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# Survey on Core Competencies for the Direct Service Workforce [Online<sup>1</sup>]

## Welcome!

You are being asked to complete this survey because you work in long-term services and supports to provide services to enable people who need assistance to live in the community, or you receive direct services so that you can live in a home and community based setting. Four states are participating in this survey project, sponsored by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

**Directions:** Please answer the following question then go to the next page. Click on the link options for full descriptions.<sup>2</sup> Select the audio feature to hear the information in alternative format.<sup>3</sup>

[Insert audio option]

What best describes your role in Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS)?<sup>4</sup> (Check all that apply)<sup>5</sup>

- Direct service worker
- Person who receives direct services
- Family member and/or guardian of person who receives direct services (includes paid and unpaid family caregivers)
- Supervisor or manager of direct service workers
- Agency or organization administrator

## Description of Services and Roles (series of text boxes linked to Survey Screen 1):

Home and Community-Based Services: Home and community-based services (HCBS) provide opportunities for Medicaid beneficiaries to receive services in their own home or community. These programs serve a variety of targeted populations groups, such as people with behavioral health needs or

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<sup>1</sup> This document contains a survey instrument to be administered via Survey Monkey. The content is to be reviewed and approved by the Office of Management and Budget prior to finalization and pre-testing. Notes to the reviewer (regarding survey logic and translation to online format) are described in footnotes.

<sup>2</sup> When clicking on each link (underlined text), the respondent will be able to review definitions of HCBS and roles (described on next page).

<sup>3</sup> Please note that all text information on this survey screen will be offered in audio format.

<sup>4</sup> Based on the answer to this question, the respondent will be guided through a particular track of the survey. Please note that the survey questions and contextual information in this document (regarding instructions and informed consent) will be tailored to specific respondent categories per survey logic methods. Questions to follow will be phrased as applicable to the respondent's role. Please refer to the supplemental document "CC Survey Logic Summary.docx" for information about the survey structure; note the corresponding online survey screens are listed in bottom left-hand corner of each page.

<sup>5</sup> If the respondent selects more than one category, then s/he will be routed to one track. (Any indication of Supervisor or Agency in addition to others will indefinitely be routed to track C. If there is indication of person receiving services or family member in addition to direct service worker, those respondents will be routed to track B.)

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mental illnesses, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and physical disabilities, as well as those in aging population who have direct service needs.

**Direct service worker:** A paid employee whose primary job responsibility is to provide support, training, and personal assistance to one or more adults who need support to live in their home or community. For the purposes of this survey, direct service workers are considered to be all full-time and part-time staff members who spend at least 50% of their hours doing direct service tasks. The type of supports and services delivered by direct service workers vary widely, depending on a service recipient's needs and the type of setting in which services are delivered. There is no unified occupational title for direct service workers.

**Person who receives direct services:** A person who receives services from a direct service worker in his or her own home or community.

**Family member and/or guardian of person who receives direct services:** A family member, guardian, and/or conservator of a person who receives support from a direct service worker through home and community-based services.

**Frontline Supervisor or manager of direct service workers:** A paid employee who supervises and/or manages the direct services provided to people in their homes and communities. This role may include a broad range of diverse and often complex activities. These activities may range from: hiring, training, and supervising staff; program planning and evaluation; advocacy; and working with families or community members. Frontline supervisors often spend a portion of their time also providing direct services.

**Program directors or agency administrator:** A paid employee in a leadership role who oversees the delivery of direct services to people in their homes and communities. This role may include a broad range of activities. These activities may range from: directing operations; financial management; policy development and implementation; and overseeing the activities of service managers and other employees.

## Section 1: Background Information

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### Survey Introduction

**Directions:** Click the video icon to view a presentation about this survey.<sup>6</sup>

[Insert video icon]

### Purpose of the Survey:

This survey is focused on employees who provide direct services to older adults and people with disabilities, including intellectual and developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, mental illnesses, and substance use disorders. The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the competencies and skills that are needed by all community-based direct service workers. This includes workers within each sector of long-term services and supports: aging, behavioral health (mental health and substance use), intellectual and developmental disabilities, and physical disabilities.

A growing number of older people and people with disabilities in the U.S. need support or assistance in their own homes and communities. However, there is a need for more workers and effective training to provide this type of service. A skilled direct service workforce is critical to the wellbeing of individuals who need support to live in the community. Your responses in this survey will help determine if the **Core Competencies for the Direct Service Workforce**, which were identified in an earlier project phase, are the representative of the skills needed to perform this work.

