

IDD Provider Workforce:

Direct Support Professional (DSP)

Department of Labor Apprenticeship program

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Georgia
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Disabilities



Direct Support Professional (DSP) Certification Pilot Projects

Competency-Based Certification Overview

Competency- Based Certification- Overview

DBHDD is leading pilots for three pathways for Direct Support Professionals to earn a competency-based certification that recognizes their knowledge and skill in supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in community-based settings.

- Each pathway includes approximately 50 hours of competency-based online instruction through Relias or the College of Direct Support and an assessment that will lead to a Direct Support Professional Entry-level credential (DSP-I).
- Certification is based on the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services Core Competencies for Direct Support Workers.
- There is no cost to the DSP for participating in any of the pathways to certification
- Each DSP who earns a DSP certification, regardless of pathway, will receive a one-time bonus/stipend.
 - DSP I Certification = \$5000 bonus
 - DSP II Certification can earn an additional \$1000 bonus
 - DSP III Certification can earn an additional \$1000 bonus
- Each pilot will seek to support 200 DSPs to earn DSP I certification by January 31st, 2025.

Competency- Based Certification- Overview

Competency Area

- A broad category within a competency set containing related information that describes knowledge, skills, or abilities for effective work performance.

Competency Description

- A statement describing themes of knowledge, skills, or abilities for effective work performance within a discrete competency area.

Skill Statement

- A description of a competency standard that incorporates a highly specific, observable action (related to a competency area) that may be demonstrated by the worker.

Competency- Based Certification- Overview

- Competencies that are built into workforce development strategies can improve workforce recruitment and retention.
 - The workforce must have the knowledge, skills, and ethical compass to perform a wide array of tasks that support people with IDD to be healthy, safe, valued, and engaged members of their communities.
 - DSPs are interdisciplinary professionals.
- Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services (CMS) Direct Service Worker Core Competency Set (2019)
 - 1. Communication
 - 2. Person-Centered Practices
 - 3. Evaluation and Observation
 - 4. Crisis Prevention and Intervention
 - 5. Safety
 - 6. Professionalism and Ethics
 - 7. Empowerment and Advocacy
 - 8. Health and Wellness
 - 9. Community Living Skills and Support
 - 10. Community Inclusion and Networking
 - 11. Cultural Competency
 - 12. Education, Training, and Self-Development

Competency- Based Certification- Overview

- Why Credentialing /Certification
 - Ensures implementation of training to improve quality of support
 - Allows for performance to be based on knowledge and skill
 - Coordination with state reimbursement rate structures for incentives to raise wages based on skill enhancement and assessment
 - Introduce a true career ladder to promote tenure

Competency- Based Certification- Overview

- Direct Support Workforce Solutions – National Consulting Group (ICI/UMN)
- Training and Professional Development Toolkit
 - Job analysis of role and demonstration of skill
 - Contains:
 - DSP Foundation Credential (DSP-R)
 - DSP I – Entry Credential (DSP I)
 - DSP II – Emerging Credential (DSP II)
 - DSP III - Advanced Credential (DSP III)
 - Frontline Supervisor (FLS) I – Entry Credential (FLS)
 - DSP levels align with CMS Core Competencies and NADSP Competencies
 - FLS level aligns with National Frontline Supervisor Competencies

Direct Support Professionals Campaign



Direct Support Professional (DSP) Certification Pilot Project

Department of Labor Certified DSP Apprenticeship



Certified DSP Apprenticeship - River Edge

What:

Department of Labor Certified Direct Support Professional Apprenticeship program – Administered by River Edge Behavioral Health.

How:

Every apprentice will complete 159 virtual training hours through Relias. An assigned mentor will be coupled with the apprentice at each provider agency to ensure that the learned skills are being used and will be required to sign off on the competencies achieved.

Who:

New hires and DSPs employed by provider agencies – Individuals must be registered as an apprentice and work a minimum of 2,000 hours.

