



**State of New Jersey**  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
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September 13, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great enthusiasm we share that on the afternoon of September 14, 2010, Department of Human Services Commissioner Jennifer Velez will announce the beginning of the New Jersey Partnership for Direct Support Professional Workforce Development.

***The NJ Partnership for Direct Support Professional Workforce Development***



*“It’s about the Quality... of supports that a well-trained workforce provides.”*

*“It’s about the Value... of professionalism gained through the College of Direct Support state-of-the-art training.”*

*“It’s about the Future... of Direct Support Professionals and the lives of people with developmental disabilities.”*

The Division of Developmental Disabilities will begin to implement statewide use of the College of Direct Support (CDS) in October 2010. Best practice demonstrates that enhanced training and professional opportunities for Direct Support Professionals (DSP) leads to higher quality supports, a more satisfied workforce, and higher retention rates. Through the CDS, agencies gain access to a state-of-the-art curriculum and learner management system. Utilization of this curriculum gives agencies the flexibility to offer online continuing education to their staff using courses of the agencies’ choice and/or the NJ Career Path which combines coursework with mentoring and portfolio development.

Agencies will be required to use the learner management system to track NJ Pre-Service Training for each of its staff members. This ensures that DDD meets our Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) requirement to have a centralized location to track training of all staff employed by agencies they fund through the HCBS waiver. The attached document contains information on the requirements of agencies and the training opportunities available through this exciting project.

Many thanks to the members of the NJ DSP Workforce Development Coalition, the NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities, and the agencies that piloted the CDS for their roles in making this initiative a reality.

It has significant meaning that the kick-off of this venture coincides with National Direct Support Professional Week. It is a great achievement for NJ to be leading the way in the professionalism of the field of direct support. We are excited to join with you in the ongoing support of a well-trained and stable workforce dedicated to quality, value, and the future lives of people with developmental disabilities.

## Agency Requirements

### **Getting Into the College of Direct Support:**

- Designate agency CDS administrators.
  - The designated administrator shall participate in CDS Administration Training. A schedule of 2010/11 trainings will be distributed soon.
  - The administrator will enter all new hires and other information as required by DDD into the CDS.
  - Administrator roles also include release of coursework and use of other useful CDS tools. Depending on the capacity of your agency you may have multiple administrators (e.g., those that focus on data entry and others that coordinate training and HR tools).
  - It is recommended that agencies have at least 2 people that know the system in case of turnover and absence.
- Each agency will receive a separate email with instructions and a spreadsheet to be used to list all staff required to take Pre-Service Training. This spreadsheet will be used to enter staff into the CDS system using a bulk-upload. This will benefit agencies by eliminating the need for their agency administrators to key in each staff person. Spreadsheets will be distributed via email following the regional roll-out schedule found below.

### **Learning about the CDS:**

- Follow the Regional Rollout Schedule for training and implementation. It is important that your agency administrator(s) attend these trainings as they will provide information on how to use the CDS, how the system will be used in NJ for tracking Pre-Service Training and the many flexible ways to use the online curriculum. The Regional Training Calendar and registration information will be distributed and posted on the DDD website as available.
  - Southern Region – Training begins in November, implementation by December 31, 2010
  - Lower Central Region – Training begins in January, implementation by February 29, 2011
  - Upper Central Region – Training begins in March, implementation by April 31, 2011
  - Northern Region – Training begins in May, implementation by June 31, 2011
- Additional Options:

Agencies will have access to the College of Direct Support and its Learner Management System, free of charge, through the DDD contract. The Boggs Center will be providing training and technical assistance to agencies at no charge. Agencies have the option to purchase 1 on 1 technical assistance directly from the College of Direct Support for \$2800. Please contact Joe Bongiovanni at 609-631-6392 or by email at [joe.bongiovanni@dhs.state.nj.us](mailto:joe.bongiovanni@dhs.state.nj.us) to receive the required form.

### **Using the College of Direct Support Learner Management System:**

Information on how to use the system and meet the requirements listed will be provided at the regional trainings.

Requirements for use of the system include:

- If not uploaded using the bulk upload mentioned above, manually enter all staff required to take Pre-Service Training into the system.
- Add new employees to the system as learners upon hire.
- Have the Pre-Service Training records of all current agency staff hired prior to your region's implementation deadline included in the CDS using OnTrack by: 6 months following your regions implementation date.
- Lead and Non-Lead Training agencies shall use the CDS to enroll and mark staff as completed for Pre-Service Trainings following the Regional Rollout Schedule.

## Training Opportunities for Staff through the College of Direct Support

The CDS, which is provided to agencies free of charge, has many benefits in addition to its capacity to track training. It is cutting edge, effective, and an efficient method to offer continuing education to agency staff. ***Agencies are encouraged to implement the optional continuing education strategies:***

- Offer the CDS to its staff on a course by course basis.
- Offer the Career Path to its direct support professionals on a voluntary basis as a process to develop professional skills and competencies, earn a NJ DSP Career Path Certificate, and provide an agency with a way to tie increased competency to employee recognition.
  - A Community College faculty review committee has recommended that the NJ DSP Career Path be accepted as 9 credits toward an associate's degree in human/social services. Raritan Valley Community College is already accepting the Career Path and we will collaborate with you to expand this benefit to your local community college.
- Information on the flexible ways agencies can make the most out of the state-of-the-art training curriculum will be provided in the administrator training. Additional information sessions on this topic and the various ways for agencies to offer the Career Path to its staff will be held throughout the state and may be scheduled upon request.

If you have any questions please contact Joe Bongiovanni at: [joe.bongiovanni@dhs.state.nj.us](mailto:joe.bongiovanni@dhs.state.nj.us)  
Please include CDS at the beginning of the subject line.