

# OHCC Connections

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## **Episode 005: Frequently asked questions about training requirements for homecare workers, personal support workers, and personal care attendants**

August 17, 2021

**Sarah Edwards:** Hi again everyone. I'm Sarah Edwards, and I'm the director of Carewell SEIU 503 training.

**Whitney Taylor:** And I'm Whitney Taylor, the curriculum development manager for Carewell training. Happy to be here.

**Cheryl Miller:** Thank you both. So far, we've talked about the training requirement and where it came from, what this looks like for new workers, how it affects current workers, and provided some information about the continuing education requirement. Today, we are wrapping up our five-part series by walking through some of the most frequently asked questions we receive. While we have talked about most of these items throughout our series, we felt it was important to address the most common questions head on. The first question we want to talk about may just be the most common question we receive. Why are care providers, homecare workers, personal support workers, and personal care attendants who have been working for years required to take this training?

**Whitney Taylor:** Yeah, that's a very common question. So, training benefits care providers and the people they are supporting by making sure that care providers have all the information they need to provide quality services safely and to learn about current best practices. This initial round of training will help to create a baseline of knowledge around standards of care for every person in Oregon. Those who've been in the workforce for a long time will likely be familiar with a lot of the concepts that are presented; however, as we all know, details can slip so easily from our minds, and this will help refresh and remind people about specifics regarding their work and the rules surrounding it. This series is very intentionally called the

refresher training series. Because we recognize the value of the experience care providers have, the second segment of this series, the refresher webinar, is an interactive webinar that provides a lot of opportunities for people to share their knowledge and experience with their peers. I think it is so vital to be able to share experiences, brainstorm, and recognize that many others have some of the same challenges and maybe they've used solutions that you wouldn't have otherwise thought of. There's just so much value in training even when the subject matter is familiar.

**Cheryl Miller:** So, another question folks often ask is do people who just work for family have to take the training?

**Sarah Edwards:** Yeah, that's a great question. And the answer is yes. So, training is required for all home care, personal support workers and personal care attendants even if they're only working for a family member. But, as Whitney just mentioned, training really does benefit the person providing care to ensure that they have the best and most current information available when they're caring for their loved one. And we recognize that you know your family member the best, and we also recognize that there are lots of ways in which providing care for a family member can be really difficult. There are a lot of rules to follow, so attending these training courses provides additional tools and resources for providing the very best care to your family member.

**Whitney Taylor:** Such a good point, Sarah. Cheryl, I'm going to change things up a bit. This last question regarding who is required to take training is for you. Do people who receive services from a worker have to take training, too?

**Cheryl Miller:** Great question. No, there's no required training for them, but they may be interested in the Oregon Home Care Commission's Employer Resource Connection Program designed to help individuals be successful employers of home care workers, personal support workers, or personal care attendants. Let us shift gears a bit. Workers are often concerned that 12 hours seems like a lot of time to fit into their busy schedules. What if a worker does not have the time to attend the training?

**Sarah Edwards:** So that's a valid concern, and Carewell understands how important it is that the training be convenient, so sessions are offered

a variety of ways. Online modules are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Care providers can start and stop the online training any time they want to pick up where they left off, and currently two-thirds of the training is self-paced, online courses. For the portion that happens at a set time, the webinars, they are offered during a variety of times and dates including evening and weekends, and care providers can participate in the pilot program now and receive training credit for when it becomes required in September of 2021. Current workers have until March 31, 2022 to finish the refresher training, which means if you start now, you have a lot of time to find a session that works for you.

**Cheryl Miller:** That is great news. Current workers have quite a long time to take advantage of the refresher training. I'm glad of this. It will allow them to fit the training into their schedule. Another question we get is because this is required, does that mean workers can take trainings during work hours?

**Sarah Edwards:** No, the training must be taken when you are off duty.

**Cheryl Miller:** So, if a worker is really struggling to find time and they do not complete the required training by March of 2022, what will happen?

**Sarah Edwards:** Well, Senate Bill 1534 requires that all workers participate in this training and so that means if a worker does not take the training, they won't be eligible to work. We really want workers to be successful, and we want to make sure they have plenty of time to take the training and help them resolve any barriers that make it difficult for them to do that so that's why this training is offered in flexible times and a variety of different ways, and we are also offering tons of different ways to support folks who are having difficulty making time or accessing the training so all they have to do is reach out to us, and we're really confident that everyone will have an opportunity to participate in the training.

**Cheryl Miller:** You've mentioned several times about a lot of the training being provided online. What if a worker doesn't have the technology resources to take the training?

**Sarah Edwards:** Great question. So, the training does not have to be accessed through a computer. It can be taken using a tablet or a smartphone. Additionally, we offer other ways to take the trainings for those who don't have a computer or don't have internet. We have lots of different solutions that we can offer to folks, so if you're in need of additional assistance, all you have to do is contact us, and you can reach us by phone at 1-844-503-7348.

**Cheryl Miller:** That is excellent to learn about all the different technology options and resources workers have to access the training. For people who prefer to take the training in a language other than English, are interpreters and translated materials available?

**Whitney Taylor:** Yes. Carewell offers interpreter services and materials translated into a variety of languages. You can select your preferred language when you log into the learning portal and that will display instructions and navigation features in the selected language. We currently have our online courses fully translated into six different languages. Those languages are Spanish, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, and Somali. If you would like an interpreter for the webinar section of the training, you can schedule that by reaching out to 1-844-503-7348. Cheryl, and I have another question for you. Do workers who take trainings through the Oregon Home Care Commission still have to take training through Carewell?

**Cheryl Miller:** The commission and Carewell have the same goal of providing quality trainings to workers to help them develop their skills. Carewell provides required training. The commission provides voluntary trainings that help workers earn professional certifications such as professional development, PDC, enhanced, and exceptional certifications for home care and personal support workers, and ventilator dependency quadriplegia certification, which is for home care workers, and, of course, all workers the traditional health worker program is available and credential to them. Current workers that hold one of these certifications will be exempt from the refresher training series. We encourage workers to take training through Carewell and the commission. Last question. Do workers have to pay for training?

**Sarah Edwards:** No. Training is free to all home care workers, personal support workers, and personal care attendants and not only is it free, but workers will be provided a stipend when they attend our required trainings, and, just a note, orientation is a course that's taken preemployment so workers won't get a stipend for that one, but for all other courses, workers will be provided a stipend.

**Cheryl Miller:** Thank you, Sarah. Well, that completes a five-part series on the new training requirement for home care workers, personal support workers, and personal care attendants. We are so pleased that you have joined us, and we hope this information has been helpful to you. We will continue to share information about required training through social media, posting information on our websites, through email, and please remember to visit the Oregon Home Care Commission's and Carewell's websites for more information. Thank you so much for joining us, and Sarah and Whitney, thank you.

**Whitney Taylor:** Thanks for having us.