

Research shows that when people with disabilities live independently and are fully included in communities, with proper supports in place, they are happier and healthier.

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) play a critical role in sustaining the independence of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD). However, with significant challenges to recruiting and an average turnover rate of 45%, demand for DSPs far exceeds supply, and many people are unable to obtain all of the services they need.

There are multiple reasons for the difficulties in attracting and retaining DSPs. These include the rising need for services creating competition for workers, shifts in the types of services needed, low wages, lack of benefits, and lack of training and promotion opportunities.

To tackle these and other issues, ACL launched the *Blazing New Trails for Community-Based Direct Support Professionals* prize competition. The challenge sought solvers to develop and pilot models that will transform the DSP workforce, and improve the quality and stability of home- and community-based services, and improve outcomes for individuals with ID/DD.

Five first-round winners were selected in May 2021 to proceed to small-scale testing of their models. In August, three finalists will be chosen to compete for the final prize.



*It is my hope the training modules will foster dialogue between providers and individuals, as well as encourage higher expectations for people with disabilities in employment, community living, access to services, and overall, inclusion of people with disabilities in their own planning for their future.*

**Able South Carolina**



## CHALLENGE PHASES

### ROUND 1

Proposal of Innovative Models:  
Five (5) teams awarded a total of

**\$100,000**

### ROUND 2

Small-Scale Testing of Models:  
Three (3) teams will be awarded a total of

**\$90,000**

### ROUND 3

Promise of Sustainability  
One (1) team will be awarded

**\$120,000**

## ROUND 1 Winners:

Able South Carolina • Collaborative for Citizen Directed Supports- NJ

National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals, Inc • RCM of Washington, Inc. • SEEC