2024

E-Badge Academy Applicant Handbook

PROCEDURES AND POLICIES TO OBTAIN CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) was founded in 1996 by a small, dedicated group of visionary professionals committed to providing quality services for people with disabilities. The group's best-known visionary was John F. Kennedy, Jr., President of Reaching Up and working closely with the City University of New York. The founders shared a vision of improving outcomes for individuals with disabilities by improving the support, training, conditions, and level of expectation for the direct service professionals who work with them daily. These workers require ethical standards, proficiencies, and professional support to effectively support people as they strive for lives of full inclusion in their communities.

The NADSP aims to solve the unfolding crisis concerning America's direct support workforce, where there is a well-documented and growing demand for higher-skilled workers to meet future needs. The NADSP strongly advocates for and supports the development of a professional direct support workforce trained in universal, competency-based skill standards and held to a high code of person-centered ethical conduct. We are committed to working with industry partners to develop a direct support workforce that reflects a culture of respect and professional capacity to meet the needs and fulfill this nation's promises to people with disabilities.

The NADSP works to meet our goals through the guidance of the following Vision, Mission, and Values:

NADSP's Vision:

> NADSP envisions a world where people with intellectual and other disabilities live community-based lives of their choosing, supported by a highly qualified direct support workforce with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to achieve their life goals.

NADSP's Mission:

> In 1996, NADSP's ideological founder, John F. Kennedy Jr., wrote, "Quality is defined at the point of interaction between the staff member and the individual with a disability." Given this, NADSP's mission is to enhance the quality of support provided to people with disabilities through the provision of products, services, and certifications that elevate the status of direct support workers, improve practice standards, promote systems reform, and, most importantly, advance the knowledge, skills, and values of direct support workers.

NADSP's Values:

> NADSP values the full participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of community life by providing person-centered supports. High-quality support requires all professionals to follow the individual path suggested by the unique gifts, preferences, and needs of each person they support and partner with the person and those who love them toward a life of opportunity, well-being, freedom, and contribution.

NADSP's Operating Principles:

NADSP is guided by a belief that:

- All direct support professionals benefit from access to well-constructed educational experiences (e.g., in-service training, continuing and higher education) and lifelong learning;
- Certifying highly qualified workers incentivizes continuing education, increased compensation, and access to career pathways for direct support professionals, thereby improving retention;
- Values and ethical decision-making can be learned and infused into daily practice, and
- Strengthening relationships and partnerships between direct support professionals, self-advocates, and other consumer groups and families improves support quality.

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E-Badge Academy Background

In 2007, the NADSP launched a portfolio-based credentialing program that used the Community Support Skill Standards (CSSS) as the basis for skill demonstration and required the DSP to produce eight comprehensive "work samples" from the twelve CSSS competency areas that often took more than a year to complete. DSPs were usually required to do this outside of their work schedules. They received feedback on their work when the portfolio was submitted for review to the NADSP. After a decade of trying to make this credentialing program more accessible and intuitive for DSPs, the feedback from them was overwhelming; it required far too much time to fit into their busy schedules, it was too academic, and it intimidated DSPs who were uncomfortable with the amount of time and the amount of writing that was required.

Furthermore, our feedback from their employers was that this model needed to be more convenient and could never be brought to a national scale. It needed to be rebuilt from the ground up.

In 2017, after a two-day summit that included NADSP staff & board members, people with disabilities, family members, agency trainers and service providers the NADSP Education, Training and Workforce Development (ETWD) Committee was tasked to break down the eight “work samples” from the CSSS and create dozens of electronic badges using the new Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Core Competency Areas, which are validated by research design and written for DSPs who work across service sectors, as the framework for a new credentialing model. While we were building this new paradigm that introduced the CMS Core Competency Areas, other aspects of the portfolio-based credentialing program were also carefully reviewed. The training requirements (knowledge) and the Code of Ethics (values) used in the portfolio model were carefully considered because they were either impractical or not reflective of the hallmarks of quality. The training requirements in the first credentialing iteration were stacked with 100 and 200 hours of competency-based training from a NADSP-accredited curriculum, which was often challenging for an employer to provide and for the DSP to verify. DSPs had the additional burden of documenting their hours of 'indirect instruction' and their completed training to reach these totals. Meanwhile, the only integration of the Code of Ethics into the original program was a "read and sign" form of the Code of Ethics to be submitted as part of the portfolio packet. Realizing that ethical practice comprises 1/3 of the quality triad, it must have a much more significant role in the new digital badge program that we were building.

During this time, we also began building our E-Badge reviewer cohort, an ever-expanding community of workforce experts, trainers, executives, family members, or people with expertise in a specific competency area. E-Badge reviewers demonstrate their reliability in passing an annual inter-rater reliability test, showing at least 85% consistency in scoring sample E-Badge submissions. Reviewers have NADSP staff support available when encountering challenging reviews or when a submission raises concerns about unethical behavior.

