



ANCOR 2019 DSP of the Year Awards: Guide to Strengthening Your Nomination and FAQs

To better understand how we will evaluate your entry, here are the six components we will be scoring:

- **Promoting Person-Centered Plans** (formerly known as the Advocacy question): how does the nominee champion the individual they support and assist them in meeting goals?
- **Relationships**: how does the nominee support the individual in creating and maintaining friendships and relationships beyond the DSP?
- **Leadership**: how has the nominee demonstrated teamwork and leadership?
- **Innovation**: How does the nominee think “outside the box” to solve challenges or improve the quality of life of the person supported?
- **NADSP Tenets**: Which competency area does the DSP particularly embody, [as outlined](#) by the National Association of Direct Support Professionals (NADSP)?
- **Additional Accomplishments**: If the nominee has done something else that does not quite fit into these categories, we will also take that into consideration.

As you showcase how your DSP meets these criteria, **it’s important to provide examples** rather than just describe character and personality traits of your nominee! In our experience, all the DSPs nominated are hardworking, dedicated, and caring. Providing real life examples demonstrating these traits is the key to writing a strong nomination. Tell us stories about the DSP’s skills and values in helping people achieve meaningful outcomes!

Here are some additional recommendations, based on past experience, which you should follow to ensure the strongest possible nomination.

- **Show, don’t tell!** The sentence “Jane is an incredible leader and advocate” is not as compelling for the committee as a specific example that shows Jane exhibiting the qualities of a leader and advocating.
 - Better: “Jane demonstrated her leadership and advocacy skills when she organized a petition drive to address the lack of a public bus stop near [individual’s] home.”
- **How does your DSP stand out from everyone else?** You already know your DSP is a rock star, but the judges don’t yet! Think about things your



DSP has done that are truly unique, and that would be good examples for other DSPs to learn from. This is your chance to show off your nominee, so others can see how they shine!

- **Remember the person(s) being served.** Describing the numerous activities of the DSP, for example saying that the nominee is very active in supporting Special Olympics, or arranges many special activities for the individuals he or she serves, is not as compelling without a description of the effect of these activities on the lives of the individual(s) being served.
 - Better: “Jane volunteers for the Special Olympics. One year, she encouraged [individual] to participate. [Individual] had never wanted to be involved before, but with Jane’s assistance, had a great time and made many friends. [Individual], who had always had a difficult time socializing, now meets up with the friends she made weekly and they enjoy ‘training’ by walking or jogging around the lake.”
- **Don’t waste words.** Focus on sharing information directly related to the awards criteria. Don’t devote too much space other issues including, but not limited to, the nominee’s life story, describing how the nominee cares for others outside the scope of this award, or the list of jobs that led the nominee to his or her current position. If these elements are relevant to the criteria, state your case as succinctly as possible.
- **Avoid nearly identical submissions for more than one DSP.** Unfortunately, this happens all too often. Remember, we’re looking for what makes the nominee uniquely-qualified for the award. This is impossible for the committee to discern if the nominator does not distinguish between two individuals. **We can tell when you are cutting and pasting – don’t do it!**
- **Answer all the questions!** If you do not address one of the criteria with a specific example, your nominee will not receive points and will be at a significant disadvantage. Answers are not always read in the context of a complete nomination by the judges, so a box filled with “see above” will not earn any points. Make sure you provide unique information for each question – don’t duplicate your responses!

How is “Direct Support Professional” defined?

For purposes of this contest, the term “Direct Support Professional” or “DSP” is defined as someone who works as a direct care worker, in-home support worker, personal assistant, or attendant that ensures people with disabilities have the necessary supports that enable them to live, work, and enjoy life more independently in a community-based setting. We believe the term “DSP”



should be applied broadly, and may include any direct care staff regardless of formal credentialing or certification.

I work with a lot of outstanding DSPs. Is there a limit to how many I can nominate?

There is a limit of three nominations per agency, per state. The limit of three per state may include nominations from related corporate entities within a state, such as related companies, chapters, affiliates or work sites, but may only add up to three across all entities. For example, if provider “X” does business through multiple entities, such as offering residential services through one company/under one name, employment services through another entity/and/or using another name or at a different location, and has multiple work sites, each location/entity may **not** submit up to three on their own. In the event that more than three nominations per state are received from a provider, ANCOR will accept the first three submitted, and not consider the subsequent nominations.

I’m not sure if my agency is a member of ANCOR. Can I still submit a nomination?

Yes! Every organization, regardless of its status as an ANCOR member, may submit a nomination.

Do I need to submit a photo of the DSP?

Yes! Starting with our 2018 nominations, we have made submitting a photo required so we can be timely with assembling our *Recognizing Excellence* publication, which we first launch at the Annual Conference. If your nominee is selected, we will contact you to obtain a photograph to be used in *Recognizing Excellence* and a photograph release form.

Why do you tell me not to include the name of the individual served in my answers?

Agencies have obligations under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) which means you have to be careful not to disclose personally-identifying health information about the people you support. Your nomination should focus on the activities and accomplishments of the DSP. If you do talk about specific individuals he or she serves, please use initials or first names only. Refer to your agency’s HIPAA policy if you have any questions about what is or is not permitted to be shared. Please note that entries that require redaction due to mention of the agency may be returned for revision or disqualified from consideration.



Why do you tell me not to include the name of my agency in my answers?

We want to ensure that the judging committee is not influenced in reading a nomination by knowing what agency the DSP works for. Members of the committee include ANCOR staff, current DSPs, former DSPs, and former providers. Not including your agency name means the judges can focus on the nominees' qualifications without any other outside influences.

Why are you asking me to provide an example of a code of ethics tenet?

A primary purpose of the DSP is to assist people who need support to lead self-directed lives and to participate fully in our communities and nation. This emphasis on empowerment and participation is critical because the prejudices of society form powerful barriers that prevent many people with mental or physical disabilities from enjoying a high quality of life. And, too often, the very social policies and service systems designed to help can create other barriers. Therefore, it must be the mission of the DSP to follow the individual path suggested by the unique gifts, preferences, and needs of each person they support, and to walk in partnership with the person, and those who love him or her, toward a life of opportunity, well-being, freedom, and contribution. There is no other position today in which ethical practice and standards are more important than direct support. DSPs are often asked to serve as gatekeepers between people needing support and almost every aspect of their lives, including access to community, personal finances, physical well-being, relationships, employment, and everyday choices. The whole landscape of a person's life can change with the coming and going of these critical supports for people (Code of Ethics Preamble).

When and how will I find out if my DSP has been selected for recognition?

We will notify nominators and agency executive directors/CEOs by email and/or telephone in early February if their DSP has been selected.