



Direct Support Professional (DSP) Internship Program Informational Webinar FAQ

The DSP Internship Program is an up to three- month training and internship program that provides standardized, new direct care workforce entry-level training and practical work experience. This program will focus outreach efforts on populations that reflect California's diverse population and do not traditionally have a pathway towards jobs in the field of providing services to individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

This FAQ is designed to provide answers to the questions that were asked during the informational webinars held between October 13th-15th 2025.

For more information, please contact us at: workforce@dds.ca.gov

Program Overview

Q1. What is the main purpose of the DSP Internship Program?

A1. The DSP Internship Program (Program) is intended to enhance the quality of services received by individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) by increasing the hiring and retention of direct support professionals leading to career opportunities while providing them with the skills they need to deliver high-quality services.

Q2. Who funds the DSP Internship Program?

A2. The program is funded by the California Department of Developmental Services (Department).

Q3. What is the primary goal of a Direct Support Professional (DSP) and what types of services are provided by a DSP?

A3. DSPs provide care and support to individuals with developmental disabilities, helping them live independently and achieve their personal goals within community settings. Please refer to the DSP definition provided by the Department: [DSP Definition](#)

Q4. When will the internship program begin?

A4. The DSP Internship Program launched in August 2024.

Q5. Will the onboarding process conducted by All's Well meet Community Care Licensing (CCL) requirements?

A5. All's WELL is not a licensed facility; however, the onboarding process does meet CCL requirements.

Q6. What should a provider do if their service code is in the process of changing?

Q6. Service providers should update All's WELL of any changes in service codes.

Eligibility and Qualifications

Q7. What are the eligibility requirements for DSP Intern candidates?

A7. For an individual to be eligible for the DSP Internship Program, they must:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Have a high school diploma, General Educational Development (GED) equivalent, or a Certificate of Completion
- Have a valid Government-issued Identification Card
- Pass the background check and other required health screenings

Q8. Who qualifies as a service provider?

A8. A regional center vendor or agency that provides approved services under the Department's guidelines. To become a service provider, a regional center vendor or agency must:

- Be in good standing with the regional center and not subject to any sanction while participating in the Program.
- Execute and abide by all the DSP Provider Participation Agreements with All's WELL.
- Have a qualified DSP employee at all times willing to and capable of mentoring and supervising, an entry-level DSP Intern; and provide the DSP Intern with an orientation and task-oriented training.

Q9. Do applied behavior analysis (ABA) agencies or Early Start providers qualify for this program?

A9. Eligibility is reviewed by the Department, Regional Center and All's WELL. If a provider is interested in participating in the DSP Internship Program, providers can submit information through the Department's online portal at: [Direct Service Professional Internship Program Portal](#).

Q10. Is the internship only for individuals with no caregiving experience?

A10. The DSP Internship Program is an entry-level training and internship program for individuals interested in becoming a DSP.

Q11. Are licensed professionals such as physical therapists, occupational therapists, or speech-language pathologists included in this program?

A11. No. The DSP Internship Program is an entry-level training and internship program for individuals interested in becoming a DSP.

Q12. How about interns that we already employ, can they be enrolled into the program?

A12. The DSP Internship Program is for new direct care workforce that are entry-level. Current employees would not qualify as a DSP Intern.

Recruitment and Placement Process

Q13. What is the vetting process for DSPs?

A13. The following is included in the interview and vetting process:

- Interns undergo a multistep process, beginning with a review of the "A Day in the Life of a DSP" video, where interns may explore what it means to be a Direct Support Professional (DSP). This video provides valuable insights into the realities of the role.
- Following this, every potential intern undergoes a thorough interview conducted by a dedicated All's Well recruiter, ensuring alignment with the service provider's culture and the consumers they support.
- Upon completing these steps, interns proceed with the onboarding process to ensure compliance with volunteer guidelines before commencing their internship.

Q14. What is All's Well's recruitment process?

A14. The recruitment and training of DSP Interns conducted by All's WELL and the Department will focus on populations that reflect California's diverse population and specifically those who do not traditionally have a pathway towards jobs in the field of providing services to individuals with I/DD. All's WELL will work with the eligible service provider to collaboratively make the intern placement. Service providers will be actively engaged in the DSP Intern selection process. Providers may also recommend candidates to All's Well, who will then conduct the recruitment and placement process.

