



NADSP Accreditation Information and Application Packet

Congratulations! By taking the first step toward NADSP Accreditation your agency is demonstrating its commitment to excellence, reflection and continual improvement in the areas of Direct Support Professional (DSP) education and training. NADSP urges you to consider the accreditation process as a journey that you and your team will take to strengthen and align your DSP education and training programs with the highest standards in the country.

The information in this packet is designed to help you understand the NADSP Accreditation program and the processes that applicants must follow to achieve NADSP Provisional and Full Accreditation statuses.

Contained in this packet are five documents to assist you in deciding if you and your program would like to proceed with an accreditation application. As you will see throughout the materials, the NADSP competency and skill statements are a critical component in any education or training program for Direct Support Professionals.

As NADSP continues to improve workforce issues in the field of community human services, we are encouraged by the number of education and training programs interested in NADSP Accreditation. We are further encouraged by the influx of Direct Support Professionals that are pursuing national credentialing through NADSP's Direct Support Professional Credentialing Program.

Documents included in this packet include:

- NADSP Accreditation Achievement Standards
- NADSP Competency Areas and Corresponding Skill Statements
- NADSP Accreditation Application
- NADSP Accreditation Applicant Process
- NADSP Accreditation Grievance Process



NADSP Accreditation Process and Achievement Standards

Why should your professional development program be accredited by NADSP?

The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) has launched a professional certification program for Direct Support Professionals. If your professional development program can effectively prepare DSPs for the NADSP credential, then you have the opportunity for your program to become accredited. NADSP accreditation assures that all learners who successfully complete your program are eligible for national credentialing, and ready to deliver the highest quality support.

NADSP accreditation demonstrates that your program effectively teaches the ethics, knowledge and skills that constitute best practice in community direct support. The accreditation process provides a structure to help you align your program content with contemporary practice guidelines and to become a leader in community human services professional development.

The accreditation process provides you with the tools to reflect on your program's content and practices and move forward with needed improvements through a self-evaluation and planning process to meet NADSP Accreditation Achievement Standards. The self-study method sets the stage for a process of communication, collaboration and exploration that will assist programs in unifying their educational program vision with a message of quality and commitment to professionalism in direct support practice. When conducted with a spirit of rigorous self-appraisal and openness to change, the self-evaluation and action planning process enables organizations to effectively assess their educational program's strengths and challenges and use this information to improve program quality. Joint exploration conducted with peer review through the accreditation process helps you to focus on your goals and opportunities through objective and practical feedback.

Accreditation Achievement Standards

1. Mission & Purposes: The candidate program's mission and guidelines are consistent with the mission and goals of NADSP

- 1.1. Describe program mission and operating guidelines. Explain how program mission and guidelines are consistent the National Alliance for Direct Support

Professionals' goals of strengthening the DSP workforce and providing better access to education, training and lifelong learning and the NADSP Code of Ethics for Direct Support Professionals.

2. Program and Instruction: The program has established learner outcomes that are aligned with the NADSP endorsed skill standards and code of ethics. The program uses competent instructors, high quality curriculum, and effective and updated adult learning methods and supports that enable most learners to master the outcomes and complete assessment requirements within the designated program interval.

2.1. Describe how the program meets each of the following expectations:

- 2.1.1. The program defines measurable learner outcomes that are aligned with the NADSP competency standards, Direct Support Professional Code of Ethics, and other NADSP credential requirements
- 2.1.2. The program and curriculum provide the support necessary for learners to support and achieve the defined outcomes
- 2.1.3. The instructional methods, program features and program activities are learner-centered and effective adult education approaches including collaborative learning, reflective discussion incorporating work-based experience, integration of technology, multi-session content exploration, project development with feedback; and application to practice
- 2.1.4. The program learning environments are comfortable, safe and suitable for learning
- 2.1.5. The program instructors are competent and qualified to teach in the program and have relevant direct support practice experience
- 2.1.6. The program's assessment plan is fair, authentic, reliable and aligned with NADSP competencies and ethical standards. The assessment supports learners in the completion of NADSP's credentialing program's certification requirements.
- 2.1.7. The program has a grievance process available to learners
- 2.1.8. The program supports individual, agency and regional career paths and awards certificates and other recognition for advancement through the program.

3. Organization and Governance: The program involves DSPs, people who use community human services, families and other stakeholders in governance decisions, continual improvement efforts, and planning. The program collaborates with state NADSP chapters, as applicable.