When:

The initial pilot will operate from February 1st, 2024 to January 31st, 2025.

For more information please email: Greta O'Dell at DOLpilot@river-edge.org



Why? Certified Direct Support Professional Apprenticeship

Registered Apprenticeships are industry-vetted and approved and validated by the U.S. Department of Labor.

- Key elements of all Registered Apprenticeship programs include the following:
 - **Industry Led** - Programs are industry-vetted and approved to ensure alignment with industry standards and that apprentices are trained for highly skilled, high-demand occupations.
 - **Paid Job** - Apprenticeships are jobs! Apprentices earn progressive wage as their skills and productivity increase.
 - **Structured On-the-Job Learning/Mentorship** - Programs provide structured on-the-job training to prepare for a successful career, which includes instruction from an experienced mentor.
 - **Supplemental Education** - Apprentices are provided supplemental classroom education based on the employers unique training needs to ensure quality and success.
 - **Diversity** - Programs are designed to reflect the communities in which they operate through strong non-discrimination, anti-harassment, and recruitment practices to ensure access, equity, and inclusion.
 - **Quality & Safety** - Apprentices are afforded worker protections while receiving rigorous training to equip them with the skills they need to succeed and the proper training and supervision they need to be safe.
 - **Credentials** - Apprentices earn a portable, nationally-recognized credential within their industry.

Benefits to Provider Organizations

- Recruit and develop highly skilled workforce that can help grow your business
 - Establishes a talent pipeline
 - Broadens the applicant pool
- Improve productivity, profitability and an employer's bottom line
- Create flexible training options that ensure staff develop the right skills
 - Keeps pace with best practices and innovations
- Minimize liability costs through appropriate training
 - Reduces risks and errors
- Increase retention of workers, during and following the apprenticeship program.
 - Filling vacancies can cost upwards to \$5,000 per DSP (CQL data) to recruit and train.
 - GCDD reports turnover rate in GA 45% with less than 64% staying around more than 1 year

Provider Organization Responsibilities

- Provider agency must register through an application with the Department of Labor and DBHDD to participate.
- Provider agency agrees to provide a mentor for apprentice that enrolls in the program.
- Provider agency agrees to pay the apprentice a minimum \$10.00 hour
 - Once the pilot ends, the plan is to be able to increase provider rates based on staff credentials through the rate study. When the rate study is approved, the plan would be to adjust the apprenticeship program wage scale to match the rate tables.

Benefits to Staff/Learners

- Earn a Paycheck from day 1
- Mentoring provided by a seasoned employee
 - One (1) qualified Mentor must be employed in each jobsite employing one (1) apprentice
- Rewarded for being productive, the credential follows the staff
- Credit for prior learning and experience (up to 1000 hours)
- Pride in accomplishments
- Valued employee
- Opportunities for advancement

Mentorship

- Providers will need to identify a mentor. A good mentor must possess the following characteristics
 - Extensive experience in a related or relevant field
 - Similar educational background
 - Has overcome relatable challenges
 - Friendly and genuine personality
 - Credible and trustworthy character
 - Must not feel threatened by empowering others
 - Favorably disposed to flexible mentoring styles
 - Open to learning from the mentee
- Mentoring requires a lot of effort and preparation. It takes time, patience, and commitment.
 - Mentors will receive a \$2000 stipend when the apprentice completes the program.
 - The mentor does not have to be the employee's supervisor but can.

Learner/ Apprentice responsibilities

- Remember that you only get out of this apprenticeship as to what you put into it.
- Must be willing and eager to learn
 - Mistakes will happen, the skills you are learning take practice. Do not expect to achieve competency the first time you are observed after completing a Relias course.
- It is mentor's job to help you guide you in obtaining needed skills to be successful as DSP.
 - Ask questions about what works for the mentor and then make decisions on how it will work for you. Personalities are huge in direct support.
 - Don't feel defeated if how they do it is not the way for you.
- When growing your career, success always requires perseverance and determination.
 - Do not expect to achieve competency the first time you are observed after completing a Relias course.
- It is also important to recall that a Mentorship is a two-way process.
 - If it works the way it should, both the mentor and apprentice will benefit and learn from the experience.