Q15. Will Providers have the opportunity to interview potential interns before placement?

A15. Yes. Providers may interview candidates before final placement to ensure alignment with their agency's needs.

Q16. Could Providers request a different intern if the initial placement is not a good fit?

A16. Yes. Providers should contact All's Well to discuss any concerns and provide feedback regarding the DSP Intern.

Q17. We require our staff to communicate in ASL, would you be able to match us with signing applicants?

A17. Yes, All's WELL will work with the eligible service provider to collaboratively make the intern placement. Service providers will be actively engaged in the DSP Intern selection process.

Q18. If providers have applicants that are not being considered for an open position, can they send/forward the resume's to AllsWell?

A18. Yes, providers can refer interested individuals requesting to participate in the Program to contact dspinterns@allswell.com

Program Operations and Responsibilities

Q19. Who is responsible for conducting new employee orientation?

A19. Alls WELL is responsible for providing required Department-approved training for DSP Interns prior to placement; however, providers are encouraged to review their own provider-specific trainings with the DSP Intern.

Q20. Can an intern be scheduled for other trainings during their "time worked" (example: CPR/FA training)?

A20. DSP Interns can complete other trainings required and are provider specific during their onboarding process. DSP Interns can log those hours and are paid for those hours by All's WELL.

Q21. Does DDS or All's Well pay for background checks and health screenings?

A21. All's WELL will recruit and interview potential DSP Interns, facilitate and pay for background checks, provide interactive trainings, and make recommendations for placement of DSP Interns with each service provider.

Q22. Are the interns completing CPR & First Aid with All's WELL?

A22. Interns do not complete CPR and First Aid training with All's WELL. All's Well has a specialized medical compliance team that ensures each intern meets essential requirements, including HCA Registration, Livescan fingerprinting, TB Test clearance, Education verification and Reference checks.

Q23. Will the fingerprinting process be tied to Guardian for licensed providers?

A23. Fingerprinting is processed through the [Guardian](#), for the licensed providers and the non-licensed providers.

Q24. Who covers worker's compensation insurance?

A24. All's WELL will maintain workers' compensation insurance for such DSP Intern during the DSP Internship program.

Q25. We require 6 months of experience before hiring on staff, due to licensing requirements, so in this case, will licensing allow interns to work for 6 months without the experience we usually require?

A25. The DSP Internship Program is a up to three- month training and internship program that provides standardized, new direct care workforce entry-level training and practical work experience. Provider specific licensing requirements are up to the provider to decide if the program is a good fit or not.

Internship Payroll and Stipends

Q26. What is the hourly rate for interns? Are there minimum or maximum number of hours per week for the internship?

A26. DSP Interns will receive the minimum wage based on the service provider's location. DSP Interns can be paid up to 30 hours per week for up to three months.

Q27. What are the Service Provider's responsibilities regarding paychecks and stipends?

A27. All's WELL will pay all wages due to the DSP Intern weekly and maintain workers' compensation insurance for such DSP Intern during the DSP Internship program. All's WELL shall pay DSP Interns who become permanent DSP employees with a regional center service provider a \$625 (before taxes) retention stipend after six months of continuous employment and another \$625 (before taxes) retention stipend after 12 months of continuous employment. All's WELL shall validate the continuous employment status with the regional center service provider prior to making payment.

Q28. Are interns paid by both All's Well and the Service Provider? Additionally, can service providers receive stipends or incentives to recruit, place and train interns?

A28. All's WELL serves as the employer of record and shall also handle payroll processing for the DSP Interns. However, when a DSP Intern is converted to or becomes a permanent DSP

employee, the Service Provider becomes the responsible party to pay their staff. At this time, there are no incentives or stipends paid to the facilitators.

Q29. How will payroll and timekeeping be managed?