3.1. Description of how the program is organized, administered and governed. This section should describe the program's:

- 3.1.1. Governance and administration structures
- 3.1.2. Strategic planning process
- 3.1.3. Involvement of Direct Support Professionals, people who receive services, families and other stakeholders in the governance and/or operational structure
- 3.1.4. Collaborations with the state's chapter) of the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals, as applicable

- 3.1.5. Fee structure for the training and education program and the annual cost per learner
- 3.1.6. Process used to maintain current and confidential learner records in an organized and accurate manner
- 3.1.7. Adherence to its mission and how it updates the mission and strategic plan

4. Learning Organization: The candidate organization is a place where people continue to expand their capacity to create the results they desire related to improving the competence and skills of DSPs so they in turn can improve support to people who use community human services. The program seeks feedback about its effectiveness on a routine basis, uses the information obtained from this feedback and constructively modifies its process and outcomes accordingly.

- 4.1. Describe how the program supports its leaders and learners in reflecting on the strengths and challenges they face in the program and how they engage in collaborative problem solving
- 4.2. Describe the methods used to evaluate the program and how evaluation outcomes are used to adjust the program
- 4.3. The program offers a supportive culture which solicits feedback and respects different viewpoints, work styles, cultures and lifestyles



NADSP Endorsed Competency Areas and Corresponding Skill Statements

Each Competency area has corresponding skill statements. These skill statements describe the knowledge and skills that high quality DSPs possess.

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. <i>Participant Empowerment</i> | i. <i>Vocational, Educational and Career Support</i> |
| b. <i>Communication</i> | j. <i>Crisis Prevention and Intervention</i> |
| c. <i>Assessment</i> | k. <i>Organizational (employer) Participation</i> |
| d. <i>Community and Service Networking</i> | l. <i>Documentation</i> |
| e. <i>Facilitation of Services</i> | m. <i>Facilitation of Relationships and Friendships</i> |
| f. <i>Community Living Skills and Supports</i> | n. <i>Provide Person-Centered Support</i> |
| g. <i>Education, Training and Self-Development</i> | o. <i>Supporting Health and Wellness</i> |
| h. <i>Advocacy</i> | |

Participant Empowerment

The Direct Support Professional enhances the ability of the participant to lead a self-determining life by providing the support and information necessary to build self-esteem, and assertiveness; and to make decisions.

- The competent DSP assists and supports the participant to develop strategies, make informed choices, follow through on responsibilities, and take risks.
- The competent DSP promotes participant partnership in the design of support services, consulting the person and involving him or her in the support process.
- The competent DSP provides opportunities for the participant to be a self-advocate by increasing awareness of self-advocacy methods and techniques,

encouraging and assisting the participant to speak on his or her own behalf, and providing information on peer support and self-advocacy groups.

- The competent DSP provides information about human, legal, civil rights and other resources, facilitates access to such information and assists the participant to use information for self-advocacy and decision making about living, work, and social relationships.

Communication

The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about the range of effective communication strategies and skills necessary to establish a collaborative relationship with the participant.

- The competent DSP uses effective, sensitive communication skills to build rapport and channels of communication by recognizing and adapting to the range of participant communication styles.
- The competent DSP has knowledge of and uses modes of communication that are appropriate to the communication needs of participants.
- The skilled DSP learns and uses terminology appropriately, explaining as necessary to ensure participant understanding.

Assessment

The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about formal and informal assessment practices in order to respond to the needs, desires and interests of the participants.

- The competent DSP initiates or assists in the initiation of an assessment process by gathering information (e.g., participant's self-assessment and history, prior records, test results, additional evaluation) and informing the participant about what to expect throughout the assessment process.
- The competent DSP conducts or arranges for assessments to determine the needs, preferences, and capabilities of the participants using appropriate assessment tools and strategies, reviewing the process for inconsistencies, and making corrections as necessary.
- The competent DSP discusses findings and recommendations with the participant in a clear and understandable manner, following up on results and reevaluating the findings as necessary.

Community and Service Networking

The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about the formal and informal supports available in his or her community and skilled in assisting the participant to identify and gain access to such supports.

- The competent DSP helps to identify the needs of the participant for community supports, working with the participant's informal support system, and assisting with, or initiating identified community connections.
- The competent DSP researches, develops, and maintains information on community and other resources relevant to the needs of participants.

- The competent DSP ensures participant access to needed and available community resources coordinating supports across agencies.
- The competent DSP participates in outreach to potential participants.

