



## Department of Developmental Disabilities

Mike DeWine, Governor  
Jeff Davis, Director

### Temporary Waiver of High School Diploma/ GED Requirements for Direct Support Professionals

Employers throughout Ohio are facing an unprecedented workforce crisis. Agency providers and residential facilities certified or licensed by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities are no exception. Without intervention, the workforce crisis will jeopardize the health and safety of some of Ohio's most vulnerable individuals, those with developmental disabilities, who depend on services and supports from agency providers or licensed residential facilities. In response, the Department is testing solutions to determine their long-term effectiveness. The Department's goal is to supplement the workforce with talented individuals who may not meet the formal education requirements in rule but are otherwise well-qualified to provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities. One such requirement is that all direct support professionals have a high school diploma or certificate of high school equivalence ("GED").

The agency provider certification rule, Ohio Adm. Code 5123-2-08, and the licensed residential facility rule, Ohio Adm. Code 5123:2-3-01, require that all direct support professionals have a high school diploma or GED. The department can waive provisions of both rules for good cause. See Ohio Adm. Code 5123-2-08(T) and 5123-3-10(C).

For good cause shown, Ohio Adm. Code 5123-2-08(J)(1)(b) and Ohio Adm. Code 5123:2-3-01(F)(1)(c) are waived **effective September 17, 2021, through September 30, 2022**. During that time, agency providers and licensed facilities are permitted to hire direct support professionals without a high school diploma or GED. The agency or licensed facility must confirm the direct support professional meets all other qualifications and must continue to ensure individuals with developmental disabilities receive quality services provided by capable staff. Direct support professionals hired during this time without a high school diploma or GED will be permitted to work for the same agency after the waiver period if they maintain continuous employment with that agency and comply with all other applicable statutes and rules.

Rendered this 17th day of September 2021.

Jeff Davis, Director