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GAVIN NEWSOM  
GOVERNOR

September 12, 2023

TO: REGIONAL CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING: DIRECT SERVICE  
PROFESSIONAL (DSP) TRAINING STIPEND PROGRAM

The purpose of this guidance is to provide regional centers with instruction for implementation of the DSP Training Stipend Program, effective September 12, 2023.

In June 2022, the budget Trailer Bill for developmental services, SB 188 (Chapter 49, Statutes of 2022), added [Welfare and Institutions \(W&I\) Code section 4699.2](#), which established the DSP Training Stipend Program with the intent to enhance the quality of services received by consumers, improve DSP retention, and increase interest among DSPs in skills development and continuous learning opportunities by offering stipends for the completion of training courses. Through this program, DSPs can receive up to two \$625 (before taxes) stipends for completing approved training courses. The DSP Training Stipend Program is time-limited and all trainings must be completed by June 30, 2024.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

Participation in the DSP Training Stipend Program is voluntary for the DSP. To be eligible for the training stipend, DSPs, including some frontline supervisors and clinical staff, must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Work as a paid DSP an average of 10 hours or more per week;
- Perform direct support tasks like skills development, guidance, and personal assistance to individuals served by a regional center as a regular part of their job duties;
- Spend at least 50% of work hours doing direct support tasks; and
- Are employed by a regional center vendor, or by a participant in the Self-Determination Program.

For the purpose of this training stipend program, the following are not eligible even if a portion of their work involves providing direct support:

- Staff paid through a funding source other than the regional center, such as Medi-Cal, health insurance or a school district;
- Those who only provide intermittent service such as home modification, and/or meal delivery services;
- Staff hired through temporary personnel agency;
- Contract or 1099 workers;

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- On-call or PRN workers;
- Volunteers; and
- Administrative or supervisory staff, unless they spend 50% or more of their time doing direct support work.

### **Accessing the Training Courses**

DSPs may access approved online training courses through the ARCA Learning Center (ARCALearn) at <https://provider.arcaclearn.org>. DSPs are required to register with ARCALearn before taking a course, including providing their employer's vendor number and regional center. DSPs should ask their employer for this information.

To obtain the first training stipend, DSPs must complete the *Code of Ethics* training, which was developed by the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP). DSPs can receive a second stipend after they complete an additional Department of Developmental Services (Department) approved course. A list of Department approved online courses can be found under the DSP Training Stipend Program tab [here](#). While multiple training courses are available, DSPs will only receive a maximum of two stipend payments. All trainings offered as part of this program can be credited towards meeting continuing education units (CEUs) requirements through Community Care Licensing.

Regional centers should share the enclosed Fact Sheet (Enclosure A) with their vendors with instructions to have them distribute the Fact Sheet to all DSPs. Also enclosed are Frequently Asked Questions (Enclosure B), and the required Training Stipend Agreement (Enclosure C).

### **Billing Process and Payments to DSPs**

Weekly activity reports, generated every Monday, titled "DSP Completion Report for RC Payment" contain information that can be used by regional centers to generate invoices for vendors. Vendors will confirm which of the DSPs identified were working for them at the time of the training. Using sub-code "T\$", regional centers will reimburse vendors, within 30 days of the receipt of the confirmation, a total \$775 for each training course completed by the vendor's employees. This consists of \$625 gross payment to be paid by the vendor to the DSP, and a \$150 administrative fee for the vendor. The administrative fee is intended to cover costs which may include but are not limited to employer payroll taxes, wages while the employee completes the training course, etc.

Regional centers and providers will sign and use the enclosed Training Stipend Agreement (Enclosure C) which outlines payment responsibilities for both the regional center and vendor. Per [W&I Code section 4699.2\(d\)](#), DSPs must be paid no later than three months after the conclusion of the training.

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### **Points of Contact at Regional Centers**

Within 14 days of the date of this guidance, regional centers must submit the following information to [Workforce@dds.ca.gov](mailto:Workforce@dds.ca.gov):

- Contact information for the regional center representative(s) who will receive the “DSP Completion Report for RC Payment” reports from ARCALearn.
- Contact information for the primary and secondary points of contact for this program.
- The regional center email address that DSPs may use to submit payment inquiries. This information will be posted on the Department’s website.

Regional centers should share this guidance with vendor advisory committees. Vendors and DSPs should contact their local regional center with any questions. Regional center questions may be directed to [Workforce@dds.ca.gov](mailto:Workforce@dds.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

*Original Signed by:*

VICKI L. SMITH, Ph.D.  
Deputy Director  
Policy and Program Development

Enclosures

cc: Regional Center Administrators  
Regional Center Community Services Directors  
Regional Center Directors of Consumer Services  
Association of Regional Center Agencies  
Nancy Bargmann, Department of Developmental Services  
Brian Winfield, Department of Developmental Services  
Ernie Cruz, Department of Developmental Services  
Jim Knight, Department of Developmental Services  
Suzy Requarth, Department of Developmental Services  
Jennifer Niklas, Department of Developmental Services