DSP WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGIES SERIES

About the Series

The Boggs Center is collaborating with the University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration's Direct Support Workforce Solutions to bring a 10-part learning series for service provider agency leaders to New Jersey. Through this series, experts in the field will provide presentations and guided learning focused on 10 strategies essential to effective Direct Support Professional Recruitment and Retention. Each topic will be presented across two sessions, the first being an engaging presentation. The second, taking place a week later, will be a facilitated Learning Forum to allow for more questions and answers, collective idea sharing, and networking. Certificates of Attendance will be provided to those who complete **both days** of the session.

Space is limited. Interested professionals within the target audience must register by topic. We ask that those registering mark their calendars and plan to attend due to demand and space limits.

Target Audience

Service provider leadership, including: Directors, Program Directors, HR Staff, and Training Department Staff

Have questions?

Email Colleen McLaughlin (colleen.mclaughlin@rutgers.edu) and Nicole Warren (nicole.l.warren@rutgers.edu) with any questions you may have.

Scan or click to register through The Boggs Center's Online Registration System under the "Workforce Development & Frontline Supervisors" tab.

RUTGERS HEALTH
The Boggs Center on Disability and Human Development
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Direct Support **Workforce Solutions**
INSTITUTE *on* COMMUNITY INTEGRATION | UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

LEARNING SESSIONS

Data Tells a Story: Leveraging Data for Workforce Results

August 14, 2025 | 1:00pm - 3:00pm | Webinar
August 21, 2025 | 1:00pm - 2:00pm | Learning Forum

Nationwide, provider organizations are experiencing difficulties with the recruitment, selection, retention and training of people in direct support workforce roles. Leveraging what can be learned from workforce data can not only help identify what workforce strategies are best for overcoming the workforce challenges at an organization but can also be used to evaluate whether the workforce strategies that are being implemented are helping. Together, we will learn more about:

- Leveraging your current workforce data to understand your workforce
- How to leverage workforce data to make informed decisions within your organization
- How to identify workforce strategies and measure the results.

Recruitment Marketing

September 18, 2025 | 1:00pm - 3:00pm | Webinar
September 25, 2025 | 1:00pm - 2:00pm | Learning Forum

Where is everyone? As the competition for talent continues to tighten, employers are finding it increasingly difficult to attract qualified applicants. Having a recruitment marketing strategy can elevate your recruiting efforts from "throw spaghetti at the wall and sees what sticks" to "proactively engaging the right talent." Together, we will learn about:

- Creating or enhancing your "employer brand" – your story
- Engaging your current workforce in the process
- Defining your organization's "X" factor

Realistic Job Preview

October 16, 2025 | 1:00pm - 3:00pm | Webinar
October 23, 2025 | 1:00pm - 2:00pm | Learning Forum

The work of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) can be rewarding, but it can also be challenging and sometimes mundane. Many organizations experience DSPs leaving their position within the first 6 months of employment, saying that they didn't understand what the job was really going to be like. The RJP is a great tool to use during the selection process because it gives the potential employee an overview of what the job is really like. Together, we will learn about:

- Various types of RJPs
- How to effectively implement RJPs in your organization to strengthen your selection practices to decrease early turnover.

Competency-based Job Analysis & Job Descriptions

November 13, 2025 | 1:00pm - 3:00pm | Webinar
November 20, 2025 | 1:00pm - 2:00pm | Learning Forum

When was the last time you conducted a job analysis or updated the job descriptions of the direct support professional (DSP) or frontline supervisor (FLS) at your organization? While the expectations of the role and service delivery have evolved, job descriptions have not. Together, we will learn about:

- The components of a job analysis and how to use them to write competency-based job descriptions.
- How accurate job descriptions based on competencies clearly and accurately communicate your expectations for quality and professional community-based support.
- Why both job descriptions and job analysis are important to your success.

