# Workforce Initiatives Overview

October 1st – 2nd

DDS Department of Developmental Services



Photo by Chona Kasinger, from Disabled and Here

# AGENDA

1. Introductions
2. About Workforce Initiatives
3. **DSP Internship Program**
4. **Technology Pilot Program**
5. **DSP University**
6. **Bi-/Multi-Lingual Pay Differential Program**
7. Q & A



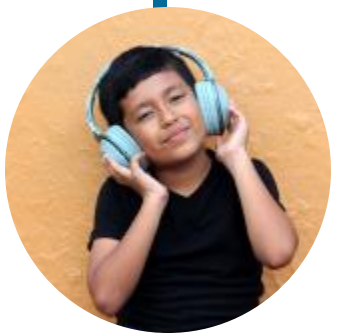
# About Workforce Initiatives

The Department's Workforce Initiatives aim to recruit, train, and retain workers from diverse communities who support individuals with intellectual and/or other developmental disabilities (I/DD).

Scan the QR Code to visit the Department's Workforce Initiatives Webpage.







# DSP Internship Program

*The DSP Internship Program will provide 2,500 entry-level interns the opportunity to be paid for up to 30 hours per week for up to three months while learning high-quality DSP skills alongside a qualified DSP in a variety of settings performing a variety of functions. The recruitment of DSP Interns will focus on populations that reflect California's diverse population and specifically those who do not traditionally have a pathway towards jobs in the field of providing services to individuals with I/DD.*

**Program Totals as of September 11 2026:**

- Interns placed: 583
- Interns converted to become DSPs: 213
- Regional Center Participating: 19
- Participating service providers: 118

6-month and 12 month Stipends as of August 2026

- 12-month stipends paid: 57
- 6-month stipends paid: 168






# DSP Intern Requirements

## Applicants must meet the following criteria:



Must be at least 18 years old



Must possess a high school diploma or equivalent



Must be authorized to work in the U.S.



Must have a valid government-issued ID



A strong desire and willingness to support individuals with developmental disabilities



Must be able to work indoors and outdoors, perform repetitive tasks, and occasionally lift up to 25 lbs.

**Interns are asked if they require any special accommodations**

# Key Points for Service Providers

- **Payroll and Compensation**

  Interns are paid weekly at minimum wage.

  Workers' Compensation coverage is fully provided by All's Well.

- **Onboarding and Clearance**

  All vetting, onboarding, and clearance processes are managed by All's Well to ensure interns meet program requirements**. All's Well will be completing the LIC 503 Form on behalf of the providers.**

- **Timekeeping and Approvals**

  Interns and designated Timecard Approvers (typically program managers) will receive access to our timekeeping portal. The provider's responsibility is to review and approve their timecard each week by the deadline.

- **Mileage Reimbursement**

  If personal vehicles are used, we offer interns mileage reimbursement at the IRS standard rate.

# DSP Internship Program

## DSP Internship Program - Relaunch May 1, 2026

- Now including LIC503 form (Health Screening Report)

- Highest recruitment needs: **181 open internship opportunities across Regional Centers**
  - North LA RC (24)
  - Valley Mountain RC (21)
  - San Gabriel Pomona (18)

**Monthly Provider Webinar hosted by All's Well**
- November 2, 2026, at 10:00 AM (PST)

**Quarterly Intern Information Webinar hosted by All's Well**
- December 2, 2026, at 10:30 AM (PST)



# Technology Pilot Program

Technology services are intended to provide supports and services necessary for individuals to access services remotely and meet the goals identified in their Individual Program Plans. The goal of the program is to provide support of the participant's individual program plan goals, reduce the need for a direct support person and enable the participant greater independence, inclusion, and quality of life.

Alta California Regional Center

On My Own Independent Living Services

STRATEGIES TO EMPOWER PEOPLE
100% Employee Owned

East Bay Innovations

Scan the QR Code to learn more about the Technology Pilot Program

# Technology Pilot Program

**OVERVIEW**

- 29 participants received 337 devices (average 12 devices per person)
- Device categories: Safety (42%), Smart Home (23%), Personal (10%), Kitchen, Health, Bathroom, Adaptive Equipment (25%)

**OUTCOMES**

- Independence: 58% → 85% (+27 pts)
- Safety: 52% → 84% (+32 pts)
- Serious incidents: 41 → 19 (-54%)
- Medication errors: 19 → 5 (-74%)