After reviewing several vendors (and one false start), we selected a company named Web Courseworks, later known as Forj, which could handle millions of potential users at any given time. After writing the E-Badge language using the CMS competency areas, deciding how to

stack the badges into three levels of certifications, settling on the visual design of the actual badges, and developing a marketing plan, we were finally ready to pilot the initial version of the E-Badge Academy. Building strong, trusting partnerships with the provider community has always been important to NADSP – it's the best way that we've been able to reach DSPs. After much consideration, we selected DSPs who worked in agencies from Maryland, South Dakota, Vermont, and Virginia to test our new credentialing program. During this six-month pilot, we sought regular feedback from our front-end users, participating provider agency local administrators, and badge reviewers. After making the necessary modifications, on January 9, 2019, we launched the E-Badge Academy to a national audience.

E-Badge Academy Overview

The E-Badge Academy is designed to be a formal system to recognize the knowledge, skills, and values of Direct Support Professionals and Frontline Supervisors working with people with disabilities. Through the NADSP E-Badge Academy, Direct Support Professionals and Frontline Supervisors can earn electronic badges (E-Badges) based on completing approved education and demonstrating skills related to the CMS competencies. The NADSP E-Badge Academy helps Direct Support Professionals get credit for competency and education that would otherwise go unnoticed. The E-Badge Academy allows a Direct Support Professional to highlight their skill sets, share their professional achievements, and build their professional portfolios. DSPs can use E-Badges to tell others about their expertise, and organizations can then acknowledge that expertise.

When an organization participates in the NADSP E-Badge Academy, they can enroll their Direct Support Professional and Frontline Supervisor workforce into the E-Badge Academy's web-based platform certification levels 1, 2, or 3 for DSPs or to a FLS certification for Frontline Supervisors. Each level of certification provides a DSP or FLS with a certificate demonstrating their completion.

Eligibility

Individuals interested in applying for an E-Badge certification must meet the following minimum requirements to be eligible:

- Must currently work as a DSP or FLS at an E-Badge participating organization or participate in a program that offers accredited education and internship opportunities to develop skills reflective of the CMS Competency Sets. More information about how an

organization can participate is available at https://nadsp.org/2023-e-badge-academy-pricing-guide/.

- Must be at least 18 years of age.
- Must live and be legally permitted to work within the United States or Canada.
- Must be able to read and understand English. The NADSP plans to add alternative language options and ASL interpretive services to the E-Badge program within the next few years.
- Must not be ineligible to apply for certification based on previous dismissal, conflicts of interest, or other disclosed reasons.

The NADSP recommends that DSPs enrolling in the E-Badge Academy through their organization have some work experience to draw from when completing competency badges. Organizations looking to use the E-Badge Academy to train and prepare pre-service DSPs are encouraged to develop internship opportunities to help provide the pre-service DSP with experience to draw from when submitting competency badges.

To enroll in the E-Badge Academy, a local administrator in the participating organization must invite each user to join the E-Badge Academy portal. The DSP/FLS will receive an email with the invitation, which requires them to log on and create a password. If a new user misses the enrollment window, they may contact their local administrator to request a unique email invitation.

Certification is based upon submitting accredited education transcripts and testimonials describing their work concerning CMS competencies and the NADSP Code of Ethics. Direct Support Professionals and Frontline Supervisors must achieve approved badges in three categories for certification.

Code of Ethics Commitment

The first badge a DSP or FLS must earn is the Code of Ethics Commitment badge. By acquiring the Code of Ethics Commitment badge, the DSP will agree to provide services per the NADSP Code of Ethics. This badge is part of the Professionalism and Ethics CMS Core Competency. The Code of Ethics Commitment Badge is a prerequisite for all other badges in the NADSP E-badge Academy. Credit criteria for this badge require the DSP/FLS to commit to the NADSP Code of Ethics. This is done by clicking a button that indicates you agree with the E-Badge Academy LMS system. As part of this agreement, a DSP/FLS will also acknowledge their understanding of the NADSP Certification Fraud Policy (see description below). Unlike most other badges, no testimonial is required for the Code of Ethics Commitment badge. Once this badge is earned, the DSP/FLS can earn other badges towards certification.

Testing Procedures and Process

E-Badge Academy users can enroll in either a certification course for DSPs or a certification course for Frontline Supervisors. These two "courses" are essentially electronic checklists listing the certification requirements. Checkboxes associated with each requirement will automatically check as the user meets requirements. The requirements are met by earning electronic badges representing either the completion of accredited training or the demonstration of particular

skills on the job. The users can select which badges they wish to apply for via either the Catalog or through links available in their certification checklists.