Structured Behavioral Interviewing and Score Guide

January 22, 2026 | 1:00pm - 3:00pm | Webinar
January 29, 2026 | 1:00pm - 2:00pm | Learning Forum

The roles and responsibilities of DSPs and Frontline Supervisors (FLSs) are critical and complex. Turnover and vacancies within these roles pose challenges, especially when turnover occurs within the first 6 or 12 months of hire. During the hiring process, there may be pressure to fill vacancies by hiring candidates without adequate qualifications, experience, and attitudes toward people with disabilities. Structured behavioral interviewing, an evidence-based strategy that asks questions designed to seek behavioral responses, supports your efforts to hire qualified candidates. Together, we will learn more about:

- The importance of strong selection practices for successful hiring
- How to implement the structured behavioral interview process
- How to develop a standardized interview scoring protocol

Orientation and Onboarding

February 12, 2026 | 1:00pm - 3:00pm | Webinar
February 19, 2026 | 1:00pm - 2:00pm | Learning Forum

First impressions count! The first days on the job influence how people feel about the job and organization long-term. Engaging and effective orientation and onboarding practices prepare new employees for success and can reduce early turnover. Orientation is an event that is a part of the onboarding process, a comprehensive process to engage, acclimate and help new employees network with others in the organization from day one. Together, we will learn more about:

- How Frontline Supervisors can play a key role in orientation and onboarding
- Effective practices for orientation and onboarding
- How to support a new employee to feel welcome in the first day

Competency Based Training

March 12, 2026 | 1:00pm - 3:00pm | Webinar
March 19, 2026 | 1:00pm - 2:00pm | Learning Forum

Have you ever wondered if your training is resulting in positive outcomes for direct support professionals (DSP), frontline supervisors (FLS), and the people they support? Competency-based training focuses on three things: 1) Knowledge - what a person knows, 2) Skills - what they can do and 3) Attitude - how they approach decision making and the way they think about people with disabilities. Together, we will learn how:

- Effective Competency-Based training focuses on real work actions that connect to outcomes for the DSPs and the people they support.
- How competency-based training can be an effective part of onboarding and growth opportunities including career path programs.

Career Pathways & Credentialing

April 16, 2026 | 1:00pm - 3:00pm | Webinar
April 23, 2026 | 1:00pm - 2:00pm | Learning Forum

The direct support professional (DSP) position is complex and takes training and experience to provide quality support. Often, the complex knowledge, skills, and attitudes that DSPs develop are not properly acknowledged. Supporting DSPs in their professional development by creating a career pathways program is an important strategy for keeping great DSPs. Together, we will learn:

- The connection between career paths, retention, and the needs of the people you support.
- The basic steps in building a career pathway or implementing a credentialing program in an organization.
- How career paths can elevate the direct support workforce and support organizational objectives.

Note: Attending the Competency-Based Training webinar prior to this webinar will provide context and additional information that will be helpful.

Competency-based Evaluations & Performance Reviews

May 14, 2026 | 1:00pm - 3:00pm | Webinar
May 21, 2026 | 1:00pm - 2:00pm | Learning Forum

Competency-based skills evaluation and performance review are separate tools that when combined provide a comprehensive and effective approach to performance management, coaching, and growth. Together, we will learn:

- How to effectively implement both tools in your organization to engage your employees in their professional development and growth.
- How to align evaluation and performance management with competency-based training plans.

Employee Feedback & Engagement

June 18, 2026 | 1:00pm - 3:00pm | Webinar
June 25, 2026 | 1:00pm - 2:00pm | Learning Forum

Engaging your workforce has never been more important. As the available workforce continues to shrink, investing in your current employees is critical to your retention efforts and the quality of the support you provide. There are many different methods of employee engagement that can support retention in an organization and result in more satisfied employees. Employees who are more engaged in the organization are more likely to stay longer because they feel they are a part of something greater than themselves. Employers who frequently ask for employee feedback and ideas often see better staff retention. How do you engage and retain the DSPs and Frontline Supervisors of today, and create a culture that attracts your next employees? Together, we will learn more about:

- Creating opportunities to hear and learn from your workforce
- Expanding person-centered practices to your workforce
- Engaging your current workforce in organizational goals and decisions