

DSP Microcredential Program Recognizes Twelve Lexington Employees



During a special recognition ceremony held Thursday, January 8, The Arc Lexington was joined by OPWDD, state and local officials and members of the community to honor 12 DSPs who recently graduated the program and received their certification. These individuals represent the continued growth and success of the program at The Arc Lexington where more than 50 employees have now earned national certification, including 14 who have completed all three courses.

Those recognized at the ceremony included:
Lina Alikhan, Kaitlyn Burkart, Emily Canary, Mary Cherry, Sierra Diamond, Sophia Hayes, Samantha Rowley, Teshia Shults, Aislynn Kearns, Athena Groves, Ashley Lobdell, and Harold Florez.

“These accomplishments reflect the heart of our mission and the strength of our workforce,” Shaloni said.

“Our Direct Support Professionals are choosing to invest in their growth while continuing to provide compassionate, high-quality support every day. Having more than 50 nationally certified employees demonstrates our organization’s commitment to excellence and to ensuring the people we support receive the very best care possible.”

“We are grateful to FMCC and OPWDD for their continued partnership in making this opportunity available,” she added.

Participants in this program, get **free tuition and academic supplies** and **earn up to \$2250** in stipends upon successful completion.

To learn more or to sign up, please contact **Courtney Mickels** at (518)775-5422 or email her at mickelc@thearclexington.org.



SPOTLIGHT *on* BENEFITS

Be a Smart Healthcare Shopper Small Choices. Big Savings — for you and for Lexington

Healthcare can be confusing and expensive — but knowing how our plan works can help you **save money, avoid surprise bills**, and get the care you need when you need it. Here's how to make smart healthcare choices and get the most value from your Lexington health plan.

Free 24/7 Care with United Concierge Medical

For many non-emergency needs, **UCM Telemedicine** can save you time and money.

- Available **24/7/365 at no cost**
- Diagnose and treat common conditions like colds, rashes, UTIs, ear infections, pink eye, and more
- Can order labs, X-rays, referrals, and prescriptions
- Communicates with your Primary Care Physician

Call **1-844-4-VIP-DOC (1-844-484-7362)**

Save on Labs, Imaging & Outpatient Care

Choosing the **right location** matters.

\$0 Out-of-Pocket Options

- CDPHP Preferred Provider Network (PPN)
- **St. Mary's Healthcare** for many outpatient services, including:
 - *Labs & diagnostic testing
 - *Imaging (CT, MRI, PET)
 - *Outpatient surgery (facility fees)
 - *OT/PT/Speech therapy (limited visits)

Ask your provider for a prescription and choose a **preferred site** using findadoc.cdphp.com

ER vs. Urgent Care vs. Telemedicine

You could spend more money — **or you could choose wisely:**

- **Emergency Room:** \$750 deductible + \$125 copay
- **Urgent Care:** \$750 deductible + \$50 copay
- **Telemedicine (UCM): \$0**

Use the ER for true emergencies only. Telemedicine is often the smartest first step.

Save Big on Prescriptions

- Ask for **generic medications** whenever possible
- Fill **90-day maintenance medications** at participating pharmacies or via mail order
- **Rx for Less Program:** Generics for as little as a **penny a pill** at many local and chain pharmacies (*CVS does not participate*)

Download the **ConnectRx, On-the-Go App** to:

- Compare prescription prices
- Request lower-cost alternatives
- Switch pharmacies easily

Pay Less by Paying Pre-Tax (Medical FSA)

A **Medical Flexible Spending Account (MFSA)** lets you set aside money **before taxes** to pay for:

- Deductibles and copays
- Prescriptions
- Dental and vision care

2026 Maximum Contribution: \$3,400

Up to **\$680** can roll over to the next year (pending IRS approval)

✓ *Tip: Always save receipts and submit claims promptly to avoid account issues.*

Smart Healthcare Shopping Checklist

- ✓ Have a Primary Care Physician and get preventive care
- ✓ Use Telemedicine before urgent care or ER visits
- ✓ Choose preferred labs, imaging, and outpatient facilities
- ✓ Use Rx for Less and generic medications
- ✓ Compare costs using CDPHP tools
- ✓ Consider contributing to a Medical FSA

Smart Choices = Lower Costs

Questions? Human Resources, NFP, and CDPHP are here to help.

Well-Being: The Foundation of Safety at Work — and a Better Life



When we think about workplace safety, we often think about policies, procedures, and protective equipment. While those are important, there's one powerful safety tool you bring with you every day: **your well-being**. Taking care of your physical, mental, and emotional health helps you stay alert, focused, and aware. When you're well-rested, nourished, and hydrated, you're more likely to notice potential hazards, react quickly, and make safe choices. Fatigue, stress, and distraction can make it harder to slow down and see risks before they turn into incidents.