Facilitation of Services

The Direct Support Professional is knowledgeable about a range of participatory planning techniques and is skilled in implementing plans in a collaborative and expeditious manner.

- The competent DSP maintains collaborative professional relationships with the participant and all support team members (including family/friends), follows ethical standards of practice (e.g., confidentiality, informed consent, etc.), and recognizes his or her own personal limitations.
- The competent DSP assists and/or facilitates the development of an individualized plan based on participant preferences, needs, and interests.
- The competent DSP assists and/or facilitates the implementation of an individualized plan to achieve specific outcomes derived from participants' preferences, needs and interests.
- The competent DSP assists and/or facilitates the review of the achievement of individual participant outcomes.

Community Living Skills & Supports

The Direct Support Professional has the ability to match specific supports and interventions to the unique needs of individual participants and recognizes the importance of friends, family and community relationships.

- The competent DSP assists the participant to meet his or her physical (e.g., health, grooming, toileting, eating) and personal management needs (e.g., human development, human sexuality), by teaching skills, providing supports, and building on individual strengths and capabilities.
- The competent DSP assists the participant with household management (e.g., meal prep, laundry, cleaning, decorating) and with transportation needs to maximize his or her skills, abilities and independence.
- The competent DSP assists with identifying, securing and using needed equipment (e.g., adaptive equipment) and therapies (e.g., physical, occupational and communication).
- The competent DSP supports the participant in the development of friendships and other relationships.
- The competent community based support worker assists the participant to recruit and train service providers as needed.

Education, Training & Self-Development

The Direct Support Professional should be able to identify areas for self improvement, pursue necessary educational/training resources, and share knowledge with others.

- The competent DSP completes required training education/certification, continues professional development, and keeps abreast of relevant resources and information.

- The competent DSP educates participants, co-workers and community members about issues by providing information and support and facilitating training.

Advocacy

The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about the diverse challenges facing participants (e.g., human rights, legal, administrative and financial) and should be able to identify and use effective advocacy strategies to overcome such challenges.

- The competent DSP and the participant identify advocacy issues by gathering information, reviewing and analyzing all aspects of the issue.
- The competent DSP has current knowledge of laws, services, and community resources to assist and educate participants to secure needed supports.
- The competent DSP facilitates, assists, and/or represents the participant when there are barriers to his or her service needs and lobbies decision-makers when appropriate to overcome barriers to services.
- The competent DSP interacts with and educates community members and organizations (e.g., employer, landlord, civic organization) when relevant to participant's needs or services.

Vocational, Educational & Career Support

The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about the career and education related concerns of the participant and should be able to mobilize the resources and support necessary to assist the participant to reach his or her goals.

- The competent DSP explores with the participant his/her vocational interests and aptitudes, assists in preparing for job or school entry, and reviews opportunities for continued career growth.
- The competent DSP assists the participant in identifying job/training opportunities and marketing his/her capabilities and services.
- The competent DSP collaborates with employers and school personnel to support the participant, adapting the environment, and providing job retention supports.

Crisis Prevention and Intervention

The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about crisis prevention, intervention and resolution techniques and should match such techniques to particular circumstances and individuals.

- The competent DSP identifies the crisis, defuses the situation, evaluates and determines an intervention strategy and contacts necessary supports.
- The competent DSP continues to monitor crisis situations, discussing the incident with authorized staff and participant(s), adjusting supports and the environment, and complying with regulations for reporting.

Organizational Participation

The Direct Support Professional is familiar with the mission and practices of the support organization and participates in the life of the organization.

- The competent DSP contributes to program evaluations, and helps to set organizational priorities to ensure quality.
- The competent DSP incorporates sensitivity to cultural, religious, racial, disability, and gender issues into daily practices and interactions.
- The competent DSP provides and accepts co-worker support, participating in supportive supervision, performance evaluation, and contributing to the screening of potential employees.
- The competent DSP provides input into budget priorities, identifying ways to provide services in a more cost-effective manner.

Documentation

The Direct Support Professional is aware of the requirements for documentation in his or her organization and is able to manage these requirements efficiently.

- The competent DSP maintains accurate records, collecting, compiling and evaluating data, and submitting records to appropriate sources in a timely fashion.
- The competent DSP maintains standards of confidentiality and ethical practice.
- The competent DSP learns and remains current with appropriate documentation systems, setting priorities and developing a system to manage documentation.

