



Division Of TennCare Long-Term Services and Supports Operational Protocol: Training Requirements for 1915(c) Waiver, Employment and Community First CHOICES, CHOICES, and Katie Beckett Providers

Effective Date: 10/1/25

I. Background

TennCare Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) requires direct support staff employed by home- and community-based service (HCBS) providers to receive training relevant to the provision of quality LTSS. This protocol outlines the training requirements for staff providing services under the following HCBS programs: 1915(c) Waivers, Employment and Community First (ECF) CHOICES, CHOICES, and Katie Beckett (KB).

II. Definitions

Direct Support Professional (DSP): A paid worker whose primary responsibilities include providing support, guidance, personal assistance, or help with skills development during any activity or at any location (e.g., at work, at home, leisure activities, recreational activities) to individuals receiving HCBS. DSPs may have a variety of titles, including but not limited to Direct Support Workers (DSWs), Paid Caregivers, Personal Care Assistants (PCAs), Employment Specialists (Job Developers or Job Coaches), Home Health Aides (HHAs), Community Integration Specialists.

Dual Provider: a contracted provider that provides services in more than one HCBS program.

Early Service Training: Also known as core training. This training is to be completed by staff providing services for the 1915(c), ECF CHOICES, and KB HCBS programs, as well as staff providing services in a Community Living Supports (CLS)/Community Living Supports-Family Model (CLS-FM) home within sixty (60) days of date of hire. Staff may work alone with persons receiving services while completing core training courses; however, staff shall not be allowed to administer medications until they have successfully completed the *Medication Administration for Unlicensed Personnel* training course. Information about [Medication Administration Training](#) is available on the DDA website.

Frontline Supervisor (FLS): An employee whose primary responsibility is the supervision of DSPs (as defined above). FLSs may occasionally perform direct support tasks, particularly while onboarding and training new DSP staff. Therefore, FLSs are required to meet the same training requirements as DSPs.

Manager: Staff whose primary responsibilities include supervising FLSs and overseeing and managing programs.

Pre-Service Training: Initial training that must be completed before working alone with a person supported. This training must be completed by DSPs providing services for the 1915(c), ECF CHOICES, and KB programs, as well as staff working in CLS/CLS-FM homes, within thirty (30) days from date of hire. Prior to completion of Pre-Service training, new DSPs must be accompanied by a fully trained staff person who assumes the responsibility for providing direct services while mentoring the new employee.

III. Training Requirements Specific to 1915(c) Waivers, ECF CHOICES, Katie Beckett, All CLS/CLS-FM Providers, and CHOICES Dual Program Providers

Onboarding: Newly hired DSPs shall complete onboarding training, including orientation, touring, training, coaching, shadowing, and mentoring, within the applicable timeframes outlined in this protocol. Each provider must have policies and procedures in place that reflect these requirements and how completion of requirements will be tracked.

1. **Agency-Specific Training:** This is to be completed in the first 30 days. This shall consist of, but is not limited to: Vision, Mission, organizational structure, customer service, policies, and tour of the facility(ies) to meet other staff and persons supported.
2. **Individual-Specific Training:** The variety of services provided can vary from agency to agency; however, person-centered thinking, planning, and practices are top priorities for all providers. Prior to working unsupervised, each DSP shall receive training on all services specific to each person they will support. Provider agencies must document completion of individual-specific training for each worker, using either an internal checklist (paper or electronic version) or within the Learning Management System (LMS) (Live Events> External Learning> Skills Checklists).
3. **Guidance for Provider's Onboarding Training Policies:** The provider's training policies shall meet the following requirements:
 - a. Describe how the agency-specific training will be conducted and how completion will be tracked. Agency Specific Training is to be completed in the first 30 days. This should consist of, but is not limited to: Vision, Mission, organizational structure, customer service, policies, tour of facilities to meet both other staff and people supported, etc.
 - b. Describe how the individual-specific training will be conducted and how completion will be tracked, including:
 - i. Training tailored to the needs and preferences of the individual served,
 - ii. Training on each service the person(s) supported receives,¹
 - iii. Information on settings requirements for each service type,
 - iv. Job shadowing (minimum of two (2) hours per service),

¹ Agencies may choose to train new hires on all services provided by the agency—in addition to services provided to the persons the DSP will be supporting—during the onboarding process.

- v. Ongoing mentoring,
 - vi. Detailed description of the skills checklist, including format (i.e., paper, LMS Live Event/Skills Checklist), and
 - vii. Information collected for credentialing and/or quality assurance (QA) purposes.
- c. Include the process for training a seasoned DSP when:
 - i. There are changes to the Person-Centered Support Plan (PCSP) for the person(s) they support,
 - ii. A DSP begins supporting a new person, and/or
 - iii. A DSP begins providing any new services.
 - d. DSPs shall receive training specific to the person(s) served from an experienced DSP, FLS, or manager.

Verification of compliance for onboarding training policy requirements will be conducted by the Department of Disability and Aging (DDA) during the credentialing and recredentialing process.

- 4. Pre- and Early Service Training Requirements:
 - a. Pre- and Early Service training requirements for DSPs and FLSs providing 1915(c), ECF CHOICES, and KB) services, as well as all CLS/CLS-FM providers (regardless of program) can be found in the [DSP and FLS Training Requirements](#) document on the DDA website. DSPs providing KB services must also complete additional required trainings, as outlined in Section IV below.
 - b. DSPs providing non-CLS/CLS-FM CHOICES services at a dual provider agency, as defined in Section II above, may utilize Pre- and Early Service trainings to meet CHOICES training requirements, as the topics are sufficiently aligned.