Mental and emotional well-being matter just as much. High stress or anxiety can cause people to rush, skip steps, or hesitate to speak up when something doesn't feel right. Managing stress—by taking breaks, asking for support, or using available wellness resources—helps create the calm, clarity, and confidence needed to work safely and communicate openly.

Focusing on well-being also strengthens our **culture of safety**. When you care for yourself, you set a positive example for others. Simple actions like checking in on a coworker, speaking up about a concern, or helping

someone navigate an unfamiliar space are rooted in awareness and care. These everyday moments protect not only you, but your coworkers and the people we support.

The benefits don't stop at the end of the workday. The habits that help keep you safe at work—mindfulness, situational awareness, healthy routines, and stress management—carry over into daily life. They support safer driving, stronger relationships, and more thoughtful responses to life's challenges.

Well-being isn't about perfection. It's about intention and knowing when to slow down, when to rest, and when to ask for help. Taking care of yourself isn't a weakness; it's a strength that helps you perform at your best and stay safe.

Throughout the year, we'll be sharing wellness resources and tips to support you on your well-being journey. If there's a topic you're interested in or you're not sure where to start, we're here to help.

Questions or ideas?

Please feel free to reach out to **Michelle Peryea**, Safety & Wellness Coordinator, at **518-775-5420**.

Important Notice— Mileage Rate Update

The IRS **has increased** the standard mileage rate **effective January 1, 2026 to 72.5 cents per mile**. Lexington will be increasing the amount of mileage reimbursement to match the IRS rate for 2026.

If you have incurred any travel expenses in 2025 for which you will be seeking mileage reimbursement, please use the current forms and rate of 70.0 cents per mile for any mileage incurred. **Please submit your 2025 reimbursement request as soon**

as possible.

Beginning January 1, 2026, please utilize the link to access a mileage reimbursement form with the new rate of 72.5 cents per mile. This [form](#) can also be found on the RKXchange.

Requests for reimbursement must be made within 90 days of the travel date.

For assistance with any Human Resources related matter or information, contact a member of the Human Resources team at:
<https://bit.ly/LexingtonHRContacts>

This newsletter will be archived at the following link: <https://thearclexington.org/hr-updates>
Managers, please post and distribute to all employees.

LEXINGTON EMPLOYEE MILESTONES

Congratulations and thank you to the following employees celebrating milestones in November through January.

40 Years

Scott Chirichio, Transportation, January 22

35 Years

Patricia Crozier, Residential, November 5
Kathleen Kane, Medical, December 3
Lisa Link, Residential, January 7
Edmund Lynch, Residential, January 7
Elizabeth Petkovsek, Residential, December 3

30 Years

Larry Addams, Administration, November 27
Brian Elwood, Residential, December 4
Helen Mott, Recreation, December 27

25 Years

Nikki Gordon, Day Habilitation, December 14

20 Years

Debbie Erway, Administration, January 30
Amanda Handy, Residential, December 16
Nicole Mesick, Residential, January 4
Michelle Ortlieb, Medical, November 19

15 Years

Tonia Mitchell, Residential, November 1
Kamolkan Renner, Residential, November 29

10 Years

Marsha Graham, Residential, November 20
Susan Karas, Residential, November 2
Selena Montalvo, Residential, November 16
Sarah Rode, Residential, December 26
Alexandra Woods, Residential, December 5

5 Years

Kaylee Atkins, Residential, November 12
Shaelyn Baird, Residential, December 9
Mariama Balde, Residential, January 4
Roni Clemons, Residential, December 30
Victoria Cruthers, Day Habilitation, December 30
Katelyn Darmetko, Residential, December 30

5 Years (continued)

Shyann Diamond, Residential, January 4
Stacey Dillenbeck, Residential, December 23
Rashona Farmer, Residential, December 16
Hannah Kincheloe, Residential, December 28
Nicole Krawcxzeski, Clinical, November 14
Rachael Lamphere, Residential, December 28
Rebekah Wildman, Medical, January 19