Building and Maintaining Friendships and Relationships

Support the participant in the development of friendships and other relationships.

- The competent DSP assists the individual as needed in planning for community activities and events (e.g., making reservation, staff needs, money, materials, accessibility).
- The competent DSP assists the individual as needed in arranging transportation for community events.
- The competent DSP documents community activities and events.
- The competent DSP encourages and assists the individual as needed in facilitating friendships and peer interactions.
- The competent DSP encourages and assists the individual as needed in communication with parents/family (e.g., phone calls, visits, letters).
- The competent DSP implements individual supports regarding community activities.
- The competent DSP provides incentive or motivation for consumer involvement in community outings.
- The competent DSP assists the individual as needed in getting to know and interacting with his/her neighbors.
- The competent DSP encourages and assists the individual as needed in dating.
- The competent DSP encourages and assists the individual as needed in communicating with social workers and financial workers.

Provide Person Centered Supports

- The competent DSP provides support to people using a person centered approach.

- The competent DSP modifies support programs and interventions to ensure they are person centered.
- The competent DSP challenges co-workers and supervisors to use person centered practices.
- The competent DSP is knowledgeable about person centered planning techniques.
- The competent DSP assists individuals in developing person centered plans .

Supporting Health and Wellness

Promotes the health and wellness of all consumers.

- Administers medications accurately and in accordance with agency policy and procedures.
- Observes and implements appropriate actions to promote healthy living and to prevent illness and accidents.
- Uses appropriate first aid/safety procedures when responding to emergencies.
- Assists individuals in scheduling, keeping, and following through on all health appointments.
- Assists individuals in completing personal care (e.g., hygiene and grooming) activities.
- Assists with identifying, securing and using needed adaptive equipment (i.e. adaptive equipment) and therapies (e.g., physical, occupational, speech, respiratory, psychological).
- Assists individuals in implementing health and medical treatments.
- Assists individuals to take an active role in their health care decisions.



National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals' National Credentialing Program

Application for Accreditation

Please review the application form, complete it in its entirety, and submit it with the \$250 application fee.

TRAINING PROGRAM

Organization Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Key Contact

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Check all that apply:

Single-site training Multi-site training

Collaborative training program

Additional Program Collaborators

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Additional Program Collaborators

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

On-line training

Other

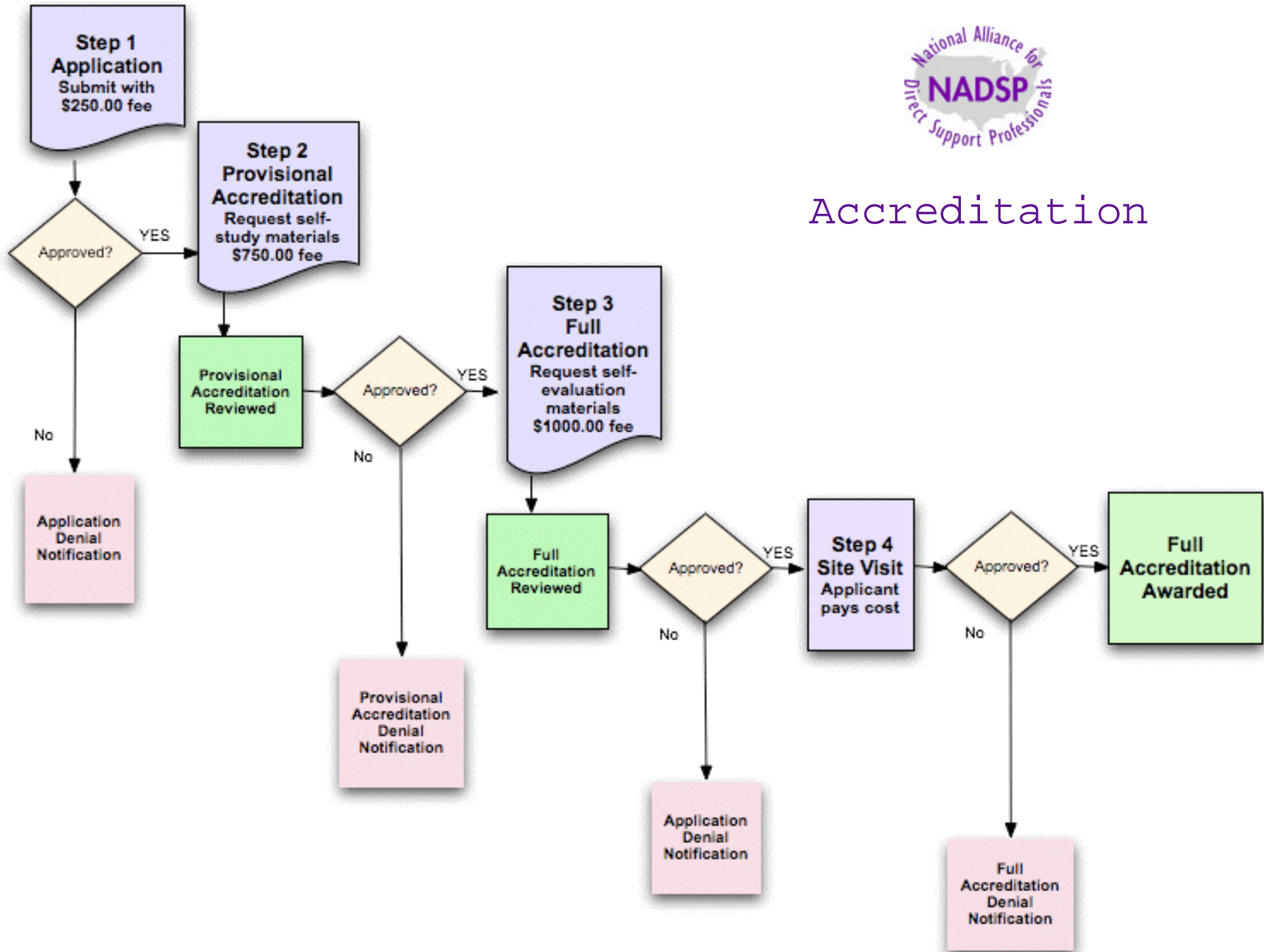
This application provides NADSP with a general overview of your program. Please be brief in your responses. You will have an opportunity to elaborate your program description at Step 2 of the accreditation process.



