

Request for Application

State of Hawai'i, Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Division
Workforce Development Training Incentive Program, Deferred Pathway Program (“WDTIP Deferred
Pathway Program”)
December 29, 2025

1.0 Introduction

This Request for Application (RFA) is issued by the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii (RCUH) on behalf of the State of Hawaii, Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Division (DDD) (hereinafter “Project”) to solicit applications from Applicants who wish to be considered for the WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program. The contract will be issued and administered as an Agreement for Services with the RCUH for the benefit of the Project.

2.0 RFA Amendments

The RCUH reserves the right to amend the RFA at any time prior to the Closing Date for Receipt of Application. All RFA amendments will be posted on the following websites: <https://health.hawaii.gov/ddd/news/> and <https://www.rcuh.com/opportunities/rfps-rfqs/open-rfps-rfqs/>. Applicants are solely responsible to check these websites for any modifications to the RFA. The RCUH reserves the right to cancel this RFA at any time for any reason at no cost to the RCUH.

3.0 Background

The mission of the Project is to foster partnerships and provide quality person-centered and family focused services and support that promote self-determination. Its vision is that individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) have healthy, safe, meaningful, and self-determined lives.

Direct Support Professionals (DSP) and Service Supervisors (SS) employed by agencies providing Medicaid 1915(c) waiver services deliver critical supports that enable people with I/DD to live, learn, and work in the community. Their work requires a wide range of competencies. Until now, Hawai'i, like most states, did not have a framework for career pathways or credentialing.

The workforce faces a high turnover rate, with an estimated 46% of DSPs leaving their jobs each year. About 38% leave within the first six months, and an additional 21% leave within 6 to 12 months. Nationally, the DSP workforce is predominately female. Two-thirds work full time, and about half rely on public assistance. Without a clear strategy, there will be fewer workers in a field that already is experiencing critical workforce shortages.

DSP and SS play a crucial role in supporting individuals with I/DD. The foundation of effective services and workforce retention lies, in part, in the quality of ongoing training, education, and supervision workers receive through their agencies. Recognizing this need, the Project has

developed the Workforce Development Training Initiative Program (WDTIP), an online training program designed to strengthen the skills, knowledge, and resources of DSP and SS who provide 1915(c) waiver services. The WDTIP strives to enhance service quality, foster career progression, and bolster staff recruitment and retention. Currently the primary focus of the WDTIP is to provide the necessary supports for DSP to achieve Level 1 Certification through the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP). The support includes an array of professional development activities designed to achieve certification, including support for SS to achieve their own certification.

To date, the Project has initiated two sets of learners, Cohort 1 and Cohort 2, which is comprised of both DSP and SS. In 2025, both Cohorts participated in the WDTIP (“2025 WDTIP, Cohorts 1 or 2”) in which participants needed to complete a prescribed number of hours of certified training and several written competency-based attestations, with the goal of achieving NADSP Level 1 Certification. The certified training and certification process was the same for both Cohorts, which included online training modules in the DDD Relias Learning Management System, participation in monthly Community of Practices (CoPs), and approval of NADSP eBadge competency-based submissions.

4.0 WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program

A WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program is being offered in this RFA. This program is specifically designed for learners who participated in the 2025 WDTIP, Cohorts 1 or 2, but were unable to achieve Level I Certification prior to the Cohort deadline. This RFA targets learners who completed all required online training in the DDD Relias Learning Management System, have achieved one (1) or more badges, and want to continue the program to achieve certification. The program will include supplemental strategies and resources to address barriers previously identified in achieving certification, including differentiated instructional support to facilitate the completion of the pending written assignments required to achieve certification. Each learner will identify their preferred learning style, co-develop an Individual Plan for Certification and schedule, participate in online meetings, receive coaching, instruction, and writing reviews from Facilitators. The program will begin January 26, 2026 and last up to 10 weeks, ending on March 31, 2026. New RFA applications are required from agencies supporting DSP and SS through the WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program process. The agency is expected to assist in supporting the learning plan. Learners must achieve certification by March 31, 2026.

