



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: People with Developmental Disabilities, NYS Office for

Division: Contract Unit

Date of Issue: 12/07/2022

Due Date: 12/19/2022

THIS IS NOT A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS. THIS IS A SOLICITATION OF INTEREST. Emails indicating interest and all questions must be submitted on 12/19/2022.

Counties: All NYS counties

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

Opportunity Type: Solicitation of Interest

Description: This Solicitation of Interest was previously advertised. Anyone who previously responded does not need to respond to this solicitation.

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 2024. <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 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.

INTENT: 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. 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 the University of Minnesota 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.

Response to SOI: December 19, 2022
Estimated Dollar Amount: \$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: Educational institution 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 education institution 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.

Interested educational organizations, who have not responded to the previous SOI, must submit questions and a letter of interest to 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 on or before December 19th, 2022.

Submit to contact: People with Developmental Disabilities, NYS Office for
Central Office
Lucas Rodriguez
Contract Manager Specialist
workforce.development@opwdd.ny.gov