

# Direct Support Professional Quarterly

Fall Issue  
October 2023

Learn more about developments in the profession and useful skills to support people with disabilities



## HAPPY FALL!

Welcome back to The Boggs Center's Direct Support Professional (DSP) Quarterly, a periodic newsletter for New Jersey's direct support professional workforce. Through this newsletter, we will bring you content to inform, educate, and inspire. This is YOUR newsletter, so we invite feedback about what you've read and what you'd like to read. To give feedback on this issue, [click here](#) to respond to a quick survey.

Subscribe to [The Boggs Center's Mailing List](#) to receive the DSP Quarterly directly, along with other information useful to the disability community.

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# October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Observed each October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) celebrates the contributions of America's workers with disabilities past and present and showcases supportive, inclusive employment policies and practices that benefit employers and employees. Promoting and empowering people with disabilities to seek and achieve competitive employment doesn't just happen in October. There are many things DSPs can do every day to learn about and promote employment.



This year's NDEAM theme is "Advancing Access and Equity", and celebrates the 50th anniversary of The Rehabilitation Act, which laid the foundation for the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This federal law:

- Ensures grants are available to states for vocational rehabilitation services for those with the most severe disabilities
- Expands special Federal responsibilities and research and training programs with respect to individuals with disabilities
- Establish special responsibilities in the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare for coordination of all programs with respect to individuals with disabilities within the Department of Human Services
- Requires affirmative action in employment by the federal government and by government contractors and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs conducted by federal agencies

For more information about legislation supporting the employment of people with disabilities, visit:

- [Rehabilitation Act of 1973 | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#)
- [Facts About the Americans with Disabilities Act | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#)
- [US Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy](#)

# What can DSPs do?

Engage in conversations with the people you support about jobs and careers. Support relationships in the community, after all, many connections lead to jobs.



Help the individuals you support share their employment stories with The Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE). Employment stories will be shared on APSE's website, social media, and email communications: [Employment Stories - Form](#).

View and SHARE this video to remind yourself and others of the importance of supporting and encouraging people with disabilities to pursue their career goals: [The "Because" PSA Campaign](#).



Many job skills begin at home. Have conversations about the benefits of work and what the person's interests may be. Assist the person to build skills related to time management, organization, and building relationships to work in collaboration with others.

If the person you support is interested in pursuing, changing, or increasing their job opportunities but needs help, assist them to coordinate a meeting with their support coordinator to get the services they may need to do this.





# Focus On: DSP Competencies

Each issue of the DSP Quarterly features a description of a competency area that is important to the work DSPs do every day. This issue focuses on **Vocational, Educational, and Career Support**. The goal of this competency is for DSPs to be knowledgeable about the career- and education-related concerns of the people they support, and to mobilize the resources and support necessary to help those individuals to reach goals.

DSPs can achieve this by:

- Exploring the individual's vocational interests and aptitudes
- Assisting in preparing for job or school entry
- Reviewing opportunities for continued career growth
- Discussing job/educational opportunities
- Supporting skill development that can assist with securing employment





# Training and Professional Development

**There are trainings that DSPs in New Jersey can participate in** to learn more about how to support opportunities to pursue education, careers, and meaningful and valued community lives:

## **Training and Professional Development Opportunities through The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities**

*Developmental Disabilities Lecture Series (DDLS) - Recorded Webinars*

### [Quality Meaningful Day Services: A Community-Based Approach - Abby Taylor George, MS](#)

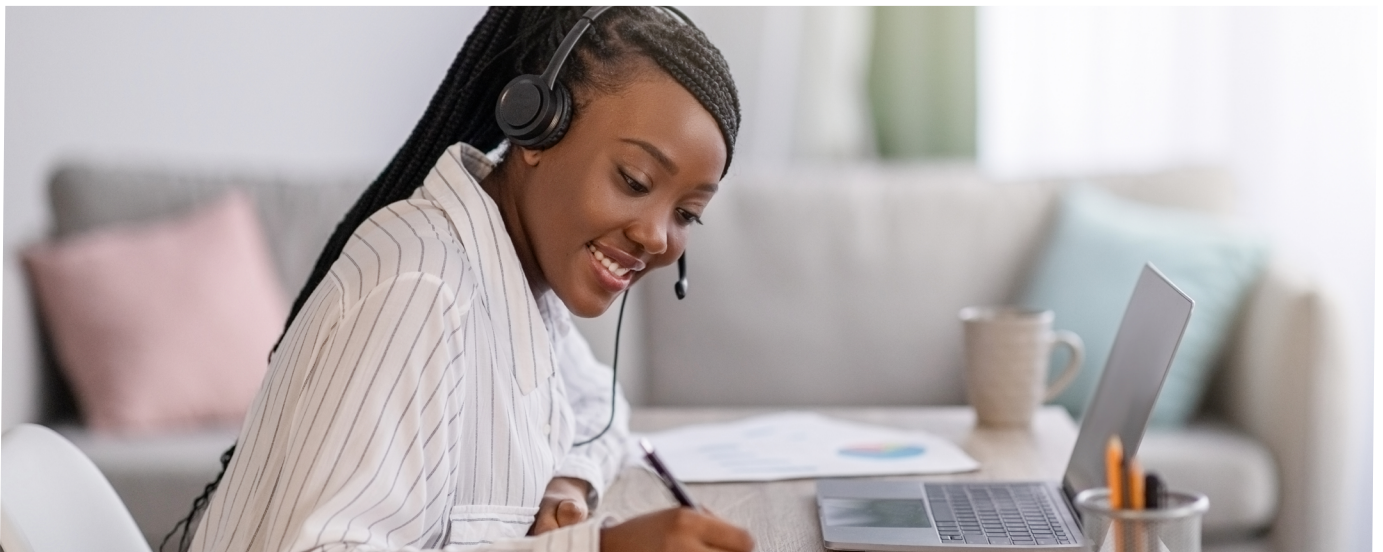
This session presents the many factors that go into building robust meaningful day services, such as individualized schedules, geographical mapping and planning, person-centered outcomes, and customized employment.