**FEEDBACK**

- 96% had choices about technology
- 91% satisfied with technology demonstrations
- 88% feel more independent

# Technology Pilot Program - Quotes

**Feedback from Cindy, Technology Pilot Program Participant**

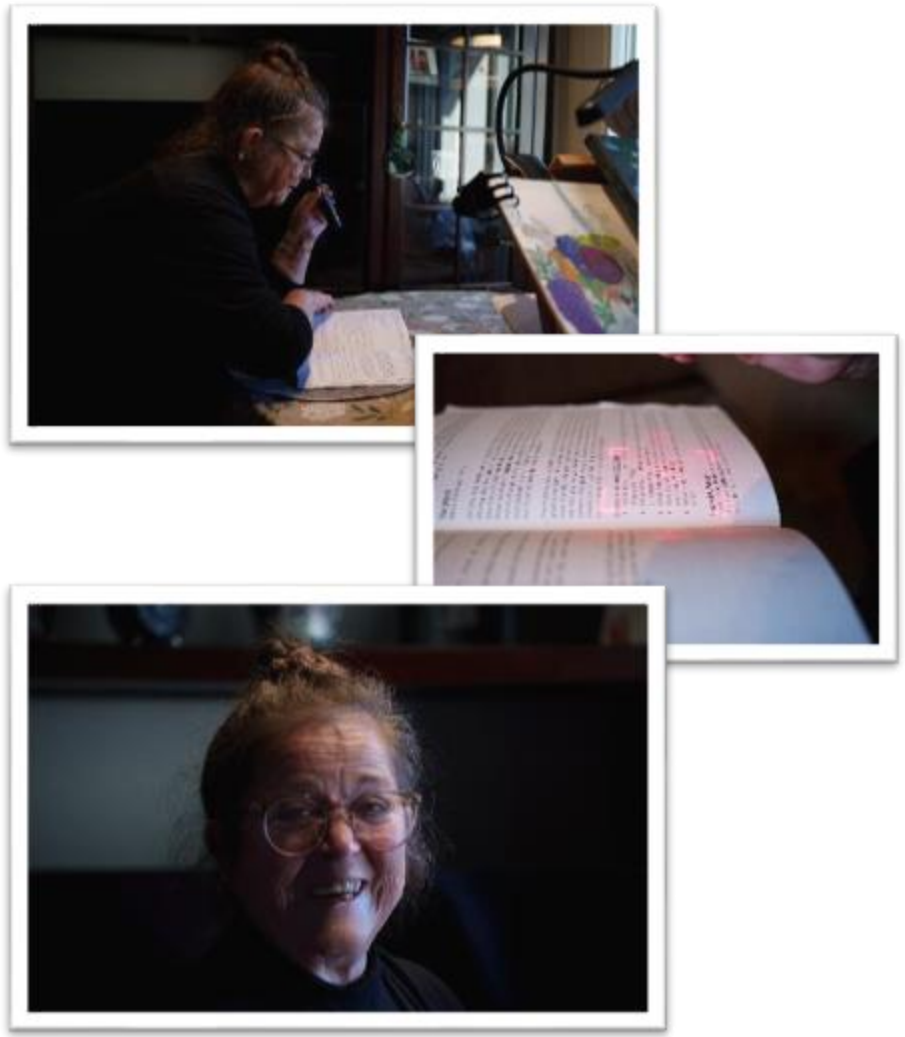
*"I can call to Ziggy or press my panic button and get help right away. It keeps me safe at night."*

***"It's like having a family — a sister or brother that watches over you without hovering."***

"I can use the robot camera to read things I have a hard time comprehending. It helps me to understand the question, recipes, or my homework."