Verification that DSPs and FLSs described above have met Pre- and Early Service training requirements will be conducted by DDA during either the Quality Monitoring survey or provider recredentialing, based on the program(s) in which the provider is providing services. It should be noted that DDA verifies compliance with training requirements for 100% of new hires and a percentage of tenured employees during the review process.

IV. Training Requirements Specific to Standalone CHOICES Providers

Agencies providing services and supports to CHOICES members only must administer and document initial and ongoing training to its DSPs—also referred to as Direct Care Workers and/or Paid Caregivers—that includes, at a minimum:

- 1. Orientation to the population the staff will support (i.e., elderly and adults with physical disabilities),
- 2. Disability awareness and cultural competency training, including person-first language and etiquette when meeting and supporting a person with a disability; and

working with individuals who use alternative forms of communication or may rely on assistive devices/auxiliary aids for communication, including the below:

- i. Ethics and confidentiality training, including HIPAA and HI-TECH,
- ii. Delivering person-centered services and supports,
- iii. Federal HCBS setting requirements and the importance of the member's experience,
- iv. Supporting community integration and participation in the delivery of HCBS,
- v. Facilitating individual choice and control,
- vi. Working with individual family members and/or conservators, while respecting individual choice,
- vii. Introduction to behavioral health, including behavior support challenges or cognitive limitations (including Alzheimer's disease, dementia, etc.); understanding behavior as communication, potential causes of behavior, including physiological or environmental factors; and person-centered supports for individuals with challenging behaviors, including positive behavior supports,
- viii. The DSP's responsibility in promoting healthy lifestyle choices and in supporting self-management of chronic health conditions,
- ix. Abuse and neglect prevention, identification, and reporting,
- x. Reportable event management and reporting,
- xi. Documentation of service delivery,
- xii. Individual-specific training,
- xiii. Use of the Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) system, and
- xiv. Any other training requirements specified by TennCare in the State Rules, Contractor Risk Agreement, or in policies or protocols.

Verification that DSPs at standalone CHOICES providers have met the outlined training requirements will be conducted by the MCOs during the credentialing and recredentialing processes.

V. Additional Requirements for Katie Beckett Providers

All KB DSPs are required to complete the onboarding and Pre- and Early Service training requirements outlined in Section III above, in addition to the outlined training in the [Training for KB Service Providers](#) document on the DDA website. Verification that DSPs providing KB services have completed the outlined training requirements will be conducted by DDA during recredentialing.

VI. Additional Requirements for Employment Supports Providers

DSPs providing Employment Supports must meet the training requirements outlined in Sections III or IV above, as applicable to the HCBS program populations they are serving, in addition to the following:

1. Service specific trainings as outlined in the [Employment Services Staff Training Requirements for All HCBS Programs](#) document on the DDA website.
2. Verification that DSPs providing Employment Supports at CHOICES and/or ECF CHOICES providers have completed required trainings that will be conducted by the MCOs using a TennCare-approved process. The process should be consistent across MCOs and create the least possible administrative burden on the MCOs and the providers.
3. Verification that DSPs providing Employment Supports at 1915(c) standalone providers have completed required trainings will be conducted by DDA during annual Qualified Provider Reviews.

VII. Reportable Event Management Provider Investigator Training

Providers of specified services are required to have a Certified Provider Investigator to investigate Tier 2 Reportable Events.² The list of [Services Requiring a Provider Investigator and Exempt Providers](#) is available on the DDA website.

To become a Certified Provider Investigator, the staff must complete four consecutive days of training including:

1. A 3-day live webinar training developed by Labor Relations Alternatives (LRA), and facilitated by DDA,
2. Passing the LRA online exam, and
3. A half (½) day live webinar facilitated by DDA on conducting and documenting Reportable Event Management (REM) Tier 2 investigations.

[Provider Investigator Training Registration](#) can be completed on the DDA website.

Monitoring provider compliance with maintaining a Certified Provider Investigator will be conducted by the DDA Reportable Event Management team.

VIII. Resources

- A. [DDA Credentialing and Recredentialing](#)
- B. [DDA Provider Training Resources](#)

1. Sample checklist for "[Personal Training Profile](#)"

² The definition of Tier 2 Reportable Events can be found in the [Reportable Event Management Protocol](#) the DDA website.

2. [DSP and Caregiver Training Requirements](#)
3. [DDA CPR/First Aid](#)
- C. [DDA Reportable Event Management](#)
 1. [REM Help Desk Email](#)
- D. [DDA Relias Help Desk Email](#)
- E. [The DSP Workplace Toolkit](#)
- F. [DDA Medication Administration](#)
 1. [Medication Administration Training and Testing Calendars](#)

IX. References:

- A. [TennCare DDA 1915\(c\) Waivers](#): Appendix C-1 Provider Specifications for each service
- B. [TennCare Managed Care Contractor Risk Agreement \(CRA\)](#): A.2.18.6 Provider Education and Training; A.2.11.10 Credentialing and Other Certification
- C. [Interagency Agreement between TennCare and DDA](#): A.41 Training of Contractor Staff for Quality Assurance and Monitoring