Time Commitment (approximate):

- DSP – 24 hours, 2.4 hours a week for 10 weeks
- SS – 18 hours, 1.8 hours a week for 10 weeks

RCUH is accepting applications for the WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program. It is recommended that interested applicants read all guidance prior to applying. Agencies are asked to discuss expectations and achieve consensus with learners prior to submitting an application. It is highly recommended that agencies review the learner's previous badge history or discuss potential submission barriers to better facilitate the process.

The RCUH reserves the right to consider as acceptable only those applications submitted in accordance with all the requirements set forth in this RFA. Any application not meeting the requirements may be disqualified without further notice, at the discretion of the RCUH.

5.0 Applicant Eligibility Requirements

Interested agencies must:

- Be a DDD contracted I/DD Medicaid 1915(c) waiver provider in good standing providing the following services: Adult Day Health, Additional Residential Supports, Community Learning Services - Group, Community Learning Services – Individual, Community Navigator, Personal Assistance/Habilitation, Residential Habilitation, Individual Employment Supports;
- Have no current adverse action imposed by Department of Human Services (DHS), including probation, revocation, or suspension;
- Have a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN);
- In accordance with Section 103-53 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes, if selected, applicants with a service agreement over \$25,000, shall submit a valid tax clearance from the Hawaii Department of Taxation and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service prior to execution of the Agreement for Services. A Certificate of Vendor Compliance that reflects a “Compliant” status from Hawaii Compliance Express (HCE) [<https://vendors.ehawaii.gov/hce/>] is acceptable in satisfying the tax clearance requirement.
- Be currently open and operating in-person I/DD services in the State of Hawai‘i and continue to remain open and operating for a period of one (1) year from the date of receiving funds.
- Have previously contracted with RCUH to participate in 2025 WDTIP, Cohorts 1 or 2.
- Confirm the following regarding the DSP and SS learners in the WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program:
 - They have completed all of the required number of training hours in the DDD Relias Learning Management System (i.e., 50 hours for DSP and 25 hours for SS)
 - They achieved one (1) or more badges through the NADSP e-Badge Academy
 - They are available and committed to achieve certification by March 31, 2026.

6.0 Agency Expectations for WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program Participation

Applicants meeting the eligibility requirements (see section 5.0) must also identify employees that will fulfill the following roles and responsibilities throughout the WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program:

	RFA Point of Contact	Project Point of Contact	Deferred Pathway SS/ DSP
Description	Must be an agency representative authorized to sign contracts.	Serves as the primary point of contact between the agency and WDTIP staff.	Participates in WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program.
Responsibilities	Reviewing and contracting.	Submitting invoices to WDTIP staff.	Achieve certification by March 31, 2026

- Agencies will identify how learners will be provided time to complete the learning plan; learners will either be provided release time during regular shifts to accomplish work, or will complete their work between shifts (Agencies will be provided a base compensation to be used to pay for an alternate for shift coverage or for wages between shifts)
- Agencies will monitor and support employee Plans for Certification
- Agencies will assign a mentor and designate a backup mentor to each learner to aid in the badge development and submission processes
- Agencies will describe how mentor time will be protected to support learners to avoid mentor overload
- Agencies must disclose the above information to DDD, learners, and mentors, in writing, by January 19, 2026 after Agencies receive their selection notification

7.0 Required Documentation

Eligible Agencies must provide the following documentation as part of the application process:

- Completed WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program Application (attached)
 - **If submitting for multiple sites, indicate participant name and their location on one application**
 - The application form(s) must be signed by RFA Point of Contact (ink and digital signatures with audit log are both accepted)
- Acknowledgement of Terms of Program, Certification must be signed by RFA Point of Contact (ink and digital signatures with audit log are both accepted)
- Completed W-9 Form <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>
 - The W-9 form should include the name associated with the Federal Employer Identification Number of the Applicant for which the application is being submitted. If you are a sole proprietor and file business taxes using your Social Security Number, your name should be on the W-9 form. If you use a FEIN to file your business taxes,

