

Tri-City Senior Peer Counselor 2019 Training Program Description

What is the Senior Peer Counseling Program (SPC)? The City of Fremont offers the SPC Program to help meet the mental health needs of seniors living in Fremont, Newark and Union City. SPC matches warm and compassionate volunteers with vulnerable older adults who may be experiencing mild depression, anxiety, loneliness, loss, family conflict and grief. Successful volunteers bring a wealth of life experience, a caring spirit, and often a common background, to their work with clients.

What is the volunteer commitment? Active volunteers dedicate approximately 5-10 hours each month to SPC activities, after completing the initial 54-hour training program. Active volunteers are expected to:

- provide weekly client home visits and complete associated documentation
- attend weekly Tuesday morning group case consultation meetings
- participate in the counseling program for a minimum of 12 months

Following completion of the training, attendance at a minimum of one group meeting/month is required, although more frequent attendance is encouraged. Volunteers who are not able to attend the Tuesday morning meeting may make alternate arrangements with the Program Coordinator.

What does the training program include? The training is highly interactive and includes frequent role play to practice active listening, asking effective questions, and motivational interviewing. Course objectives include:

- enhancement of personal qualities essential to working closely with older adults
- competency to provide supportive peer counseling
- increased knowledge of older adult mental health and related life changes
- familiarity with community resources to enhance older persons' quality of life

What is the schedule for the 2019 Training Program? Classes will be held Tuesdays and Thursdays, for 3 hours each day, from 1:00- 4:00pm, beginning March 12- May 9. A graduation ceremony and lunch will take place on Friday, May 17, 12:00 pm.

Who is eligible for the Training Program? The 9-week training is offered annually to a cohort of 9-12 trainees. There are no educational requirements to become a counselor. We are looking for warm, caring people who reflect the diversity of the Tri-Cities. The major requirements are empathy and a desire to help others. Applicants must be 50 years of age or older. Enrollment is limited and is based on a selective interview process.

How do I apply? Complete the attached application and return by Friday, February 8.

For further information: Contact Heidi Stein, LCSW, SPC Program Coordinator, (510) 574-2064 or email at hstein@fremont.gov