



E-BADGE ACADEMY REVIEWER HANDBOOK

Guidelines and policies for person interested in
becoming an E-Badge application reviewer.

The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals

<https://nadsp.org/services/the-nadsp-e-badge-academy/>



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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. It worked 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 assist them in achieving 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 his, 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.
- Strengthening relationships and partnerships between Direct Support Professionals, self-advocates, and other consumer groups and families improves the quality of support.

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 can earn electronic badges (E-Badges) based on completing approved education and demonstrating skills related to the CMS competencies. Similarly, Frontline Supervisors can earn badges based on education and demonstrating skills related to the National Frontline Supervisor Competencies. The NA SP E-Badge Academy helps Direct Support Professionals and Frontline Supervisors get credit for competency and education that would otherwise go unnoticed. The E-Badge Academy allows users to highlight their skill sets, share their achievements, and build professional portfolios. DSPs and FLSs can use E-Badges to tell others about their expertise, and in turn, 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 to earn electronic badges in the areas of accredited education and competencies that tier to 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.

How to Become a Reviewer

The NADSP E-Badge Academy utilizes contracted E-Badge Reviewers to review testimonials and award badges. E-Badge Reviewers are professionals with experience in human services who are well-versed in the NADSP Code of Ethics and NADSP Competency areas.

Recruitment for E-Badge Reviewers occurs at least twice yearly through advertising within the NADSP E-Badge Academy networks and NADSP email subscribers. Anyone interested in becoming an E-Badge Academy Reviewer is asked to contact a NADSP E-Badge Academy team member or complete an inquiry form through the NADSP Communications email at <https://nadsp.org/contact-us/>.

Requirements

To become an E-Badge Reviewer, interested professionals must participate in a virtual two-hour training session conducted by the NADSP E-Badge Academy team and pass an inter-rater reliability test with 85% success. Potential reviewers who do not pass with 85% the first time may retake an equivalent test for a second opportunity to become a reviewer.

Upon successful completion of the inter-rater reliability test, interested professionals may apply to become an E-Badge Reviewer by submitting an application (found at https://form.jotform.com/NADSP_Communications/nadsp-e-badge-academy-reviewer-app/) and a current resume. Applicants are reviewed and approved by the Chief Operating Officer before acceptance as an E-Badge Reviewer. Once accepted, each E-Badge reviewer must sign a

one-year contract outlining the performance expectations and compensation agreement and provide a current W-9.

Each E-Badge Reviewer must complete training and pass a new inter-rater reliability test (at least 85% score) annually to remain a Reviewer. Contracts for Reviewers meeting all reviewer requirements will be renewed annually. The Director of Certification and Accreditation or designee will meet with each E-Badge Reviewer at least annually to connect and work with the E-Badge Reviewer on any individual challenges they may be experiencing. The Reviewer is encouraged to contact the Director of Certification and Accreditation or his designee to address these concerns: all contracts and supporting documentation are kept confidential by the NADSP Chief Operating Officer.

Eligibility

The NADSP will not discriminate against anyone interested in becoming an E-Badge Reviewer, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, or race. However, to be eligible to serve as an E-Badge Reviewer, the NADSP does necessitate all those interested meet the following minimum requirements:

- Must be 18 years of age.
- Must reside in and be eligible to work within the United States or Canada.
- Must be willing to work within a remote setting.
- Must have access to a reliable internet connection.
- Must be able to speak and understand both written and spoken English. People who speak additional languages (e.g., Spanish) or are certified in American Sign Language are encouraged to apply, but this is optional to become an E-Badge Reviewer.
- Must have previously worked within the DSP field or have served within the disability community as an advocate or support caregiver.
- Current DSPs or FLS who have obtained E-Badge certification are welcome to apply.

Terms and Conditions

The NADSP and contracted E-Badge Reviewers reserve the right to terminate the contract at any point during the contract year, without cause, with two weeks written notice of intention to terminate. E-Badge Reviewers who must terminate the contract early, leave on good standing, attend annual training, and pass the inter-rater reliability test may re-contract with the NADSP when future opportunities arise.

