

IDD Provider Workforce:

Direct Support Professional (DSP)

Certification Pilot Projects – DSP TAP

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D·B·H·D·D

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& Developmental
Disabilities



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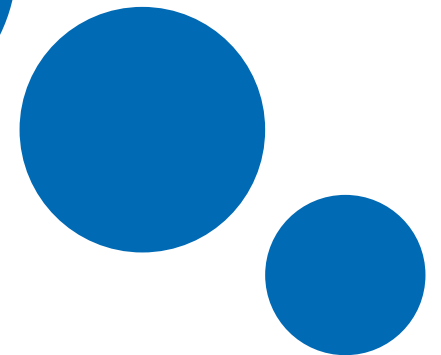
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American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Stakeholder Workforce Workgroup

The **American Rescue Plan Act** was signed into law on March 11, 2021. It is the sixth COVID-19 relief bill enacted and provides approximately \$1.9 trillion in federal assistance. It includes fiscal relief funding for state and local governments, education, housing, food assistance, and additional grant programs. The State of Georgia, through the Department of Community Health (DCH), submitted an Initial Spending Plan Projection and narrative to enhance, expand, and strengthen home and community-based services (HCBS) under the Medicaid program using funds associated with the increased Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage.



Stakeholders Workforce Workgroup

- Beginning in 2022, the Division of DD has established a Workforce Development Workgroup as part of the ARPA initiative.
- Workgroup Focus & Goals:
 - Low wages and benefits
 - Insufficient competency-based training and supervisory/mentoring supports
 - Lack of career ladders or advancement opportunities/professional growth
 - Lack of a pipeline generating a new engaged DSP workforce
 - High turnover rates
 - Demanding work schedules with unpredictability



Stakeholders Workforce Workgroup

Members:

- Dr. Carol Britton Laws, University of Georgia, IHDD, Clinical Professor
- Division of Developmental Disabilities, DBHDD
- Self-Advocates
- Family members and allies of individuals with I/DD
- Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Direct Service Professionals
- Trade Associations



American Rescue Plan Act- Georgia Spend Plan

While Georgia’s Initial Spending Proposal has several initiatives, the main focuses related to DBHDD IDD include the rate study/increases rates and.....

INITIATIVE #2:	Workforce Development and Training
<div>Description:</div> <div>DSP PILOTS</div>	<p>During the Public Health Emergency, Georgia experienced significant challenges in retaining a stable workforce and recruiting Certified Nursing Assistants. The impacts of COVID-19 were substantial which resulted in a significant reduction in the direct care workforce.</p> <p>ARPA funding will be utilized to collaborate with Georgia’s Technical College System to strengthen the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training program thereby expanding provider capacity. Certifying additional CNAs will reduce the workforce shortage which ensures that Georgia’s HCBS recipients will have access to services.</p> <p>Additional HCBS training and workforce development programs will be developed to expand provider capacity, improve the quality of care and service delivery, and improve member satisfaction.</p>