- the legal name of the business should be on the W-9 form. The W-9 form must be signed by RFA Point of Contact (ink and digital signatures are both accepted).
- Valid Tax Clearance from the Hawaii Department of Taxation and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service is required for a service agreement over \$25,000. Tax clearance may be retrieved from <https://vendors.ehawaii.gov/hce/>

8.0 Funding Types and Requirements

Eligible Applicants may receive two WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program funding types: 1) Agency Support Funds; and 2) DSP/SS Funds. Each funding type must be used in the following manner:

8.1 Agency Support Funds

Agency Support Funds must be used by eligible provider agencies to do the following:

- Cover costs associated with supporting DSP and SS as they access training and complete NADSP Level 1 Certification.
- Support for DSP and SS training by ensuring staff have access to technology appropriate for participating in online training sessions.
- Ensure participating staff have access to email for training related communication.
- Provide management and Mentor support by monitoring, tracking and reporting staff learning progress.

8.1.1 Distribution of Agency Support Funds

Agency support funds will be paid within 30-days of invoice submission, invoices must list each DSP/SS learners for the agency.

Agencies will receive the following per learner, until the learner achieves certification based upon the established timeline :

- January 26, 2026 – February 28, 2026 (Weeks 1 – 5): \$300
- March 1, 2026 – March 31, 2026 (Weeks 6 – 10): \$300

8.2 DSP/SS Funds

A single stipend will be paid to the DSP or SS by the agency upon successful completion of NADSP Level 1 Certification by the following completion date:

- By March 31, 2026 - \$500

Each DSP or SS that qualifies for the stipend(s) shall:

- be in good standing with their agency employer;
- be a past participant in either 2025 WDTIP, Cohorts 1 or 2 under the agency employer, have completed all certified training requirements, and have achieved the minimum amount of badges required for the program.

This incentive opportunity is separate from any employer-required training for DSPs or SSs, including training assigned to address performance issues or included in onboarding, compliance, or corrective-action plans.

8.2.1 Distribution of DSP/SS Funds

The stipend(s) shall be paid in addition to regular wages and fringe benefits for each eligible staff person and shall not be used as a substitution for any other compensation. Invoices can be combined with the invoices listed above for the agency payments with specific itemized descriptions for these DSP/SS payments, or these invoices can be submitted separately. DSP/SS Funds must be distributed to the learner by the agency within 30 days of receiving the payment from RCUH:

- Agency to invoice as DSP and/or SS successfully complete NADSP Level 1 Certification. These invoices must be submitted by May 31, 2026, or earlier if certification is achieved in earlier months.
 - Invoices must list the DSP and/or SS that has achieved NADSP Level 1 Certification. The invoice will be used to distribute the stipend for each DSP/SS that achieves certification based on the following timeframe for certification completion
 - By March 31, 2026 - \$500
 - Final invoice must be submitted by May 31, 2026, unless an extension is authorized by the Project.
 - Agency to distribute the payment to the learner within 30 days of receiving the payment from RCUH.

8.3 Summary

The funds for the WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program will be distributed as follows:

WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program – Certification Earned by March 31, 2026			
	Invoice 1 (Weeks 1-5)	Invoice 2 (Weeks 6-10)	Total
Payment Type			
Agency Support Funds	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$600.00
DSP/SS Funds	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
Total Payment Amount	\$300.00	\$800.00	\$1,100.00

9.0 Application Submission

Completed application(s) must be emailed to:

Marlene.Murray@doh.hawaii.gov

By Tuesday, January 13, 2026, by 4:00 p.m. (HST)

Subject line must include the following: **Hawai'i Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Division, WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program.**

No late submissions will be accepted.