Accredited education badges are earned by uploading documentation of completed training hours, such as transcripts or certificates of attendance. The training must be from a training curriculum previously accredited by NADSP to ensure that it aligns with the appropriate competencies and is consistent with the NADSP Code of Ethics.

Competency badges are related to particular skill statements found in either the CMS Core Competencies (for direct support skills) or the National Frontline Supervisor Competencies (for the immediate supervisors of direct support professionals). These badges are earned by uploading a testimonial in either written or audio form in which the applicant describes how they have utilized the identified skill in real situations they have encountered on the job. For each competency-based badge, the applicant is provided with two prompts to guide the construction of their testimonial.

Once received, the uploaded testimonials are automatically assigned to a reviewer who reviews the testimonials and responds within three business days. Submissions that meet the requirements are approved, and the newly awarded badge will be reflected on the user's profile and certification checklist. Submissions that do not meet the criteria are denied with a note explaining what was missing from the testimonial as submitted.

When all certification requirements are met, the certificate unlocks at the bottom of the certification checklist, allowing the user to view, download, and print the certificate.

Special Accommodations Request

The NADSP will make every effort to ensure that E-Badge certificate applicants can complete all necessary steps of the application process. For DSPs and FLSs that need special accommodation, we will partner with local administrators of the contracted organizations to find solutions for each applicant to participate fully. Such accommodations may include the assistance of an ASL interpreter to audio record testimonials for individuals who may be deaf or hard of hearing. Requests for special accommodations must be presented in writing via email or mail and sent to Desiree Loucks Baer at dloucksbaer@nadsp.org. Upon request, a meeting will be set up to discuss the accommodation needed and problem-solve the solution.

Accredited Education

Each organization participating in the NADSP E-Badge Academy must be engaged with a NADSP Accredited Education platform. Accredited education comes from a source outside of the NADSP that has been reviewed and approved to meet the standards of the NADSP. NADSP accreditation demonstrates that programs effectively teach the ethics, knowledge, and skills that constitute best practices in community support and can prepare staff for NADSP certification. Direct Support Professionals must complete up to 50 hours of accredited education as part of their level 1 certification. They must complete up to an additional 50 hours (100 hours cumulative) as part of their level 2 certification. No extra hours of accredited education are required for level 3 DSP certification. Frontline Supervisors must complete 25

hours of Frontline Supervisor accredited education as part of the Frontline Supervisor certification.

Currently approved Accredited Education platforms for Direct Support Professionals (1/2024):

- The College of Direct Support (CDS)
- Relias
- Open Future Learning
- The US Department of Labor (DOL)
- DSPaths (Ohio)
- North Dakota Community Staff Training Program
- ARC Broward PATHS Certificate Program
- The Academy for Direct Support Professionals (Texas A&M)
- Star Services
- Human Services Credentialing Program (Massachusetts)
- NADSP-Produced Curricula and Training
- Optimae LifeServices
- SUNY-Corning
- Optimal Life Services
- Intellectibility
- Tennessee Direct Support Professional Training Program (formerly known as QuiLTSS)
- Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs

Currently approved Accredited Education platforms for Frontline Supervisors (1/2024):

- The College of Frontline Supervision and Management (CFSM)
- The Training Collaborative for Innovative Leadership
- Relias
- DSPaths FLS Modules (Ohio)
- NADSP-Produced Curricula and Training

Accredited Education badges are purple and orange. Direct Support Professionals and Frontline Supervisors completing accredited education must upload transcripts of their accredited education in the E-Badge Academy LMS to receive badges. For DSPs, badges can be earned for 10 hours, 25 hours, 50 hours, 75 hours, and 100 hours of accredited education. A badge can be earned for 25 hours of accredited education for Frontline Supervisors. Accredited education courses need not be completed contemporaneously with an E-Badge certification application. E-Badge Academy users may submit for accredited education that has occurred at some time during their professional careers. However, each course may only be counted once towards the required training hours, even if taken annually to meet organizational and state training requirements.

Upon submission of accredited education hours, a trained E-Badge Academy reviewer will review the submitted transcript to ensure all hours submitted are from an accredited education platform and that sufficient hours have been completed to earn the badge. Should all

requirements be met, the Reviewer will award the appropriate accredited education badge to the DSP/FLS. This badge will then be stacked with other badges toward certification.

Suppose a transcript submission does not demonstrate the appropriate number of hours or document training NADSP has accredited. In that case, the Reviewer will deny the badge and provide the DSP/FLS with a note explaining what needs to be done to earn the badge.