Direct Support Professional (DSP) Certification Pilot Projects

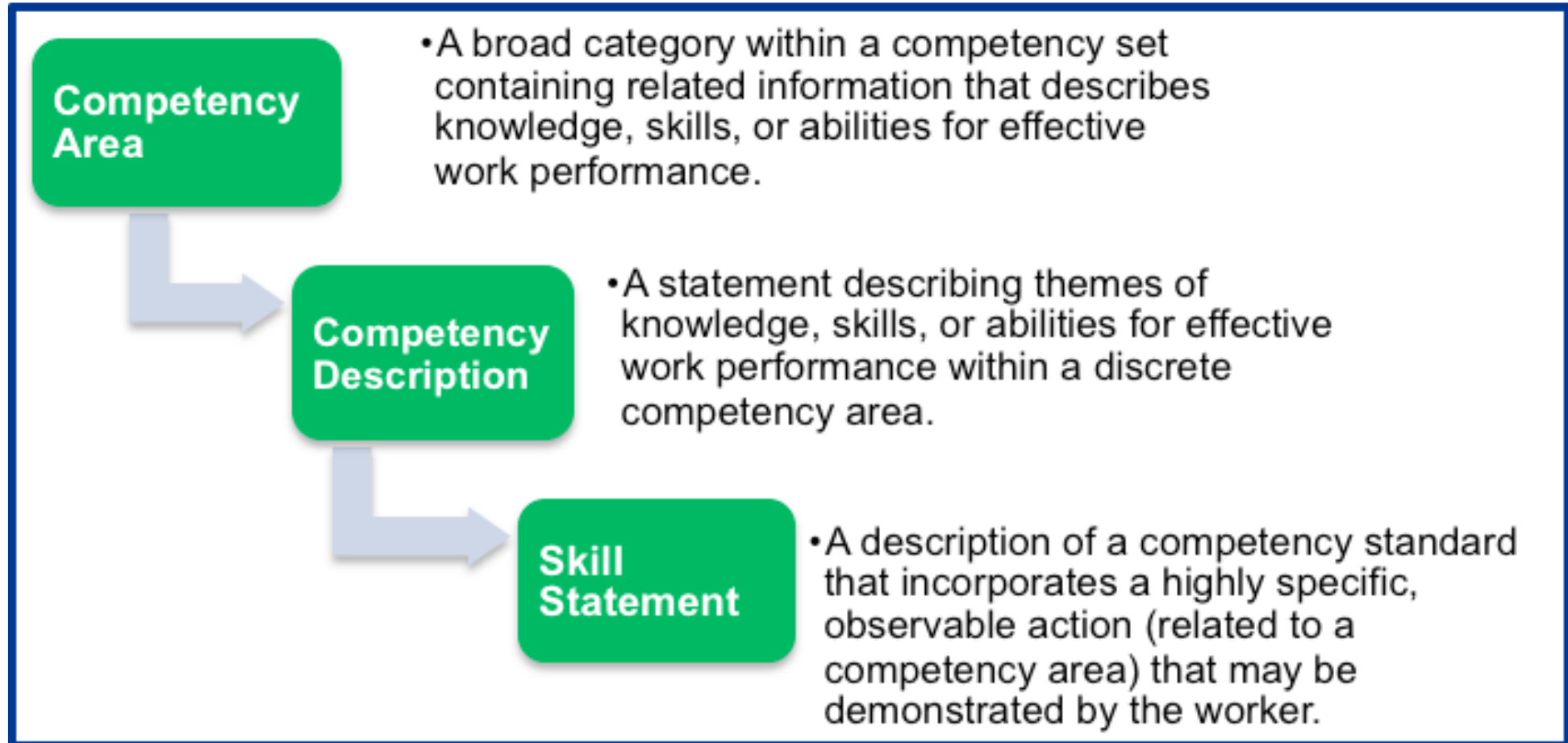
Competency-Based Certification Overview

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- 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
 - Credentialing is an umbrella term used to refer to concepts such as professional certification, certificate programs, accreditation, licensure, and regulation.
 - A certification program is designed to test the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform a particular job, and, upon successfully passing a certification exam, to represent a declaration of a particular individual's professional competence. In some professions, certification is a requirement for employment or practice.
 - 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

Competency- Based Certification- Overview



Direct Support Professional (DSP) Certification Pilot Projects

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



Direct Support Professional (DSP) Certification Pilot Projects

National Alliance for Direct Support
Professionals E-Badge Academy

NADSP E-Badge Academy – United Cerebral Palsy

What:

National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals (NADSP)E-Badge Academy program - Administered by United Cerebral Palsy

How:

DSP must complete 50 hours of online learning through Relias or the College of Direct Support and apply the learning in practice. Work samples that reflect the DSP's knowledge, values, and skills are submitted for NADSP review and an e-badge is awarded. 15 e-badges are required to earn a DSP 1 certification.

