

## WHAT IS A DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL?

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) provide guidance and support to people who need help to be self-sufficient. DSPs provide this support to a wide range of individuals including people with physical, psychiatric, or cognitive disabilities or chronic illness; children and youth who are at risk; and families who need assistance in supporting family members.

DSPs are found in hundreds of different settings with various job titles such as Residential Counselor, Employment Specialist, Family Advocate, and Personal Support Assistant. Many of these jobs share similar requirements and approaches including the ability to teach life skills, provide physical assistance, and to support the empowerment, choices and self-direction of the individual receiving supports. It is estimated that there are over 2 million Americans working in these roles.

❖ *Much of the text in this section is excerpted from the NADSP fact sheet: The Direct Support Workforce by Marianne Taylor, Human Services Research Institute.*

### Training Site Coordinator Contact Information:

#### TRAINING PARTNERS

- *University of Missouri Kansas City- Institute for Human Development*
- *Missouri Department of Mental Health- Division of Developmental Disabilities*
- *Missouri Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities*
- *College of Direct Support*

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## MISSOURI COLLEGE OF DIRECT SUPPORT TRAINING PROGRAM

### FACT SHEET

- Training Program
  - Approved by the Dept. of Elementary & Secondary Education
  - Length- 4-8 weeks
  - On-site Instruction
  - Online Coursework
  - Realistic Job Preview
  - Certifications
    - First Aid
    - Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
    - Medication Administration
    - Crisis Prevention & Intervention
  - Certificate of Completion
    - Missouri College of Direct Support Online Courses (13) and Realistic Job Preview
- Eligible Applicant
  - 18 years of age
  - High school diploma or GED equivalent
  - U.S. Citizen or have legal right to work in U.S.
  - Pass background screening
- Direct Support Professional Characteristics
  - Flexible- accommodates customer/agency needs
  - Personable- works well with people
  - Creative- utilizes problem solving skills
  - Ability to obtain work results with minimal supervision
  - Ability to maintain information in a confidential manner
  - Ability to organize, prioritize and multi-task
  - Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Potential Employers
  - Disability service agencies
  - Nursing homes
  - School paraprofessionals
  - Home health agencies
  - Group homes/residential facilities
  - Individuals with disabilities who manage their own direct care staff

#### Job Outlook

The United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics states that the job outlook for Direct Support Professionals is expected to grow by nearly 34 percent between 2006 and 2016. This will increase the number of available jobs by 114,000 due to increased demand.

## ■ ■ ■ DIRECT SUPPORT PROGRAM

The training program is approved by the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education and the Department of Mental Health, Division of Developmental Disabilities. The 160 hour instructional program can be completed in just 4-8 weeks. The program includes instruction in the following areas:

- First Aid Response
- Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
- Medication Administration & Infection Control
- Prevention and intervention for challenging behaviors
- Identification and prevention of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Foundation and benefits of Person-Centered Planning
- Rights and choices of people with disabilities
- Principles of documentation and confidentiality
- Prevention and response to health and safety issues
- Principles for leading and supporting healthy lives
- Principles for inclusion of people with disabilities in the community
- Importance of human relationships for people with disabilities
- Ethical principles of direct support professionals
- History, language and basic concepts of developmental disabilities
- Importance of cultural competence in daily support
- Teaching people with developmental disabilities

## ■ ■ ■ APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

Be a minimum of eighteen years of age

Have a high school diploma or GED equivalent.

Be a U.S. Citizen or have the legal right to work in the U.S.

Pass a background screening prior to acceptance in the training program. The background screening will include review of records maintained by the following agencies:

- State criminal history records maintained by the Missouri State Highway Patrol
- Child abuse/neglect records maintained by the Department of Social Services
- The employee disqualification list maintained by the Department of Health & Senior Services
- The employee disqualification registry maintained by the Department of Mental Health
- Child-care facility licensing records maintained by the Department of Health & Senior Services
- Foster parent licensing records maintained by the Department of Social Services

## ■ ■ ■ PATH TO A CAREER AS A DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL (DSP)

1. Successfully complete the Direct Support Professional Student Training Program.
2. Be employed by an agency that provides direct support services funded by the Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Developmental Disabilities.
3. Successfully complete the Missouri College of Direct Support "On-the-Job Assessment" and all agency required training.

The employing agency will certify to the Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Developmental Disabilities, that the employee has met all requirements to receive the Missouri College of Direct Support Basic and Advanced Training Certificates.

### DSP Career Path

