



Brand and Language Guidelines
for Partner Organizations Promoting the Certified Wellness
Coach Profession



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HCAI expands access to quality, equitable, affordable health care for all Californians by supporting high-value delivery systems, resilient health facilities and workforces, and actionable health information and strategies.

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1. Purpose of This Guide

This Brand and Language Guidelines document establishes standards for how the Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) program is represented across all partner institutions, including education programs, workforce partners, CWC employers, and communications teams.

These guidelines are intended to:

- Protect the integrity and consistency of the CWC brand
- Ensure alignment with HCAI's role as the sponsoring authority
- Prevent misrepresentation of the program or profession
- Provide clear rules for branding, language, and visual identity

All partners using the HCAI and/or CWC name, logo, or program description must adhere to these guidelines.

2. Brand Architecture

2.1 Sponsor Brand (Master Brand): HCAI

HCAI is the official sponsoring agency and governing authority of the Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) program and is responsible for:

- Defining the CWC role and scope
- Establishing certification requirements
- Designating education programs
- Maintaining brand standards and approvals

HCAI must always be presented as the primary authority brand with the use of a logo or text line attribution.

2.2 Program Brand (Sub-Brand): Certified Wellness Coach (CWC)

The Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) is a state-sponsored workforce profession certified by and operating under HCAI.

The CWC program represents:

- A new profession in behavioral health
- A standardized competency framework

- A statewide certification pathway

Educational institutions and partners operate under the CWC brand and may not present themselves as program owners or credentialing authorities.

| P – Permitted/ Encouraged | A – Allowed with HCAI Review | D – Discouraged | U – Unacceptable |
|---|---|---|--|
| Using the official name “Certified Wellness Coach (CWC)” | Creating companion taglines or headlines using the CWC name | Informal abbreviations or casual renaming | Renaming or rebranding the CWC program/profession |
| Describing programs as “HCAI-Designated” (if approved) | Explaining designation in student-friendly language | Using “designated” without clear attribution to HCAI | Claiming designation without HCAI approval |
| Using HCAI-approved program descriptions | Modifying descriptions for specific audiences | Rewriting role definitions | Redefining the CWC role or scope |
| Using official CWC and HCAI logos as provided | Co-branding layouts with partner logos | Inconsistent logo sizing or placement | Altering, recoloring, or embedding logos |
| Stating “prepares students to apply for certification” | Creating co-branded recruitment or marketing materials | Implied outcomes or aspirational phrasing | Promising certification or employment |
| Referencing CWC as an entry-level behavioral health profession administered by HCAI | Drafting language about the profession and how it relates to partners | Comparative language against other professions (e.g., “leading,” “top”) | Superlative or exclusive claims about the profession |
| Referencing HCAI as program sponsor | Launching/ modifying co-branded websites or social media pages | New co-branded platforms without coordination | Publishing co-branded channels without HCAI approval |

For questions or situations not covered in the table above, please reach out to WellnessCoach@hcai.ca.gov.

2.3 References

Below are examples of how we use key terms for the Certified Wellness Coach Program and the departments and initiatives it falls under.

| Preferred Usage | As Appropriate |
|--------------------------|---|
| Certified Wellness Coach | CWC, Wellness Coach, Coach (after first usage of full name) |

| | |
|--|--|
| The California Certified Wellness Coach program | Program (after first usage of full name) |
| California Department of Healthcare Access and Information | HCAI (after first usage of full name) |
| Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative | CYBHI (after first usage of full name) |
| California Health and Human Services Agency | CalHHS (after first usage of full name) |
| California Department of Health Care Services | DHCS (after first usage of full name) |

3. Core CWC Program Language

3.1 What is a CWC?

Official definition:

The Certified Wellness Coach role is a new, state-certified profession to increase California’s overall capacity to support the growing behavioral health needs of children and youth (ages 0-25). It is designed to help build a larger and more diverse and representative behavioral health workforce in California that has the training and supervision needed to engage directly with young people where they live, study, and work.