***"It keeps me independent. It gives me freedom to breathe."***

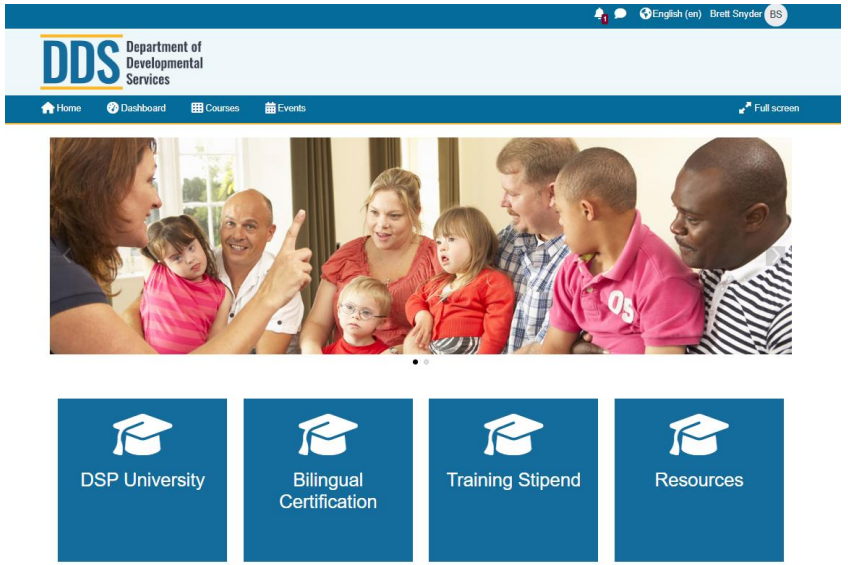
*"Without the tech program, I'd be lost. My life is a lot more content with STEP and Tech."*



# Direct Support Professional (DSP) University

*Direct Support Professional University is a competency-based training and certification program for DSPs tied to wage differentials. The DSP University is designed to have three different tiers of enhanced training aimed at promoting services that are person centered, culturally and linguistically sensitive, and that improve outcomes for individuals with I/DD.*

- Intent to enhance the quality of services that individuals with I/DD receive from their direct support professionals while recognizing the value of services provided by direct support professionals.
- Trainings are delivered via EDGE - Employee Development, Growth, and Education
- Launched as of Spring 2026
- As of September 7, the total users of EDGE/DSPU is over **2,500**!



EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT,
EDGE
GROWTH, AND EDUCATION



# What Content is on EDGE?

EDGE is capable of hosting training content in a variety of formats:

- Self-paced or live courses
- Video-based courses
- Slide-based courses with voiceovers
- Text-based
- Interactive training courses with knowledge checks, quizzes, and/or surveys
- Shared documents and resources



Training on EDGE can be accessed via computers, laptops, tablets, and mobile devices.

EDGE is designed to be user-friendly and accessible with support for screen readers and other assistive technologies to ensure an inclusive learning experience.

# DSPU – Tier 1 & Tier 2

## DSPU Training Structure

**Tier 1:**
Foundations (health, safety, system basics)

**Tier 2:**
Quality of life & independence

**Tier 3:**
Advanced & specialized practice

# Tier 1: Examples of Courses and Lessons

## Course 1: Rights, Values and Community-Based Services

**Lessons (16 hours)**

- Understanding the Perspectives of People with Developmental Disabilities: Experiences, Diversity and Culture
- Understanding the Context of Services for People with Developmental Disabilities: History, Law and the Values by which We Work
- What Are We Trying to Achieve in Services: "People Living Their Best Lives"
- The Role of the DSP and What is Expected
- An Introduction to Person-Centered Practice

## Course 2: Supporting Safety, Health and Well-Being

**Lessons (16 hours)**

- Supporting Health and Well-Being - Providing a Safe and Healthy Environment and Support
- Supporting Health and Well-Being - Fatal Five Fundamentals and Basic First Aid
- Understanding, Preventing and Responding to Abuse
- Providing Sensitive and Respectful Personal Care
- Person-Centered and Required Documentation

