

Maryland Technical Assistance Project

FREE Hybrid Online ACRE Employment Specialist Certificate Training

The Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston is now offering the College of Employment Services certificate training in Maryland. This ACRE (Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators) approved training is limited to 30 employment support professionals who are providing employment services to individuals with disabilities. Eligible individuals for this training are working with individuals who are funded by Maryland DDA.

ACRE training is based on the APSE national competencies for employment providers. The APSE competencies set the standards for best practice in all areas of employment for individuals with disabilities and emphasize the Employment First philosophy for everyone.

Who: Employment Support Professionals

What: A FREE hybrid on demand and online curriculum leading to ACRE certification

When: June 2 – September 30, 2025

The training was developed and is facilitated by staff from the Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston. It is a hybrid on demand and online curriculum leading to ACRE certification. It consists of:

- On demand access to 40 hours of the College of Employment Services curriculum
- 4 scheduled virtual Learning Community meetings
- Field assignments demonstrating, knowledge, skill, and awareness of employment services competencies.
- Up to two 1:1 personal coaching sessions to support implementation of strategies
- Virtual on demand support

Join us for this instructor-supported online training. The training combines flexibility in completing course content with online in-person opportunities to connect with fellow learners and project staff. The lessons and fieldwork are available online 24/7 and there is no traveling required. Log in and complete the work at your convenience.

Instructors are available during the training to answer any of your questions and support you in completing the required work. We provide ample time to complete all the required lessons and the fieldwork assignments. Learners can view the lessons at the pace and time that is convenient for them without any interruption to their work demands.

The National ACRE certificate will be sent upon successful completion of the lessons, fieldwork assignments and attendance at Learning Community sessions.

REGISTRATION

Go to https://umassboston.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6yZxcqe21Kdglym to complete the registration request form for this training.

Any accommodation requests must be made at least three weeks prior to the start of the training. We will then follow up with you to get your enrollment onto the College of Employment Services completed.



Required virtual learning community sessions (on zoom):

- **Training Overview and Orientation** and introduction to the College of Employment Services online training platform. **June 3, 10-11am**
- **Topical discussion:** Getting to know your job seeker and using a 30-day placement plan. **July 15, 10-11am**
- **Topical discussion:** Identifying and connecting with employers. **August 12, 10-11am**
- **Wrap up and Feedback:** Final questions and review of best practices. **October 7, 10-11am**

Field work

Field work should be completed as part of your daily work and addresses practical application of course content including career planning, informational interviewing, employer outreach, and job support.

FAQs

What content is covered during the training?

1. Foundations of Employment Services
2. Principles of Career Development
3. Strategies for Job Development: Part 1
4. Strategies for Job Development: Part 2
5. Business Perspectives
6. Performance Coaching and Support
7. Using Work Incentives Toward Self-Sufficiency
8. Funding
9. Ticket to Work
10. Networking
11. Job Creation

What is ACRE Certification?

It is a nationally recognized certificate in employment services for people with disabilities. It is competency-based training designed for professionals in the field of employment services to provide education and skills in the best practices to support individuals in planning for, finding and maintaining individualized competitive employment. To learn more about the ACRE Certificate go to www.acreeducators.org

Why is it important?

The ACRE Certificate is based on the APSE national competencies for employment providers. These set the standards for best practice in all areas of employment for individuals with disabilities and emphasizes Employment First and informed choice. The ACRE certificate ensures that professionals in the field have all the necessary knowledge, skills and tools needed to provide high quality services to the individuals they serve.

How does this training differ from existing ACRE trainings offered through the provider network?

Completion of existing ACRE endorsed training and this course both provide you with an ACRE certificate of completion but;

- This course is based on online learning modules provided through the [DirectCourse College of Employment Services](#). The learning modules are self-paced and completed on your own schedule. Learning community sessions are provided remotely.



- This ACRE approved training focuses on supported employment best practices and provides learners with tools, strategies, and research-based best practices to provide quality person-centered services to individuals with an array of abilities, skills, education, and interests. You will learn how to implement strategies that ensure an individualized, person-centered approach to services for everyone you serve.

While they cover similar material and both address APSE competencies, the provider network training specifically focuses on customized employment

What is the cost to me and my organization?

There will be no direct cost to your organization. Maryland DDA provides access to the College of Employment Services. Field work and learning support are provided by the Maryland Technical Assistance Project.

What do I need to do to complete the field work?

You will need access to a job seeker, employer, and jobsite where an individual is working. You will need to complete a variety of assignments including discussion forums, case studies and community-based assignments. The community-based assignments include completing a career planning meeting with a job seeker, organizing, and attending an informational interview with an employer, conducting a workplace culture survey at a job site and other hands-on activities.

Does this qualify me to provide employment services in Maryland?

The course prepares employment support professionals to qualify as a Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) as detailed in the DDA Meaningful Day Training Policy. Becoming a CESP requires taking a national exam in addition to completing training.

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For more information

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