Wellness Coaches offer non-clinical services that support youth behavioral health and well-being, such as wellness promotion and education, screening, care coordination, individual and group support, and crisis referral. The model will supplement and support existing behavioral health roles, fill gaps in the current behavioral health workforce, and create a larger and more diverse workforce with whom youth can connect.

3.2 Designation Language for Education Partners

Official definition:

HCAI-Designated Education Programs (“Designated Institutions”) are colleges and universities formally recognized by the state for preparing students to become Certified Wellness Coaches. Through aligned curriculum and supervised field experience, these programs ensure graduates are ready to apply for certification immediately upon completing their degree.

Designation reflects a partnership with HCAI to strengthen California’s behavioral health workforce by creating clear, workforce-ready pathways for students.

3.3 Language Conventions

Communications should be crafted to be accessible and engaging for a wide audience, ensuring the information about the Certified Wellness Coach Program is easy to understand and share:

- We recommend all program materials, website content, and outreach communications aim for an 8th-grade reading level. This ensures our messages are clear and accessible to individuals of varying ages and educational backgrounds.
- Limit the use of the acronym "CWC" when possible. Always introduce with "Certified Wellness Coach (CWC)" first, followed by "Wellness Coach" in subsequent references. "Coach" may be used alone only after one of the longer forms has been mentioned, ensuring the term is never misunderstood or taken out of context.
- "Health care" should be spelled as two words, aligning with industry standards, except in specific titles.
- When referring to "mental wellness", “wellness,” “mental well-being,” or “well-being,” choose these terms carefully to reflect the program/profession’s focus on providing support, avoiding any implication of medical or clinical intervention.
- When discussing the impact of Certified Wellness Coaches, avoid overpromising or suggesting a direct causation in elevating the well-being of children and youth (for instance, instead of writing "Certified Wellness Coaches improve the mental health and well-being of children and youth," it should read, "Certified Wellness Coaches play a role in supporting the mental health and well-being of children and youth.")
- When referring to Certified Wellness Coaches as an occupation, use “profession” over “role” to clarify this as an occupation as opposed to specific activities (e.g., “The Certified Wellness Coach profession provides entry-level behavioral health services to children and youth.”).

For the full language and design guidelines specific to creating new materials for the Certified Wellness Coach profession, reach out to WellnessCoach@hcai.ca.gov.

3.4 Additional Resources

HCAI websites and pages provide approved language and content that partners can reference when developing materials. These resources are intended to guide partners as part of the branding guidelines.

- [HCAI Certified Wellness Coach](#): HCAI’s technical website provides detailed information on the program’s model, grant programs, and other aspects of the profession and certification.
- [Cawellnesscoach.org](#): HCAI’s marketing website provides an overview of the profession and certification program, as well as high-level information for prospective CWCs, employers, and education partners.
- [HCAI CWC Designated Education Programs](#): HCAI’s resource page, developed specifically for designated education programs, provides answers to their frequently asked questions.

4. Brand Integrity and Partner Guardrails

HCAI serves as the steward of the Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) brand and is responsible for maintaining consistency, accuracy, and appropriate use of program identity and messaging.

The goal of these guidelines is to ensure partners maintain the integrity of the Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) brand while allowing flexibility in partner communications. Partners are expected to follow established branding and language guidelines when developing materials related to the program.

4.1. Use of the CWC Name

The official program name is Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) and should be used consistently in communications. The name should not be altered, combined with other titles, or rebranded.

4.2. Designation Language

Only education programs that have received formal approval may represent themselves as Designated Institutions by HCAI. Programs may not imply designation status prior to completing the official validation process.

Education programs that are under contract and working toward designation may identify themselves as a “program working toward designation,” provided designation has not yet been formally granted.

For a quick guide, reference the [Appendix](#) in this document.

