient.

9. Peer Specialists shall only provide service and support within the hours, days and locations that are authorized by the agency with which they work.
Wisconsin Peer Specialist Code of Conduct

10. Peer Specialists will keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to recovery, and openly share this knowledge with their coworkers and service recipients. Peer Specialists will refrain from sharing advice or opinions outside of their scope of practice with service recipients.

11. Peer Specialists will utilize supervision and abide by the standards for supervision established by their employer. The Peer Specialist will seek supervision to assist them in providing recovery oriented services to service recipients.

12. Peer Specialists will not accept gifts of money or items of significant value from those they serve. Peer Specialists do not loan or give money to service recipients.

13. Peer Specialists will not discuss their employment situation in a negative manner with any service recipient.

14. Peer Specialists will protect the welfare of all service recipients by ensuring that all their conduct will not constitute physical or psychological abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Peer Specialists will provide trauma informed care at all times.

15. Peer Specialists will, at all times, respect the rights, dignity, privacy and confidentiality of those they support.
Attachment 4

General Wisconsin Peer Specialist Job/Position Description

(This Job/Position Description is to give an idea of some of the functions a Peer Specialist could perform. Tailoring would be necessary to fit the unique mission.)

Title of Position: Peer Specialist (Paid Evidence Based Practice Position)

Job Summary: The Peer Specialist engages and encourages mental health service recipients in recovery, and the peer specialists provide service recipients with a sense of belonging, supportive relationships, valued roles and community. The goal is to promote wellness, independent living, self direction, and recovery focus, enhancing the skill and ability of service recipients to meet their chosen goals. The Peer Specialist works with service recipients as equals except in having more recovery experience and training, looking for and empowering signs of wellness and recovery, encouraging strength and self-direction. Peer Specialists are examples of recovery, meaning previous first-hand experience with some parts of what the service recipients are experiencing at the time support services are needed. In some programs, the Peer Specialist must be supervised by a qualified mental health professional.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

Providing Support

The Peer Specialist will:

• Identify as a person in mental health recovery.
• Understand their role and fully participate as an integral part of the professional Recovery Team.
• Be mindful of the ethics, boundary, power and control issues unique to Peer Specialists.
• Establish rapport with the service recipients.
• Provide information as to the purpose of peer support and recovery models.
• Provide service recipients with very clear definitions of recovery and its components.
• Intentionally share their Recovery Story as appropriate to assist service recipients, providing hope and help in changing patterns and behaviors.
• Provide respect for the service recipients, for example, in viewing what traditionally is labeled “resistance” as “self direction”, and honor the person for taking charge of their own life.
• Set mutually acceptable boundaries with the service recipient, especially about “help” and “safety”; continue to ask if these are the same or changing.
• Be well informed about trauma, and explore with service recipients their experiences and support these in individuals in getting appropriate resources to help.
• Have his/her own Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) or another recovery plan done and in current use.
• Be able to assist service recipients with constructing their own Wellness Recovery Action Plans (WRAP, or another recovery plan.)

continued...
• Help persons in crisis explore options that may be beneficial to their recovery and to maintaining stability. Provide culturally sensitive and age specific services. Continue to increase knowledge in this area.

**Communicating with Supervisors and Interacting with Staff**

**Peer Specialists will:**

• Understand and utilize the established supervisory hierarchy to communicate needs, ask questions (especially about ethics, boundaries, and confidentiality), mention concerns, etc.
• Provide education to staff on recovery reminding them that recovery is possible, and that peer support has become an Evidence Based Practice.
• Accurately complete and punctually turn in time sheets.
• Accurately, respectfully, punctually complete all required documentation.
• Work with service recipients and staff in a manner that incorporates the policies of the Peer Specialist Program and the responsibilities of the staff based on their policies.
• Begin work with service recipients stating that talk of harm to self or others cannot be kept confidential. Report threats to harm self or others immediately to the staff in charge.

**Demonstrating Confidentiality**

**Peer Specialists will:**

• Be familiar with Wisconsin documents relating to confidentiality. Be very knowledgeable of all confidentiality directives from your own agency.
• Maintain the utmost confidence concerning all verbal and written information whether obtained from service recipients or otherwise.
• Be knowledgeable of information that should not be kept in confidence: threats to harm self or others, and know how to handle these situations.

**PREFERRED TRAINING/SKILLS:**

• Group facilitation or co-facilitation experience.
• Both completion of Wellness Recovery Action Plan or another plan for self, and also knowledge of how to run a group assisting service recipients in how to write their own Wellness Recovery Action Plan, or an other plan.
• Basic knowledge of how to assist service recipients with locating community resources (employment, housing, health, peer delivered services including 12 step groups, etc).
• Work or volunteer experience providing peer support.

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Funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, Medicaid Infrastructure Grant #93.768, Department of Health Services/Pathways to Independence
ANSWER KEY TO SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. b
2. c
3. d
4. c
5. b
6. b
7. c
8. c

Remember it is very important to read all of the materials in the Wisconsin Peer Specialist Certification Exam application packet and to fill out the application completely and correctly. Be sure to include all of the necessary documentation and the $50 fee for taking the Wisconsin Peer Specialist Certification Exam.

For questions on the exam process, please contact:

Alice F. Pauser, CPS
WI Peer Specialist Program Coordinator
Access to Independence, Inc.
3810 Milwaukee St.
Madison, WI 53714
608-242-8484 ext 224
800-362-9877
TTY: 608-343-8485
alicep@accesstoind.org

Thank you for your interest in the Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialist Program.
North Country Independent Living
2231 Catlin Avenue Suite 16
Superior, WI 54880
715-392-9118 (V/TYY)
715-392-4636 (fax)
1-800-924-1220 (toll-free)
www.northcountryil.com

Midstate Independent Living Center
3262 Church St. Ste 1
Stevens Point WI 54481
715-344-4210 (V/TYY)
715-344-4414 (fax)
1-800-382-8484
www.milc-inc.org

Options for Independent Living
555 Country Club Road
P.O. Box 11967
Green Bay, WI 54307
920-490-0500 (V)
920-490-0600 (TTY)
920-490-0700 (fax)
888-465-1515
www.optionsil.com

Access to Independence
3810 Milwaukee St
Madison, WI 53714
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608-242-8485 (TTY)
608-242-0383 (FAX)
1-800-362-9877 (V)
www.accesstoind.org

Independence First
540 South 1st Street Milwaukee, WI 53204-1605
414-291-7520 (V/TYY)
414-291-7525 (FAX)
1-877-463-3778
www.independencefirst.org

Society's Assets
5200 Washington Ave.
Racine, WI 53406
262-637-9128 (V/TTY)
262-637-8646 (FAX)
1-800-378-9128
www.sai-inc.org

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