Who:

DSPs who are currently employed by provider organizations.

When:

The UCP/E-Badge pilot will support 20 DSPs at 10 Provider Organizations (200 DSPs) from February 1st, 2024 – to January 31st, 2025

For more information please email: Diane Wilush at UCPNADSP@ucpga.org



Direct Support Professional (DSP) Certification Pilot Projects

Direct Support Professional Training and
Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

DSP TAP - University of Georgia/IHDD

What:

Direct Support Professional Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP) led by the Institute on Human Development and Disability (IHDD/UCEDD) at the University of Georgia.

How:

Learners must complete self-paced online competency-based training (approximately 50 hours) and take an exam that will be proctored remotely online.

Who:

This online credentialing option is open to learners who are already employed by support providers, those in self-direction, or those who are interested in working with adults with I/DD.

When:

Learners can enroll in courses through the College of Direct Support in January 2024. Classes start in February and will end in May. The exam will be offered in Fall 2024. A second cohort will start in August 2024 with the exam offered in January 2025.

For more information please email: Dr. Carol Britton Laws at DSPWorkforce@uga.edu



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DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

Institute on Credentialing Excellence

- I.C.E. is a leading developer of standards for both certification and certificate programs and it is both a provider of and a clearing house for information on trends in certification, test development and delivery,

Purpose of Credentialing Programs:

- Advance Education and Workforce Skills
- Measure Competence, Knowledge, Skill and Attitudes (KSAs)
- Protect the Public
- Professional Development
- Selection/ Goodness of Fit

Purpose of the DSP- TAP:

- Direct Support Professional Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP) is designed to prepare potential DSPs for the job and recognize the competency of DSPs who are currently working in the field.

DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

Learners complete:

- Self- paced online competency-based training offered over the course of one Spring or Fall semester
- A standardized exam which measures DSP knowledge and skill
 - Developed to meet Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) accreditation standards
 - Exam can be delivered to anyone, anywhere regardless of employment setting;
 - Is replicable and scalable to meet state needs.
- DSP TAP is administered online by the Institute on Human Development and Disability at UGA
 - No subscription required by provider organizations
 - No administrative overhead required to support DSPs
 - Credential is earned by the DSP, is awarded directly, and is portable.

DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

What does the Learner Do?

- Register to take DSP Entry Level competency-based lessons through the College of Direct Support administered by IHDD/UGA
- Engage in a self-paced series of lessons through the College of Direct Support in:
 - Crisis Prevention and Intervention
 - Safety
 - Person-Centered Practices
 - Health and Wellness
 - Other entry level foundational content to be successful as a DSP
- Complete 50 hours of online learning offered in the Spring (Feb- May) or Fall 2024 (August – Dec) semester
 - Comparable online learning through Relias may be considered if training records are provided
 - Experienced DSPs may 'test out' of lessons if they chose to

DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

College of Direct Support Training Program:



College of Direct Support

The curriculum is developed by the Research and Training Center on Community Living at the University of Minnesota – leading experts in the recruitment, retention, and training of direct support professionals. National advisory and editorial boards comprising leading subject matter experts ensure the content follows best practices.

<https://directcourseonline.com/direct-support/>



DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

Training Program:

- The College of Direct Support (CDS) is an online competency-based curriculum designed for Direct Support Professionals and Frontline Supervisors.
 - CDS is focused on workforce development to assist in developing qualified and committed DSPs.
 - Training in areas that are critical to the direct support workforce
 - Pre-tests & Post-tests
 - Aligns with national efforts
 - Easily accessible for learners everywhere
 - Must have internet connection and a computer or smart phone
 - Flexible and self-paced
 - Assistance provided by IHDD's CDS Administrator if needed

DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

- DSP I (Entry Level) includes 50 hours of content
- Courses are organized by CMS Competency Area
 - Communication
 - **Person-Centered Practices**
 - Evaluation & Observation
 - **Crisis Prevention & Intervention**
 - **Safety**
 - Professionalism & Ethics
 - Empowerment & Advocacy
 - **Health & Wellness**
 - Community Living Skills & Supports
 - Community Inclusion & Networking
 - Cultural Competency
 - Education, Training, & Development

DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

College of Direct Support Training Program –

- The training schedule runs from February 2024 – May 2024
- Courses will be sectioned out each week
 - Organized by CMS Competency Area
 - Self-Paced or follow provided schedule
- If learners have taken assigned 50 hours of training in the past 12 months, they are able to submit their transcript to sit for the DSP TAP exam
 - Transcripts from Relias in parallel competency areas will also be accepted
 - Additional hours of training can be taken to bring the learner to 50 if needed
- 90% or higher on pre-test score can qualify learners to test out of a lesson to recognize the knowledge of currently employed staff

DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

CDS Training Courses (sample):

College of Direct Support Course and Lesson Information

CDS: Cultural Competence

Course Description

This course will help you develop cultural awareness and impact in support. You will learn to increase the cultural responsiveness of your own behavior. You will also learn how these aspects may apply more broadly to communities or organizations. Five elements of cultural competence are shared: 1) Valuing diversity; 2) Understanding your own culture; 3) Understanding when culture may be affecting interactions between people and among groups; 4) Knowing where to find good resources; and 5) Knowing how to change your behavior to meet the cultural needs of others. The lessons in this course provide you with opportunities to reflect on your culture and to learn about other cultures. They will teach how to apply this knowledge in direct support work.

Please click on the link below to learn about how this lesson fits into the whole course.

Lesson Descriptions and Learning Objectives [[View](#)]

Credits: [[View](#)]

Resources and References [[View](#)]

Related Competencies: [[View](#)]

Code of Ethics: [[View](#)]

Assessment Options: This course has a number of ways to assess learner competence. There are three links below. Click on each of these links if you are interested in learning more about potential skill assessments for the course. These assessment options can help you understand more about how to apply the lesson materials. They may also be used by your employer to create job descriptions or performance reviews.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) Assessments [[View](#)]

DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

DSP I Sample Courses Spring 2024

Week #5
3.4.24 - 3.10.24

CMS Competency Area: Safety

Maltreatment: Prevention & Response:
What is Maltreatment? (0.4 hours)

Maltreatment: Prevention & Response:
What is Abuse? (0.4 hours)

Maltreatment: Prevention & Response:
What is Neglect? (0.4 hours)

Maltreatment: Prevention & Response:
What is Exploitation? (0.4 hours)

Maltreatment: Prevention & Response:
The Role of Documentation and Systems in Prevention (0.4 hours)

DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

DSP I Sample Courses Spring 2024

Week #10
4.8.24 - 4.14.24

▼	CMS Competency Area: Health & Wellness
	<i>Introduction to Medication Support:</i> Medication Basics (1.5 hours)
	<i>Introduction to Mental Health & Mental Illness:</i> Overview of Mental Health and the Role of the DSP (1.1 hours)
	<i>Introduction to Mental Health & Mental Illness:</i> Overview of Common Mental Illnesses, Treatment, and Service Options (1.4 hours)

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DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

College of Direct Support Training Program –

- A Handbook (pdf) will be provided to every participating learner
- The handbook will include:
 - Training Schedule
 - Course descriptions
 - Opt-Out Explanation
 - How to use CDS
 - Navigating the home page, trainings, etc.
 - Technical assistance
 - Transcript access
- The learner can print their transcripts for all of the modules completed from CDS
 - Transcripts are portable and stay with the learner
 - Contains date of completion, test scores, CEU's, and total credits earned