Competency

Core Competency badges are green and orange in color. These badges require the upload of a testimonial describing an example of work that meets the requirements for the badge. In completing competency badges, the DSP/FLS will choose a badge from the E-Badge Academy Catalog and complete a testimonial answering two prompts reflective of work performed by the DSP/FLS. Testimonials can be uploaded in written form or through an MP3 audio file. Testimonials should be about half a page of written material (or a few minutes of narration if you prefer to submit an audio recording.)

Each Core Competency badge is associated with **one skill statement** from the CMS Core Competencies. Each Core Competency badge has two prompts the applicant must address in a testimonial. The first prompt asks for an example of the applicant using their **skills** in this area to provide quality support. The second prompt asks them to explain how the profession's values are shown in their example.

DSPs/FLSs will submit their testimonial to the E-Badge Academy web-based portal. Upon submission of the testimonial, a trained E-Badge Academy reviewer will review it to ensure that both prompts have been answered and that the submission demonstrates the identified skills and aligns with the values expressed in the NADSP Code of Ethics. The trained E-Badge Reviewer has three business days to respond to the submission and will utilize the rubric below to determine if the badge has been earned. Should all requirements be met, the Reviewer will award the appropriate competency badge to the DSP/FLS. This badge will then be stacked with other badges toward certification. Suppose any of the four requirements are not met in the testimonial. In that case, the submission will be denied, and a note will be sent to the DSP/FLS explaining the reason for the denial. The NADSP recognizes that DSPs and FLSs may not be accustomed to writing and reflecting on their work in this type of format and that there may be a learning curve involved, so DSPs and FLSs are offered the opportunity to resubmit testimonials as many times as necessary to earn the badge.

Evaluation

The NADSP recruits E-Badge Reviewers who have professional experience working in human services. To become an E-Badge Reviewer, one must complete comprehensive training on the E-Badge Academy and performance review expectations. Upon completion of the training, each E-Badge Reviewer must complete an inter-rater reliability test and pass with at least 85% accuracy. Inter-rater reliability tests are conducted annually by each person who agrees to be an E-Badge Reviewer.

Once an E-Badge Reviewer has passed the inter-rater reliability test, they will be assigned up to 3 badges to review. All submissions for accredited education or competency badges will be sent to the assigned Reviewer's email, where they have up to three business days to review and return through the E-Badge Academy web-based portal.

When reviewing for a competency badge, the E-Badge Reviewer will need to answer four questions:

- Does the testimonial demonstrate the skill statement associated with the badge?
- Does the testimonial address the first prompt for this badge?
- Does the testimonial address the second prompt for this badge?
- Is the work described in the testimonial in line with the NADSP Code of Ethics (including the tenet on confidentiality)?

Badges will be earned when each question is answered with a yes. Should any question have no response, the E-Badge Reviewer will deny the badge and return with a note to the DSP/FLS explaining the reason behind the denial. DSPs and FLSs can then resubmit, utilizing the notes provided, until they have earned the badge.

Certification

Direct Support Professionals may earn up to three levels of certification. Frontline Supervisors may attain one level of certification. Frontline Supervisors are not required to undergo DSP certification to participate in the FLS certification. The NADSP does not require the work or the accredited education hours to be contemporaneous with the badge submission. A transcript of the accredited education from a NADSP-accredited platform is required for accredited education badges. This can be from any of the platforms listed above. For the competency badges, a testimonial of work reflective of the identified competency and skill set, showing actual work completed by the DSP or FLS, written out in a few paragraphs or a few minutes of audio recording, is required. Transcripts and testimonials will be uploaded into the LMS to be received by an E-Badge Reviewer. All reviews should be completed with badges awarded or denied within three business days.

Once a badge is earned, it will be stacked with other badges to achieve certification. Each level of certification has requirements for the number of hours of accredited education, specific competency badges that must be completed, and the total number of badges that must earned. The levels of certification and the requirements for each level are listed below.

DSP-I

You must earn 15 total E-Badges, including:

- The Code of Ethics Commitment E-Badge
- The 50 hours of Accredited Education E-Badge
- At least one E-Badge in Crisis Prevention and Intervention
- At least one E-Badge in Person-Centered Practices
- At least one E-Badge in Health and Wellness and
- At least one E-Badge in Safety

DSP-II

You must earn 30 total E-Badges, including:

- The DSP-I E-Badge
- The 100 hours of Accredited Education E-Badge
- At least one E-Badge in Evaluation and Observation
- At least E-Badge in Communication
- At least one E-Badge in Professionalism and Ethics and
- At least one E-Badge in Community Inclusion and Networking

DSP-III

You must earn 50 total E-Badges, including:

- The DSP-II E-Badge
- At least one E-Badge in Empowerment and Advocacy
- At least one E-Badge in Community Living Skills and Supports
- At least one E-Badge in Education, Training, and Self-Development; and
- At least one E-Badge in Cultural Competence