A29. All's WELL serves as the employer of record and shall also handle payroll processing for the DSP Interns. However, when a DSP Intern is converted to or becomes a permanent DSP employee, the Service Provider becomes the responsible party to pay their staff. Providers must establish a procedure to review and approve DSP Intern timecards no later than Monday, 12:00PM. Timely approval is critical; failure to meet this deadline may result in delayed payment for the DSP Intern.

Q30. Who pays for the reimbursement of mileage? The provider or All's Well?

A30. All's Well will reimburse for mileage that is reported by the DSP Intern.

Program Duration and Hiring Outcomes

Q31. Can providers hire interns before the period ends?

A31. The DSP Internship Program is a up to three-month program. Service providers can hire interns as permanent employees anytime within the 3-month DSP Internship Program.

Q32. Can providers appoint multiple mentors so that they can get supervision in different shifts?

A32. Yes, this is up to the provider's discretion.

Q33. What happens if the provider chooses not to hire the intern?

A33. The internship may end after three months if the provider decides not to hire the intern. All's Well should be notified promptly.

Q34. If an intern joins toward the end of the initiative, will they still receive the full stipend?

A34. Interns are eligible for the stipend only after completing the required six or twelve months of continuous employment during the duration of the DSP Internship program.

Q35. Will interns be available on weekends?

A35. Yes, candidates can be available on the weekends. All's WELL will contact the interested service provider, survey their program needs, work together to execute the DSP Provider Participation Agreement and onboard the provider with the process for the DSP Intern submission of timecards, oversight and other programmatic procedures.

Intern Supervision and Duties

Q36. What are the expected responsibilities of the intern?

A36. The DSP interns will be learning high-quality DSP skills alongside a qualified DSP in a variety of settings performing a variety of functions while supporting an individual with intellectual or other developmental disabilities. Specific responsibilities will be discussed with provider.

Q37. What tasks are prohibited for interns?

A37. This is an entry-level internship opportunity. The following are tasks that a DSP intern cannot participate in and are but not limited to administration of medication and driving.

Q38. Do interns need to be always supervised?

A38. Yes. Providers must have a qualified DSP employee willing to and capable of mentoring and supervising, always, an entry-level DSP Intern.

Q39. Do the interns have to stay on site, or can they go out in the field in community-based services, such as Independent Living Skills?

A39. If the DSP Intern is accompanied by the qualified DSP employee and individual, the DSP intern can go out into the field.

Q40. Can interns drive clients or accompany them during community outings?

A40. Interns may not transport individuals. However, they may accompany DSP mentors during outings.

Q41. Do interns count toward required staffing ratios?

A41. No. DSP Interns are not allowed to be left alone with individuals, so the DSP Intern does not count toward mandated staffing ratios.

Other Trainings

Q42. Are interns required to complete DSP 1 & 2 certification before starting?

A42. No. DSP 1 & 2 certification is not required.

Q43. Does completing DSP 1 & 2 training before the program qualifies an intern for a stipend?

A43. No. Stipends are not tied to the DSP 1 & 2 certification. DSP 1 & 2 is a separate program. To learn more about the DSP 1 & 2 training visit [Direct Support Professional Training : CA Department of Developmental Services](#)

Q44. Is any dementia training provided?

A44. All's Well provides the following required training modules: We're here to speak for Justice, Child abuse and neglect, Workplace Violence Prevention Training, Sexual Harassment Training, Personal Protective Equipment and Safety Training. Providers should expect to provide site-based orientation, and on the job, site specific training.

Participation and Next Steps

Q45. How many interns can each provider have?

A45. Providers may host more than one intern, depending on the providers capacity and need.

Q46. What are the next steps if a provider is interested in participating?

A46. If providers are interested in participating in the DSP Internship Program providers can submit information through the Department's online portal at: [Direct Service Professional Internship Program Portal](#).

Q47. How soon can providers expect a response after signing up?

A47. Providers will typically receive follow-up communication from All's Well within a few business days of completing registration.

Q48. Are there enough interns for all interested vendors and/or are there plans to grow the program to meet demand

A48. All's WELL is continuing to work with the department to recruit interns and providers to meet program demands. Interested individuals requesting to participate in the Program may contact dspinterns@allswell.com. Interested providers can submit information through the Department's online portal at: [Direct Service Professional Internship Program Portal](#).