

## **Grant Request: Improving Mental Health Supports for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities Through Training and Cross-System Collaboration**

**Applicant:**

**Funding Request:** Up to \$10,000

**Project Period:** October 1, 2026-September 30, 2027

### **Project Summary**

Individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) experience mental health challenges at rates comparable to or higher than the general population, yet many frontline providers, caregivers, and community professionals report limited training on how mental health conditions present and are addressed in this population. As a result, individuals often experience delays in support, fragmented services, and avoidable crises.

This project seeks funding from the North Dakota Developmental Disabilities Council to increase knowledge, awareness, and collaboration among developmental disability providers, mental health professionals, caregivers, and community partners through evidence-informed training opportunities. Funding will support training access, regional learning opportunities, and development of a sustainable train-the-trainer model to expand knowledge throughout North Dakota.

### **Project Goals**

1. Increase the ability of frontline staff and caregivers to recognize and respond appropriately to mental health needs in individuals with developmental disabilities.
2. Improve collaboration between developmental disability services, mental health providers, schools, crisis systems, hospitals, law enforcement, and community agencies.
3. Build local capacity for ongoing training through a train-the-trainer approach.
4. Promote earlier identification, intervention, and support to reduce unnecessary crises and improve quality of life.

### **Proposed Activities**

#### **1. Evidence-Informed Training Access**

Provide access to existing training resources such as:

- National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (NADD) certification and training opportunities.
- Mental Health Wellness for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (MHW-IDD) self-paced online modules.
- Accessible Mental Health Care Training provided through OHSU/AUCD for mental health clinicians and community providers.

## **2. Regional Training Opportunities**

Host in-person training sessions in multiple regions across North Dakota to reach providers, families, and community partners. Sessions would focus on practical skills and real-world application for supporting individuals with developmental disabilities who experience mental health challenges.

## **3. Train-the-Trainer Development**

Identify and prepare agency leaders, clinical staff, and experienced professionals to become trainers within their organizations. This model will allow participating agencies to continue educating staff long after the grant period ends.

### **Training Topics**

#### **Frontline Staff Training**

Training for direct support professionals, provider managers, employment supports, and job coaches would include:

- Recognizing mental health symptoms in people with developmental disabilities.
- Understanding how anxiety, depression, trauma, psychosis, and mood disorders may present differently.
- Distinguishing behavior from communication, trauma responses, distress, or unmet needs.
- Effective de-escalation approaches for individuals who process information differently.
- Documentation practices that help clinicians identify patterns and needs.
- Knowing when and how to seek additional clinical support.

#### **Cross-System Collaboration Training**

Training for mental health providers, developmental disability providers, schools, transition teams, hospitals, crisis teams, law enforcement, case managers, and community agencies would include:

- Developing shared language across systems.
- Understanding referral pathways and available resources.
- Using warm handoffs and coordinated transitions.
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities of each system.
- Avoiding diagnostic overshadowing.
- Including individuals and families in planning and decision-making.
- Crisis response planning and coordinated support strategies.
- Building practical person-centered collaboration.

#### **Family and Caregiver Education**

Training opportunities for parents, family members, and caregivers would include:

- Recognizing signs of mental health challenges in adults with developmental disabilities.
- Communicating concerns effectively with providers.
- Tracking behavior and symptom patterns in a supportive, non-blaming manner.
- Preparing for therapy, counseling, and psychiatric appointments.
- Responding when an individual does not recognize their need for support.

- Developing proactive crisis plans.
- Supporting autonomy while maintaining safety.

### Expected Outcomes

By the end of the project:

- Providers and caregivers will report increased confidence in recognizing and responding to mental health concerns.
- Community partners will have a greater understanding of how developmental disabilities and mental health intersect.
- Participating agencies will have trained staff capable of providing ongoing internal training.
- Stronger partnerships and referral pathways will exist between developmental disability and mental health systems.
- Individuals with developmental disabilities and their families will have improved access to coordinated and effective supports.

### Budget Request Example (Up to \$10,000)

| Activity                                                     | Amount          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Training registration/licenses and educational materials     | \$3,500         |
| Regional training meeting costs (facility, travel, supplies) | \$3,000         |
| Train-the-trainer development and resources                  | \$2,000         |
| Family/caregiver outreach and educational materials          | \$1,000         |
| Project coordination and evaluation                          | \$500           |
| <b>Total Request</b>                                         | <b>\$10,000</b> |

### Match Contribution

The applicant will provide a 30% in-kind match to support project implementation. Based on a grant request of \$10,000, the organization will contribute approximately \$3,000 in in-kind resources through staff time, planning and coordination activities, trainer preparation, outreach efforts, facility use, administrative support, and volunteer participation.

### Sustainability

The project will emphasize a train-the-trainer approach and utilize established evidence-informed training resources. By developing local trainers and strengthening relationships among agencies and systems, the benefits of the project will continue beyond the grant period and help build long-term capacity across North Dakota.

This project aligns with the DD Council's mission of increasing independence, inclusion, community participation, and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities by strengthening the capacity of those who support them.

### **Proposal Submission Instructions**

Interested applicants should submit a completed proposal outlining their proposed activities, timeline, budget, anticipated outcomes, and any required matching contributions.

Proposals must be submitted electronically via email to:

**Julie Horntvedt**

**Email:** jhorntvedt@nd.gov

Please include "Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Training Proposal" in the subject line of the email.

Applications should clearly describe how the proposed project will improve mental health awareness, support, and cross-system collaboration for individuals with developmental disabilities in North Dakota.

Applicants should also identify how they will provide the required **30% in-kind match**.