E-Badge reviewers will be assigned by the NADSP E-Badge Academy team to review specific competency or accredited education badges based on the Reviewers' interests and strengths. Reviewers may be given one to four badges based on availability and the number of submissions a badge receives. Testimonials submitted by Direct Support Professionals or Frontline Supervisors will be randomly assigned to E-Badge Reviewers specific to their badge assignments. They will be sent to the email address on record for that Reviewer. Each Reviewer is expected to review the testimonials they receive within three business days, following the

grading rubric provided to them. Reviewers are compensated \$1 per testimonial that they review. NADSP will issue payment for completed reviews by the 15th of the following month.

The NADSP has established an E-Badge Academy Reviewer community of practice that meets bimonthly. Attendance is not mandatory. All E-Badge Reviewers are invited to attend, and the meeting is recorded and shared with the E-Badge Reviewer Community for learning and reference. Additionally, access to previously recorded meetings is made available to all Reviewers for reference as needed. Topics for each meeting are determined based on challenges, questions, or concerns that come up in the review process. Topics may include upgrades to the web-based portal, how to provide valuable and supportive feedback, reviews of fraud concerns, etc. Each meeting has a prepared agenda and allows time for discussion and questions.

Occasionally, an E-Badge Reviewer may receive a testimonial from a DSP/FLS from the organization where they work. When this occurs, the E-Badge Reviewer is asked to contact the NADSP E-Badge Academy team regarding the potential conflict so the testimonial may be reassigned to another E-Badge Reviewer or a member of the E-Badge Academy Team.

Leave of Absence

E-Badge Reviewers who need to take time away from reviewing for vacations or other personal reasons are requested to notify the E-Badge Academy team in writing two weeks in advance or as soon as is reasonably possible. During the E-Badge Reviewer's absence, another Reviewer or a member of the E-Badge Academy team will be responsible for reviewing badges assigned to the absent Reviewer. Additionally, should an E-Badge Reviewer find that the volume of badges is greater than their time to complete, they are encouraged to contact the Manager of Certification and Accreditation to reassign some of their assigned badges to make the workload more manageable.

Conflict(s) of Interest

All E-Badge Reviewers must 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. Reviewers currently employed as a DSP or FLS are not permitted to review applications from persons who work at the same sponsoring organization or agency, with whom they are related, or with whom they have an existing personal or professional relationship. Any Reviewers who fail to notify the NADSP of conflicts will have their contracts terminated and be ineligible to work as a Reviewer. All Reviewers are required to read and electronically sign the *Conflict of Interest Disclosure Questionnaire* (Appendix A – Conflict of Interest Disclosure & Acknowledgement Form) as part of their contract requirements.

Completing E-Badge Reviews

When an E-Badge Reviewer receives a testimonial, they are expected to review the testimonial within three business days utilizing the questions below:

- 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)?

Should the testimonial demonstrate all the requirements in the rubric above, the Reviewer will award the appropriate competency badge to the DSP/FLS in the E-Badge Academy web-based portal. A badge will be earned toward DSP/FLS Certification.

If any four requirements are unmet in the testimonial, the E-Badge Reviewer will send a denial in the web-based portal and a note to the DSP/FLS explaining the denial. To ensure consistency in responses for denied badges, E-Badge Reviewers are provided with *NADSP E-Badge Declination Message Response* when completing notes with denials.

NADSP E-Badge Declination Message Response (Core Competency Badges)

All unsuccessful submissions to the NADSP E-Badge Academy should receive a standardized message. Use the italicized text as the first and last parts of your reply, and select a reason from the list to include.

Thank you for your submission to the NADSP E-Badge Academy. Unfortunately, we are currently unable to award this badge. The reason for this determination is:

- No testimonial was included in your submission.
- The testimonial submitted does not align with the NADSP Code of Ethics. Please revise your testimonial to reflect the NADSP Code of Ethics better. <https://nadsp.org/code-of-ethics/>
- The submitted testimonial must contain more information to show that the skill statement associated with this badge was demonstrated. Providing greater detail may resolve this issue.
- The submitted testimonial needs to address the first prompt for this badge fully.
- The submitted testimonial needs to fully address the second prompt for this badge.