RCUH reserves the right to only respond to questions regarding application requirements, contents and details that are submitted in writing via email by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 6, 2026. Subject line must include the following: Hawai'i Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Division, WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program. Only questions submitted via email will be accepted. Submit questions via email to:

Marlene Murray, Program Coordinator

Marlene.Murray@doh.hawaii.gov

Hawaii Department of Health

Developmental Disabilities Division

All written questions will receive an official response and become addenda to this Request for Application. All received questions and responses will be posted by 4:00PM, HST on Thursday, January 8, 2026 on the following websites, <https://health.hawaii.gov/ddd/news/> and <https://www.rcuh.com/opportunities/rfps-rfqs/open-rfps-rfqs/>.

Activity	Scheduled Date
RFA Issued	Monday, December 29, 2025
Informational webinar – 1:00pm to 2:00PM	Monday, January 5, 2026
Closing date for receipt of questions	Tuesday, January 6, 2026 at 4PM
Department's deadline for response to applicant's questions	Thursday, January 8, 2026 at 4PM
Application due date	Tuesday, January 13, 2026 at 4PM
Selection/Award notifications (tentative)	Friday, January 16, 2026
Deadline to inform DDD, learners and mentors expectations, roles and responsibilities	Monday, January 19, 2026
Service agreement (contract) execution period	January 19-January 23, 2026
Orientation	January 26-27, 2026
Program Start	Monday, January 26, 2026
Certification Completion Date	Tuesday, March 31, 2026 for \$500

10.0 Award Information

Awards will be prioritized based on the eligibility requirements listed above. Qualified applicants will be awarded in order of submittal. To be eligible for an award, all Required Documentation listed above must be submitted and received by the stated deadline. Applicants are advised that entering into an Agreement for Services is contingent upon availability of funds (up to \$600,000.00 is available). If funds are not available, the RCUH reserves the right not to enter into an agreement.

Upon selection of Applicant's application(s), Applicant will be required to sign an RCUH Agreement for Services and any required federal certifications, depending on award amount. The application review process is expected to take approximately five (5) to ten (10) days, depending on the number of applications received.

Please note that all WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program funds are considered taxable income. Please discuss any tax implications with a tax professional. Furthermore, the Applicant should deduct applicable employee payroll taxes as with normal payroll. The Applicant cannot reduce the stipend to cover the employer's share of payroll taxes and/or fringe benefits, as those funds are included in the Administration Fund calculation.

11.0 Reporting Requirements

All awarded agencies will be required to submit a monthly invoice, as outlined in Section 8.0 Funding Types and Requirements. Learners must actively participate in training to remain eligible for the agency to receive support funds. Training activities will be monitored and verified monthly. Proof of certification must be submitted with the final invoice to receive the stipend.

Acknowledgment of Terms of Program, Certification

By submitting this Application, Applicant certifies and agrees:

To be bound by any and all WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program requirements as set forth in the Request for Application, and the terms set forth below, including the terms and conditions set forth in the Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i (RCUH) Agreement for Services and Attachment 32a, Terms and Conditions Applicable to Contracts and Purchase Orders (Under Federal Grants);