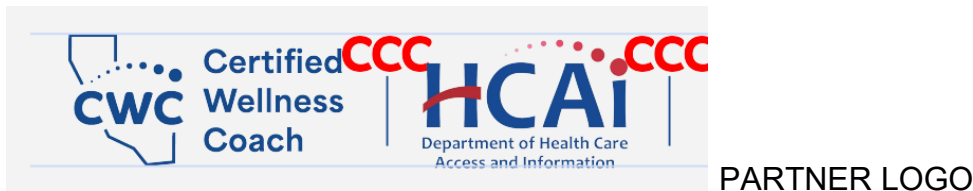
4.3. Logo Use

If the CWC logo is used, it must follow the official brand standards provided by HCAI. Logos may not be modified, recolored, or altered. Partner branding may appear alongside the CWC logo in accordance with the branding guidelines.

Co-Branding

The objective for co-branding is to grow the Certified Wellness Coach brand while providing partners with the opportunity to use their established brand. Partners can use their brand equity and ties to their community to receive attention for their affiliation with the program. This will create a brand halo that is mutually beneficial.

Place/visualize three “C”s from the insignia in a row to space the logos out and center the separating line to the middle “C”.



When choosing to co-brand, a partner logo can be used next to the CWC logo, and a text attribute can reference the HCAI brand. This option may be best where there is limited space for brand representation.



Text Attribute: *The Certified Wellness Coach program is a profession sponsored and governed by the California Department of Health Care Access and Information.*

Note: If appropriate, include a link to the CWC and/or HCAI website.

For the full language and design guidelines specific to creating new materials for the Certified Wellness Coach profession reach out to WellnessCoach@hcai.ca.gov.

Co-Branding with CYBHI

The use of the CYBHI logo is prohibited without prior authorization. While represented in the official CWC Branding Guidelines document, the CYBHI logo is only used when all co-branding is used by HCAI on specific occasions. Partners may include a text attribute and a link if approved by HCAI.

Text Attribute: *The Certified Wellness Coach program is a profession sponsored and governed by the California Department of Health Care Access and Information in conjunction with the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative.*

4.4. Marketing and Promotional Content

Partners may develop their own promotional materials but should align with the branding and language guidelines provided by HCAI.

Partners should reference HCAI-approved language and descriptions when describing the CWC program and profession to ensure consistency in how the program is represented publicly.

HCAI websites and materials provide approved language and content that partners can reference when developing communications.

External parties may paraphrase publicly available HCAI information with accurate attribution.

Direct quotes or use of HCAI-branded language, program descriptions, or narrative frameworks require explicit written approval.

Any reference must avoid implying endorsement or partnership unless formally authorized by HCAI.

4.5. Use of Non-Public Materials

Use of draft, internal, or unpublished information is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, any email communications between partners and HCAI or its affiliates.

5. Mandatory HCAI Brand Review Process

All partners must submit public-facing CWC materials to HCAI for review and approval prior to publication, including but not limited to:

- Websites and webpages
- Brochures and flyers
- Social media campaigns
- Press releases
- Public presentations and PowerPoint slides
- Videos and digital media
- Other co-branded materials (e.g., swag, shirts, table skirts)

HCAI reserves the right to:

- Request edits
- Deny use of materials

- Require removal of non-compliant content

Depending on the nature of the relationship between HCAI and the partnering organization, submission may be made to the "Program Communication Lead." Individuals serving in this role may include:

- HCAI Communication Team Lead
- HCAI Policy Team Lead
- HCAI Grant/Vendor Manager

Estimated Processing Time for HCAI Review:

- Short content, small, targeted audience: approx. 2 – 3 weeks
- Longer content, broad audience: approx. 3 – 4 weeks

Note: This processing time does not account for further reiteration or revisions that may be required if HCAI identifies areas of misalignment.

For more information on the submission process, reference the [Process for Submission and HCAI Approval](#) section below.

5.1 Retroactive Compliance for Existing Materials

Any existing materials that are still in use and do not align with current HCAI and/or CWC branding standards should be updated or withdrawn to ensure accuracy and consistency moving forward.

6. Visual Identity Standards

6.1. HCAI Logo Specifics

When using the HCAI logo, please obtain the correct file type (e.g., PNG, JPG, EPS) from your Program Communication Lead referenced above. If you are unsure which file type to use, be sure to include the usage for the logo (e.g., for digital use a PNG file; for print use a JPG or high-resolution EPS file). Ensure the brand colors are not modified. Do not distort the logo or place it on top of a busy background. Do not attempt to "recreate" the logo in any way.