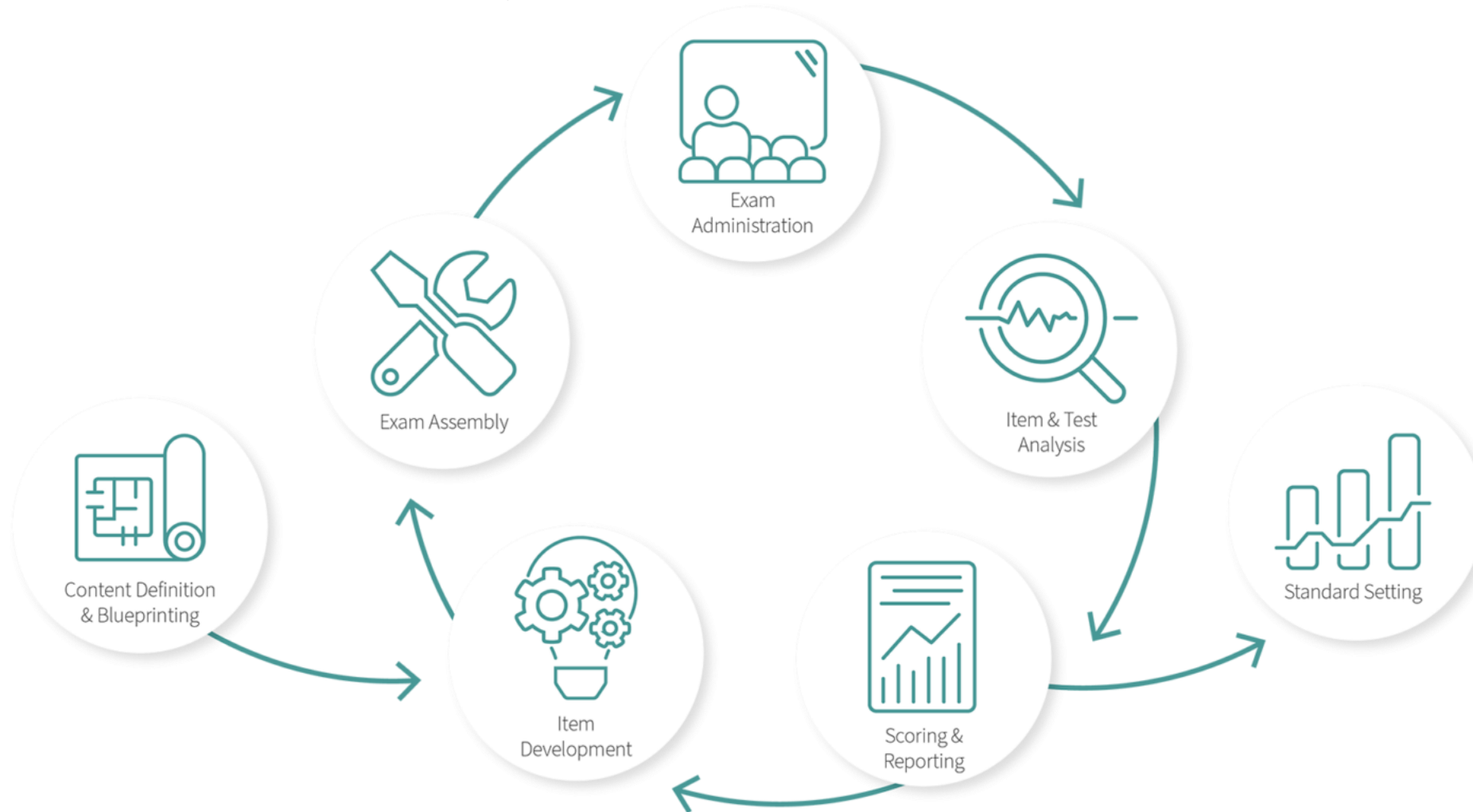
DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

How is the Learner Assessed?