### [Pathways to Employment for Autistic Youth and Young Adults - Carol Schall, PhD](#)

This session presents research about the impact of internships, supported employment, and customized employment on employment outcomes for autistic youth as well as information about behavioral methods used to support youth with ASD in the transition from school to work.

Visit [The Boggs Center's Video Library](#) for additional DDLS recordings and handouts.



# Training and Professional Development

## Training and Professional Development Opportunities through The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities (continued)

### *Training Opportunities*

#### Developing and Implementing Outcome Based Support Strategies

Service providers are charged with developing and implementing support strategies that help those they serve to achieve the outcomes they want in life. This training offers providers an overview of important changes in the service delivery system and guidance in using person-centered practices to identify effective support strategies. Participants will learn how to use information from people using supports, their families, and others who know them best, along with planning documents, to create, evaluate, and refine strategies that match what people want, need, and hope to accomplish.



#### Employment Specialist Foundations 4 Part Training Series

This is a four-day series of interactive, competency-based workshops designed for beginning Employment Specialists working for a DVRS Supported Employment Vendor and/or DDD Community Service Provider offering Supported Employment Services. The content would also be beneficial to school job coaches and transition coordinators. Participants will learn best-practice, evidence-based approaches to all phases of supported employment. The course is designed to prepare otherwise qualified staff for the Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) exam by providing an overview of the five core areas identified as crucial for ability to work as a supported employment specialist.

#### Meaningful Days Leading to Fulfilling Lives

This training helps professionals working in day services to develop a better understanding of what is driving the change in service expectations, such as the HCBS Settings Rule, and the role of the direct support professional in implementing these changes. Trainees will explore how the services they provide should be defined by the provision of quality experiences that lead to more fulfilling lives for those receiving services and prioritizes inclusion in community life. The training is designed to encourage day staff to think creatively about services, support strategies, advocacy and the development of community capacity.

For more information, and to register for these courses, visit [The Boggs Center Online Registration System](#).



# Training and Professional Development

## Training and Professional Development Opportunities through the College of Direct Support



### Supporting Jobs and Careers in the Community

This course will help DSPs understand many of the things that go into successful employment and introduce them to many different employment opportunities for those they support. The DSP will learn the importance of matching a person's current abilities and desires to a job he or she will enjoy. They will also learn about the skills and knowledge needed to support both the worker and the employer along with the role workplace relationships play in job success.

### Employment Supports for People with Disabilities

This course reviews employment and employment supports for people with disabilities. It will help DSPs understand the variety of supports available, the importance of identifying and using the preferences of a job seeker, and learning the steps in finding a job

You can check out these and other courses that are available in the CDS by [viewing the Course Catalogue](#) or speaking with your agency's CDS Agency Administrator.



# Integrated Employment

**The Home and Community Based Settings (HCBS) Final Rule** requires that individuals with disabilities be provided opportunity and support they need to exercise individual initiative, autonomy, and independence in making life choices including employment opportunities. Through use of a person-centered planning process, people with disabilities should be afforded the opportunity to discuss interests, career goals, and be assisted to obtain the supports and services they need to achieve competitive integrated employment.

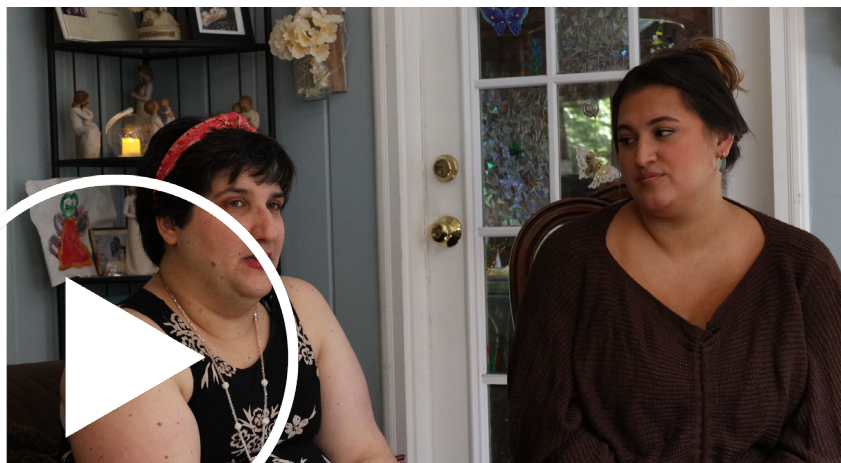


Additional information about implementation of the HCBS Settings Final Rule in New Jersey can be found in the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities, [Provider Guide to the Home and Community Based Services Final Settings Rule](#). To learn about The Rule and strategies to promote community integration and employment check out the [DDD Webinar Short](#).



# DSP Spotlight: Melissa Salazar

**Melissa Salazar is a direct support professional** for Royal Community Support. Starting out as a part time job, Melissa soon realized that being a DSP and supporting people with disabilities could be a full time career. Click the video below or [you can click here](#) to learn more about her passion for the role and what keeps her motivated to keep going.



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