

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AIDE (BHA) EDUCATION PROGRAM

PROGRAM OVERVIEW BOOKLET
2025



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WHAT IS THE BHA LEVEL SCOPE OF WORK?

➔ BHA 1 Services



Wellness promotion through cultural activities (examples: talking circles, cultural art practices, drumming, dancing, traditional games); Education and advocacy on behavioral health topics;

Community needs assessments; Screenings, intakes, and referrals; Trauma informed crisis counseling; Case management; Life skills coaching; Individual and group interventions; Psychospiritual support and education; Medication education.

➔ BHA 2 Services



All of the BHA Level 1 services **plus** substance use disorder assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, and treatment implementation; community readiness; family intervention and counseling.

➔ What are the Portland Area CHAP Certification Board (PACCB) Requirements?



- Completed coursework from chosen academic institution 1,000 work hours per year (2,000 total) 200 total
- practicum hours
- Master's level Clinical Supervisor
 - Check ins
 - Cultural implementation
 - Knowledge & Skills Checklist completion (signed)



OVERVIEW OF THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AIDE EDUCATION PROGRAM

What is a Behavioral Health Aide (BHA)?

A Behavioral Health Aide (BHA) is a counselor, health educator, and advocate. BHAs help address individual and community-based behavioral health needs, including those related to alcohol, drug, and tobacco misuse. They also provide trauma-informed approaches to mental and spiritual health care such as depression and anxiety resources, suicide prevention, grief support, and self-care tools. BHAs seek to achieve balance in the community by integrating their sensitivity to cultural needs with specialized training in behavioral health concerns and culturally appropriate approaches to treatment.

Northwest Indian College (NWIC):

- Located on the Lummi Nation in Bellingham, Washington
- Tribal college
- Quarter-based program (4 quarters)
- **Online learning**
- Adapted from the Bachelors in Chemical Dependency program 2-year
- Associate in Technical Arts (ATA) in BHA

This education program prepares BHAs with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to provide quality behavioral health care in throughout pacific northwest tribes and communities to increase access & services in a culturally- responsive manner.

BHAs will learn how to:

- Engage with behavioral health prevention and intervention programs.
- Identify and use resources to address individual, family, and tribal community mental health needs.
- Communicate and interact effectively with an Indigenous client population.
- Evaluate client needs and document services accurately.
- Build a personal portfolio to assist them in receiving National Certification through the Portland Area CHAP Certification Board (PACCB).

BHA PATHWAY

Anyone can be a BHA. Prospective students are encouraged to be currently working for a Tribe or Tribal Health Department.

The BHA Program is a 2-year commitment. If students come in with any higher education credits, they may be transferrable and shorten the length of program completion.

Throughout schooling, BHAs will be assisted in working towards creating a portfolio that will acquire documentation needed for National Certification.

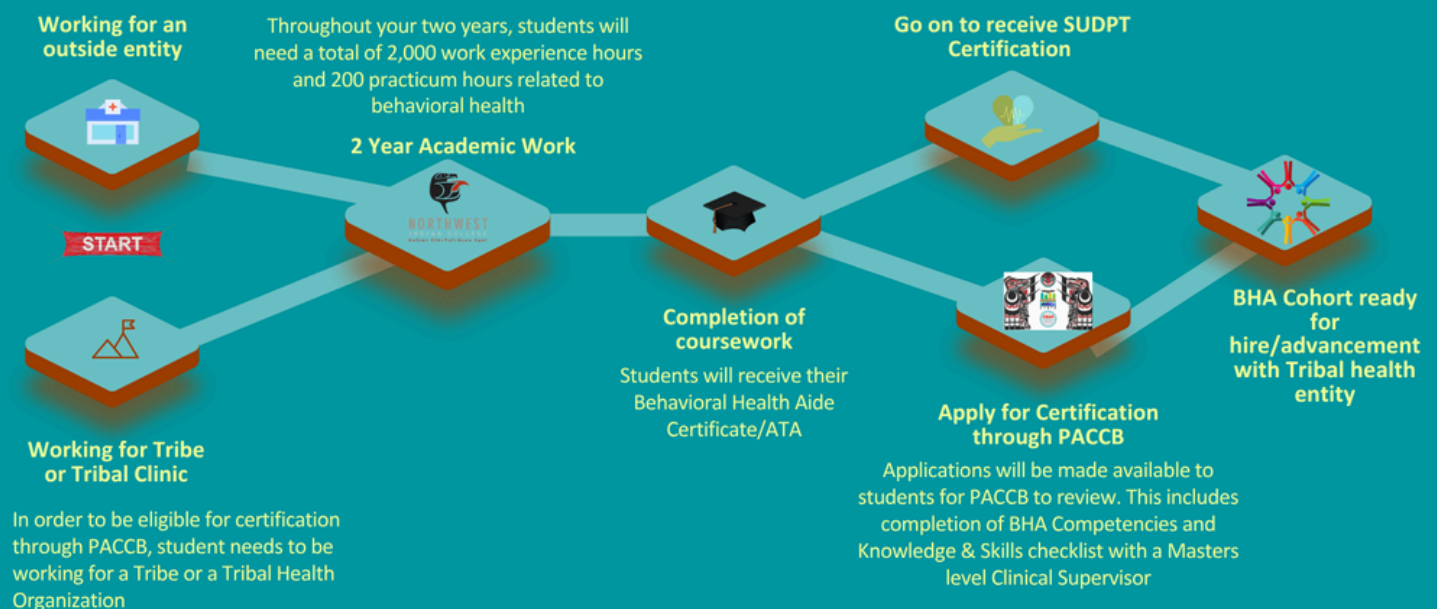
Students may go on to pursue additional certifications, such as a SUDPT certificate. Several BHAs have chosen to extend their educational journey and pursue NWIC's Bachelor's degree in Chemical Dependency. This pursuit is encouraged!

VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF 2 YEAR BHA EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY

BHA Route : 2022-2028

Those working for an outside entity need to have a signed contract with a local Tribe to complete work experience hours through their mental health or behavioral health department

An additional SUDPT Certification is available to you for an additional semester through NWIC



PROSPECTIVE BHA TRAINEES

Anyone can enroll in the BHA Education Program at Northwest Indian College (NWIC). A long established partnership exists between the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (NPAIHB) and NWIC. Thereby emphasizing a partnership in program development, student recruitment, and student support.

Prioritization for NPAIHB stipend funding will go to prospective trainees who:

- Have a highschool diploma or GED
- Are currently working for a Tribe and/or Tribal Behavioral Health Clinic/Department
- Have a Master's level Clinical Supervisor or licensed behavioral health professional
- Are interested in pursuing National Certification through the Portland Area CHAP Certification Board (PACCB)

NOTE:

- If you have any higher education credits, you are encouraged to apply. Your credits received may be transferrable to NWIC.





NORTHWEST INDIAN COLLEGE

Building People,
Building Nations.



Yakaiyastai Gorman (*Diné*)

BHA Coordinator and Professor at NWIC

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The Behavioral Health Aide (BHA) Associates of Technical Arts (ATA) degree embodies a holistic competency-based instruction, with emphasis in clinical instruction and skills, awareness of cultural influences, emphasis on a positive learning environment, and respect for the unique needs of the adult learner while promoting self-directed leadership, communal responsibility, Indigenous value ethics, and responsibility.

The BHA ATA degree reflects the nature of enhancing quality Tribal Health Care to create diverse economic opportunities within Tribal Communities. With its main campus located on the Lummi Indian Reservation in Washington State, NWIC is the only accredited tribal college serving the states of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

Northwest Indian College's student body is diverse, ranging from students straight out of high school, many attracted by our growing athletic program, to returning adult learners of all ages. Over 75 percent of our students come from a federally-recognized Indian tribe and our students represent over 90 different Tribal nations. The Northwest Indian College proudly serves over 1,200 students annually.

Institution Structures

Term (4 quarter) system NWIC start date:

- Fall term: September 16, 2025
- Winter term: January 6, 2026

Pathway: All courses in BHA ATA pathway can go toward a Bachelor of Arts in Chemical Dependency

- This includes an additional 2 years of coursework depending on your course enrollment, preexisting credits, and other factors.

Behavioral Health Aide meets Northwest Indian College Institutional Outcomes:

- 1.Exhibit Sense of Place
- 2.Recognize Tribal rights as they relate to human rights
- 3.Practice community building through service learning
- 4.Effectively communicate in diverse situations, from receiving to expressing information, both verbally and non-verbally
- 5.Meet the technological challenges of a modern world
- 6.Work cooperatively toward a common goal

www.nwic.edu

NWIC Curriculum Overview

NWIC Foundational Courses:

CSOV 101 – INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY

CSOV 102 – THE LANGUAGE OF OUR ANCESTORS

CSOV 120 – RECLAIMING OUR HISTORY

ATA Required Courses:

CMST 101 – INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTERS

CMST 210 – INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

CMPS 101 – INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTERS

HMDV 110 – INTRODUCTION TO SUCCESSFUL LEARNING

MATH 190 – AAS OR ATA REQUIREMENT

ENGL 101 – ENGLISH COMPOSITION

NWIC Curriculum Overview

NWIC BHA Program Core Courses:

- BEHA 100 General Orientation
- BEHA 101 Introduction to BHA
- BEHA 102 Health Privacy & Documentation
- BEHA 103 Crisis Management
- BEHA 197 Supervised Practicum
- BEHA 297 Supervised Practicum II
- HUMS 120 Survey of Chemical Dependency
- HUMS 130 Pharmacology of Substances
- HUMS 156 Stress Management
- HUMS 160 Chemical Dependency Case Management
- HUMS 170 Chemical Dependency Individual Counseling
- HUMS 187 Airborne and Bloodborne Pathogens
- HUMS 210 Group Facilitation
- HUMS 223 Chemical Dependency Assessment & Treatment
- HUMS 230 Chemical Dependency & the Family
- HUMS 240 Multicultural Counseling
- HUMS 275 Relapse Prevention
- PSYC 101 General Psychology
- PSYC 220 Abnormal Psychology

APPLICATION PROCESS

**Ready to begin
your educational
journey? Follow
these steps.**



STEP 1

Apply for funding through NPAIHB's Stipend Application.

- Access online [application here](#):
- To request a fillable pdf application, please contact Katie Hunsberger at khunsberger@npaihb.org
- Application Materials include:
 - Resume
 - Cover letter
 - Reference letter



STEP 2

Wait to receive funding acceptance letter from NPAIHB BHA Program Manager, Katie Hunsberger. Review of applications can take up to 1 month.



STEP 3

Once you have received an acceptance letter for funding, you will receive next steps that guide you through the admissions process for Northwest Indian College.



STEP 4

Once you have applied for admissions at NWIC please submit all required documents to NPAIHB's Program Manager. Stipend funding will not be sent to you until all requirements are met.

NPAIHB Stipend Funding Visual

Total Stipend Funding	Year 1	Year 2	School Supplies	PACCB Prep
Total = \$13,500 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This total amount can be used for either a stipend (personal expenses) or a scholarship (tuition). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NOTE: Students must submit final grades at the end of each quarter. 	Year 1 Total = \$6,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are required to make tuition payments on their own behalf. Students will receive this allotted amount in one payment. 	Year 2 Total = \$7,500 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are required to make payments on their own behalf. Students will receive this allotted amount in a one-time payment. 	School Supply Funding = \$3,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will receive an additional \$3,000 for school supplies. Funding can be used for any supplies needed to get through coursework. This total amount will only be given in Year 1. 	Additional Funding to pursue National Certification <p>Students are eligible for an additional \$7,500 in funding for one year of preparation for National Certification through the Portland Area CHAP Certification Board (PACCB).</p>

THESE AMOUNTS MAY CHANGE BASED UPON AVAILABILITY OF FUNDING.

NPAIHB Stipend Funding

Funding support for BHA trainees

Funding for BHAs is supported through the Human Resources Services Administration's (HRSA) Opioid-Impacted Family Support Program (OIFSP) grant.



Students who receive funding will be responsible for making their own tuition payments near the end of each term.

Students who receive funding are expected to pursue National Certification through PACCB.

These amounts may change based upon availability of funding.

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NATIONAL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

BHAs working for a Tribe/Tribal Health Clinic or Department and eligible for National Certification through the Portland Area CHAP Certification Board (PACCB).

What is required?

- Completed coursework from NWIC
 - Copy of BHA ATA degree from NWIC
- A Master's level Clinical Supervisor or licensed behavioral health professional to oversee BHA work, duties, and skill development
- 100 hours of logged clinical practicum for Level 1 scope of work
- 100 hours of logged clinical practicum for Level 2 scope of work
- 2,000 hours of work experience within Tribe/Tribal Health Department

Pursuing National Certification

What does the certification process look like?



PORTLAND AREA CHAP CERTIFICATION BOARD (PACCB)

WHAT IS THE PACCB?

The Portland Area Community Health Aide Program Certification Board sets standards for the community health aide program and certifies individuals as community health aides and practitioners, dental health aides (including primary dental health aides, dental health aide hygienists, expanded function dental health aides, and dental health aide therapists), and behavioral health aides and practitioners. Each of these individuals is subject to specific requirements and engages in a specific scope of practice set forth in these Standards, which may also be referred to as the Portland Area Standards and Procedures (PASP). For historical reasons, these various health aides are often referred to generically as “community health aides” or Tribal Community Health Providers.”

WHO SITS ON THE PACCB?

1. Portland Area IHS Director
2. Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (NPAIHB) Delegate
3. NPAIHB Affiliate
4. BHA/P Representative
5. CHA/P Representative
6. DHA/T Representative
7. BHARC Representative
8. CHARC Representative
9. DHARC Representative
10. Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Medicaid
11. Oregon Health Authority
12. Washington Healthcare Authority
13. Portland Area CHAP Education Programs