



1101 King Street, Suite 380, Alexandria, Virginia 22314 • Phone: 703.535.7850 • Fax: 703.535.7860 • Email: ancor@ancor.org • Web site <http://www.ancor.org>

Contact: Renee Pietrangelo
703-535-7850

Pilot Program to Abate Direct Support Workforce Shortage Announced **Job Candidates to be Culled through DoL One-Stop Center Network**

May 5, Alexandria, VA -- The U.S. Department of Labor (DoL) and the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) are embarking on a pilot program to build a strong and qualified workforce of direct support professionals (DSP) to stem this critical long-term care personnel shortage. The objective of the pilot is to develop an effective One-Stop network program model that will provide screened and trained direct support candidates to private providers of community-based facilities for Americans with mental retardation and developmental disabilities.

“Workforce shortage issues are a constant dilemma for providers such as CRSI (Champaign Residential Services, Inc)”, says Linda Anderson Smith, director of public relations for the agency. “It is an ongoing challenge to meet and fill employee needs which are mostly part-time opportunities for an agency the size of CRSI and any efforts to remedy the shortages by national organizations such as ANCOR are welcome.”

Champaign Residential Services, Inc., based in Urbana serves over 800 individuals in over thirty counties and employs over one thousand full and part-time workers, according to Smith.

The pilot brings together the key components of the DoL public workforce development network such as One-Stop navigators, state coordinators and representatives from prospective workforce pools, including Native Americans, Job Corps and elder, migrant, young adult and displaced workers. Four states have been selected to test the models: Kentucky, Maine, Arizona and New York. Kentucky will kick-off the initiative May 19 in Frankfort.

“When this model is successfully built,” says Peter Kowalski, chairman of ANCOR’s National Advocacy Campaign to address the workforce crisis, “the DoL has committed to launching it throughout its One-Stop national workforce development network. This will provide significant

workforce relief.” The DoL proposes to provide a flow of job candidates to private providers by screening for career affinity, conducting criminal background checks and providing training in CPR and First Aid. In turn, this affords candidates a quick start in a new career.

Assistant Secretary of Labor Emily Stover-DeRocco, Employment and Training Administration, is enthusiastic about the partnership with ANCOR. “It is imperative that the urgent need for direct support professional workers is met. Health care providers can tap into a pool of unemployed workers already assessed and trained through the public workforce system. All over the country, we have been partnering with business, education and workforce development leaders to respond to worker challenges facing the health care industry. America’s most fragile population depends on direct support professionals and we are committed to building a stable cadre of these workers for the future.”

“This pilot program has broad societal implications,” said Dr. Renee Pietrangelo, ANCOR CEO. “There are eight million Americans with mental retardation and developmental disabilities, many of whom rely on private supports and services. Add to this number the millions of fragile citizens, such as those with MS, Alzheimers and the frail elderly who are dependent upon long term care. All stand to benefit from an increase in qualified DSPs.” DSPs provide habilitation, health needs, personal care and hygiene, employment, transportation, recreation, housekeeping and other home management-related supports and services.

Recognized by the DoL as a National Business Partner, ANCOR is the only national trade association listed amongst major U.S. corporations.

ANCOR represents and advocates on behalf of the more than 800 providers of services and supports for 385,000 Americans with disabilities. To get more information on the ANCOR National Advocacy Campaign, visit www.supportnac.org. To view the study “The Growing Crisis in Recruiting and Retaining the Direct Support Workforce,” visit http://www.ancor.org/dev/Activities/NAC/Final-Report_Revised121602.pdf.

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