

Proposed Direct Care Training Guidelines and Competency Testing (January 2010)

New guidelines for training of personal care and attendant care workers are being discussed by ALTCS and the Arizona Department of Economic Security, in collaboration with the Direct Care Workforce Initiative. The new guidelines will comprise specific competencies, including knowledge and practical skills, and standardized tests will be required. The competencies are based on the *Principles of Caregiving* curriculum; however, the curriculum does not cover all of the competencies. Additional teaching material should be used as needed. **The entire model curriculum and the competencies are posted at www.azdirectcare.org.**

Materials and procedures are still being finalized; there may be some changes to this information.

THE REQUIREMENT

1. Two levels of training and testing are proposed, training must be completed before starting work:
 - a. **Level I** for homemakers, companions, and family caregivers
 - b. **Level II** specialized training for personal / attendant care (includes Level I). Note: only one module at Level II is required.

2. This requirement applies only to in-home provision of housekeeping, personal care, and attendant care services. Respite providers may need to complete training if these services are provided. Family members employed by an agency must complete Level I plus client-specific training as needed.

3. The following are not affected by this requirement:
 - Consumer-directed programs, such as the ALTCS self-directed attendant care program and the DDD independent providers, have separate requirements.
 - RNs, LPNs providing direct care services do not have to complete this training or testing.
 - Direct care workers employed by an agency on July 1, 2010, will be grandfathered as long as they stay with the same employer. Any grandfathered DCW who changes employer will have to complete training and testing.

4. Training and testing are typically combined, but individuals with prior training and experience can take the test as a “challenge exam.” The requirement is complete only when the DCW has passed all required tests.

5. Training can be provided by employers, colleges, and other providers of training. In order to administer the required test, training programs must be approved. Approved programs may also provide training and testing to staff from other agencies.

6. The training is portable; employers provide information about completed training and testing to other employers at the request of the workers. However, agencies must verify skills of their employees, regardless of prior training and testing.

7. A continuing education requirement of 6 hours per year applies to all direct care workers, including those grandfathered or exempt from training and testing.

IMPLEMENTATION AND POLICIES

8. Initial roll-out of implementation will **begin July 1, 2010**; with full implementation targeted for June 30, 2011. ALTCS and DES will include the new requirement in policy and contracts starting July 1, 2010. ALTCS program contractors and Area Agencies on Aging will communicate with providers to ensure that steps are taken toward meeting the requirement.

9. AHCCCS contractors and Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) monitor providers for training and testing compliance. Contractors and AAAs will coordinate the oversight in order to lessen the administrative burden on agencies.

PROCEDURES

10. The *Principles of Caregiving* curriculum provides the basis for the required competencies, but other curricula will be allowed. Agencies can prepare a crosswalk of their training program to the competencies and apply for approval of their program. The competencies and *The Principles of Caregiving* are posted at www.azdirectcare.org. Please note: A few of the competencies are not covered in the current version of the curriculum; additional teaching material may be required.

11. Standardized tests and guidelines for testing (knowledge and skills) are being developed and will be made available for review. Only approved programs will be able to administer the test.

12. Testing consists of a written test (multiple choice) and a skills demonstration. Trainers may choose to break the test into shorter segments and administer these throughout training. Any sections not passed must be repeated, typically after additional training. The challenge test can be taken only once; if the candidate does not pass, training is required.

13. Agencies will submit an application to become an approved program for training and testing. Information about the curriculum, trainers, and instructional methods will be required. The application will be available July 1, 2010.

14. Trainers need to pass the DCW test(s) that they plan to administer. This is a one-time requirement; a letter will be issued when testing has been completed. Testing sessions for trainers will be planned for 2010. In the future, approved trainers will be able to test other trainers.

15. Agencies will document and track completion of training for workers. When a DCW seeks new employment, the new employer will send a verification form to the agency where training and testing was completed. This form must be completed and returned. If prior training and testing cannot be verified, testing must be repeated.

For more information, visit www.azdes.gov/aaa/directcare.asp, or contact:
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