NJ Department of Human Services
Division of Developmental Disabilities

Request for Proposals: NADD Competency-Based to NADD Dual Diagnosis Direct Support Professional Certification Pilot

Response to Questions – August 27, 2024

	QUESTION	ANSWER
1.	Can an agency project the number of employees based on the total number needed to be fully staffed at all locations if they are aiming for 100% of their workforce to complete the training?	Bidders are directed to base their application on a realistic number of known staff who will have the ability to participate. Applications based on projections of staff expected to be hired have the potential to result in unspent program funds that could have been allocated to another applicant.
2.	How should we account for turnover when an employee who has been paid for NADD certification leaves? For example, if we project training for 200 employees, but 10 leave after completing the training, resulting in 210 employees requiring certification, can turnover be factored into the total number?	Since pursuing the NADD-DSP certification is an opportunity and not a requirement for staff, agency leadership is encouraged to invest in employees who can commit to the work. NADD will issue promo codes for the designated number of employees. Once a code is used and an employee accesses the training or submits an application for certification, that promo code (and associated cost) is no longer transferable to another employee.
3.	What are the expectations regarding the timeline for completing the certification? Is it required that all employees be certified within the first year, or can an agency implement a ramp-up period between years 1 and 2 to meet the required percentage?	**RFP, pp. 10:** "Employees enrolled in the pilot should complete all steps through completion of first certification exam within six months of activation in the NADD LMS."
4.	Can an agency decide to make NADD certification a mandatory condition of continued employment through this pilot?	That is an agency decision.
5.	On the budget spreadsheet, can the hourly rate of employees be increased to cover the cost of taxes and fringe benefits associated with the certification?	The average hourly wage an agency indicates it will use to calculate employee reimbursement for training hours and certification bonus payment should appropriately reflect an amount inclusive of usual deductions.
6.	Is there a fee for employees who need to retake the certification exam if they fail?	Employees may re-take the certification exam up to three times at no additional cost.
7.	Will an employee who fails the exam three times negatively affect the agency's progress toward achieving 100% certification? This is in a case where the agency is projecting 100 percent of the workforce becoming certified.	No. The "up to 100%" figure represents the agency's anticipated employee participation.

8.	If an agency does not enroll the full number of projected employees but still aims to certify 100% of its workforce, how should any unutilized funds be handled? Can these funds be returned, excluding those already paid to NADD, or can they be used to certify additional employees who have met the requirements?	Bidders are directed to base their application on a realistic number of known staff who will have the ability to participate. Applications based on projections of staff expected to be hired have the potential to result in unspent program funds that could have been allocated to another applicant.
9.	If we have an employee that is having an exceptionally difficult time grasping the information does NADD have additional technical support to offer that employee to support a passing score on the certification exam?	Learners who are struggling with the content are encouraged to attend the Learning Collaborative sessions through The Boggs Center for further support. Questions about the DSP certification process or the exam itself can be emailed to DSPCerts@thenadd.org and will be answered by a NADD staff member. If a learner takes the exam and fails more than once, a mentor will be offered who can discuss the difficulties they are having and help them better understand the information they are struggling with.
10.	Is there any potential unexpected cost associated with an agency moving forward with this PILOT or is NADD prepared to stay in line with all cost as outlined in this RFP? If unexpected cost were to come up how would an agency address this?	The NADD costs will remain constant for this pilot, as described in the RFP.
11.	Are there opportunities for agencies to network or collaborate with other organizations participating in the certification program?	NADD, in partnership with The Boggs Center, will be offering information sessions to help agency leadership prepare and to guide DSPs though the certification process. These sessions will tentatively be offered: • October 3, 2024, at 10 am Eastern • October 22, 2024, at 3 pm Eastern Coordinator Forums are required for the agency lead/Certification Coordinator. Agencies are encouraged to designate an alternate to ensure agency representation each quarter. Virtual Learning Collaboratives hosted by The Boggs Center are designed to support DSPs in their learning. These are all opportunities for networking, collaboration, and further capacity building.

12.	Who, when and how is the training delivered? Virtual or In-person?	Training is provided through a password-protected online learning platform. Learners can go at their own pace through a series of lessons (or competencies).
13.	Are classes interactive (live) – can questions be asked?	While the training sessions are not live, they are designed so learners can actively engage with the lessons. The Learning Collaborative sessions through The Boggs Center will be conducted live online and offer opportunities to ask questions and engage with competency area experts and other learners.
14.	What is the schedule of sessions for 2024?	There is no formal schedule because the trainings are asynchronous - meaning the learner can access the training at any time through the password-protected portal.
15.	Can membership cost be paid from the $1000 per DSP?	Yes, annual membership fees for two years (either organizational or individual) are included in the $1000-per-employee funding.
16.	Are supervisors eligible to receive the NADD Competency-Based IDD/MI Dual Diagnosis Direct Support Professional Certification under this grant? Or do we have to cover the director level at our own cost?	Yes, DSP supervisors are eligible as long as the agency has an equal or greater number of DSPs enrolled in the NADD certification pilot.
17.	Can Managers also participate in the training and become certified?	Yes, DSP managers are eligible as long as the agency has an equal or greater number of DSPs enrolled in pilot.
18.	Can we designate two persons to perform the Certification Coordinator role: a primary and a secondary?	Yes.
19.	The qualifications for the Certification Coordinator say the person designated be "supervisory level or above." Would you consider an Agency Nurse taking the Certification Coordinator role since the classes fall under "clinical?"	Yes.
20.	Are the Letters of Commitment (Appendices #6, page 16) from the provider agency on letterhead? Do you have a sample?	Agency Letterhead can be used. A sample is not provided.
21.	Would an Anti-Discrimination / Anti-Harassment Policy qualify for Cultural Competency Plan (Appendices #7, page 16)?	Yes.

