Where Do I Receive Education and Training?

Currently, the education to become a direct care professional can be obtained in a number of locations and the hours required may vary depending upon where you work:

Community Colleges: Community Colleges are located throughout the state and often work in partnership with local employers to provide both classroom instruction and clinical practices at local hospitals, nursing homes, and other provider settings. Contact your local community college or go to http://www.iacct.com/Pages/colleges.aspx to learn where the nearest community college is located.

Hospitals: Some hospitals provide educational programs for direct care professionals and also partner with local state universities, private colleges, community colleges, and others.

High Schools: Some high schools offer Certified Nursing Assistant training with credits that will transfer to community college or university.

Employers: Some employers provide education for the direct care professionals they employ.

Education may be available in a number of formats ranging from classroom, online, on the job, or a combination of all.
Thinking About A Career In Caring?
Those entering the field of direct care may be considering:
- First Time Employment
- A Career Change
- More Rewarding Work
- A Career Pathway
- A Return to the Workforce

Is Direct Care Right For You?
While direct care is not for everyone...many who have chosen the field say it is “The Toughest Job You’ll Ever Love.” Becoming a Direct Care Professional may be for you if you can answer yes to these questions:
- Are you seeking a career with a meaningful purpose that makes a positive difference in someone’s life?
- Does it bring you satisfaction to help guide others to a higher level of independence?
- Do you like a challenge?
- Do you like to be “kept on your toes”?
- Do you enjoy being busy?
- Do you enjoy building meaningful connections with others?

Direct Care As An Occupation
Those who work in direct care make up the largest occupational group in Iowa. They are also high demand jobs and new efforts are helping to provide more opportunities for advancement within the field. The demand for these jobs is growing due to an increase in our aging population and persons with disabilities and their desire for more in-home care and support options. Delete “for persons with disabilities and those who are aging.

Where Do Direct Care Professionals Work?
- Homes of consumers or clients
- Group Homes
- Adult Day Centers
- Assisted Living Facilities
- Residential Facilities
- Hospitals
- Nursing Homes
- Nonmedical Senior Service Agencies
- Hospices

Who Do Direct Care Professionals Serve?
- Children and adults with disabilities that they were either born with or acquired through an accident, stroke, or brain injury.
- Individuals with Alzheimer’s disease or other dementia.
- Those recovering from short term illness or surgery
- Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, head trauma or loss of limbs.
- Individuals during the end of life.
- Aging adults no longer able to care for themselves.
In addition, direct care professionals serve as vital partners in caring with the families of those served.

I can’t imagine our lives without direct care workers.
— Jim Pender Family

What Do Direct Care Professionals Do?
Direct Care Professionals provide most of the direct hands on care and support for Iowans of all ages and in all settings. Those responsibilities, depending upon what area you are working in, may include:
- Assisting with activities of daily living such as:
  - Eating
  - Dressing
  - Bathing
  - Walking
  - Rehabilitation and exercising
  - Cooking
  - Job and independent living coaching
  - Using the Toilet
  - Monitoring Medications
  - Monitoring vital signs such as blood pressure, pulse, temperature
  - Monitoring wound care
  - Managing behaviors
  - Transporting which comes in many forms (wheelchair, van, etc.)

Direct Care Professionals Are Currently Known By a Number of Different Titles
Job titles are often linked to the place of employment or type of care or support setting:
- Home Care or Health Aides
- Consumer Directed Attendant Care Worker
- Direct Support Professional
- Certified Nursing Assistant
- Rehabilitation or Restorative Aide
- Hospice Aide
- Medication Aide
- Behavior Specialist
- Patient Care Technician
- Universal Worker
- Adult Day Service Worker

Made Possible Through A Partnership Between Iowa Department of Public Health, Upper Midwest Public Health Training Center, and Iowa CareGivers Association.

Funded by the US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resource Service Administration Grant #s T82HP21505 and UB6HP22826, and the Iowa Department of Public Health Contract #5882NW23.