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Department of Developmental Services and District 1199 Partner Together for Development of New Training Academy

The first Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Training Academy for Family Support classes has been scheduled to begin during the first week in April. Under an agreement with DDS and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) District 1199, a pilot Training Academy was approved to provide 35 union members an opportunity to learn new skills, enhance their current skills and to better understand the goals of providing individual and family supports.

“As our service system moves from institutional and group homes settings to person-centered services, we wanted to find a means to use the staff’s years of experience in a new way,” said Commissioner Terrence W. Macy, Ph.D. “I had two goals for the Academy. The first was to give DDS staff the skills they will need to be a vibrant part of our future array of community based services and the second, to give families effective staff resources who will meet their everyday needs.”

The Academy’s program will provide training for those who currently work in larger residential settings. As DDS reduces its census in those settings, employees will have new opportunities in the department’s Individual and Family Support Division. The 56-hour course will focus on being partners in change, principals of supporting families, human rights, community safety, and communication and computer skills. Its goal is to successfully provide employees with the necessary skills to support individuals in their own homes and their family homes. Current DDS staff who are members of the NP-6 bargaining unit and who meet the qualifications for the Supported Living Worker job classification are eligible to apply for participation in the Academy. Southbury Training School employees will be given first preference for 25 of the 35 slots, and the eligible participants will be selected based on the same criteria used to award lateral transfers and promotions. More information and an application form are available on job posting bulletin boards.

“Developing the Academy has been extremely positive,” continued Commissioner Macy. “The department is able to retain the years of experience that our direct care employees offer and at the same time employees are receiving enhanced training that will give them more employment opportunities.”

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