22.	Do the winning bidders receive the requested funding upfront? Are the funds required to be deposited into a separate/interest bearing account?	Yes, the awarded funding is dispersed up front, after contract is signed. The agency makes its own determinations regarding funds management.
23.	Are there periodic evaluations/reporting required? The RFP only mentions the one-time budget report filed at the end of the 2-year period	NADD will provide periodic reports to DDD about trainings completed, exams attempted, and certifications issued. Other required reporting to DDD includes pre-pilot and post-pilot metrics and the final Expenditure Report.
24.	Are we assigned a dedicated contract manager?	A dedicated contract manager will not be assigned. Questions and issues may be submitted to DDD.ProviderAttestation@dhs.nj.gov at any time during the two-year pilot.
25.	Can the costs of training materials be included in the participant costs? Currently the RFP does not include cost of training materials.	There are no training materials outside of the NADD LMS modules, which are viewable by the employee at any time.
26.	What is the percentage of goal required to meet deliverable?	The overarching goal of the pilot is for 100% of enrolled employees to complete the training and pass the exam to become certified. It is understood that factors like employee turnover may affect an agency's ability to achieve 100% even after having successfully assigned a Certification Coordinator, enrolled employees, remitted all NADD fees, and begun moving employees through the training.
27.	How many hours can be designated for the dedicated trainer/supervisor?	DDD does not determine this. The agency should project Certification Coordinator hours based on the person(s) selected for this role, number of employees participating, etc.
28.	Is there a cost for the Boggs Center collaborative sessions?	No.
29.	What is the contract period?	Two years.
30.	Can you clarify that the NADD Membership Costs will be an agency cost, while the NADD Training & Certification Costs are covered by the $1,000 per employee funding (with the understanding that any remaining funds will be distributed equally to all participating employees)?	Two years of NADD Organizational Membership or Individual Memberships (whichever cost is lower for the provider agency) are costs covered through the RFP (See page 5 for more detail).
31.	When do the pre- and post- pilot metrics have to be provided to DDD?	Agencies must include in their proposal their timeline for submission of pre-pilot and post-pilot metrics reporting.

32.	After the DSP's are trained for 10 hours and certified does DDD have any plans for any type of additional stipend for this certification?	No.
33.	Attachment G: Letter of Reference - are these letters due with the application or upon award once DSPs who will participate have been selected?	Employee letters of reference are due upon award and submitted directly to NADD (not to DDD) as part of the employee certification application.
34.	Board Resolution: is the board resolution due with the application or upon the award?	It is due at the time of the proposal/application and needs to be included with the proposal package.
35.	Budget form- do we only need to show expense categories that are already posted on the form? For example, what if some of the funds will be utilized towards paying the coordinator?	The Expenditure Sheet will be updated to include a G&A category. Bidders are reminded that all costs are covered in the $1000-per-employee funding amount and a Certification Coordinator should be included when calculating total number of employees enrolled.
36.	Training- Who is actually conducting the training?	The training is asynchronous and is delivered through the NADD Learning Management System.
37.	Training- is it all pre-recorded?	Each person is provided access to a virtual, password-protected online Learning Management platform.
38.	Training- when was it developed and by who?	The NADD Competency-Based Direct Support Professional Certification was originally developed using an expert-consensus model. The work group of experts from across the US and Canada met over the course of four years to identify appropriate competency areas and to design a fair and comprehensive program for evaluating the competency of direct support professionals to properly support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who also have mental health needs. This team consisted of: Robert Fletcher, DSW, ACSW; Donna McNellis, PhD; Kathleen Olson, PhD; Melissa Cheplic, MPH, NADD-CC, Jerry Hodges, MA, MBA; Deceil Moore, LCSW; Susan Morris, BSW, MSW, RSW; Susan N. O'Nell; Tony Thomas, LISW, ACSW; Belinda White, MSW. The training content has been updated over time to stay current and to incorporate evolving best practice standards.

39.	Given the VF/EA is not the employer of record, meeting the projected 10% enrollment threshold in a self-directed model of service delivery is not solely in the VF/EA's control. While 10% seems achievable will DDD consider an allowance if enrollees are under 10% (after 60 days) which projects to be 650+ self-directed employees under the VF/EA model?	The 10% minimum does not apply to FMS vendors, as FMS vendors may identify their own their own minimum. **Per RFP, page 7:** "FMS vendor applicants may identify the minimum number of self-directed eligible employees they will sponsor (and may decline the award if they are unable to meet their identified minimum within sixty days of award notification)."
40.	Can DDD confirm that the select vendor's administrative costs including enrolling and tracking interested candidates, completing NADD and LMS registrations, processing payments, reemitting applicable taxes, issuing supporting year end payment documentation and the provision of project management staff should be derived from the $1,000 per employee funding?	Yes. The $1,000 per employee includes all costs associated with the project, including reasonable administrative fees.
41.	When will funding be released? Do providers need to cover any of the cost up front?	Funding will be dispersed via a one-time payment through NJ Treasury (not Gainwell) after contract award and signing, based on the agency's projected employee enrollment in the pilot identified in its proposal. DHS/DDD will recoup any funding awarded through the RFP that remains unexpended at the end of the two-year pilot and/or if it is determined that expenditures did not align with RFP parameters.