



Homecare Workers: Frequently Asked Questions

What is a homecare worker?

Homecare workers (HCWs) are people who support older adults and people with disabilities at home and when they are out in the community so they can live as safely and independently as possible. HCWs support consumer-employers participating in various in-home services programs offered by [Aging and People with Disabilities](#). This includes the [Consumer Employed Provider Program](#) as well as the [Spousal Pay Program](#), [State Plan Personal Care](#), and [Oregon Project Independence \(OPI\)](#). For more information on HCW classifications, please [see our guide](#).

What is a consumer employer?

Consumer employers are people who hire homecare workers, determine how and when the HCW does a task, and approve time worked so the HCW can be paid. HCWs may have several consumer-employers at one time. Each consumer-employer is responsible for directing the work and developing a schedule based on their service needs and training and supervising the HCW.

Can I get paid to offer support to my family member or friend who is an older adult or person with a disability?

Yes! Homecare workers offer essential support to older adults and people with disabilities that allow them to live in their own homes and participate in their communities as independently and safely as possible. This arrangement often benefits everyone involved. Hiring a caregiver who is also a family member or friend provides a sense of familiarity, comfort, and cultural connectedness for the consumer. Meanwhile, being paid to offer support to a family member or friend provides the HCW with sustainable, meaningful work and the opportunity for a flexible work-life balance.

How is Oregon different than other states?

Oregon is a pioneer in offering robust long-term services and supports that help people live in their homes instead of going to nursing facilities. Eligible consumer-employers can choose the people they employ themselves or use an in-home agency. Consumer employers who want to select and hire their own homecare workers sign up for the [Consumer-Employed Provider \(CEP\) Program](#).

What are some of the benefits?

In addition to experiencing the joy of meaningful work and contributing to their community, homecare workers enjoy benefits including:

- Competitive pay (Oregon wages are among the highest in the nation!)
- Health insurance, paid vacation and working holiday pay
- Flexible hours
- Paid training
- Career advancement opportunities
- Job finding resources

What are some of the risks?

People become homecare workers because they are compassionate and enjoy helping others. The work is very valuable and makes an essential difference in the lives of those they support. However, empathy and the desire to help others may compel someone to exceed expectations, leading to compassion fatigue. Prioritizing self-care and respectful boundaries protects both the HCW and the consumer-employer. For more information and guidance on setting healthy boundaries, please see our [homecare workers' guide](#).

I have no related experience. Is free or paid training available?

Yes! Many resources exist to help people learn the skills they need to succeed as HCWs and have a robust career, including opportunities for paid training and certificates for increased wages through the Oregon Home Care Commission. To learn more, please see the [OHCC Elevate Training Newsletter](#) and the [Carewell SEIU 503 Training](#).

What types of services do homecare workers provide?

Homecare workers offer essential support with bathing, eating, and mobility, among other “activities of daily living” (ADLs). Additional supports including light housekeeping, meal preparation, and grocery shopping are considered “instrumental activities of daily living” (IADLs). Examples of health-related tasks that some HCWs do can include insulin injections, ventilator care, and tube feeding.

Are there types of work homecare workers cannot do?

There are some things that Medicaid will not pay a homecare worker to do, including yard work, pet care, home repairs, vehicle maintenance, and more. If something is not on the task list, the HCW is not authorized to do it. For more information on service plans and task lists, please [see our guide](#).

How do I become a homecare worker?

A person must be at least 18 years old, submit an application packet, attend orientation, pass a background check, be legally authorized to work in the United States, and sign a confidentiality agreement, among other requirements. Details can be found [online](#) or by calling 877-624-6080, option #2. For information on the application kit, forms and other enrollment items, please [see our guide](#).

What is the mandatory orientation and how soon do I need to do it?

The in-home care provider orientation provides basic information about being a homecare worker including roles and responsibilities, professionalism, how to be paid, universal precautions, being a mandatory reporter, and more. Attendance within 90 days of getting a provider number is required for active enrollment and to be paid. People can usually [find an orientation in their area](#). Once the orientation is complete and a provider number has been issued, there is an additional eight hours of online, paid, mandatory training to complete through Carewell SEIU 503 Training.

What is a provider number and why is it important?

The six-digit provider number identifies someone as an enrolled homecare worker. It is used for the Registry, training paperwork and more.

- All HCWs must have a current, valid number to work and be paid.
- It is the responsibility of the HCW to renew an expiring number.
- Provider numbers expire if the HCW doesn't work nor receive payment within a 12-month period.

Can a provider number be terminated?

A provider number can be terminated for multiple reasons. A terminated provider number disenrolls someone from the program and prevents them from being a homecare worker. Violations that lead to involuntary termination include but are not limited to:

- Taking or borrowing money or items belonging to your consumer-employer.
- Sharing something that is confidential.
- Neglecting your consumer-employer's service needs.
- Forging a signature or falsifying payment records.
- A substantiated abuse allegation.
- Working unauthorized overtime.

How do homecare workers find jobs?

In addition to the option of being hired by a person already receiving support like a family member or friend, homecare workers and consumer employers can connect through [Carina](#). Carina is an online system that matches people looking for work with people receiving Medicaid in-home services, or those on OPI who are looking for qualified workers. Please note, that people who pay privately for services cannot use Carina.

Do homecare workers get paid for travel time?

Homecare workers receive pay for travel time when they are working for more than one consumer-employer on the same day.

What is a mandatory reporter and how do they prevent abuse?

Homecare workers are mandatory reporters of abuse or suspected abuse of an older adult (age 65 or older), 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This means even when not working, the HCW must immediately report abuse or suspected abuse, including neglect and financial exploitation, to the Oregon Department of Human Services. For questions or to report abuse, call 855-503-SAFE (7233). More information can be found at www.Oregon.gov/dhs by clicking on “Report Child Abuse” and “Report Adult Abuse.”

Where can I find more information?

Resources on career advancement and additional training, service plans, safety, tax responsibilities, and much more can be found in the [homecare worker guide](#).

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