- After completing the DSP I Entry level curriculum, Learners can sit for the DSP I (Entry Level) Credentialing Exam
 - Designed to measure the knowledge and skills identified by the CMS Core Competencies for beginners in the direct support field
- Exam will be written to be accessible to learners with low literacy and for those who do not speak English as their first language
- Exam will be designed to meet the NCCA accreditation standards:
 - Psychometrically sound
 - Administered through a secure and confidential testing platform
 - Offered remotely through Zoom (or other online video conferencing platform)
 - Remote proctored – test takers will be observed by a trained exam administrator

DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

The Assessment Life Cycle -



DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

Assessment Program – DSP I Exam Development (2024)

- Subject matter experts
 - DSPs, Provider Orgs, PWD, FLS, Researchers
- Job analysis
 - CMS Core Competencies, DSP Credentialing Toolkit, SME
 - Job tasks and knowledge to be minimally qualified for the DSP position
 - Survey of DSPs
 - Criticality – level of harm that would be caused by not having the knowledge/skill
 - Frequency – how often is the knowledge/skill applied
 - Relevance – how relevant is the knowledge/skill of the content area to practice
 - Need at Entry – is the content needed to be minimally qualified for the job

DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

- Test Blueprint Development
 - Content areas, knowledge/skill items identified in each area
- Exam content planning, design, and outline
 - Multiple choice
 - Situational Judgement Test (SJT) scenarios
 - Test knowledge and skill in context
 - Reflect plausible yet not equally effective ways of handling the situation
 - Require judgement and decision-making like DSP work itself
- Item Development
 - Drafted, reviewed for readability, analysis, editing
- Exam Form Assembly
 - Exam validation and secure administration

DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

- Technical Review
 - SMEs and Psychometricians
- Item Analysis
 - Determining that items and test work as they should
- Field Testing Test Administration
 - Test taker management, online remote proctoring, collusion detection
- Scoring and Reporting
- Standard Setting
 - Determining cut point
 - Pass/Fail percentage
- All of this will be done in partnership with a credentialing vendor with expertise in exam design and administration

DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

When is the DSP I Credential awarded?

- Certification will be awarded upon successful passing of the DSP I Exam.
- Learners can re-take the exam if they do not pass it on the first attempt.
- DSP I exams will be offered in Fall 2024 and January of 2025.

DSP II (Emerging Level) and DSP III (Advanced Level) training through the College of Direct Support and the corresponding exams for each will be available in 2025 – 2026 if pilot is successful.

The DSP TAP program will seek National Commission on Certifying Agencies (NCCA) Accreditation for in 2025.

DSP Training and Assessment Program (DSP TAP)

- For more information please email: Dr. Carol Britton Laws at DSPWorkforce@uga.edu
- To Register:
 - https://ugeorgia.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6PxxHABjaWdNht4



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Direct Support Professional (DSP) Certification Pilot Projects

Next Steps

DSP Certification Program Pilots – Next Steps

- All 3 Programs will run from February 2024 – January 2025
 - External evaluation of the pilots conducted by ICI at UMN
- Each program seeks to have 200 Learners
 - Participation is Voluntary
 - Supporting Learners to engage in online learning on the clock is highly recommended but NOT required
 - Learners must be 18 years of age or older at the point of hire
- Upon successful completion of the assessment required in the program, DSPs earn one time bonus payments
- Bonuses for Certified DSPs:
 - **Certified DSP Entry Level – DSP I – \$5000 bonus**
 - **Must be employed as a DSP to receive bonus**
 - Certified DSP Emerging Level – DSP II - \$1000
 - Certified DSP Advanced Level – DSP III - \$1000
- Certified DSPs will be recorded on a Registry administered by DBHDD



What's next to come....

Enrollment opens in January 2024!

To Participate and Register Learners:

DSP Apprenticeship: DOLpilot@river-edge.org

NADSP E-Badge Academy: UCPNADSP@ucpga.org

DSP-TAP: DSPWorkforce@uga.edu

A close-up, soft-focus photograph of several hands of different skin tones being held together in a supportive grip. The hands are positioned in the center-left of the frame, with fingers interlaced. The background is a warm, out-of-focus light beige.

BE D·B·H·D·D

Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities

