



## DSW to LPN Certificate Program Program Participation Checklist

### Background

DDS is proud to sponsor the Direct Support Worker (DSW) to Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) Certificate Program, which is designed to support DSWs to advance in their careers by becoming LPNs.

For DSWs who have worked full time in good-standing (no disciplinary action) with DDS for 2 years, the program provides the opportunity to receive an LPN certificate -- fully funded by DDS up to \$18,000, while receiving paid educational leave. More information about the program is available at: [mass.gov/lists/dsw-to-lpn-certificate-program](https://mass.gov/lists/dsw-to-lpn-certificate-program).

### Program Participation Checklist

- ☐ Research pre-requisites for application to LPN Certification Program at participating educational institute of choice
- ☐ Complete pre-requisites, if necessary
- ☐ Apply to LPN Certification Program at participating educational institute of choice
- ☐ Receive acceptance into LPN Certification Program at educational institute of choice
- ☐ Complete DDS application for DSW to LPN Certificate Program with supporting documentation:
  - Attach copy of official Acceptance Letter from educational institute
  - Attach copy of [Verification of Acceptance](#)
- ☐ Submit Application and required documentation to your regional Human Resources Manager:
  - Central West: Dan Moriarty [Daniel.M.Moriarty@mass.gov](mailto:Daniel.M.Moriarty@mass.gov)
  - Southeast/Wrentham: Lindsey Williamson [Lindsey.K.Williamson@mass.gov](mailto:Lindsey.K.Williamson@mass.gov)
  - Northeast/Metro/Hogan:
    - Through 3/26/23, submit to: Cindy Fava [Cynthia.Fava@mass.gov](mailto:Cynthia.Fava@mass.gov)
    - 3/27/23 on, submit to: Diane DiGiovanni [Diane.M.Digiovanni@mass.gov](mailto:Diane.M.Digiovanni@mass.gov)
- ☐ Receive notification from Appointing Authority of acceptance/non-acceptance status
- ☐ Sign Agreement for participation in DSW to LPN Certificate Program
- ☐ Submit tuition and approved program expenses to your Program Director for payment to educational institute
- ☐ Submit the following documents to your Program Director:
  - Educational Institute's academic calendar
  - Class schedule by semester
  - Monthly attendance sheets signed by educators
  - Transcripts by semester

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

### 1. What is this DDS DSW to LPN Certificate Program?

The DDS DSW to LPN Certificate Program is being offered to DSWs who are interested in becoming a licensed practical nurse (LPN). DSWs who apply to and are accepted into one of 21 full-time 10-12 month long LPN certificate programs will be able to apply for the DDS DSW to LPN Certificate Program. If accepted, DDS will pay full salary and benefits and up to \$18,000 in tuition, fees and certain required educational expenses. In return, the DSW will work one 8 hour shift per week, work a full work week when the LPN program is not in session, and commit to working full-time for a minimum of 2 years with DDS as a licensed LPN.

### 2. Who is eligible for the Program?

DSWs currently working full-time with at least 2 years of full-time experience in the position. Additionally, applicants must have ratings of “Meets” or above on their EPRS for the previous 2 years and in good-standing (no disciplinary action) over the same period.

### 3. What is considered a full-time DSW?

A full-time DSW is someone who works 40 hours per week.

### 4. How do I apply for the Program?

You must apply to and be accepted into one of 21 full-time LPN certificate programs at community colleges and technical schools in the Commonwealth. You must then show verification of acceptance into a program and complete the application for the DDS DSW to LPN Certificate Program.

### 5. Where can I find more information about the Program?

Go to [mass.gov/lists/dsw-to-lpn-certificate-program](https://mass.gov/lists/dsw-to-lpn-certificate-program) to find all the information you need to apply for the program.

### 6. Why is DDS offering this program?

DDS’ mission is to serve individuals in the community. Many of these homes need licensed LPNs and we need more of them in order to meet our mission to be in the community. The best LPN for DDS is someone who knows our system and is committed to their care – and that is you. As a DSW, you are already part of our workforce and understand the individuals and their needs. You have demonstrated a commitment to the individuals, and we want to return that commitment to you with this opportunity.

### 7. Where am I able to go to school?

We have created a list of 21 Community Colleges and Technical Schools that offer a full-time 10-12 month long LPN certification program. This information can be found at [mass.gov/doc/dds-dsw-to-lpn-participating-programs-2023](https://mass.gov/doc/dds-dsw-to-lpn-participating-programs-2023).

### 8. How long are you going to offer this program?

This program has been in place in the past and we are excited to bring it back. We would like to enroll up to 25 staff this year and we anticipate having the need for this program into the near future. We will continue to evaluate our workforce and make this program available as long as there is a need and funding to support it.

**9. How many people can get admitted to the program?**

25 in total from 2023-2024 school year among the four regions. The need is great for LPNS, but it is also great for direct care workers. Thus, we expect to take a balanced approach.

**10. How will I continue working in my position while attending the LPN Certification Program?**

You will be given 32 hours of paid Educational Leave to attend the Program. You will be expected to work 8 hours in your DSW capacity and 40 hours per week when your educational program is not in session. You will be exempt from mandatory overtime while your classes are in session.

**11. How will you make decisions on who gets into the program?**

We are putting a team together in each region to make these decisions. These selection teams will prioritize interested candidates based on operational need (i.e. where the greatest need for LPNs is) and seniority.

**12. How is this going to be paid for?**

DDS is making a significant contribution to you, because of your contribution to us. To that end, we have created a system of paying the community college or technical school directly. All you have to worry about is applying, getting in, being accepted by us into the program and then focusing on your program.

**13. What will I have to pay?**

You are responsible for costs for prerequisites (see tuition remission benefits) and application costs. Once you are admitted to a program AND selected by us, we expect to pay most reasonable and expected costs of the program, such as books, uniforms, lab fees, etc. We will not pay for your transportation to and from college or any boarding costs.

**14. Will I have to pay taxes on the paid tuition by DDS?**

Yes, a portion of the education assistance program is considered taxable. Federal tax law allows employers to offer up to \$5,250 of tuition payments tax-free per calendar year per employee. This means any educational assistance received from DDS over \$5,250 will be included as income in your yearly tax filing. Please consult with a tax professional to determine your tax implications.

**15. What is my post program obligation to DDS?**

After completion of the LPN Certification Program and securing licensure, you will be obliged to work as an LPN for DDS for 2 years of full-time service.