FLS

You must earn 16 total E-Badges, including:

- The Code of Ethics Commitment E-Badge
- The 25 hours of Accredited Education E-Badge
- At least one E-Badge in each of the following CMS Core Competency areas:
    - Crisis Prevention and Intervention
    - Safety
    - Person-Centered Practices
    - Health and Wellness
- At least one E-Badge in each of the following National Frontline Supervisor Competency areas:
    - Health, Wellness, and Safety
    - Participant Support Plan Development, Monitoring, and Assessment
    - Facilitating Community Inclusion Across the Lifespan
    - Promoting Professional Relations and Teamwork
    - Staff Recruitment, Selection, and Hiring
    - Staff Supervision, Training, and Development
    - Service Management and Quality Assurance
    - Advocacy and Public Relations
    - Leadership, Professionalism and Self-Development
    - Cultural Awareness and Responsiveness

Recertification

DSP and FLS certification is valid until the 2nd anniversary of the date the level 1 certification was achieved. If, within those two years, the DSP earns another level of certification, recertification is due on the 2nd anniversary of that more recent certification.

A DSP or FLS must not be enrolled in the E-Badge Academy to recertify. To recertify the DSP/FLS, you can upload the recertification form from the NADSP website. To recertify the DSP/FLS, you must submit a transcript of 20 hours of professional development since certification. Eight hours of professional development may include mandatory agency training. The remaining 12 hours must enhance the DSP/FLS professional development. These hours may consist of conferences, webinars, or other training activities that have not been done previously or are mandated by the DSP's or FLS' employer. Accredited education is not a requirement for recertification.

For recertification, the DSP/FLS completes the recertification application, uploads their transcript of the professional development, and pays a $50 fee. This entire process can be completed online. Upon submission, the recertification application goes to an employee of the NADSP to review all requirements that have been received. An email confirming recertification has been achieved, including the effective date and the expiration date, is sent to the DSP/FLS and the organization they are employed with. Recertification may take up to two weeks to complete by the NADSP team, and the application can be accessed via the link below:

https://nadsp.org/services/certification/certification-renewal-application-dsp-1-2-3-fls/

Testimonials

The DSP Core Competency badges are based on the CMS Core Competencies language. These badges come with two prompts that the DSP/FLS will be asked to respond to in a "testimonial" document. A testimonial represents the DSP's/FLS' description of an example of their direct support work and their reflection on that experience. The first prompt will typically ask the user to describe an example of their work in which the skill associated with this badge was used. The second prompt will ask the user to reflect on the profession's values and will often (but not always) ask how the NADSP Code of Ethics came into play in the example described. This requires a reflective writing style that may differ from writing typically done for documentation purposes.

In written form, a testimonial is usually about half a page to one page in length. (The NADSP doesn't deny submissions for being too short, but if there is less than a half-page in writing, the writer is likely leaving out some critical information that the Reviewer will need.) If the DSP/FLS prefers speaking to writing, the NADSP will also accept audio submissions in MP3 format.

Conflict(s) of Interest

All E-Badge Academy Applicants are required and expected to abide by a continuous transparency process, whereby they must notify the NADSP senior staff of any potential conflicts that may arise while reviewing submitted E-Badge certification applications. E-Badge applicants may not have their evaluations assessed by family members or persons with existing

personal or professional relationships. All applicants must electronically sign the *E-Badge Academy Conflicts of Interest Disclosure Form* (Appendix A – Conflict of Interest) to submit their application for certification.

Privacy

All badge submissions become the property of NADSP and may be used in future NADSP business operations. In applying and being awarded this badge, you affirm that you will notify NADSP of any substantiations of abuse or neglect as it may affect your ability to remain active in the NADSP E-Badge Academy.

Confidentiality

The NADSP Code of Ethics requires each user of the E-Badge Academy to safeguard and respect the confidentiality and privacy of the people they support. For this reason, no testimonial, including individually identifiable information, will be approved for an E-Badge. The badge will automatically be denied when a testimonial containing individually identifiable information is received. A note will be sent to the DSP/FLS indicating that the tenant's confidentiality has yet to be met and that the testimonial needs to be resubmitted so that the person being supported may not be identified.

Fraud Policy

NADSP is a professional organization that promotes adherence to a professional code of ethics. All professionals who seek to align with NADSP are expected to uphold high ethical standards. In the certification process, individuals must follow the path of responsible, forthright work and actions that represent the NADSP Code of Ethics. All persons aligned with NADSP are responsible for ensuring the integrity of the certification process, thus challenging and reporting any known acts of certification fraud.

