

Quick Facts

- People with disabilities and their families overwhelmingly **choose community settings** over institutional settings in which to live.
- Qualified, proficient direct support professionals are in **constant demand**.
- Community service providers are **willing to pay more** for a direct support professional who is already trained.



“There is a **critical need** for qualified professionals to support people with disabilities to live in a variety of community settings. As a statewide employer of Direct Support Professionals, I am very excited about the PATHS certificate program and believe the graduates will make **excellent employees**.”

— Nancy Newberry, *President and CEO*
American Habilitation Services



For More Information Or To Apply

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The PATHS Certificate Program is supported by a partnership with the Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University and the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services.

PATHS

Postsecondary Access and
Training in Human Services

Your path to
a successful
career as a


Direct Support

Professional

working with
people with
disabilities.



A certificate program
offered through the
Center on Disability
and Development
at Texas A&M.



Are you ready to get on the Path?
<http://paths.tamu.edu>

What Is A Direct Support Professional?

Direct Support Professionals support people with disabilities and older people to live in their homes, with their families, or in other community settings. A Direct Support Professional can be employed by a provider of community services, a family member, or a person with a disability who needs support and assistance. Direct Support Professionals play key roles in the lives of the people they serve and their families. Direct Support Professionals are instrumental in supporting a person to live a valued life in his or her community. As a part of their job, Direct Support Professionals may:

- Assist a person with mobility needs to complete everyday tasks
- Help a person to become active in community settings of their choice (for example: workplace, recreational activities and social functions)
- Assist a person in developing independent living skills (for example: shopping, acquiring transportation and preparing meals)
- Support more than one person with disabilities in a community home

What Is PATHS?

PATHS stands for Postsecondary Access and Training in Human Services. The PATHS Certificate Program prepares individuals for jobs as Direct Support Professionals. After completing two semesters at the Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University, participants earn a certificate that combines classroom instruction with practical career building experiences.

How Do I Earn A Certificate?

People who have a sincere career goal to support people with disabilities and older people in community settings should apply to be considered for admission to the PATHS Certificate Program. Successful candidates in the program will take one semester of required coursework. In the second semester, PATHS students will be placed in a paid, supervised practicum in a community setting to learn on-site, hands-on skills to prepare them to be Direct Support Professionals. PATHS instructors will provide a broad base of training based on professional experience.

What Can PATHS Graduates Expect?

PATHS graduates will be well equipped for immediate employment as a Direct Support Professional.