

Employer FAQ on PCA Orientation

(updated 12/30/2016)

Q: Who needs to complete orientation?

A: Orientation is required for any PCA first hired on or after January 1st, 2015. PCAs working for **any** employer since before this date probably don't need to take orientation. Your PCAs hire date can be confirmed with your fiscal intermediary.

Q: Why is orientation required?

A: All PCAs are part of a bargaining unit and the conditions of employment in that bargaining unit are outlined in a contract between the state (the PCA Workforce Council) and the union, called a collective bargaining agreement. The current collective bargaining agreement states that "An orientation shall be completed by all PCAs first hired after January 1, 2015...."

Q: What is a PCA?

A: We understand that some people do not think of themselves as receiving PCA services. "PCA" means Personal Care Attendant and is used broadly to describe individuals employed by a consumer-employer in various DSS and DDS programs, including: Individual Home Support, Individual Day Support, Personal Support, Personal Care Attendant, Adult Companion, and Respite.

Q: If I opt-out, why does my PCA need to attend a 30-minute union-only session?

A: The collective bargaining agreement says that the orientation will include 30 minutes on "workers' rights and responsibilities ***presented by a Union representative.***"

Q: How does my PCA sign-up for the 30 minute union-only portion?

A: The union-only portion will be the first 30 minutes of each group session. PCAs sign-up the same way they sign up for the full group orientations:

Online: <https://www.tfaforms.com/433968>

Phone: 860-804-4869 (Litchfield, New Haven, Fairfield and New London)
860-804-4867 (Hartford, Middlesex, Tolland and Windham)

A schedule of orientation group sessions is also posted on our website, <http://portal.ct.gov/pcaworkforcecouncil/>.

Q: Is my PCA required to join the union?

A: PCAs have the option to choose whether or not to have union dues deducted from their paychecks. That choice is between your PCA and the union. We urge employers not to interfere with that choice.

Q: How is my PCA paid for completing orientation?

A: In the same manner they are paid for service time (either direct deposit or paper check). The orientation stipend should be paid within two weeks of completing orientation. The orientation stipend is \$37.50.

Q: If I opt-out, will my PCA still be paid?

A: Yes, but your PCA must complete both the union-only portion and the employer-provided portion of the orientation.

Q: Does the orientation count against my budget or service hours?

A: No, the payment will not be deducted from your budget. Also, orientation must be taken during non-service time.

Q: What is the orientation deadline?

A: PCAs hired between January 1, 2015 and November 30, 2016 now have an orientation deadline of February 28, 2017. The deadline for all new PCAs hired after November 30, 2016 is 90 days from his/her hire date.

Q: What is the PCA Workforce Council?

A: The PCA Workforce Council was established by state law in 2012. It represents the interests of employers of PCAs and the state of Connecticut and negotiates the PCA collective bargaining agreement with the union that represents PCAs.

Q: I have a question, concern or complaint about the orientation program, who do I contact?

A: We encourage employers to contact the PCA Workforce Council. Our phone number is 860-418-6370. Our email address is pcacouncil@ct.gov. You can also visit our website at <http://portal.ct.gov/pcaworkforcecouncil/>.

While we do receive calls from employees, the PCA Workforce Council represents employers. Employees are encouraged first to speak with their employer. Further questions can be addressed to the union, SEIU-NE, at 860-549-1199 or mailbox@seiu1199ne.org.

Q: How do I join the PCA Workforce Council?

A: Members of the Council are appointed by the Governor and legislative leaders. If you would like to be considered for appointment, please email pcacouncil@ct.gov.