The NADSP defines certification fraud as follows:

- Describing direct support work inaccurately (or falsifying evidence) in a portfolio work sample or E-Badge Academy submission. This includes describing direct support work that was not performed or events that did not occur.
- Describing the work of another professional as your work. This includes copying work samples or testimonial statements of another Direct Support Professional and claiming to have performed direct support work performed by others.
- Copying information from a source without attributing the work to the author of that source.
- Downloading or copying information directly from the internet and passing it off as one's own.

These behaviors are unethical and inconsistent with the Integrity and Responsibility tenet of the NADSP Code of Ethics. The NADSP will not accept any work with evidence of fraud for assessment.

Direct Support Professionals who engage in or are discovered to have engaged in fraud will have any certifications based on a fraudulent submission revoked and will be indefinitely prohibited from applying for certification with the NADSP.

Direct Support Professionals participating in the NADSP E-Badge Academy who engage in or are discovered to have submitted fraudulent submissions to the E-Badge Academy will be removed from the E-Badge Academy platform and will be prohibited indefinitely from re-enrolling.

Direct Support Professionals determined by the NADSP to have engaged in fraud, resulting in a loss of certification with the NADSP, may appeal this decision by submitting in writing a request for appeal along with documentation supporting their claim for appeal to the NADSP, Attn: Desiree Loucks Baer, COO, 240 Washington Ave. Extension, Albany, NY 12203 or at dloucksbaer@nadsp.org.

Direct Support Professionals determined by the NADSP to have engaged in fraud who wish to request re-admission to the E-Badge Academy dloucksbaer@nadsp.org.

Completion of this course serves as an acknowledgment of the NADSP Certification Fraud Policy.

Nondiscrimination and Fairness Policy

Neither the NADSP nor their E-Badge Reviewers will discriminate against applicants based on age, gender identity, sexual orientation, geographic location, education level, political views, or cultural norms. No personally identifiable information, including but not limited to the abovementioned information, will be collected, distributed, or recorded during the application and review process.

How To Get Started

Once your organization is contracted to participate in the E-Badge Academy, you will be invited to start your certification process through your organization's local administrator. You will receive an email invitation to enroll. You must log in to the E-Badge Academy within 72 hours, or your invitation will expire, and you will need to seek out your local administrator to receive a new invite.

When you get ready to log in, you should see a link to the Login page in the upper right corner of the login page. Your username should be the same as your email address and **must be entered in all lowercase letters**. If you have forgotten, you can reset your password by entering your email address on the Forgotten Password page. Still, your email address must also be entered in all lowercase letters here

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You will see all the available badges by clicking Catalog at the top of your login page.

If you are a direct support professional, enroll in the NADSP Certifications for DSPs course, which will track your progress towards DSP-I, DSP-II, and DSP-III certification.

Suppose you are seeking the NADSP Certification for Frontline Supervisors. In that case, you will need a passcode from your local E-Badge Academy administrator to enroll in the FLS certification program.

To see how many badges you have earned, look at the Manage Badges page or seek out your local administrator for assistance.

Local Administrators

As part of contracting for the E-Badge Academy, the NADSP will offer each organization one free local administrator seat to be the primary point of contact between the NADSP E-Badge Academy team and the organization. Organizations may choose to have more than one local administrator. In cases where more than one person serves as a local administrator, the organization must use one of their purchased seats for the additional contact.

Any individual employed by the organization may serve as a local administrator. The NADSP does not have specific requirements for local administrators. Best practices show that the person(s) selected for this position should be easily accessible to DSPs/FLSs enrolled in the E-Badge Academy, have a good understanding of the work of DSPs and FLSs, be willing to serve as a workforce champion and have adequate time made available to them to support the DSPs and FLSs working on certification. Local administrators should be comfortable working with technology and have good communication skills.

Upon contracting with the NADSP, the organization must select a local administrator to act as the point person with the NADSP. The local administrator will be responsible for:

- Attending training provided by the NADSP on how the E-Badge Academy works, how to get into and operate within the E-Badge Academy LMS system, how to enroll DSPs and FLSs into the system, and how to follow and track DSP/FLS progress and certification
- Registering selected DSPs and FLSs into the E-Badge Academy system and assisting with operating within the system
- Act as a workforce champion and resource to DSPs and FLSs working on E-Badge Academy certification by being a source of information on uploading transcripts and testimonials, reviewing progress within the system, providing guidance and encouragement as needed, and providing access to certificates of certification as required.
- Work with the NADSP to investigate potential fraud as discovered through testimonial review.

NADSP will provide training to become a local administrator through a video link with a follow-up meeting to answer additional questions and offer instruction upon request.

Local administrators will have access to the NADSP E-Badge Academy team during regular business hours. To ask a question, report a problem, or get additional support, the local administrator will be asked to email the Manager of the Certification at jwilson@nadsp.org.