Denial Messaging

The following provides denial notes that you may use for easy copying and pasting when providing a note.

No testimonial:

Thank you for your submission to the NADSP E-Badge Academy. Unfortunately, we are currently unable to award this badge. This determination is because no testimonial was included in your submission. We encourage you to submit an updated submission for reconsideration. If you have any questions, please reach out to your organization's contact.

Not aligned with the Code of Ethics:

Thank you for your submission to the NADSP E-Badge Academy. Unfortunately, we are currently unable to award this badge. This determination is because the submitted testimonial does not align with the NADSP Code of Ethics. Please revise your testimonial to reflect the NADSP Code of Ethics (<https://nadsp.org/code-of-ethics-text/>). We encourage you to submit an updated submission for reconsideration. If you have any questions, please reach out to your organization's contact.

Does not demonstrate skill statement:

Thank you for your submission to the NADSP E-Badge Academy. Unfortunately, we are currently unable to award this badge. This determination is because the submitted testimonial does not contain sufficient information to show that the skill statement associated with this badge was demonstrated. Providing greater detail may resolve this issue. We encourage you to submit an updated submission for reconsideration. If you have any questions, please reach out to your organization's contact.

First prompt not addressed:

Thank you for your submission to the NADSP E-Badge Academy. Unfortunately, we are currently unable to award this badge. This determination is because the submitted testimonial must address this badge's first prompt fully. We encourage you to submit an updated submission for reconsideration. If you have any questions, please reach out to your organization's contact.

Second prompt not addressed:

Thank you for your submission to the NADSP E-Badge Academy. Unfortunately, we are currently unable to award this badge. This determination is because the submitted testimonial must fully address the second prompt for this badge. We encourage you to submit an updated submission for reconsideration. If you have any questions, please reach out to your organization's contact.

Additional Suggested Language for Common Situations that can be added to the script (These may not apply well to all badges; feel free to use, ignore, or adjust as needed.)

Competency Alignment

The First Prompt

- The first prompt asks you to describe an example of your work, and we need a more detailed description of this example to evaluate your skill.
- While we do not deny submissions based on length, submissions that are less than half a page tend to leave out essential details needed to evaluate a DSP's skill level.
- You are doing excellent direct support work, but this submission does not refer to a specific example of how you use this skill. Describe a situation where you used this skill rather than making more general statements about your overall approach.

- This submission describes a hypothetical example of direct support. To evaluate your skills, we need you to describe an actual situation you encountered on the job in your role as a direct support professional.
- In your response to the first prompt, you discuss the actions " staff " took. While it is sometimes expected for DSPs to refer to themselves this way in documentation, in writing for the E-Badge Academy, it must be clear that you, not a co-worker, are performing the work described. Using "I" or "me" when appropriate would provide clarity and strengthen this submission.
- Core Competency badges are awarded based on how you have used the identified skill in your work. The testimonial must reflect the authentic real-life experience that you have had on the job, and fictional accounts cannot be accepted. It needs to be clarified from the submission that this is an actual situation you have encountered.
- You referred to your testimonial as being "fictitious." While we want you to change any names or other identifying information, we do not accept fictional examples. Testimonials must be based on authentic experiences you have had while working as a DSP or frontline supervisor. If you meant that you had changed the names of the individuals you support to protect confidentiality, please clarify that in a revised submission.

The Second Prompt

- The second prompt asks you to explain how this example aligns with the Code of Ethics. You noted one of the nine Code tenets that align with but did not explain how it connects to the example from the first prompt.
- The second prompt asks you to explain how this example aligns with the Code of Ethics. You quoted from the Code but needed to explain how it connects to the example from the first prompt.
- The second prompt asks you to explain how this example aligns with the Code of Ethics. You said some generally positive things about your example. Still, you did not connect it to the actual language of the [NADSP Code of Ethics](#).
- This is a good start on a response to the second prompt. Please expand on your thoughts.
- If it helps, you may want to structure the response to the second prompt to begin like this: The Code of Ethics says "(quote from the Code)," and I did this by (something from your example).
- The second prompt asks you to connect to the [NADSP Code of Ethics](#), and you relate to the Competencies instead. While both are important, the [Code](#) and the Competencies are different. The Competencies are about the skills needed in direct support work, but the [Code](#) is about the values that guide that work.
- While most badges have a second prompt that asks for a connection to the Code of Ethics, this badge does not fit that pattern. Please resubmit with some language that responds to the second prompt for this badge.