Please note that you can use the main colors if there's a requirement to use a solid color scheme or a minimal color scheme.



6.2. CWC Logo Specifics

As with the HCAI logo, please obtain the correct file type (e.g., PNG, JPG, EPS) from your Program Communication Lead referenced above when using the CWC logo. If you are unsure which file type to use, be sure to include the usage for the logo (e.g., for digital use a PNG file; for print use a JPG or high-resolution EPS file). Ensure the brand colors are not modified. Do not distort the logo or place it on top of a busy background. Do not attempt to “recreate” the logo in any way.



For the full language and design guidelines specific to creating new materials for the Certified Wellness Coach profession reach out to WellnessCoach@hcai.ca.gov.

6.3. Photography

When using stock photography in materials associated with CWC, partners should align with the program values and mission:

Inclusivity

The CWC program is dedicated to supporting the well-being of all young Californians. Photography should reflect a diverse workforce and the broad communities served.

Keyword search: inclusive, diverse, culturally vibrant

Empathy

Photography should capture the compassionate spirit of the program, depicting moments of connection and understanding.

Keyword search: compassionate, supportive, empathetic

Guidance

Use photography that authentically captures adults guiding youth on their wellness journeys.

Keyword search: uplifting, inspiring, guiding

Usage:

- Stock photography use should comply with the site from which it is procured and include any attributions to the source.
- Do not use photography from internet browser searches unless it is lawfully obtained from a public-use or validated “royalty-free” source.

Note: Any stock photography that uses artificial intelligence (AI) must be labeled as such.

Creating specific photography:

- Ensure the imagery is created with the program values and mission in mind.
- Obtain written permission from anyone included in the photograph by using a Talent Release form in alignment with your organization’s policies.

7. Creating a Press Release

HCAI welcomes partner news and press releases to promote the CWC profession. As a state department, HCAI is responsible for what it releases to the public and is required to provide information to anyone who requests it under the California Public Records Act. HCAI’s Director’s Office reviews all information for accuracy, risk, relevancy, and other factors. The office also coordinates timing for all HCAI news and press engagements in conjunction with other news coming out from the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) and the Governor’s Office. Partners need to take this into consideration when preparing media statements or press releases about its programs.

7.1 Press Release Terms and Conditions

If a partner is engaging with the media to promote its program activities, there are important steps to follow:

- All partner organizations are required to submit press releases for review by HCAI at a minimum of two weeks in advance of the intended publication date for review and approval.
- Partner organizations understand that portions, or the entirety, of its press release may be used by HCAI, CalHHS or the Governor's Office and may be changed without notice.
- If HCAI, CalHHS or the Governor's Office issues a press release or statement about a partner program, but does not use the organization's press announcement, the partner may issue its release after HCAI, CalHHS or the Governor's Office issues a statement. The release must still be reviewed by HCAI before release.
- For some programs, a pre-approved press release template may be developed in a toolkit for the program, which may reduce the review/approval time by HCAI. (This does not apply to all programs.)

Partner representatives should stay in close contact with HCAI Program Communications Leads and provide any detailed plans related to news media engagement(s).

8. Governance and Enforcement

HCAI retains final authority over:

- Program definitions
- Brand usage
- Visual identity
- Public messaging

Non-compliance may result in:

- Required revisions
- Removal of branding rights
- Loss of designation status (if applicable)

9. Process for Submission & HCAI Approval

EXAMPLE:

1. Creator develops public-facing content
 - a. Before submitting for review, Creator should check for:
 - i. Use of approved program names, descriptions, and language
 - ii. Alignment to HCAI brand rules for logos, tone, and representation
 - iii. Removal of unapproved or internal HCAI content
2. Creator submits content to Program Communication Lead
 - a. Estimated processing time:
 - i. Short, smaller audience content: Approximately 1 – 2 weeks
 - ii. Long, larger audience content: Approximately 2 – 3 weeks
3. Communication Lead provides feedback to Creator
4. Creator incorporates all feedback and edits
5. Creator provides updated content to Communications Lead
 - a. Estimated processing time:
 - i. Short, smaller audience content: Approximately 1 – 2 weeks
 - ii. Long, larger audience content: Approximately 2 – 3 weeks
6. Communication Lead provides final approval for publication

HCAI created these service marks in the normal course of their duties with HCAI. HCAI retains all rights, title, and interest in and to the service marks (HCAI and CWC logos and brand).