Program Description		
Years of Program Operation:	Hours of Training Offered:	Fees for Training:
No. of Instructional Sessions Offered per Year:	No. of Learners per Instructional Session: Currently Enrolled: Annually Enrolled:	No. of Instructors:
List of Courses / Training Sessions:		
Describe methods of instruction:		
Describe learning assessment measures:		
Describe instructor's credentials or background		



Accreditation





NADSP Accreditation Applicant Process

NADSP accreditation of educational and training programs consists of four steps. Each step requires written documentation from the applicant program and a corresponding review fee. The accreditation process is described below in detail, including the accreditation fee structure and responsibilities of the applicant. NADSP reserves the right to change the application process at any time. Applicants will be held accountable for following the most current process and should therefore move through the accreditation process in a timely fashion. A visual diagram of the accreditation process can be found on page 13.

Step 1

Applicants must download the Accreditation Application from the NADSP website (www.nadsp.org/accreditation). Applicants should review and complete the application; being mindful that this application is designed to provide NADSP with a general overview of their program. Providing brief explanations to the questions is sufficient as applicants will have the opportunity later in the accreditation process to provide more detailed explanations of their program. The completed online application must be returned along with an electronic payment of the \$250 application fee.

Applicants will be notified within 30 days of their submission whether or not their program has been approved to move to Step 2 of the accreditation process. If an applicant is denied Step 2, they will be given detailed reason(s) for the denial. Interested applicants can make corrections and re-submit their application along with a new \$250 application fee.

Step 2

Upon receipt of the approval letter from NADSP which indicates that the applicant can move forward in the application process, the applicant must complete the online request for a Provisional Accreditation Self-Study Guide along with an electronic payment of the \$750 Provisional Accreditation fee. Immediately upon receipt of the applicant's request for Provisional Accreditation, NADSP will provide the applicant with the Provisional Accreditation self-study materials and the name of the NADSP reviewer assigned to their application.

Applicants must complete a detailed self-study based upon the first two NADSP Accreditation Achievement Standards (see pages 1-2) in compliance with the NADSP Provisional Accreditation Self-Study Guide. The assigned NADSP reviewer can be contacted by the applicant for up to two hours of technical assistance during the self-study process. Applicants will be notified within 30 days of their self-study submission, as to whether or not they have

been approved by the NADSP Board of Directors for Provisional Accreditation status. Provisional Accreditation status is valid for up to two years from the date of the accreditation award. Programs that can demonstrate historical continuity in their training or education program, reflecting its current quality and alignment with NADSP Achievement Standards, may receive a “grandfathering date” to be used by previously trained Direct Support Professionals in pursuing their national DSP-C credential. NADSP will award programs that receive Provisional Accreditation a certificate of merit and list them on the NADSP website under accredited programs.