### Information about the Core Competencies for the Direct Service Workforce:

The **Core Competencies for the Direct Service Workforce** is a resource that informs direct support service delivery. It describes best practices in community-based supports. The core competency set is not intended to impose requirements for direct service workers upon entry to the workforce. The purpose of the core competency set is to guide the development of training for direct service workers. It is also intended to serve as the foundation for a competency model in this industry.

Upon completion of the current survey project, the resource will be released with a web-based toolkit. Effective direct service workforce training tools and activities (such as performance evaluation tools and

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<sup>6</sup> For this section, three (3) videos will be developed to present the information reflected on pages 3-6. Per the survey logic method, each video will present the same information in this section, but will be tailored to the nuances of the specific respondent group: (A) Direct service workers, (B) Person receiving services and family members/guardians, or (C) Supervisors, Managers, and Administrators. Each video will entail slides and audio (captioned). This will increase accessibility of the information. Including the video option in the instrument will accommodate people who are not able to read and/or who have trouble reading text from a computer screen. A summary of information covered in the videos is provided below.

Each of the three videos will address: (1) Purpose of survey, (2) Directions, Consent, and Privacy information, (3) Information about Core Competencies project, and (4) Focus of the survey, i.e. types of workers and services.



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recruitment, hiring, and selection activities) will be developed based on the set. Implementation the core competency set will lead to improved quality of training to direct service workers. The mission is to promote a high quality of life for people who receive services and their families. A current version of the core competency set (Version 3.0) is available to the public on the [DSW Resource Center Website](#).

## Notice of Informed Consent<sup>7</sup>

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### Risks and Benefits:

We are not aware of any risks of participating in this process. The direct benefit will be an opportunity for you to review the DSW Core Competencies resource. This review may provide you with information to enhance strategies of direct service workforce development. Participating in the study will help us to validate a set of DSW core competencies.

### Compensation:

You will not receive any payment or other compensation for completing the survey.

### Notice of Privacy/Confidentiality:

Your responses are recorded anonymously. Your responses will be kept private under the guidelines of the Privacy Act. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared. Your name is not linked to your responses. Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology used. Your responses will not affect your status as a service provider or recipient.

### Voluntary Participation:

Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the National Direct Service Workforce Resource Center, your employer, or the services you receive.

### Directions:

Please complete the survey by using this secure website. The survey will take approximately 30 minutes<sup>8</sup> to complete. Follow the instructions on each page. Completing and submitting this survey indicates you have consented to participate in this study.

### For More Information:

If you have questions about the purpose of the survey or how to respond, please contact the Direct Service Workforce Resource Center toll-free at 1-877-822-2647, or by email:

[info@dswresourcecenter.org](mailto:info@dswresourcecenter.org).

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<sup>7</sup> This subsection of the online survey is designed to comply with consent form guidelines per the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board (IRB). Informed consent and confidentiality notices will be presented in the section video (described previously as tailored to respondent group) and will include both text and audio format.

<sup>8</sup> Estimated time burden will be measured in pretesting and reported in OMB description. The results of pretesting will be used to revise and update the survey.



## PRA Disclosure Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0938-NEW. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 30 min per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed and complete and review the information collection. If you have comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to:

CMS, 7500 Security Boulevard,  
Attn: PRA Reports Clearance Officer,  
Mail Stop C4-26-05, Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850.



## Focus of the Survey<sup>9</sup>

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***This survey is about people employed or contracted to be direct service workers*** in home and community-based settings. Please keep the following information in mind as you go through each page.

### Types of Workers

The direct service worker's primary job responsibility is to provide support, training, and personal assistance to older adults and/ people of all ages with support needs (based on behavioral health, physical disabilities, and/or intellectual or developmental disabilities). For the purposes of this survey, direct service workers are considered to be all paid staff members who spend at least 50% of their hours doing direct service tasks.

The direct service workforce includes the following job titles and those in similar roles:

- ▶ Personal Support Specialists (PSS)
- ▶ Home Health Aids (HHA)
- ▶ Direct Support Professionals (DSP)
- ▶ Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA)
- ▶ Homemakers or home attendants
- ▶ Personal Attendants (PA) or Personal Care Attendants (PCA)
- ▶ Psychiatric technicians or aides
- ▶ Peer support workers
- ▶ Residential or vocational counselors
- ▶ Addiction counselors

### Types of Services Provided

This survey refers to direct service workers who provide the following types of services:

- ▶ Community living supports
- ▶ Personal care
- ▶ Private duty nursing
- ▶ Home maker/ home chore
- ▶ Adult day care
- ▶ Adult day health services

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<sup>9</sup> Information in this subsection will be presented in the section video (described previously as tailored to respondent group) and will include both text and audio format.