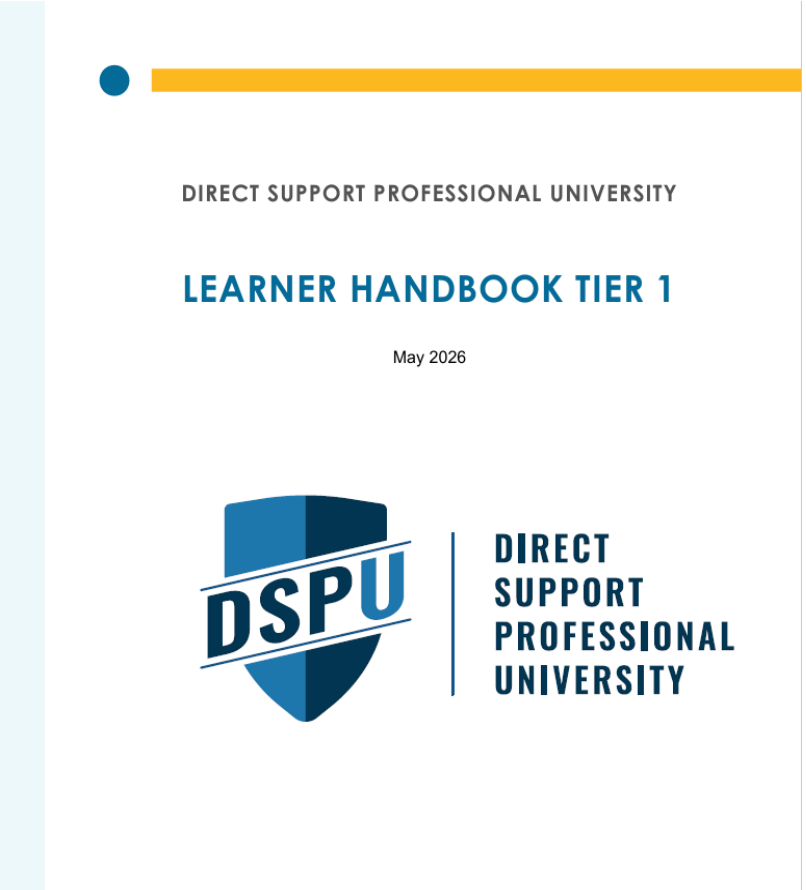
## Course 3: Applying Principles in Practice: Level 1 Learners

**Lessons (16 hours)**

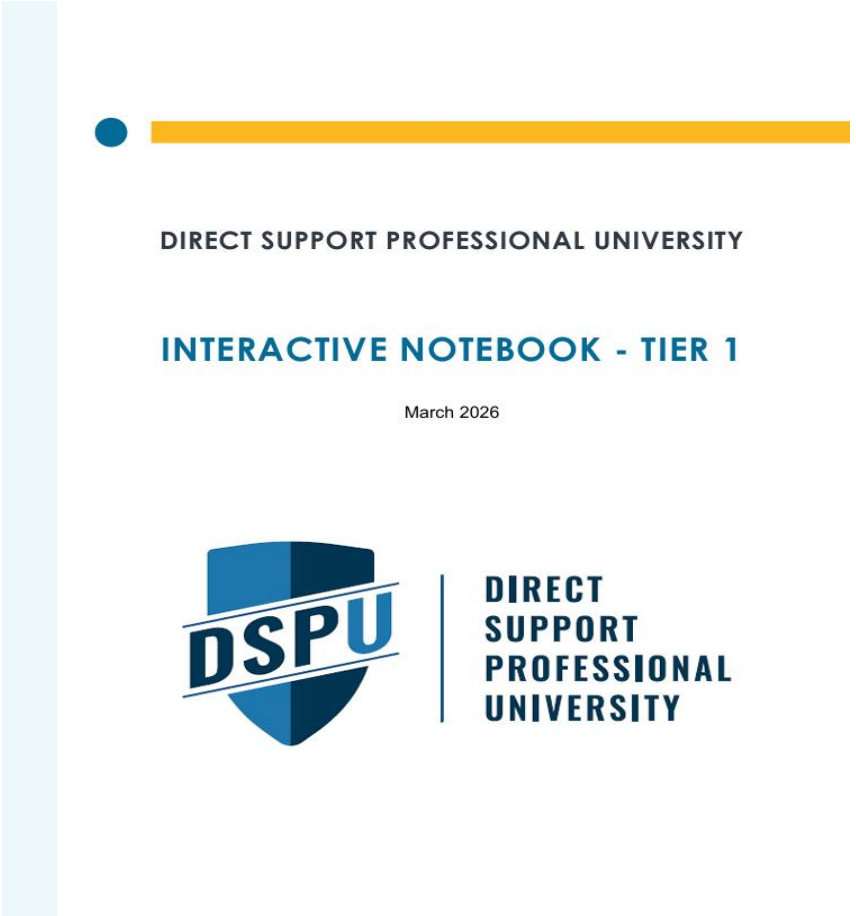
- Practice-Based Sessions on Person-Centered Practice-Instructor Led
- Understanding and Communicate with People Who are Deaf (Even if You and/or They Don't Use ASL)
- Deaf Culture and Perspectives
- Advocacy
- Understanding and Promoting Rights
- Epilepsy
- Introduction to Autism
- Introduction to Downs Syndrome
- Prader-Willi Syndrome