Those who are denied Provisional Accreditation will be given specific corrective actions they can take to improve their program as they continue to work toward accreditation. Applicants have one opportunity to re-submit their self-study materials after they have made the required improvements. The re-submission fee of \$375 is due at the time of the revised self study is electronically submitted. Applicants will be notified within 30 days as to whether or not they have been awarded Provisional Accreditation status. If the applicant’s Provisional Accreditation self-study does not meet NADSP Accreditation Achievement Standards for the second time, applicants must wait twelve months before beginning the application process again.

Step 3

Within 6-12 months of achieving Provisional Accreditation status, applicants must seek Full Accreditation status. Applicants must complete the online request for a Full Accreditation Self-Study Guide along with an electronic payment of the \$1000 Full Accreditation fee. Immediately upon receipt of the applicant’s request for Full Accreditation, NADSP will provide the applicant with the Full Accreditation self-study materials.

Applicants must complete a detailed self-study based upon all four of NADSP Accreditation Achievement Standards in compliance with the NADSP Full Accreditation Self-Study Guide. Applicants will update the first two standards (previously completed during the Provisional Accreditation application) and will thoroughly report on the third and fourth standards. The assigned NADSP reviewer can be contacted by the applicant for up to two hours of technical assistance during the self-study process. Applicants will be notified within 30 days of their self-study submission, as to whether or not they have been approved for Step 4 of the accreditation process; a site visit. The site visit notification letter will include the name and contact information for the NADSP Primary Site Reviewer, as well as the requirements for the site visit.

Applicants denied the site visit based upon the Full Accreditation self-study will be given specific corrective actions to improve their program as they continue to work toward accreditation and the ability to host an accreditation site visit. Applicants have one opportunity to re-submit their self-study materials after they have made the required improvements. The re-submission fee of \$500 is due at the time of the revised self study is submitted. If the applicant’s Full Accreditation self-study is accepted on the second submission, they will be notified of their approval for a site visit. However, if the second Full Accreditation self-study fails to meet NADSP Accreditation Achievement Standards, applicants will lose their Provisional Accreditation status and must wait a period of twelve months before beginning the application process again.

Step 4

Applicants must contact the NADSP Primary Site Reviewer to coordinate a mutually agreeable timeframe to complete the site visit. Site visits should be completed within 60 days of Step 3 notification. The length of the site visit will range from 1-3 days depending upon the size and scope of the program. Applicants are responsible for all costs associated with the site visit, including but not limited to airfare, lodging, transportation, meals and \$800 per day/per reviewer for the two person review team. Upon completion of the site visit, the NADSP Primary Reviewer will synthesize the reviewers' comments, and report to the NADSP Board of Directors who will make the determination of accreditation. Applicants will be notified of their accreditation status within 30 days of the site visit.

Full Accreditation status will be awarded in three levels. The Ruby level indicates a satisfactory achievement of the NADSP Accreditation Achievement Standards. The second level is Sapphire. This level indicates that the applicant has achieved a higher standard in the accreditation process, exceeding some of the NADSP Accreditation Achievement Standards. The highest level of Full Accreditation is Emerald. The Emerald level represents an organization that has exceeded the NADSP Accreditation Achievement Standards in all areas. It is anticipated that accredited programs will continue to make improvements to their education and training programs resulting in increased levels of accreditation over renewal years. All levels of Full Accreditation are valid for five years from the date that the Provisional Accreditation was awarded. Programs accredited by NADSP will receive a one year NADSP Affiliate Membership and a plaque signifying the program's achievement.

Applicants that do not receive Full Accreditation status upon the completion of the site visit and Board of Directors' review will receive a letter detailing the necessary corrections and informing them of the opportunity to repeat the site visit. Applicants must assume the full cost (previously detailed) of the second site visit. If the second site visit results in Full Accreditation, they will be notified of their approval and receive all accreditation benefits. However, if the second site visit fails to meet NADSP Achievement Standards, applicants will lose their Provisional Accreditation status and must wait a period of twelve months before beginning the application process again.

Accreditation Renewal

NADSP is finalizing details of the Accreditation Renewal Process. Information regarding the renewal process will be available in the Summer of 2008.