Consistent with The Code

- Respect is an essential tenet of the NADSP Code of Ethics. Some aspects of this submission come across as less than respectful to those you support, notably...
- While this appears to be excellent direct support work, some of the language you use to describe that work is inconsistent with the Code of Ethics requirement to "Promote respectful, sensitive, and contemporary language." For example...
- "It was not clear to the reviewer if you were using a real name, and we need some clarification to ensure that this submission is consistent with the Confidentiality tenant of the Code."

"Rebuttals"

- Each testimonial you submit to the NADSP E-Badge Academy will likely go to a different reviewer. For this reason, responding directly to a note from a previous reviewer is not helpful. Please revise your submission into an updated draft that responds to the prompts in a way that a reviewer can understand without prior knowledge of your submissions for this badge.

NADSP E-Badge Declination Message Response (Accredited Education Badges)

All unsuccessful submissions to the NADSP E-Badge Academy should receive a standardized message. Use the italicized text as the first and last parts of your reply, and select a reason from the list to include.

Thank you for your submission to the NADSP E-Badge Academy. Unfortunately, we are currently unable to award this badge. The reason for this determination is:

- The documentation of training submitted is needed to demonstrate the completion of the required number of hours of NADSP-accredited curriculum to achieve the badge for which you have applied.
- The documentation of the submitted training is from something other than an NADSP-accredited curriculum and, therefore, does not meet the requirements to achieve the badge for which you have applied. For more information on NADSP-accredited education, visit <https://www.nadsp.org/accredited-education-curricula/>
- The type of training documentation submitted requires that your name and agency representative's signature be included.

We encourage you to submit an updated submission for reconsideration. If you have any questions, please reach out to your organization's contact.

Denial Messaging

The following provides denial notes that you may use for easy copying and pasting when providing a note.

Not enough hours of accredited training:

Thank you for your submission to the NADSP E-Badge Academy. Unfortunately, we are currently unable to award this badge. *The reason for this determination is that the documentation of training submitted is needed to demonstrate the completion of the required number of hours of NADSP-accredited curriculum to achieve the badge for which you have applied.*

- We encourage you to submit an updated submission for reconsideration. If you have any questions, please reach out to your organization's contact. Please note that duplicate courses are only counted once. We cannot count the local training on your transcript, as NADSP has not accredited these trainings.
- Your transcript contains many classes developed by your agency or training material selected by your agency. These classes are essential to your career as a Direct Support Professional but are not NADSP-accredited education. Please remember that if you are applying for a 10-hour badge, include your transcripts that equal or exceed 10 hours of NADSP Accredited Education. Please include all training documentation in one submission.

Training is not accredited:

Thank you for your submission to the NADSP E-Badge Academy. Unfortunately, we are currently unable to award this badge. The reason for this determination is that the documentation of training submitted is not from a NADSP-accredited curriculum and, thereby, does not meet the requirements to achieve the badge you applied for. For more information on NADSP-accredited education, visit <https://www.nadsp.org/accredited-education-curricula/>. We encourage you to submit an updated submission for reconsideration. If you have any questions, please reach out to your organization's contact.

Documents are missing critical information:

Thank you for your submission to the NADSP E-Badge Academy. Unfortunately, we are currently unable to award this badge. This determination is because the submitted training documentation needs to show all the information necessary to award this badge. We encourage you to submit an updated submission for reconsideration. If you have any questions, please reach out to your organization's contact.

Signature or Name Missing from Agency-Generated Form:

Thank you for your submission to the NADSP E-Badge Academy. Unfortunately, we are currently unable to award this badge. This determination is because the type of training documentation submitted requires that your name and your agency representative's signature be included.

