



## **PATHS – OHIO’S VOLUNTARY CREDENTIALING PROGRAM FOR DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS**

**Goal of PATHS: Develop a Voluntary Credentialing Program for Direct Support Professionals in Ohio.**

**Background:** PATHS is at an important crossroads in its development. It is critical that adequate funding be identified and secured if the goal of PATHS is to be achieved. It is our goal to enhance and develop relationships with other human service policy makers, providers, educational institutions and direct support workers in Ohio.

***PATHS Mission: To create a competency based and credentialed career path for direct support professionals.***

***PATHS Vision: A sufficient, highly skilled human service workforce encouraging and supporting people with disabilities to lead self-directed lives.***

### **1. Overview of PATHS**

#### **A. What is PATHS?**

- An opportunity for Ohio to be the leader in direct support professional credentialing.
- A multi-year collaborative effort to develop a voluntary credentialing program for direct support professionals in Ohio.
- A collaboration of providers, advocates, individuals with disabilities, family members, state and county representatives and others interested in improving the direct support workforce in Ohio.
- Ongoing funding and support from the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council.
- Organized through a statewide council and regional councils.
- Additional funding and support from The Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, The Ohio State Apprenticeship Council and The Department of Labor.
- Significant in kind support from organizations and individuals.

## **B. What financial support has PATHS received? (first four years)**

- \$275,000 from Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council
- \$107,500 from Department of Labor through Ohio State Apprenticeship Council. (Year 4)
- \$18,000 from Ohio Department of MR/DD for specific start up and evaluation (Year 1)
- \$407,000 in kind support organizations and individuals
- Intermittent local county board support in some areas of the state

## **C. What is the current status of PATHS**

- Training and credentialing activities in 4 regions, Southwest, Northeast, Northwest and West Central.
- 110 graduates in Certificate of Initial Proficiency
- 50 graduates in Certificate of Advanced Proficiency
- Over 100 candidates currently in training throughout the four regions
- Curriculum developed for CIP and CAP
- Developing strategy for future sustainability.
- Plan to create Ohio Alliance of Direct Support Professionals as a free standing non profit organization

## **D. Why is PATHS important?**

- Candidates report a change in their attitude toward their work and the people they work with.
- Candidates likely to remain with agency as they become credentialed
- Development of professional identity for direct support professionals and skills mentors.
- Increased need for direct support professionals in all aspects of health care.
- Cost benefit to government, funders and providers.
- Cost of turnover continues to rise - \$2592.36 per leaver  
(Sheryl Larson, PhD – University of Minnesota)

## **2. PATHS Curriculum, Requirements and Learner Outcomes**

The PATHS curriculum is based upon The Community Support Skill Standards, The National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals Code of Ethics and The Minnesota Front Line Supervisor Competencies.

PATHS provides candidates with rigor and ongoing support and supervision:

- Skills Mentor

- Portfolio
- Testing
- Work samples
- Family and individual with disabilities testimonials

### **3. PATHS Outcomes:**

- Over 160 awarded CIP or CAP credential
- Over 100 candidates currently in training
- Curriculum for CIP and CAP developed and nationally recognized.
- Promotions, pay raises and increased competency by direct support professionals.
- Changes in agency practice as a result of efforts of credentialed candidates.
- Return on investment, more stable and competent workforce
- Recognized as a national leader in the direct support professional credentialing effort
- Recipient of the 2004 Moving Mountains Award for exemplary practice in direct support credentialing efforts.
- Enhanced status and professional identify for direct support professionals and front line supervisors.
- Collaboration and recognition by Department of Labor for apprenticeship
- Changes in people's lives. (see attached)

### **4. PATHS Evaluation:**

- Professional Development:
  - Career PATHS for DSPs
  - Enhanced status and profile
  - Improved skills
  - Better work conditions (wages, recognition etc.)
- Shared Leadership
  - Community of Practice and Learning
  - Voices of DSPs and Consumers Heard
- Quality Cluster
  - Candidate satisfaction
  - Waiting lists for new classes
  - Transfer of learning from classroom to workplace
  - More meaningful performance evaluation
- Currently studying impact on retention and recruitment

- According to Sheryl Larson, chief evaluator for Moving Mountains Award – The stories of PATHS are the principal evaluation you need.

## **5. PATHS Challenges: Breaking down Barriers – Working Together**

- Increased collaboration with other state departments involved with the direct support workforce. (Ohio Department of Aging, Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services)
- Increased participation by organizations and individuals throughout Ohio.
- Increased accessibility by people needing support, family members, independent providers and those with other disabilities and needs.
- Increased awareness and acceptance of apprenticeship
- Ability to develop long term and sustainable funding base.
- Increase activities and collaborations with organizations such as Community Colleges, Vocational High Schools and Workforce Investment Boards.

## **6. Next Steps: Strategies to Work Together**

- Develop partnerships
- Increase sustainable funding base
- Legislative and policy advocacy
- Broadening curriculum and class offerings
- Increase apprenticeship sites

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