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- ▶ Respite
- ▶ Ongoing supported employment services
- ▶ Attendant care
- ▶ Peer support
- ▶ Residential counseling
- ▶ Supported employment
- ▶ Addiction counseling

## Types of Service Settings

This survey refers to direct service workers who provide services in the following home and community-based settings:

- ▶ **Residential services**—Supports provided to a person living in a community home with two or more people of any age with disabilities or who are aging (e.g., group home, Assisted Living Facility).
- ▶ **In-home supports/Home care**—Supports provided to a person in their own home or in the home of a family member in which they reside.
- ▶ **Community-based services such as day programs and rehabilitative or medical supports**—Supports provided outside an individual's home such as adult day care and adult health care services, rehabilitative services, day training and rehabilitation services, case management and disability specific non-school based services to children and youth with disabilities (e.g., *respite, drop in centers*).
- ▶ **Job or vocational services**—Supports to help individuals to locate, acquire and keep a job for which they are paid. This includes services such as job coaching, supported employment, work crews, sheltered workshops, and job training.

## What's Excluded

For the purposes of this survey, please **do not include** employees who provide **therapy services**, such as occupational therapists.

In addition, please **do not include** employees who provide services in the following settings:

- ▶ **Institutional settings** such as ICF-MRs, Skilled Nursing Facilities, Nursing Homes, Hospitals, or Rehabilitation Facilities.
- ▶ **School settings** for children through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Background Questions

**Directions:** Please respond to the questions below based on your role in home and community-based services.

**1. How long have you worked in this field or received services?**

Years,  Months

**2. In which of the following service areas do you currently receive, provide, supervise or administer services? (Select the main area that you work in or receive services from, most of the time. Click on the link options for full descriptions <sup>10</sup>)**

- Aging and Elderly Services *(Service recipient population: People who are 65 years of age or older with chronic illness or disability, cognitive impairment or dementia)*
- Behavioral Health Services *(Service recipient population: People who experience mental health conditions, psychiatric disabilities, or disorders related to substance use)*
- Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Services *(Service recipient population: People who experience limited mental capacity and difficulty with adaptive behaviors; people who experience severe, long term disability that may affect cognitive ability, physical functioning, or both)*
- Physical Disabilities Services *(Service recipient population: People who experience a physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities)*

**3. Which of the following services do you currently receive, provide, supervise, or administer? (Check all that apply)**

- Community living supports
- Personal care
- Private duty nursing
- Home maker/home chore
- Adult day care
- Adult day health services
- Respite
- Supported employment services
- Peer support
- Residential counseling
- Addiction counseling
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>10</sup> When clicking on each link (underlined text), the respondent will review “Service recipient population” text.



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4. Do you (or your family member/guardian) direct your own services? (Such as consumer-directed, participant-directed, or self-directed state service programs)<sup>11</sup>

Yes

No

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<sup>11</sup> Example of question variation (based on survey logic by respondent group):

Direct service worker version (A): Does the person you support direct his or her own services? (Such as...) Yes/no

Supervisor and Administrator version (C): Do you have any programmatic or fiscal responsibilities within participant-directed services? (Such as...) Options: Yes/no. If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

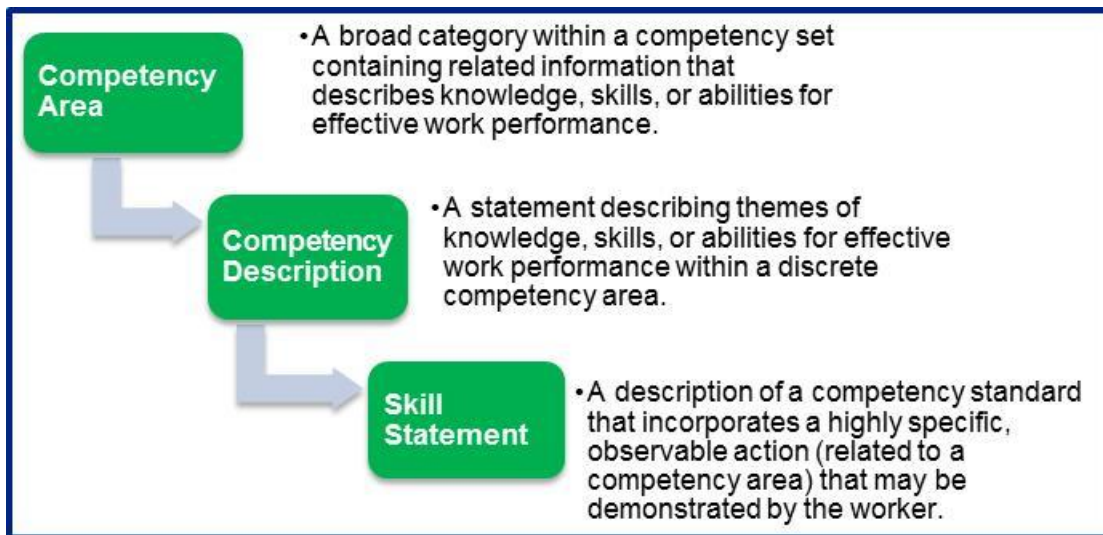
## Section 2: Core Competencies for the Direct Service Workforce

