



Prepare to Care

Iowa's Direct Care and Support Curriculum

Quality • Consistent • Careers



QUALITY, CONSISTENT TRAINING FOR CAREER PATHWAYS IS AVAILABLE STATEWIDE!

Prepare to Care – Iowa's Direct Care and Support Curriculum is a comprehensive training package that prepares people to work in a variety of direct care jobs and settings. The curriculum includes a Core training course, which provides basic knowledge and an introduction to the profession, and five advanced training courses.

Advanced certificates as a Community Living Professional, Personal Support Professional, or Health Support Professional are achieved by taking a written exam at any Iowa community college after completion of required courses.

“To realize others in the class had, maybe, the same concerns that I had, and some of the ideas from the instructor and from the other providers in the room were a great help to learn more on how to care for our participants the best way that we can.”
– Dennis Gustafson, Direct Care Professional

Why Should Direct Care Professionals Take Prepare to Care Training?

Prepare to Care training was developed by direct care professionals (DCPs), employers, and educators to address the knowledge base needed to serve people in the broad array of programs and settings. It can be taken by individuals who want to enter the direct care field and by those with experience. Its quality and effectiveness were proven through pilot projects and formal evaluation.

Prepare to Care training gives DCPs many of the features they have asked for!

- » Recognizes professional achievement through Advanced Training Certificates
- » Allows DCPs to choose direct care as a career and take training for their career pathway
- » Standardizes training in the topics DCPs need on the job
- » Reduces re-training if a DCP changes jobs or employers
- » Gives DCPs common education and skills through a state-approved curriculum
- » Teaches a person-centered approach to working in any setting
- » Gives DCPs ownership and responsibility for their own educational advancement
- » Creates opportunities for DCPs to seek employment using their Advanced Training Certificates to show previous recognized, quality training and competence
- » Is available statewide through community colleges or employers




“The training is invaluable. I feel like sometimes you get into a rut, and it's the same for everybody. But as you continue and you take the training, there are lots of ideas that maybe you hadn't thought of that come out in the training, and it just kind of helps you to think about individualizing care more and helping them grow as people.”

– Karen Barkley, Direct Care Professional

How Does Prepare to Care Training Work?

Prepare to Care training makes it easy for direct care professionals to pursue a career path of their choice through the way the curriculum and training are organized. The curriculum consists of the introductory Core training plus the five advanced training modules.

Advanced Training Modules:

-  Home & Community Living
-  Instrumental Activities of Daily Living
-  Personal Support
-  Personal Activities of Daily Living
-  Health Monitoring & Maintenance

Based on the combination of Core with other modules, an individual becomes eligible for a state-approved Advanced Training Certificate, awarded upon successful completion of an exam. Exams are offered, administered and monitored at all Iowa community colleges.

Advanced Training Certificates:

- Community Living Professional =  +  +  +  + exam
- Personal Support Professional =  +  +  +  + exam
- Health Support Professional =  +  +  + exam

How Can I Access Prepare to Care Training?

- » The Core training is available online at <http://directcare.training-source.org>.
- » Contact your local community college's health occupations department and ask if they offer the Prepare to Care training.
- » Talk with your employer to see if she will offer the training in-house.
- » Prepare to Care must be taught by trained, approved instructors. Visit www.iowapreparetocare.com to review the criteria and apply to become an instructor or work with your employer to have an in-house instructor trained.

Who are Direct Care Professionals?

Direct Care Professional (DCP) is an umbrella name for the 78,000-strong workforce in Iowa. Direct care professionals are defined as individuals who provide supportive services and care to people experiencing health conditions, illnesses, or disabilities and receive compensation for such services. They may work in home-based, community-based, or facility settings. They have many job titles, such as direct support professional, supported community living worker, home health aide, direct care worker, universal worker, and many more.

Learn more about Prepare to care at www.iowapreparetocare.com or contact directcare@idph.iowa.gov.

Prepare to Care was developed as part of the Direct Care Workforce Initiative, a legislatively directed project of the Iowa Department of Public Health to standardize training and increase stability of the direct care workforce.

“Our feedback from our providers that attended was that it was our best training yet, so to me that was a testimony of the quality of the curriculum, those teaching tool boxes that help people who may not necessarily have a background in training, as well as just the step-by-step processes for how to keep it moving and engaging for the attendees at the training.”
– Amy Wallman Madden, Prepare to Care Instructor and Employer

Key Findings

Compared to a group of direct care workers who did not get the training, Prepare to Care students were more likely to feel they had opportunities for advancement in their agencies and less likely to report heavy workloads.

More than 90% of students say they are satisfied with the training.

In a pilot study, employers experienced up to a 59% reduction in turnover rates after implementing the Prepare to Care training.