



Prepare to Care

Iowa's Direct Care and Support Curriculum

Direct care positions providing hands-on supports and care to people with health conditions, illnesses, or disabilities are among the fastest-growing and highest-demand jobs in Iowa. A new training program is now available across Iowa that provides career pathways and flexible careers for individuals choosing this work.

QUALITY, CONSISTENT, EFFECTIVE TRAINING AVAILABLE STATEWIDE

Prepare to Care – Iowa's Direct Care and Support Curriculum is a comprehensive, cross-discipline training package that prepares people to work in a variety of direct care settings. The curriculum includes a Core training course, which provides basic foundational 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.

Developed and piloted by the Iowa Department of Public Health through the Direct Care Advisory Council, Prepare to Care is a standard curriculum, taught by trained instructors, that provides a state-approved advanced training certificate to those who complete required course work and pass the exam.

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.

“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

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

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

Compared to a control group, Prepare to Care students were more likely to feel they had opportunities for advancement in their agencies and less likely to report heavy workloads.

Benefits for Direct Care Professionals, Employers, and Consumers

Prepare to Care training can be taken by individuals with experience who are currently working and by those who want to enter the direct care field. The quality and effectiveness of Prepare to Care training were proven through pilot projects and formal evaluation.

Benefits of Prepare to Care training include:

- » 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
- » Provides flexibility in training using a standard curriculum for initial and continuing education
- » Builds a trained workforce with recognized quality training and competence through state-issued advanced certificates
- » Recognizes professional achievement through Advanced Training Certificates
- » Reduces staff turnover
- » Reduces re-training if a DCP changes jobs or employers
- » Teaches a person-centered approach to working in any setting
- » Is available statewide through community colleges or employers

“ 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

Training is Now Available Statewide

Instructors trained in Prepare to Care are approved to deliver the training in many settings. Some employers have chosen to have in-house instructors trained. All community colleges are also offering Prepare to Care training.

“ The student feedback has been great and the students have really enjoyed the class, and learned a lot. There’s proven results that show that that is the case.”

– Jaime Haub, Prepare to Care Instructor

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.
- » Take the Prepare to Care training from an employer’s in-house instructor.
- » 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.

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.