We encourage you to submit an updated submission for reconsideration. If you have any questions, please reach out to your organization's contact.

Other messaging considerations:

- While the College of Direct Support (CDS) and the College of Frontline Supervision and Management (CFSM) are NADSP-Accredited, other DirectCourse offerings such as the College of Employment Supports (CES) and the College of Recovery and Community Inclusion (CRCI) are not accredited. They cannot be counted toward your total number of accredited hours.
- While we accept records in a spreadsheet format, the reviewers must be able to see all the critical information for each course on the same page, with column widths allowing for all the essential information to be read.
- When downloading a transcript from the College of Direct Support, the system should allow you to download a transcript or learning report with all the needed information as a PDF file directly. This process is usually much more straightforward and avoids many common pitfalls resulting from the formatting of the spreadsheet files.
- If you have multiple files to upload, they must all be contained in a single submission. (Attach, attach, attach...submit rather than attach, submit, attach, submit, attach, attach, submit..)
- While we accept individual Open Future Learning certificates, we can review your submission more quickly if you submit the Open Future Learning Module Report. This report shows all of your completed modules in one file.
- While many courses in Relias are NADSP-accredited, many others still need to be. It is important to check the "Board Name" or "Available Certificates" for a Relias course to verify if NADSP accredits it.
- You have taken several courses multiple times, but we can only count each course once. This is why the total we have calculated differs from the one at the bottom of your transcript.
- The 12-hour "NTG Foundational Training" is not an NADSP-accredited training, so it cannot be counted toward your hours of accredited education needed for this badge. However, there is a separate badge called "[NTG Foundational Training \(12 hours\)](#)", which you can earn specifically for completing this training. Please submit your NTG training certificate to that badge course instead.

Confidentiality

E-Badge Academy Reviewers will have access to usernames and emails as part of their review process. The NADSP expects that E-Badge Reviewers maintain confidentiality regarding the testimonials they receive and the users who submit them. At no time should testimonials or users' names be shared with anyone outside the NADSP team.

Earners of the Month

E-Badge Academy reviewers are encouraged to look for and submit to the E-Badge Academy team any testimonials that they review that demonstrate exceptional understanding and

performance of competency and ethics. These testimonials will be reviewed by the Manager of Certification and Accreditation and collected to share with the NADSP team. Each month, 2 – 5 testimonials are presented to the NADSP team to vote on the "best" for the Earner of the Month. Earners of the Month are interviewed and featured monthly through NADSP social media, on the NADSP E-Badge Academy webpage, and highlighted in the *Frontline Initiative*.

Suspected Fraud

Occasionally, an E-Badge Reviewer will come across a testimonial that may appear to have been copied from the work of others, been generated by artificial intelligence, or reproduced without references from the internet. When an E-Badge Reviewer comes across such a testimonial, they are asked to report their concern or reassign the badge to the Manager of Certification and Accreditation to initiate an investigation. Suppose there is a question about a submission. In that case, the E-Badge Reviewer should refrain from reviewing it and contact the Director or Manager of Certification and Accreditation.

E-Badge Academy Reviewers Resources and Tools

We have compiled valuable tools for your reference and support to assist you as a NADSP E-Badge Academy Reviewer. If you need assistance beyond these resources, don't hesitate to get in touch with 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 E-Badge Academy: Helpful Tips for Reviewers - <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:47abdeda-f5a5-4553-a395-ab13d0c7b972>
- 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

Appendix A – Conflict of Interest Disclosure & Acknowledgement Form

Conflict of Interest Disclosure Questionnaire

1. Name (please print):
2. Do you have family (including spouse, children, or in-laws) that are currently employed by the NADSP?
 - a. If so, please identify:
3. Do you have family (including spouse, children, or in-laws) that currently work as a DSP or FLS?
 - a. If yes, then please identify which Organization/Agency they are employed by:

I HEREBY CONFIRM that I have read and understand the NADSP's E-Badge Academy Conflict of Interest Policy and that my responses to the above questions are complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature

Date