# DSPU Tools

## Learner Handbook




## Interactive Workbook



# Course 1: Rights, Values, and Community-Based Services

- **Lesson: The Role of the DSP and What is Expected**
  - Modules
    - Code of Ethics
    - Compassion Fatigue
    - Cultural Awareness
    - LGBTQIA+ Awareness and Understanding
    - Importance of Being Present
    - Power of Beliefs and Positivity
    - Mindfulness, Self-Awareness and Self-Care

- **Lesson: An Introduction to Person Centered Practice**
  - Modules
    - Person-Centered, A Guide to Being
    - Circle of Friends
    - Person-Centered Planning: An Introduction

# Course 2: Supporting Safety, Health and Well-Being

- **Lesson: Providing a Safe and Healthy Environment and Support**
  - Modules
    - Health and Safety
    - Infection Control and Blood Borne Pathogens
    - Medication Administration
- **Lesson: Recognizing, Preventing, and Responding in an Emergency**
  - Modules
    - Recognizing, Preventing and Responding to the "Fatal Five"
- **Lesson: Understanding, Preventing and Responding to abuse**
  - Modules
    - Recognizing and Preventing Abuse
- **Lesson: Providing Sensitive and Respectful Personal care**
  - Modules
    - Personal and Intimate Care
- **Lesson: Person-Centered and Required Documentation**
  - Modules
    - Person-Centered Documentation

# DSP Participation

**DSP Participation is**

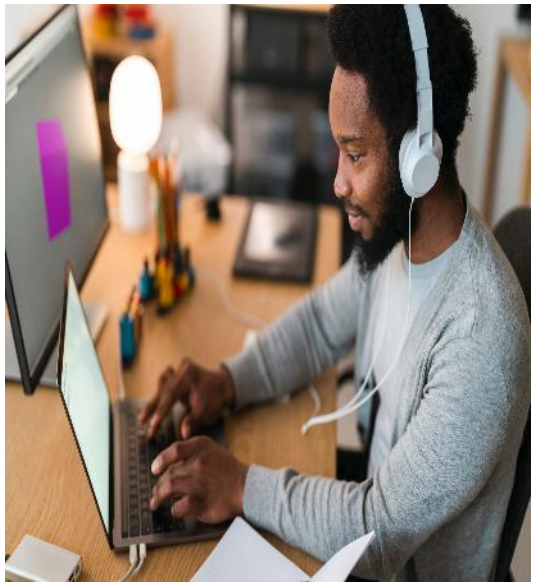
- Voluntary
- DSPs must meet eligibility criteria
- Regional Center Service Provider must be funded by regional centers

**Who qualifies as a DSP?**

- Provide direct support to individuals with IDD
- Spend 50%+ of work hours in direct support
- Support health, safety, and independence
- Are paid workers funded by regional centers



# DSPU Enrollment/Participation Process



1. DSPs will access the online Enrollment Form.
2. DSPs complete the form, providing their personal information and their employer information.
3. After enrollment form submission, the DSP receives an email with their username and temporary password to Log-in to EDGE and access DSPU
4. DSP can then complete the tier.

For more information about the DSPU Program visit the Department's Website:

**DSPU Webpage**

# EDGE Account Creation Pathways

**Pathway #1 – DSP**

- DSPs will complete the online enrollment form through Qualtrics available on the EDGE webpage.
- Once the form is complete, they will receive an email confirmation that will include a temporary username & password.
- The DSP can now login via the EDGE login page.

**DSP Login QR Code**

**Pathway #2 – Non-DSP Login**

- All other interested users will go directly to the EDGE login page

**Non-DSP Login QR Code**

# DSPU Town Hall

Scan the QR Code to register



# Bi-Multilingual Pay Differential Program

The Bi-/Multi-lingual Pay Differential Program allows DSPs (Direct Support Professionals)to become certified in one or more additional languages and receive a stipend for using those language skills in their work. DSPs who provide services in a consumer's primary language other than English are eligible to receive quarterly stipends contingent upon continuous employment and eligibility.

- There is no cost to become certified in the program
- Payments will be processed to the DSP via the Department's designated contractor

How will DSPs be enrolled into the program?

- The DSP will be responsible for enrolling into the program through the enrollment form for-Employee Development, Growth, and Education (EDGE).
- **Launching Early 2027**

For more information, visit our Initiatives Webpage at Initiatives : CA Department of Developmental Services.



# Q & A