Certified Direct Support Professional Apprenticeship

What does the Learner (Apprentice) Do for completion of the Apprenticeship Program?

- Engage in 159 hours of lessons in Relias that build knowledge in 15 competency areas.
- Apply the learning in practice under the mentorship of more senior staff
 - The key to employee success is having a mentor.
- Practice the skills taught by the mentor on the job while supporting a person with a disability
- Receive feedback from the mentor about the performance of skill in practice
- Must complete the entire program in order to receive the designation of DSP III.
 - If the learner completes the probationary period and drops out, they will not be issued DSP I credentials on the DBHDD DSP state wide registry.

15 Competency Areas

1. Participant Empowerment
2. Communication
3. Assessment
4. Community and Service Networking
5. Facilitation of Services
6. Community Living Skills and Supports
7. Education, Training and Self-Development
8. Advocacy
9. Vocational, Educational and Career Support
10. Crisis Prevention and Intervention
11. Organizational Participation
12. Documentation
13. Building and Maintaining Friendships and relationships
14. Providing Person-Centered Supports
15. Supporting Health and Wellness

Work Process and Checklist

How is the Learner Assessed for Competencies?

- The Mentor completes a checklist that attests that the Apprentice has successfully demonstrated the skills required in the competency area on the job.
 - Field Training – Mentor/Journey worker has provided training and demonstration of task to the apprentice.
 - Demonstrates Fundamentals – Apprentice can perform the task with some coaching.
 - Proficient in Task – Apprentice performs task properly and consistently.
 - Completion Date – Date apprentice completes final demonstration of competency.

Competency Area 10: Crisis Prevention and Intervention

The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about crisis prevention, intervention and resolution techniques and should match such techniques to particular circumstances and individuals.

Competency Skill Statements	Trainer's Certification	Employee's Initials	Completion Date
A. The competent DSP identifies the crisis, defuses the situation, evaluates and determines an intervention strategy and contacts necessary supports.			
B. The competent DSP continues to monitor crisis situations, discussing the incident with authorized staff and participant(s), adjusting supports and the environment, and complying with regulations for reporting.			

Certified Direct Support Professional Apprenticeship

When is the DSP I certification awarded?

The apprentice must complete the entire program and will be granted the DSP III certification. The apprentice will receive a certificate from Department of Labor and be listed on the DBHDD DSP registry.

- The apprentice MUST complete the entire 2000 hours and 159 hours of training through the Relias platform.
 - DSP I – Entry level certification
 - 500 hour probationary period
 - 50 hours of online learning in the Entry level competencies
 - Mastery of these skills is documented by the mentor in the task verification checklist
 - 5000\$ stipend at completion of the check list
 - DSP II – Emerging certification
 - 100 hours worked
 - 50 hours of online learning in the Emerging level competencies
 - Mastery of these skills is documented by the mentor in the task verification checklist
 - 1000\$ stipend at completion of the check list
 - DSP III – Advanced certification
 - 500 hours worked
 - 59 hours of online learning in the Advanced level competencies
 - Mastery of these skills is documented by the mentor in the task verification checklist
 - 1000\$ stipend at completion of the check list
- The average apprentice coming into this training with no previous experience may take approximately 1-2 years to master the competencies.
- Credit may be given for previous experience and education – up to 1000 work hours and which ever Relias courses that aligned with the learning objectives. Must be able to demonstrate competency on the Work Process checklist.

Certified Direct Support Professional Apprenticeship

- For more information please email: Greta O'Dell at DOLpilot@river-edge.org
- Enrollment will begin in November 2023 for provider agencies
- Apprentices can begin enrollment once the provider has committed





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