



## Office for People With Developmental Disabilities

**KATHY HOCHUL**  
Governor

**KERRI E. NEIFELD**  
Commissioner

**ROGER BEARDEN, J.D.**  
Executive Deputy Commissioner

**Title:** Solicitation of Interest: High School DSP Training and Certification (BOCES)

**Agency:** NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities

**Division:** Contract Unit

**Date of Issue:** 07/07/2022

**Due Date/Time:** 08/09/2022 11:00 AM

THIS IS NOT A REQUEST FOR PROPALS. THIS IS A SOLICITATION OF INTEREST. Emails indicating interest and all questions must be submitted by 11:00 a.m. on 08/09/2022.

**Location:** All NYS counties

**Classification:** Educational & Recreational - *Consulting & Other Services*

**Opportunity Type:** Solicitation of Interest

**Contact:** Connie Blais

**Description:** The New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities is soliciting email notifications from educational organizations who are interested in participating in the following initiative:

**FUNDING:** The federal government implemented the American Rescue Plan in 2021 which sets aside funding for home and community-based services through Medicaid's Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) funding. This is being delivered in the form of a 10 percent, one-time rise in the federal government's share of spending on the Medicaid program starting April 2021 and extending through March 2022. <https://opwdd.ny.gov/american-rescue-plan-act-arpa>

**PURPOSE:** OPWDD will invest approximately \$5 million in enhanced FMAP funding to attract High School students, or other eligible BOCES students to direct support positions and create a workforce talent pipeline. The expansion of the high school pipeline will benefit the New York State service provider system to strengthen the candidate pool of highly skilled workers, improve recruitment and retention efforts, and increase awareness of the Direct Support Professional (DSP) occupation.

**BACKGROUND:** The cost for disability organizations to constantly recruit and hire new DSPs, provide training, and pay overtime to compensate for vacancies, is placing insurmountable hardship on these agencies. A lack of DSPs can prevent community integration of people with I/DD. Staff stability is correlated to positive outcomes for people with I/DD, such as having relationships, choosing their services, being safe and free from abuse and neglect. Staff stability has also been linked to a reduced number

of injuries and hospital visits for people receiving supports, which reduces costs. Attracting and selecting the best candidates for a position involves communicating the benefits and qualifications needed to perform the role. The High School DSP Program will provide education and skills, realistic job previews, information on professional development and career advancement opportunities, and a pathway to a rewarding career.

**SCOPE:** Educational organizations such as the Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and high school districts may apply for grant funding to implement or expand high school level DSP training and certification programs. OPWDD will develop a stakeholder committee to create a standardized Career and Technical Education (CTE) DSP curriculum. The program curriculum will align with the industry-recognized National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) credential to support students' attainment of the DSP-I Certification. Upon completion of the curriculum, OPWDD intends to award funding based on the number of eligible and interested educational organizations, either through equitable distribution or a competitive procurement.

In collaboration with stakeholders, OPWDD will develop a standardized CTE DSP curriculum for high school students. OPWDD will seek NYSED-approval of the final CTE curriculum and DSP program. Additional funding will be allocated through an RFA for the development and implementation of DSP training and certification programs at the high school level to support the field. Data collection and evaluation by UMN will be components of each grant awarded. The expansion of the high school pipeline will benefit the New York State service provider system to strengthen the candidate pool of highly skilled workers, improve recruitment and retention efforts, and increase awareness of the DSP occupation.

<b>Anticipated Start Date</b>	September 1, 2022
<b>End Date</b>	TBD
<b>Estimated Dollar Amount</b>	\$5 million to be distributed among accepted applicants with an estimated cap ranging from \$135,000 to \$500,000.

Under Education Law section 1950, a BOCES may provide any educational service that is requested by two or more component districts and approved by the commissioner of education according to need and practicality in a regional context. The BOCES then notifies component districts of the approved services, asking for a firm commitment to participate by May 1 of each year. The BOCES and the component districts then enter formal contracts. Contracts between BOCES and component districts, when approved by the commissioner, are effective for one year. After which they may be renewed, changed, or cancelled. Districts may also authorize multi-year service requests from BOCES. <https://www.p12.nysed.gov/mgtserv/boces/handbooks/home.html>

**ELIGIBILITY:** High School and BOCES partners must have the capacity to deliver in-person, virtual, or hybrid instruction to students as well as interface with OPWDD and a third-party evaluation team to develop an evaluation plan and data collection system to monitor the progress and outcomes of the program.

- The school district and/or BOCES grantees will guarantee performance

sufficient to fulfill the needs and goals of the contract.

- Follow regular reporting requirements.
- Adhere to workplan/deliverable schedule, subject to future amendments.
- OPWDD will maintain the right to, upon request, be advised of the status of work being done and the details thereof.

**HOW TO SUBMIT INTEREST:** Interested educational organizations must submit questions and a letter of interest to [workforce.development@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:workforce.development@opwdd.ny.gov) describing the organization's background, capacity and experience that demonstrates its ability to conduct the activities as described above. This email must be submitted no later than 11:00 a.m. on August 9, 2022.

**FOOTNOTES:**

National Core Indicators. (2022). National Core Indicators Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 2020 Staff Stability Survey Report. <https://www.nationalcoreindicators.org/resources/staff-stability-survey/>

Hewitt, A., Pettingell, S., Kramme, J., Smith, J., Dean, K., & Kleist, B. (2020). *The Direct Support Workforce and COVID-19 National Survey Report 2020*. Minneapolis:

Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota. Retrieved from <https://ici-s.umn.edu/files/ijphkG6fcN/dsp-covid-survey-results>

Hewitt, A., Pettingell, S., Kramme, J., Smith, J., Dean, K., Kleist, B., Sanders, M., & Bershadsky, J. (2021). *Direct Support Workforce and COVID-19 National Report: Six-Month Follow-up*. Minneapolis: Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota. Retrieved from [https://publications.ici.](https://publications.ici.umn.edu/community-living/covid19-survey-6-month-followup/main)

[umn.edu/community-living/covid19-survey-6-month-followup/main](https://publications.ici.umn.edu/community-living/covid19-survey-6-month-followup/main)

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. (2021). *The Employment Situation*. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empst.pdf>

**Submit to:** NYS Office for Contract Unit People with Developmental Disabilities

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