1. To be an approved provider of services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities delivered by employee through the State of Hawai'i, Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Division, with no current adverse actions imposed by DHS or DDD.
2. To confirm the WDTIP Deferred Pathway Program, roster of training learners within five (5) business days of approval of this Application;
3. The DSP and SS learners have completed all of the required number of training hours in the DDD Relias Learning Management System, achieved at least one badge through NADSP e-Badge Academy, and will be available and committed to achieve certification March 31, 2026.
4. This Application does not create a contractual relationship with the RCUH, the University of Hawai'i (UH), or the State of Hawai'i, Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Division (DDD), and any failure to distribute funds pursuant to this Application does not create a cause of action nor does it carry any appeal rights;
5. To only expend the funds in a manner as defined in this RFA and Application and to expend the total payment to DSP/SS successfully completing NADSP Level 1 Certification within thirty (30) days of receiving payment from RCUH;
 - Agency Support Funds:
 - Used to cover costs associated with supporting DSP/SS as they access training and complete NADSP Level 1 Certification.
 - Support DSP/SS training by ensuring staff have access to appropriate technology.
 - Ensure participants have access to email for training related communication
 - Provide management and mentor support by monitoring, tracking and reporting of staff learning progress
 - DSP/SS Funds:
 - Single stipend will be paid to the DSP/SS by the agency upon successful completion of NADSP Level 1 Certification based on completion date.
 - DSP/SS shall be in good standing with their agency employer
 - DSP/SS shall have participated in 2025 WDTIP, Cohorts 1 or 2 and achieved minimum number of required badges
6. To keep detailed, accurate, and truthful accounting records of the receipt and disbursement of all funds received pursuant to this Application;
7. To allow the State of Hawai'i, Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Division and/or RCUH or their representative(s), unlimited access to audit and examine any and all records related to the funds disbursed pursuant to this Application, including, but not limited to, all records, reports, distributions, account ledgers, balance sheets, bank records, credit card statements, electronic payment records, receipts, and/or other documents related to the receipt and distribution of funds pursuant to this Application; failure to provide accurate documentation will be construed as filing a

false statement;

8. To allow the State of Hawai'i, Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Division and/or RCUH or their representative(s) to interview any employee or agency in relation to funds disbursed pursuant to this Application;
9. That any funds received pursuant to this Application are subject to repayment, reclaim and recapture if (a) the funds are not used in the manner provided for and set forth in this Application, or (b) if access to records or information as set forth in the preceding paragraphs is refused or denied by the person(s) or entity receiving funds pursuant to this Application or, (c) if any information provided in the Application is found to be false or misleading; any agency action in requesting or demanding repayment, reclaim, and/or recapture is a final determination and is not subject to appeal;
10. That, if funding is reduced or restricted prior to distribution by legislative action, federal or state allocations, or executive action, the amount approved for distribution will be reduced or eliminated accordingly;
11. That this Agreement does not and will not violate any conflict-of-interest provisions in any respect and Applicant agrees not to pay a bonus to an individual that would result in a violation of law;
12. Will not use any funds disbursed under this application for lobbying or any other prohibited use;
13. To comply with Executive Order No. 11246, as amended and as supplemented by U.S. Department of Labor regulations (41 CFR, Part 60-1, et. seq.), which prohibits discrimination based on race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, or age; and
14. The information included in this Application is true and correct; and the person whose signature is below is the applicant/owner/licensee or the authorized designee with the authority to sign the Application and agree to the terms and requirements of the Program.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____

Location	Learner	Mentor	Backup Mentor

If more space is needed, please use an additional page.

I attest to the following, our organization:

- | | |
|---|---------|
| | Initial |
| Is a DDD contracted I/DD Medicaid 1915(c) waiver provider in good standing | |
| Does not have a current adverse action imposed by DHS or DDD, including probation, revocation, or suspension | |
| Is registered with Hawaii Compliance Express | |
| Is currently open and operating in-person I/DD services in the State of Hawai'i | |
| Intends to continue operating through June 30, 2026 | |
| Will provide the necessary support to our DSP and SS to achieve certification: | |
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide release time during regular shifts to accomplish work OR | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Will complete work between shifts | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please provide details) | |
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| 2. Will monitor and support employee plans for certification | |
| 3. Will assign a mentor, and designate a backup mentor to each learner to aid in the badge development and submission processes | |
| 4. Describe how mentor time will be protected to support learners to avoid mentor overload: | |
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| 5. Will disclose the support information to DDD, learners and mentors in writing by January 19, 2026 | |

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Title _____

The individual signing this application must be an authorized representative of the organization. If the person signing the Service Agreement will be different from the application signer, please provide their information below:

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Name and Title _____

Submit the following documents along with your application	
Completed W-9 Form	Tax clearance if applicable