### Overview of Core Competencies

**Directions:** In this section, you will be asked to review full content of the Core Competencies for the Direct Service Workforce. Click the video icon to view a presentation about this section of the survey.<sup>12</sup>

[Insert video icon]

Please keep in mind the core competency set is structured by the following:



<sup>12</sup> For this section, three (3) unique videos will be developed to present the information reflected on pages 8-9. Per the survey logic method, each video will present the same information in this section, but will be tailored to the nuances of the specific respondent group: (A) Direct service workers, (B) Person receiving services and family members/guardians, or (C) Supervisors, Managers, and Administrators. Each video will entail slides and audio (captioned). This will increase accessibility of the information. Including the video option in the instrument will accommodate people who are not able to read and/or who have trouble reading text from a computer screen. A summary of information covered in the videos is provided below. Each of the three videos will address: (1) Brief overview of the competencies, (2) Instructions: How to review the competencies and respond from the primary sector perspective, i.e. “consider one worker who provides services to you and the skills that the person needs to perform the job well.”

**The structure of the set of core competencies, which categorizes specific skills into groups.**

In the following pages, you will be asked to review each of the 14 core competency areas listed below. Please read the competency area description on the top of each page. Then respond to questions based on the related skill statements.<sup>13</sup>

**DSW Core Competency Areas (Version 3.0)**

Communication

Facilitation of Individualized Services

Evaluation and Observation

Participant Crisis Prevention and Intervention

Safety

Professionalism and Ethics

Participant Empowerment

Advocacy

Supporting Health and Wellness

Community Living Skills and Supports

Interpersonal and Family Relationships

Community and Service Networking

Cultural Competency

Education, Training and Self-Development

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<sup>13</sup> Information in this table will be presented in the section video (described previously as tailored to respondent group) and will include both text and audio format.

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# Core Competency Area #1: Communication

*Competency Description: The DSW recognizes communication as a core function of support, and uses person first language and effective communication skills to establish a supportive and collaborative relationship with the participant and his or her family.*

**Directions:** For each statement listed below (A-D), please answer the following questions by selecting “yes” or “no”. In your responses, please consider whether each statement is relevant to direct service workers in your sector(s): aging, behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, or physical disabilities services.

SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills? <sup>14</sup>	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>A. Uses effective communication skills:</b> The DSW uses effective, respectful communication skills. This includes active listening, paraphrasing, and using open-ended questions to create open communication with participant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B. Uses positive communication strategies:</b> The DSW has knowledge of and uses positive communication strategies (verbal and nonverbal) that are appropriate and specific to the needs of participants.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C. Uses service terminology:</b> The DSW uses service terminology as needed for effective service delivery, explaining as necessary to participants and family members to ensure understanding.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D. Communicates with others appropriately:</b> The DSW communicates with participants and their natural support systems in a respectful and culturally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<sup>14</sup> Example of question variation (based on survey logic by respondent group) - Direct service worker version (A): Does this statement describe skills that you and other direct service workers need to perform your jobs? Do you and other direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?



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SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills? <sup>14</sup>	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
appropriate manner, using preferred language when possible, respecting cultural differences, and recognizing non-verbal communications.				



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## Core Competency Area #2: Facilitation of Individualized Services

*Competency Description: The DSW provides person-centered services to support participant’s preferences, strengths, interests and goals, and participates in multidisciplinary teams, with participant approval.*

**Directions:** For each statement listed below (A-I), please answer the following questions by selecting “yes” or “no”. In your responses, please consider whether each statement is relevant to direct service workers in your sector(s): aging, behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, or physical disabilities services.

SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>A. Maintains professional relationships:</b> The DSW maintains collaborative professional relationships with the participant and all support team members (including family/friends, as desired by participant).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B. Assists individualized plan:</b> The DSW assists in the development of an individualized plan based on participant strengths, preferences, needs, and goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C. Implements individualized plan:</b> The DSW implements a participant’s individualized plan to achieve goals collaboratively identified with participant, based upon his or her preferences, strengths, needs, and interests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D. Contributes to team:</b> The DSW contributes as part of a multidisciplinary team, participating in team building and group processes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>E. Supports participant goals:</b> The DSW reviews progress towards participant outcomes, and collaborates with participant to identify alternative goals to be shared with multidisciplinary team.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>F. Supports service transitions:</b> The DSW supports successful transitions across services, including promoting delivery of appropriate services based on the participant’s strengths and needs, and facilitating transition into home and community-based settings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>G. Fosters a supportive environment:</b> The DSW fosters a supportive environment, providing person-centered supports and services using a strengths-based approach to promote the participant’s development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to achieve goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>H. Documents information:</b> The DSW collects, compiles, documents, and reviews pertinent participant information to ensure effective service provision, consistent with agency standards and in compliance with applicable administrative rules.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I. Uses documentation:</b> The DSW uses documentation effectively and submits records to appropriate sources in a timely manner to promote consistent delivery of services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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# Core Competency Area #3: Evaluation and Observation

*Competency Description: The DSW understands formal and informal assessment practices and is able to respond to the needs, desires and interests of the participants.*

**Directions:** For each statement listed below (A-D), please answer the following questions by selecting “yes” or “no”. In your responses, please consider whether each statement is relevant to direct service workers in your sector(s): aging, behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, or physical disabilities services.

SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>A. Supports assessment:</b> The DSW initiates or assists in the initiation of an assessment process by gathering information from multiple sources including formal and informal networks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B. Uses assessment information:</b> The DSW can review and discuss findings from the various assessments and evaluations that inform individualized services and plans.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C. Reassesses goal progress:</b> The DSW collects data regarding the progress and achievement of goals, and regularly seeks input from the participant, and his or her family as requested, regarding satisfaction with progress towards goals to inform the plan and services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D. Conducts observations:</b> The DSW conducts observations from a culturally relevant perspective and uses results to support the independence, health and wellness of the participant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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# Core Competency Area #4: Participant Crisis Prevention and Intervention

*Competency Description: The DSW identifies potential risks, crisis situations, and/or behaviors, and uses appropriate procedures to de-escalate the situation and minimize potential for danger, using strategies specific to the environment and as outlined in the participant’s plan.*

**Directions:** For each statement listed below (A-F), please answer the following questions by selecting “yes” or “no”. In your responses, please consider whether each statement is relevant to direct service workers in your sector(s): aging, behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, or physical disabilities services.

SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>A. Identifies risks and crises:</b> The DSW recognizes the indicators of risks and participant crisis situations, and identifies appropriate person-centered prevention strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B. Uses positive behavior support strategies:</b> The DSW uses positive behavior support strategies to promote wellness, recovery and crisis prevention when a participant engages in potentially challenging or dangerous behavior.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C. Intervenes appropriately:</b> The DSW uses appropriate intervention strategies to defuse a crisis situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D. Seeks assistance as needed:</b> The DSW recognizes the need for and seeks additional assistance at any point of a crisis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>E. Monitors and reports:</b> The DSW continues to monitor situations and effectively communicates with the participant and/or family or team members to reduce risk while complying with regulations for reporting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>F. Assesses contributing factors:</b> The DSW recognizes his or her role during conflict or crisis situations, identifies how his or her behavior affected the situation, and changes behavior to minimize potential for crisis or conflict.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Core Competency Area #5: Safety

*Competency Description: The DSW understands ways to support a participant to be safe and adhere to procedures necessary to maintain a safe environment, in order to reduce risks and be prepared for emergencies.*

**Directions:** For each statement listed below (A-E), please answer the following questions by selecting “yes” or “no”. In your responses, please consider whether each statement is relevant to direct service workers in your sector(s): aging, behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, or physical disabilities services.

SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>A. Identifies, prevents, and reports abuse and neglect:</b> The DSW understands and demonstrates his/her responsibility to identify, prevent, and report abuse, exploitation, and neglect.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B. Understands maltreatment and related mandates:</b> The DSW understands types and indicators of abuse according to state law and organizational policies, including physical abuse, psychological abuse, exploitation, neglect, and improper use of physical and chemical restraints, and implements methods to prevent them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C. Practices emergency preparedness:</b> The DSW is prepared to maintain the participant’s health and safety in the event of emergency (fire, natural disaster, terror threat, etc.), and is practiced in emergency procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D. Assists safe community living:</b> The DSW facilitates learning and assists a participant to develop and retain safe community living skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>E. Provides first aid and emergency response:</b> The DSW provides first aid and safety procedures based on the needs of the participant when responding to emergencies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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# Core Competency Area #6: Professionalism and Ethics

*Competency Description: The DSW demonstrates professionalism by respecting participant rights in accordance with relevant ethical standards and legal protections, and recognizes his or her own personal wellness as it relates to effective service provision.*

**Directions:** For each statement listed below (A-H), please answer the following questions by selecting “yes” or “no”. In your responses, please consider whether each statement is relevant to direct service workers in your sector(s): aging, behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, or physical disabilities services.

SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>A. Behaves professionally and ethically:</b> The DSW is aware of his/her professional performance and compares this to ethical, legal, and professional standards to enhance performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B. Understands role and boundaries:</b> The DSW understands and demonstrates his/her collaborative role in relation to the participant and adheres to boundaries in various settings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C. Fulfills responsibilities:</b> The DSW demonstrates professionalism and responsibility, including timeliness, accountability, and appearance appropriate to his/her work environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D. Complies with laws, regulations, policies, and ethical codes:</b> The DSW conducts all professional activities in accordance with relevant Code of Ethics (NADSP, USPPRA, etc.) and applicable laws, regulations, and agency policies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>E. Manages stress and maintains personal health:</b> The DSW understands the importance of stress reduction and uses strategies to promote personal wellness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>F. Respects and promotes participant rights:</b> The DSW respects and promotes the participant’s right to privacy, respect, and dignity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>G. Respects privacy and confidentiality:</b> The DSW respects the confidentiality of participant information in all verbal and written communication, as directed by the participant, and adheres to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>H. Explains participant rights and safeguards:</b> The DSW informs the participant of his or her rights, and procedures that safeguard these rights.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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# Core Competency Area #7: Participant Empowerment

*Competency Description: The DSW supports the participant to lead a self-determined life by providing information necessary to make informed decisions and advocate on his or her own behalf.*

**Directions:** For each statement listed below (A-D), please answer the following questions by selecting “yes” or “no”. In your responses, please consider whether each statement is relevant to direct service workers in your sector(s): aging, behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, or physical disabilities services.

SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>A. Supports individual decision-making and goal achievement:</b> The DSW supports the participant to identify goals, make informed choices, and follow-through on responsibilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B. Promotes self-determination:</b> The DSW promotes participant engagement in the design of support services, involving the participant and others at the request of the participant in the process, and inquiring about satisfaction with current services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C. Supports self-advocacy:</b> The DSW supports the participant to advocate for oneself by increasing awareness of self-advocacy methods, providing information on peer support and self-advocacy groups, and assisting the participant to speak on his or her own behalf.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D. Facilitates informed consent:</b> The DSW provides information about human, legal, civil rights and other resources, and supporting access to information that allows the participant make informed decisions about community living, work, and social relationships.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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## Core Competency Area #8: Advocacy

*Competency Description: The DSW understands diverse challenges facing participants (e.g., human rights, legal, administrative and financial) and is able to identify and use effective advocacy strategies to overcome such challenges.*

**Directions:** For each statement listed below (A-D), please answer the following questions by selecting “yes” or “no”. In your responses, please consider whether each statement is relevant to direct service workers in your sector(s): aging, behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, or physical disabilities services.

SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>A. Facilitates advocacy process:</b> The DSW supports the participant to identify, gather, and review information and aspects of an issue concerning the participant’s rights to promote self-advocacy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B. Identifies advocacy resources:</b> The DSW has awareness of participant rights, services, and community resources, or knows where to direct the participant to learn more and secure needed supports.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C. Identifies strategies to meet needs:</b> The DSW supports the participant to overcome barriers when his or her service needs are not being sufficiently met.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D. Recognizes barriers in services and community:</b> The DSW identifies the barriers that sustain stigma, oppression, discrimination, and prejudice in our society and service system, and how this impacts the participant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Core Competency Area #9: Supporting Health and Wellness

*Competency Description: The DSW assists the participant and supports the development of skills to maintain health and wellness in all areas of his or her life.*

**Directions:** For each statement listed below (A-I), please answer the following questions by selecting “yes” or “no”. In your responses, please consider whether each statement is relevant to direct service workers in your sector(s): aging, behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, or physical disabilities services.

SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>A. Promotes physical, spiritual, emotional, and social wellbeing:</b> The DSW promotes the health and wellness of the participant in the areas of physical, spiritual, emotional, and social wellbeing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B. Facilitates medication administration:</b> The DSW accurately administers medications, or assists participants to self-administer medications, in accordance with state regulations and agency policy and procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C. Supports participant-directed spiritual or religious practice:</b> The DSW supports the participant to express his or her personal faith and observe religious or spirituality practices, as directed by the participant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D. Facilitates disease prevention and health maintenance:</b> The DSW promotes the participant's knowledge and skills in disease prevention and maintenance of his or her own health, including sexual health and wellbeing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>E. Uses universal precautions for infection control:</b> The DSW demonstrates and assists the participant to apply standard infection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
control procedures in all activities.				
<b>F. Promotes access to healthcare:</b> The DSW supports the participant in scheduling, keeping, and following through on all health appointments, as desired by the participant or according to his or her plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>G. Implements health treatments as needed:</b> The DSW supports the participant in implementing health and medical treatments, including assisting with the use of prescribed equipment, supplies, and devices as appropriate, and as determined by the needs and desires of the participant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>H. Facilitates healthy nutrition:</b> The DSW facilitates healthy nutrition by assisting the participant to develop or maintain knowledge and skills with meal planning, food preparation and serving, food shopping and handling, in accordance with the participant's preference and plans.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I. Monitors health and wellness:</b> The DSW recognizes and promotes participant knowledge of abnormal signs and symptoms of common diseases and conditions of body systems, and takes necessary informed action in collaboration with the participant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Core Competency Area #10: Community Living Skills and Supports

*Competency Description: The DSW collaborates with the participant to identify specific supports and interventions to meet his or her unique strengths, needs, and preferences, and promote chosen and valued social roles.*

**Directions:** For each statement listed below (A-E), please answer the following questions by selecting “yes” or “no”. In your responses, please consider whether each statement is relevant to direct service workers in your sector(s): aging, behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, or physical disabilities services.

SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>A. Provides personal care as needed:</b> The DSW assists the participant to meet his or her physical (e.g., health, grooming, toileting, eating) and personal management needs (e.g., human development, sexuality), building on participant strengths and capabilities, and providing skills training when needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B. Facilitates home and community living:</b> The DSW assists the participant with household management (e.g., meal preparation, laundry, cleaning) and with transportation needs, as directed by participant and his or her plan, to maximize independence, high quality of life, and community living.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C. Identifies and uses resources needed for health and safety:</b> The DSW supports the participant in identifying, securing, and using needed equipment (e.g., adaptive equipment) and therapies (e.g., physical, occupational and communication) to promote health and safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<p><b>D. Supports participant relationships:</b> The DSW supports the participant in the development and/or maintenance of friendships and other relationships as chosen by the participant based on his or her interest and preference.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>E. Promotes participant engagement in the community:</b> The DSW encourages and supports the participant to develop and continue fulfillment of chosen, desired, and valued social roles.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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## Core Competency Area #11: Interpersonal and Family Relationships

*Competency Description: The DSW engages in support that recognizes, respects, and values the role of family and social relationships as an essential component of the participant’s quality of life and community living.*

**Directions:** For each statement listed below (A-F), please answer the following questions by selecting “yes” or “no”. In your responses, please consider whether each statement is relevant to direct service workers in your sector(s): aging, behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, or physical disabilities services.

SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>A. Recognizes the role of family:</b> The DSW understands and respects the leadership role of family members in planning, guiding, and supporting services and supports with and/or for the participant, as appropriate based on the participant’s experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B. Builds positive relationships:</b> The DSW seeks information and builds knowledge to understand the nature and dynamics of family and social relationships within the participant’s life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C. Tailors services to the individual, family, and community:</b> The DSW tailors services and supports to unique characteristics and experiences of the participant, family, and community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D. Maintains appropriate boundaries:</b> The DSW establishes and maintains appropriate social and physical boundaries in relation to the participant and his/her family members (and other members of his/her natural support system, including friends and those who the participant considers significant in his/her life).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>E. Listens, communicates, and collaborates</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>effectively:</b> The DSW utilizes clear, effective, and respectful communication skills in all interactions with the participant’s family members and other members of his/her natural support system.				
<b>F. Respects privacy in home and community-based settings:</b> The DSW provides support that is informed by and respectful of the participant’s rights to privacy and confidentiality within the home environment, community settings, and service system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Core Competency Area #12: Community and Service Networking

*Competency Description: The DSW is familiar with formal and informal supports available in his or her community and skilled in assisting the participant to identify and gain access to such supports.*

**Directions:** For each statement listed below (A-D), please answer the following questions by selecting “yes” or “no”. In your responses, please consider whether each statement is relevant to direct service workers in your sector(s): aging, behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, or physical disabilities services.

SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>A. Identifies resources and options:</b> The DSW assists the participant to identify his or her preferences and needs for community supports using a person-centered approach, and works with informal and formal support systems to identify and access community connections.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B. Facilitates access to community resources:</b> The DSW provides coordination, support, and follow-through to promote the participant’s access to available community resources as determined by, or in collaboration with the participant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C. Assists full participation in the community:</b> The DSW assists the participant to access and participate in integrated, meaningful activities, promoting the participant’s ability to live in a community of choice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D. Promotes natural supports:</b> The DSW promotes the use of natural supports (including family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers), within the participant’s neighborhood, community, and workplace.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Core Competency Area #13: Cultural Competency

*Competency Description: The DSW engages in support that recognizes and values diverse worldviews and experiences and is capable of adapting supports to the unique needs of participants in a culturally competent way.*

**Directions:** For each statement listed below (A-E), please answer the following questions by selecting “yes” or “no”. In your responses, please consider whether each statement is relevant to direct service workers in your sector(s): aging, behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, or physical disabilities services.

SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>A. Practices cultural awareness:</b> The DSW supports participants from diverse backgrounds by engaging in self-reflection and learning opportunities designed to increase awareness of diversity and cultural competence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B. Mitigates cultural bias:</b> The DSW recognizes his or her own personal biases, stereotypes, and prejudices and does not allow them to interfere with interactions with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C. Assesses cultural needs:</b> The DSW respects unique cultural needs and preferences of each participant to provide culturally competent services and supports.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D. Provides culturally relevant services:</b> The DSW provides culturally relevant learning, social, and recreational opportunities for participants.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>E. Tailors services to unique characteristics:</b> The DSW provides support based on the individual characteristics of the participant and his or her family as appropriate, incorporating sensitivity to culture, religion, race, ethnicity, linguistics, disability, developmental level, age, health status, sexual orientation, and gender into daily practices and interactions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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# Core Competency Area #14: Education, Training and Self-Development

*Competency Description: The DSW identifies and seeks opportunities for professional development, education, and training as appropriate to the participant and reflecting emerging evidence-based practices.*

**Directions:** For each statement listed below (A-D), please answer the following questions by selecting “yes” or “no”. In your responses, please consider whether each statement is relevant to direct service workers in your sector(s): aging, behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, or physical disabilities services.

SKILL STATEMENT	Does this statement describe skills that direct service workers need to perform their jobs well?		Do direct service workers currently receive enough training to achieve these skills?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>A. Engages in training and professional development:</b> The DSW completes required training education/certification and continues professional development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B. Seeks feedback to improve performance:</b> The DSW seeks feedback from multiple sources, including participants and family members as appropriate, and uses performance evaluations to improve performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C. Uses evidence-based skills to improve service:</b> The DSW learns about and uses evidence-based skills as identified in participant's plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D. Completes required documentation:</b> The DSW learns and remains current with appropriate documentation protocols, tools, and technologies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Section 3: Training Perspectives and Options

**Directions:** Please respond to the following additional questions about the core competencies based on your experiences and current perspective.

5. **When considering the workers you have contact with, how many skills reflected in the competency set do you think direct service workers currently have?**
- All of the skills
  - Most of the skills
  - Some of the skills
  - Few of the skills
  - None of the skills
6. **If a direct service worker received training to achieve the skills described in the core competency set, how much would this improve the quality of direct services that she or he delivers?**
- Greatly improve the quality of direct services delivered
  - Moderately improve the quality of direct services delivered
  - Slightly improve the quality of direct services delivered
  - No improvement in the quality of direct services delivered
7. **What are the most effective training methods for direct service workers? (Check all that apply)**
- Online training
  - In-person training class
  - On-the-job instruction provided by a supervisor or mentor
  - On-the-job instruction provided by person receiving services or family member
  - Combination of online training and on-the-job instruction
  - Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
8. **How should direct service workers be recognized after completing training? (Check all that apply)**
- Enhanced wages to reflect increased competency
  - Credit toward a human service related degree, i.e. Associate in Applied Sciences (AAS)
  - Credit toward a national credential or certificate career program in direct service work
  - Certificate of recognition from the state or employer
  - Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
9. **What barriers exist to provide additional or ongoing training to direct service workers?**
- Please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_
10. **What structural changes might improve access to training direct service workers? (Check all that apply)**
- Mandated training requirements
  - Voluntary recognition programs (such as credentialing or certification programs)
  - Enhanced state or federal funding for training
  - Community college credits for training



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- Access to Department of Labor Apprenticeship Programs
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_



## Survey on Core Competencies for the Direct Service Workforce

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### Thank You!

Thank you for completing the survey. Your responses to questions will be used to finalize a valuable resource for the direct service workforce. You can click the “Previous” button to review your responses as desired.

Please submit your survey responses by clicking the “Done” button on the bottom of this page. Your contribution to this project is very important.

### For More Information:

If you have questions about the purpose of the survey or how to respond, please contact the Direct Service Workforce Resource Center toll-free at 1-877-822-2647, or by email: [info@dswresourcecenter.org](mailto:info@dswresourcecenter.org).

Visit the project web page at <http://dswresourcecenter.org/tiki-index.php?page=competenciesreview>.