The NADSP has established a community of practice for all local administrators. These virtual meetings are scheduled bi-monthly and are available for local administrators to learn new features in the E-Badge Academy LMS system, share challenges and best practices with other local

administrators, and bring universal concerns to the attention of the NADSP E-Badge Academy team. All local administrator community of practice meetings are recorded and shared via email following the meeting.

At any point during the E-Badge Academy contract period, the organization may select to change local administrators. When a new person is assigned to become the local administrator, the organization must notify the NADSP E-Badge Academy team and share the email address of the new local administrator. The NADSP will train the new local administrator and set them up in their new role within five business days of notification of a change.

E-Badge Academy User and Local Administrator Resources and Tools

We have compiled valuable tools for your reference and support to assist you through the E-Badge Academy certification process. If at any time you need assistance beyond these resources, please reach out to your local administrator and then the Director of Certification and Accreditation, Dan Hermreck, at dhermreck@nadsp.org or the Manager of Certification and Accreditation, Janet Wilson, at jwilson@nadsp.org.

The following links provide further support and tools to assist our Reviewers throughout the process:

- NADSP Code of Ethics – https://nadsp.org/resources/the-nadsp-code-of-ethics/
- CMS Competency Sets - https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:7b44cb92-3565-47fe-a870-c986bcfdb66a
- National Frontline Supervisor Competencies - https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:us:a9369812-252c-4ba7-ac34-8c077d90792d
- NADSP Accredited Education list - https://nadsp.org/services/accredited-education/
- E-Badge Academy portal – https://ebadge.nadsp.org/
- Forgotten Password reset form- https://ebadge.nadsp.org/login/forgot_password.php

Tips for Local Administrators

The following items provide general information and support for Organizational Administrators and E-Badge applicants.

What should I do if a user is having problems accessing the system?

If users are not currently logged in, they should see a link to the Login page in the upper right corner of the Welcome page. Their username should be the same as their email address and must be entered in all lowercase letters. If they have forgotten their password, they can reset it by entering their email address on the Forgotten Password page, and their email address must be entered in all lowercase letters here as well.

How do I access E-Badge Academy as a local administrator? How do I invite new users to the E-Badge Academy?

When you log in, you should have a menu on the left side of the screen. (That menu can be opened or closed by clicking the “hamburger” icon in the upper left corner.}

At the bottom of the left-side menu, you should see a "Site Administration" button. Clicking there will take you to the administrative screens only you can access. Once you are in the administrator part of the system, there should now be a bookmark on that left-side menu, which will take you to the Manage Sub portals page.

You can use the Envelope Icon to go to the Invite Screen (The icon will look like an envelope). This is how you will invite new users into the system.

You can also use an icon that looks like a newspaper to go to the Self-Reported Learning page to monitor your existing users. The Self-Reported Learning page is the most useful of the reports. It lets you see everything your users have uploaded.

What if a user does not accept an invitation within 72 hours?

If a user does not accept an invitation after 72 hours, you can reissue the invitation.

How will I know when a user takes one of our user seats?

A user seat will be considered occupied when the user accepts the invitation and creates a user account.

How do I know how many seats my agency has?

You can find how many seats your agency has by going to your sub-portal and clicking the newspaper icon. Under the “Overview” tab, you will also see your agency's renewal date.

If a user leaves our agency, can we replace them with another user?

Administrators may replace the occupant of a user seat only at renewal time. One month before your renewal date, you will receive a list of your users and will be asked to return the list with the names of the users you would like to have removed from their er seats. NADSP can suspend a user account for you at any time. Still, the user seat will be able to be filled by another user only at renewal time.

How many local administrators can an agency have?

You may have as many admins as you like. Still, each administrator will occupy one of your contracted user seats beyond the first.

Can a local administrator also earn badges?

Most administrators who want to apply for badges and seek certification set up a separate account. Creating a different account to earn badges will also take one of your user seats. If you try to earn badges using your local admin account, the badges earned will not show up on your Manage Badges Page. This is because the system will see you as an administrator rather than an enrolled "student."

What is the first badge users should earn?

The first badge in the NADSP E-Badge Academy that users should earn is the Code of Ethics Commitment badge. This badge is earned by agreeing to provide services per the NADSP Code of Ethics. It is a prerequisite for all the other badges; a user who does not earn this badge first cannot acquire any other badges.

How can a user see how many badges they have earned?

The user will need to go to their Manage Badges Page. A hyperlink can be found at the bottom of the Welcome page or the top of the Certification Checklist page with a hyperlink labeled "Total Badges Earned."

How does a user start?

If users are direct support professionals, enroll in the NADSP Certifications for DSPs course, which will track progress towards DSP-I, DSP-II, and DSP-III certification.