Any violation of using these guidelines by user/CWC partners will be subject to appropriate legal action by the State of California. User agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless HCAI from any and all claims and losses accruing to any person, organization, or other legal entity resulting from its violation of use of the brands discussed within this document but only in proportion to and to the extent such claims result from or are caused by the acts or omissions of user/CWC partner its officers, agents, or employees.

Any questions should be directed to wellnesscoach@hcai.ca.gov.

10. Appendix Items

10.1. General Program Language Guidance from the CWC Design Guidelines

CERTIFIED WELLNESS COACH DESIGNATION LANGUAGE GUIDE

Scope of Use:
This document was developed to support consistent messaging by partners regarding Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) Designated Education Programs. This document is not intended to be shared externally.

Purpose of This Guide:
This guide is intended to support faculty, staff, and communications teams at official HCAI-Designated Education Programs in using consistent language when describing the program to students, partners, and the public. It helps ensure alignment with HCAI's expectations and supports accurate public understanding of the CWC pathway.

What Does "Designation" Mean?
Designation confirms that your college has:

- **Aligned** its curriculum and fieldwork components with HCAI's Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) competencies
- **Completed** all curricular gaps outlined in the approved Form 1
- **Received** final designation confirmation from HCAI (signed Memorandum of Understanding)

Being an HCAI-Designated Education Program signals to students and employers that your institution offers a vetted, structured pathway designed to help students meet the eligibility requirements to apply for CWC certification upon graduation.

Curriculum Alignment & Certification Eligibility
Suggested Language:
"Our program has been formally designated by the California State Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) as offering an approved curriculum aligned with Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) competencies. Students who complete the required coursework and fieldwork are eligible to apply for certification upon graduation."

Important Notes to Convey:
Certification is not guaranteed. While the curriculum is aligned, students must:

- Enroll in the correct set of courses
- Complete required fieldwork hours
- Work with an academic counselor to develop a Student Education Plan (SEP) that meets certification requirements

10.2. Student Friendly Language Guide



STUDENT AMBASSADOR LANGUAGE GUIDE

Purpose of This Guide

This guide helps you explain the Certified Wellness Coach program in clear, consistent, student-friendly language. It will prepare you to answer common questions and avoid misunderstandings when talking with peers who are curious about the program.

What Does “Designation” Mean?

Designation means that the Department of Health Care Access and Information has officially reviewed and approved the program’s curriculum and fieldwork, confirming it meets all Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) certification requirements, including completion of the degree and required fieldwork placement hours.

Suggested Student Language:

“If you choose a designated program, you can feel confident that the courses and fieldwork are already built to meet the requirements for applying to become a CWC when you graduate.”

Key Clarification:

Students in other majors (social work, psychology, human services, addiction studies, etc) can qualify for CWC certification. The difference is:

- Designated programs include all degree and fieldwork placement hours requirements.
- Non-designated programs may meet all requirements, but it’s up to the student to ensure they fulfill all curricular and fieldwork placement hours. If minimum hours aren’t met in the degree program, individuals must complete them after graduation via internships, volunteering, or on-the-job training before they can apply for certification.

Curriculum Alignment & Certification Eligibility

Suggested Student Language:

“Our school’s program is recognized by the state (HCAI) as offering the right classes and fieldwork to prepare students for CWC certification. Once you complete these requirements, you can apply for certification upon graduation.”

Key Clarification:

Certification is not automatic. **A student is still responsible to:**

- Take the right courses
- Complete the required fieldwork hours
- Work with a counselor to confirm their SEP meets requirements
- Submit an official application to, and have application approved by, HCAI