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NADSP and ANCOR Announce the Direct Support Professional Registered Apprenticeship Program

Program Promotes a Highly Qualified Stable Workforce

Minneapolis, MN October 25 - The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) and the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) announce the Direct Support Professional Registered Apprenticeship Program. This new program, approved by the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration's (DOLETA) Office of Apprenticeship, addresses the need for a quality, competency-based model of instruction to educate Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and promotes opportunities for advancement and career pathways within this workforce. The DSP Registered Apprenticeship Program model provides a structure for the development of quality educational programs that can be tailored and implemented across the nation to meet state and regional needs.

The Direct Support Professional Registered Apprenticeship program expressly requires training for DSPs that focuses on supporting people to live healthy and active lives in their communities. The program is based upon NADSP's Competencies and Code of Ethics and aligns with the nationwide voluntary NADSP Credentialing Program. DSP apprentices will engage in on-the-job and classroom learning to develop skills in assisting people to realize their personal potential and enabling them to participate fully in social and civic life. "Community-inclusive supports offer the best opportunity for high quality lives for individuals receiving supports," says NADSP President Lisa Burck. "The DSP Registered Apprenticeship Program addresses a long-standing need to provide professional competency-based and job-specific training to ensure a proficient direct support workforce in the years ahead."

"This is an historic step forward in advancing the professionalism of the direct support workforce and advancing the values of full participation in communities of choice for people with disabilities," says ANCOR CEO Renee Pietrangelo. "The Program's focus on empowerment and participation is critical because people who rely on human support services such as people with disabilities, mental health or chronic health conditions are frequently and unnecessarily isolated and excluded from living and working in their communities."

Direct support professional job titles vary and include in-home support worker, personal assistant, home health aide, job coach, direct support worker, and independent living skills instructor. No matter the title, this workforce is currently facing a critical and alarming shortage of workers. Low wages, limited training, and little recognition of the skilled work DSPs do leads to high turnover. Added to this, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that one million new DSPs will be needed by 2016. This workforce crisis, combined with the aging of the nation, needs immediate attention from our nation's policymakers.

The DSP Registered Apprenticeship Program was developed in accordance with the basic standards recommended by DOLETA's Office of Apprenticeship. Sponsoring provider agencies have the ability to work with their state or regional Office of Apprenticeship or State Apprenticeship Agency to establish a training program to meet their specific needs. Agencies sponsoring a local NADSP/ANCOR Direct Support Professional Registered Apprenticeship Program must adhere to a written plan outlining the terms and conditions for the recruitment, selection, employment, training, supervision, and competency assessment of DSP apprentices. DSP apprentices must fulfill the sponsoring agency's specific requirements as well as those outlined in the master Apprenticeship program. [Click here](#) to learn more about the DOLETA-approved DSP Registered Apprenticeship Program Standards, or visit http://www.doleta.gov/oa/bul10/Bulletin_2010_31_NADSP_ANCOR.pdf.

Because the NADSP/ANCOR DSP Registered Apprenticeship training and work experience requirements are aligned with the criteria for NADSP's national, voluntary DSP Credentialing Program, DSPs may complete both the Registered Apprenticeship program and the Credentialing program through similar efforts, although these are distinct and separate programs. Adds Lisa Burck, "Along with credentialing for DSPs, this national apprenticeship program is a key step in defining and recognizing high quality direct support."

About NADSP

The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals mission is to promote the development of a highly competent human services workforce that supports individuals in achieving their life goals. NADSP has developed a national agenda to strengthen the direct support workforce. NADSP's goals are to: 1) Enhance the status of direct support professionals. 2) Provide direct support professionals better access to high quality education and lifelong learning. 3) Strengthen collaboration between direct support professionals, self-advocates, those who receive supports, and families. 4) Promote systems reform that provides incentives for direct support professional education, increased compensation, and access to career pathways. 5) Support the implementation of a national voluntary credentialing process for DSPs. Key programs to achieving our mission are the Direct Support Professional Credentialing Program, the DSP Code of Ethics, and the Moving Mountains Award for organizations demonstrating best practices in workforce development. Please visit www.nadsp.org to learn more.

About ANCOR

The [American Network of Community Options and Resources](#) is a national association representing more than 850 private providers of community living and employment supports and services to more than 400,000 individuals with disabilities. A nonprofit organization, ANCOR successfully addresses the needs and interests of private providers that employ nearly a half million DSPs. ANCOR advocates continually before Congress and federal agencies on the crucial role private providers play in enhancing and supporting the lives of people with disabilities and their families. Through its National Advocacy Campaign (NAC), ANCOR seeks to obtain the resources to recruit, train and retain a sustainable direct support workforce. Work with the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration's Office of Apprenticeship is an important function of the NAC. Visit www.youneedtoknowme.org for more information.