

3/10/2026

Dear Amanda Guile-Hinman,

I am writing to express my strong support for the continuation of the Wilsonville Peer Support Specialist position through The Peer Company and to encourage the City Council to maintain funding for this vital role beyond the current budget cycle.

In the short time that Denyell Cruise has served in this position, the value of peer support within our community response system has already proven to be significant. Since her employment began, I have experienced meaningful relief in my caseload and a noticeable improvement in the continuity of care for individuals experiencing behavioral health crises.

My role requires prioritizing immediate crisis response and stabilization services. While crisis intervention is essential, many individuals do not stabilize with a single outreach. They often require additional time, connection, and consistent support to locate resources, remain engaged in treatment, and work toward long-term stability. This is where the Peer Support Specialist position has become indispensable.

Denyell has consistently stepped in to provide that ongoing support. I have been able to refer individuals who require more intensive engagement and connection to resources, and she has taken on this responsibility with professionalism, confidence, and genuine respect for meeting people where they are in their lives. She has joined me on calls, built trusting relationships with clients, and continued to support them through multiple stages of recovery, including treatment engagement and relapse. Her ability to stay engaged with individuals beyond the initial crisis provides the consistency many people need in order to move toward stability.

This type of peer support not only improves outcomes for the individuals being served, but it also strengthens the efficiency of our overall response system. When individuals receive consistent follow-up and support navigating resources, they are less likely to fall back into repeated crisis situations that require emergency response. By helping people stay connected to treatment, housing resources, and community services, the Peer Support Specialist role helps reduce repeat crisis calls and unnecessary strain on emergency and crisis response systems.

The Peer Support Specialist role allows crisis responders like myself to remain available for urgent situations while knowing that individuals who need longer-term engagement are still being supported. This collaborative model creates a continuum of care that crisis services alone cannot provide.

Based on the positive impact already demonstrated in such a short time, I strongly encourage the City Council to continue funding the Wilsonville Peer Support Specialist position. Maintaining this role will ensure that individuals in our community continue to have access to the compassionate, consistent, and recovery-oriented support that peer services provide, while also supporting a more efficient and cost-effective community response system.

Thank you for your time and for your continued commitment to the well-being of the Wilsonville community.

Sincerely,

*Brenda Evans*

Brenda Evans, LCSW  
Wilsonville Police Department BHU, Clackamas County MCRT