1 Year

Hannah Banovic, Residential, November 25
Ashley Bevington, Residential, November 25
Abbey Bozek, Residential, November 25
William Brown, Maintenance, January 27
Christopher Brownell, Residential, November 25
Ashely Cook, Residential, January 13
Bella Mamadou Diallo, Residential, January 21
Alison Farron, Residential, January 13
Michele Hamm, Residential, January 9
Gabriel Hughes, Residential, December 4
Ashley Johns, Residential, November 25
Bill Johnson, Employment, December 9
Lisa Jurcsak, Day Habilitation, December 30
Ainslyn Kearns, Residential, November 25
John Lee, Transportation, November 25
Teegan Lawrence, Residential, November 25
Zoey Leonard, Residential, January 27
Franceil Paulino, Residential, January 21
Gabriella Pettit, Residential, January 13
Randy Randall, Day Habilitation, December 6
Allison Ryder, Residential, December 9
Kirstin Shoemaker, Residential, January 19
Sasha Siver, Residential, December 30
Megan Tesiero, Residential, December 30
Cora Young, Residential, January 5

Lexington Retirees

Sandra Bundy, Residential, 24 Years of Service
Laurie Cetnar, Residential, 20 Years of Service
Beverley Perry, Residential, 26 Years of Service
Susan Spagnola, Residential, 17 Years of Service

EARN YOUR NADSP NATIONAL CREDENTIAL AT NO COST THROUGH FMCC

THE DIFFERENCE

- ✓ **FREE** Tuition Provided by OPWDD
- ✓ **FREE** Academic Supplies
- ✓ **Earn Up to \$2250** in Stipends



DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

DSPs support those with intellectual & developmental disabilities with daily care while ensuring safety & fostering independence. They can work in settings such as group homes, day programs, or community-based organizations.

For more information, contact:

Christie Davis at Christie.davis@fmcc.suny.edu | (518) 736-3622 x8931
Courtney Mickels at mickelc@thearclexington.org | (518) 775-5422

Build a Better Budget

Learn to build a budget that supports current needs and wants, along with a foundation for financial independence and future goals. Identify budget techniques and methods that work for YOU, and explore ways to manage spending and saving in relation to current income. Principles of categorized expenses, mindful spending, record-keeping, and organizing money are integrated throughout this robust discussion. All employees are welcome. **Please pre-register for this event at the address below, or by scanning the QR code.**

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/187abee2-c1a5-4f3d-b3dc-5fcfaa148f66@fe3ee96e-7b39-4305-94a0-80e3cb1f2cb7>



Talking about Lexington paid off for Edie Boehme and Bahja Haddawi. They earned bonus referral checks and you can, too!

2026 HOLIDAYS AND PAY PERIODS/DATES

Holiday	Day Observed Non-Residential Programs	Day Observed Residential
New Year's Day	Thursday, January 1	Thursday, January 1
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Monday, January 19	Monday, January 19
President's Day	Monday, February 16	Monday, February 16
Memorial Day	Monday, May 25	Monday, May 25
Independence Day	Friday, July 3	Saturday, July 4
Labor Day	Monday, September 7	Monday, September 7
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 26	Thursday, November 26
Day after Thanksgiving	Friday, November 27	Friday, November 27
Christmas Eve	Thursday, December 24	Thursday, December 24
Christmas Day	Friday, December 25	Friday, December 25

PAYROLL PERIODS AND PAY DATES FOR THE YEAR 2026

12/14/25 – 12/27/25	01/02/26	06/14/26 – 06/27/26	07/03/26
12/28/25 – 01/10/26	01/16/26	06/28/26 – 07/11/26	07/17/26
01/11/26 – 01/24/26	01/30/26	07/12/26 – 07/25/26	07/31/26
01/25/26 – 02/07/26	02/13/26	07/26/26 – 08/08/26	08/14/26
02/08/26 – 02/21/26	02/27/26	08/09/26 – 08/22/26	08/28/26
02/22/26 – 03/07/26	03/13/26	08/23/26 – 09/05/26	09/11/26
03/08/26 – 03/21/26	03/27/26	09/06/26 – 09/19/26	09/25/26
03/22/26 – 04/04/26	04/10/26	09/20/26 – 10/03/26	10/09/26
04/05/26 – 04/18/26	04/24/26	10/04/26 – 10/17/26	10/23/26
04/19/26 – 05/02/26	05/08/26	10/18/26 – 10/31/26	11/06/26
05/03/26 – 05/16/26	05/22/26	11/01/26 – 11/14/26	11/20/26
05/17/26 – 05/30/26	06/05/26	11/15/26 – 11/28/26	12/04/26
05/31/26 – 06/13/26		11/29/26 – 12/12/26	12/18/26
		12/13/26 – 12/26/26	12/31/26



Lexington's Mission

We empower people with autism and developmental disabilities to live their best lives, every day, by partnering with their families, our employees and our community.