



PATHS is a collaborative effort that includes:

- ▲ Family members
- ▲ Individuals with disabilities
- ▲ Government officials
- ▲ Advocates
- ▲ Providers

PATHS is designed to develop a stable and competent workforce to support Ohioans with mental retardation and developmental disabilities.

PATHS creates meaningful career paths that help to:

- ▲ Improve quality of service and assure health and safety for people with disabilities living in the community
- ▲ Keep people on the job longer
- ▲ Stabilize the workforce
- ▲ Increase opportunities for training and skill development
- ▲ Provide clear descriptions of abilities
- ▲ Refine and develop ethical practice
- ▲ Respond to families and consumers
- ▲ Honor diversity

Some of the building blocks to reach these ends include:

- ▲ Identifying best practices for recruitment and retention
- ▲ Expanding career opportunities
- ▲ Discovering keys to matching employees with appropriate work roles
- ▲ Fostering more effective supervision
- ▲ Improving the quality of care
- ▲ Making training transferable

PATHS will award DSPs a voluntary credential.

Initially, the voluntary credential will be awarded at four levels:

1. Registration
2. Certificate of initial proficiency
3. Certificate of advanced proficiency
4. Specialized certificates, such as for supervision, behavior management, health care, etc.

Led by the Ohio Alliance for Direct Support Professionals and coordinated by the Ohio Provider Resource Association, the project has an active statewide advisory group. Assisting are workforce development consultants from Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) of Cambridge, MA.

HSRI team leader Marianne Taylor said, "This project puts Ohio at the leading edge of progressive thinking about the human service workforce."

Many stakeholders have had input. Pilot testing for the credential program occurs in 2003. Actual issuance of credentials begins in 2004.



PATHS focuses on building career paths for DSPs (direct support professionals) through on-the-job, classroom and skill training. The work of PATHS will help assure the development of a highly respected career path for DSPs.

Recruiting and retaining a highly skilled workforce of DSPs is an ongoing challenge for people with disabilities and their families. DSPs help people with disabilities lead more independent self-directed lives and to contribute to their communities.

Professional Advancement through Training in Human Services (PATHS) will help transform the DSP's role from an accidental work-point into a consciously chosen career. The project will strengthen Ohio's direct support professional workforce. This is essential in providing support and care to Ohio's citizens with developmental disabilities.

PATHS is part of an ongoing national movement led by the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP). Principal funding is provided by the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council and the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, with significant in kind support from OPRA, provider, and other community agencies.

**For more information, contact:
PATHS Project
30 E. Spruce Street
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 224-6772 v/tty
opra@opra.org**

*Designed by DD Council's Public Awareness Project,
the AXIS Center, Columbus, Ohio.*

PATHS

Professional Advancement through
Training and Education in Human Services



*Turning direct support
jobs into careers*

Ohio
Developmental
Disabilities Council