Suppose they are seeking the NADSP Certification for Frontline Supervisors. In that case, they will need a passcode from your local E-Badge Academy administrator to enroll in that course.

What is the passcode I can give the front-line supervisors to enroll in the front-line supervisor certification course? Who should I share the code with? Why is there a code?
If you are a local administrator that does not have the access code to the FLS badges, please reach out to your contact at NADSP.

NADSP realizes that every agency defines who a Front-Line Supervisor is differently. We leave it to you to determine who gets the code.

We have a code for the Front-Line Supervisor courses so that DSPs do not mistakenly submit for these badges.
Can a Front-Line Supervisor also earn a DSP Certification?

Yes, since many Front-Line Supervisors started their careers as DSPs and utilize similar skills as the DSPs, they can also earn DSP Certificates.

Where can I find a list of training that counts towards the NADSP-Accredited education badges?

A list of NADSP-accredited education can be found at NADSP Accredited Education - NADSP.

Does our local training count towards the hours earned for the accredited education badges?

The training must be NADSP-accredited to count toward your users' accredited education hour badges.

Do NADSP webinars count towards NADSP-Accredited Education hours?

Any training provided by NADSP, including NADSP webinars, is considered NADSP-accredited and can be used toward the accredited education requirements for certification. NADSP webinars should be documented using the Accredited Education Documentation Form on the NADSP website.

What else is there to remember about accredited education hour badges?

Each NADSP-accredited course can only be counted once towards the total number of hours, regardless of how many times the user has taken the course.

The Reviewer must see the user's name on the transcript.

The Reviewer must be able to see the entire course name and the number of hours accredited for each course.

What do users need to include when writing a testimonial for a NADSP Competency badge?

Users will need to address both prompts when writing their testimonials. A testimonial should be about half a page to one page in length. (Reviewers do not deny a testimonial for being too short or too long, but a user writing less than half a page will likely leave out some critical information the Reviewer will need.)

There is an option for users to submit testimonials in MP3 format. They may also handwrite their testimonial and submit their writing as a JPEG.

The first prompt will typically ask the user to describe an example of their work in which the skill associated with this badge was used. While direct support is often a team effort, the Reviewer will want to read about the user's skills that they are trying to evaluate. Reviewers cannot award a badge based on what a user "would do" in a hypothetical situation or the skills they have observed others using. Suppose other professionals are involved in their example. In that case, users should describe each person's role, focusing on their actions.

Suppose the user has yet to encounter the situation the first prompt asks about or has not used the skill this badge is based on. In that case, they should wait to apply for that badge.

The second prompt will ask the user to reflect on the values of their profession and will often (but not always) ask how the NADSP Code of Ethics came into play in the example they described. This requires a reflective style of writing that may be very different from the writing the user typically does as a DSP. Feeling entirely comfortable with this writing style may take some time and practice. If the second prompt asks about the Code, it might be helpful for you to share this format to help them get started: The Code of Ethics says "(quote from the Code)," and I did this by (something from their example)."

Can users identify the person they support in their testimonial by using the person's name?

To align with the NADSP Code of Ethics, the users will want to use a fictitious name(s) for the person(s) and let the Reviewer know they are doing so. A simple statement somewhere in their testimonial stating, "all names used in my testimonial are fictitious," will ensure the reviewers know users are protecting the privacy of the individual(s) they support.

Do reviewers evaluate testimonials based on grammar, spelling, or handwriting?

Reviewers do not base their approval or denial of a badge on these criteria. Suppose the Reviewer can understand what a user is saying in their testimonial. In that case, the testimonial will be evaluated on the user's work and reflection.

How do I find the submissions my users have sent?

You can find this information by going to Site Administration in the menu on the left, clicking the Manage Sub portals bookmark on the left, clicking the Newspaper icon on the right, and then going to the final tab on the Reports screen. Once you are there, you can set filters to focus on a particular DSP, a particular badge course, or a particular date range.

How long does it take for a submission to be reviewed?

A submission should be reviewed by the end of the third business day after it is submitted. It will be helpful for the local administrators to remind their users that Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays do not count as business days.

Who should I write to if a badge has not been reviewed after three business days or if I have questions or need help?

If you have a question, it is best to contact Dan Hermreck, Director of Certification and Accreditation, at DHermreck@nadsp.org and Janet Wilson, Manager of Certification and Accreditation, at JWilson@nadsp.org. Whoever is free will reply to your email.

Do you have any reference material I can share with my users?

The Welcome page links to the NADSP Code of Ethics, Helpful Tips for DSPs, and the Certification Fraud Policy. There is also a video for users on the Welcome page.

Do you have a recording for local admins to use as a reference to navigate the system?

Yes. This recording can be accessed via https://vimeo.com/903709553/db1e976f26?share=copy.