



## **QDDP/QMRP Certification Program**

**for Qualified Developmental Disability Professionals**

### **Program Overview**

In response to many inquiries regarding training and qualifications from around the country, the National Association of QDDPs (NAQ) has embarked on a ground-breaking project to develop national standards to define and shape the role of Qualified Developmental Disabilities Professionals (QDDPs), also known as Qualified Mental Retardation Professionals or case managers. Individuals, organizations, accrediting bodies, and state regulatory agencies are interested in training that can be applied in a wide variety of work environments and equip QDDPs with a strong understanding of developmental disabilities and methods of working with people who may have varied personal goals, disability-related needs, vocational aspirations, and living arrangements. Historically, guidelines from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) require only that QDDPs have a degree in a human service field and one year experience, and many states have no additional training requirements beyond this minimal federal standard.

### **History**

As an organization representing QDDPs from across the nation, the NAQ embarked on a partnership with the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities at Minot State University to develop training that would provide a well-rounded understanding of best practices in the field with a strong ethical component and in a competency-based format. NAQ developed the course content based on Minot State University's training curriculum for QDDPs of developmental disability organizations throughout the state of North Dakota. In order to reach as many interested persons as possible, the program has been designed as an on-line certification.

NAQ QDDP Certification was being beta-tested with participants from across the country, who work in different programs and settings, including ICFs/MR and waiver programs, among others. Their feedback was used to adjust course content, streamline the application process, and test the procedures for evaluating portfolios.

## **Qualifications for the Program**

- Meet the federal definition of QMRP in Federal guidelines CFR§483.430(a)-(b).
- Have at least two years of qualifying experience. Those who have at least one year of experience working as a QDDP/QMRP or who worked in a similar professional position may enroll in the program at any time. It should be noted that a student may be working towards the second year of required professional experience while enrolled in the program. Certification will not be awarded until the experience requirement is met.
- Become a member of NAQ.

## **Applying for the Program**

- Submit a complete application, application essays, resume and fees (as specified in the NAQ application).
- Submit professional references verifying experience and professional conduct consistent with the NAQ Code of Ethics.
- Acquire official transcripts from all higher education institutions and submit them to NAQ.
- Undergo a criminal background that demonstrates the absence of a history of criminal, civil, or professional sanctions for conduct detrimental to vulnerable persons or populations.

Qualified applicants can obtain an application at [www.qddp.org](http://www.qddp.org) and submit it by mail or electronically.

## **The Certification Process**

First, qualified applicants complete the application process and pay an initial application fee. Once admitted to the program, certification candidates begin coursework and pay the remainder of the fee. All testing is done on-line. After passing all the required core and elective courses, candidates assemble and submit their portfolios, including case studies, which are reviewed by NAQ representatives. Following acceptance of portfolios, successful candidates receive a certificate of completion from the NAQ.

## **Curriculum**

Professionals applying for certification as a QDDP/QMRP complete seven “core” training units and three electives. Each course includes objectives, lessons, and feedback questions and answers. Most courses are entirely self-paced. The CORE training elements required of all candidates are:

- Supporting Individuals with Disabilities in Community Settings
- Person Centered Planning
- Working with Families
- Achieving Personal Outcomes – Implementing the Person Centered Plan
- Guidelines for QDDPs/QMRPs
- Designing and Implementing Behavior Positive Behavioral Supports
- Preventing Abuse and Neglect of Persons with Developmental Disabilities (this course must be taken within a specified time frame and is the only instructor-led course)

In addition to the core curriculum, candidates choose three electives for certification from the. ELECTIVE training elements include:

- Aging and Developmental Disabilities
- Rearranging Lives After Alzheimer’s Disease
- Seizure Disorders
- Positioning, Turning, and Transferring
- Nutrition and Wellness for Persons with Developmental Disabilities
- Leadership Roles in Human Service Agencies
- Community Education and Public Relations
- Job Coach Training
- Sexuality and Developmental Disabilities
- Assisting People with Traumatic Brain Injury and their Families.
- Supporting Individuals with DD and History of Sexual Offense

Curriculum content for each training topic includes objectives, lesson pages, feedback questions, and feedback answers. Competence is assessed with online exam(s) and assignments. Applicants will be scheduled to complete the 8 week Prevention of Abuse and Neglect module with other participants. Training for all other units is self-paced within the nine month deadline for completion of all certification components.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

*Why should I get certified?*

Although the federal government does not require QDDPs to be certified at this time, potential employers may view certification as a sign of advanced knowledge in the field. The NAQ Certification Program represents best practices, and signifies to employers that you have taken the time to equip yourself with the most current skills available.

*How much does it cost?*

NAQ certification is available for a reasonable total cost of \$950.00. Some employers may be willing to assist you with payment under tuition reimbursement programs, subject to availability of funds and company policies.

*Who is the NAQ?*

The National Association of QDDPs was formed in 1996 by Trinity Services, Inc. staff as the result of a recognized need by QMRPs - Qualified Mental Retardation Professionals/QDDPs – Qualified Developmental Disability Professionals (also known Case Managers) to establish a strong resource for research, networking, and addressing issues that concern QDDPs today. Although there were a few states that had formed groups by and for QDDPs, the need to form an organization that would address the historical, conceptual, methodological and ethical issues confronting the QDDP today on a national level was evident. The National Conference of QDDPs provides a forum to share information pertinent to the diverse interests of QDDPs.

The goals of the organization are to: promote an outcome-based approach to service delivery and the provision of supports for people with disabilities; provide training in best and promising practices; disseminate relevant information, including research findings, through its newsletter and

annual conference; engage in advocacy in the public interest; and make public statements consistent with its purposes.

*How long is the certification period?*

As a relatively new program, QDDP certification guidelines have not yet been fully developed. At this time, certification is valid for a minimum of five years. The NAQ reserves the right to modify the certification period for future certification candidates at any time, as long as candidates are aware of the renewal requirements at the time of payment.

*Are Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) required to maintain certification?*

In response to demand from members, the NAQ is working to finalize guidelines for CEU credits, which will be required in the future. Expectations will be similar to those maintained by other professions.

*How can I find out more about QDDP certification?*

You can view more information on the NAQ website, at [www.qddp.org](http://www.qddp.org), or contact the NAQ by phone at 815-485-4781.