

## FAQs: Microcredentials and Badges

Certified Direct Care Professionals (CDCPs) provide personal and supportive home care to older adults and individuals with disabilities. To become certified, candidates complete a free, 30-hour online training series developed by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) and the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.

After completing the training and passing an online exam, CDCPs are added to a statewide registry that can be viewed by employers. CDCPs will use what they've learned in a variety of home and community-based settings. They also can undergo additional training and earn microcredentials. Explore these questions and answers to learn about microcredential training.

### **FOR CARE PROFESSIONALS**

#### **What is a microcredential?**

A microcredential is a credit, certificate, certification, or other kind of recognized training in a specific area that goes beyond the CDCP training. For CDCPs, microcredentials serve as an opportunity for continuing education.

Microcredentials allow CDCPs to expand their knowledge and expertise in the home and community-based field in a way that can be recognized by potential employers. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is collaborating with numerous organizations to offer these additional training opportunities for CDCPs.

Once a CDCP completes a microcredential, the training will be included in their profile on the CDCP registry so employers will be able to view their new skill.

#### **Why should CDCPs earn microcredentials?**

Microcredentials indicate more advanced training and can make a difference when an employer is hiring. For example, if a CDCP has a microcredential in dementia care, that would be of interest to an employer that offers specialized care for older adults and people with dementia. Microcredentials also indicate a willingness for CDCPs to keep learning and growing their career. Microcredential training completion is recognized and rewarded by earning a badge that shows this achievement.

#### **What is a badge?**

A badge is an easy, visual, and virtual way to show verified skill mastery to employers and show that you have completed the training. Think of it like a diploma but sent as an image file. When CDCPs complete a microcredential training, they will receive access to their virtual badge. CDCPs can upload and display their badges in emails, on their resume, and on their social media accounts.

#### **Are microcredentials important to employers?**

Yes. CDCPs could be exempt from employer training since the coursework was already completed.

**Can microcredentials help CDCPs become a certified nurse aide (CNA), licensed practical nurse (LPN) or a registered nurse (RN)?**

No, these training programs are separate from the CDCP program. WisCaregiver Careers offers a CNA program. CDCPs can learn more at [WisCaregiverCNA.com](https://www.wiscaregiver.com/cna). To become an LPN or RN, CDCPs need to pass a national exam to earn a license. It is called the [National Council Licensure Examination \(NCLEX\)](https://www.nclex.com/). The CDCP program can be the first step to begin a health care career and is a free program. CDCPs can expand their skills and abilities through microcredential trainings or through other programs such as the CNA program.

**What is a “ladder” or “laddering”?**

A ladder, as in “career ladder,” means CDCPs have advanced to another position in their career that might require more responsibility or additional licensure.

**What is a “lattice” or “latticing”?**

A lattice is learning additional skills while in a current position or those that require the same level of training and gives the CDCP a broader knowledge of a particular topic. Learning additional skills can help CDCPs break down barriers to getting to another level.

**What’s the difference between a ladder and a lattice?**

The term “ladder” is generally used when talking about moving up to a new position that may have more responsibility or a higher salary. Moving to a CNA, LPN, or RN position is an example of laddering. “Lattice” is used when referring to other moves that would increase knowledge but may have a similar level and salary. Latticing may increase pay by broadening a set of skills. Examples of a move that would be a lattice instead of a ladder include a direct care worker becoming a peer mentor, senior aide, dementia specialist, or certification medication aide.

## **FOR EMPLOYERS**

**What are the benefits to hiring workers with microcredentials?**

When a CDCP completes a DHS-approved microcredentialing course (obtaining a badge in the process), they demonstrate a specialized skill above and beyond the standard CDCP training. They may be able to opt out of some employer trainings if they have already obtained the necessary skills.

**My organization has training that CDCPs may be interested in. Could we offer our training to CDCPs?**

Your training may qualify, and DHS would like to learn more! To evaluate the skills your training will provide to CDCPs, DHS is creating an application process for interested organizations. An informational webinar will be held on June 12, 2024, to learn more about the application process.