



National Direct Support Professional (DSP) Recognition Week

Recognition Idea List

DATES	HASHTAG
September 13–19, 2026	#DSPRW2026

Below are budget-aware ideas you can use throughout DSP Recognition Week. Mix and match activities and repeat them at different shift times and locations so every DSP has an opportunity to participate.

MAKE IT PERSONAL: The most meaningful recognition is specific. Highlight real stories, accomplishments, and examples of excellent support. Take photos only with consent, then share throughout the week using #DSPRW2026.

BUDGET-FRIENDLY / NO-COST

- Handwritten thank-you notes from supervisors and executives. Make the praise specific and timely.
- Gratitude wall or digital kudos board. Invite families, coworkers, and people supported to contribute notes.
- **#MissionMomentMonday:** Invite DSPs, families, and people supported to share a short story about a moment when a DSP made a difference.
- Daily social media shout-outs with brief staff spotlights. Tag community partners and use #DSPRW2026.
- Letter to the editor from your CEO or board describing the complex, skilled, and essential nature of direct support work.
- Peer-to-peer Excellence in Direct Support recognition with quick nominations and daily honorees.
- **#DSPShoutoutTuesday:** Encourage staff to recognize a coworker who made an impact on the team or demonstrated excellent support.
- Leadership ride-along or shadow day. Executives work alongside a DSP and share what they learned.
- Open thank-you mic at shift changes or team huddles throughout the week.
- Pass the Praise Chain. Each DSP passes a card to a coworker with a specific example of great support.
- Loop a lobby or break-room slideshow featuring DSP stories, photos, accomplishments, and kudos.

LOW-COST APPRECIATION

- Snack cart or coffee run at varied times to reach day, evening, overnight, and weekend shifts.
- DIY care kits with practical favorites such as travel lotion, a granola bar, and a good pen.
- Daily raffles for gift cards, preferred parking, agency gear, or a choose-your-shift opportunity.
- Local discount booklet. Ask area businesses to offer DSP-only coupons or specials.
- Mini wellness table, such as chair massage donated by a local school or community partner.
- Personalized certificates featuring a specific story of impact or accomplishment.
- Lunch with Leadership drawing. Create an informal opportunity for DSPs to share ideas and experiences with organizational leaders.

RECOGNITION & ADVANCEMENT

- Offer one paid hour for a DSP-selected online module, continuing education activity, or micro-credential.
- Level Up Spotlight. Feature DSPs who completed training, earned credentials, took on new responsibilities, or mentored colleagues.
- **#CareerPathThursday**: Highlight DSPs who advanced into leadership, became trainers, earned certifications, or built long-term careers in the field.
- Professional Pride display featuring certifications, milestones, years of service, and accomplishments.
- Skill-share lightning talks. Invite staff to give 10-minute demonstrations of practical tools, creative approaches, or effective support strategies.

CULTURE & VOICE

- Reserve seats for DSPs on onboarding, safety, scheduling, quality, or workforce committees.
- Host a 30-minute Ask Me Anything session with leadership at multiple shift times. Record or summarize key responses for staff who cannot attend.
- Use an anonymous micro-survey to identify one workplace pain point. Share one action the organization will take next week.
- **#WhyIChooseThisWorkWednesday**: Invite DSPs to complete the sentence, “I choose this work because...” and share responses throughout the week.
- Record short video interviews with DSPs about what they value in the profession and the impact of their work.

COVERAGE-AWARE REWARDS

- Raffle a paid shift off, with the organization arranging appropriate coverage.
- Offer floating “you-pick” hours earned by participating in recognition activities.
- Split celebrations across morning, evening, overnight, and weekend schedules so every shift is included.
- Deliver recognition-to-go bags directly to team members working in community settings, remote locations, or overnight shifts.

COMMUNITY & MEDIA

- Request a mayoral, county, or state proclamation. Invite DSPs to participate in the presentation and photos.
- Issue a press release featuring DSP stories, accomplishments, and the value of direct support work. Invite local media to visit a program site when appropriate.
- Invite families and people supported to submit thank-you notes or 30-second videos, with consent.
- Ask vendors, partners, and community organizations to post appreciation messages and tag your organization throughout the week.
- Faces of Support campaign. Feature frontline professionals, their accomplishments, and what makes their work meaningful.

FOOD & FESTIVITIES

- Picnic, potluck, breakfast bar, or traveling taco bar that rotates among locations and shifts.
- Theme days such as team shirt day, school colors, decades, or silly socks, paired with small prizes.
- Photo booth with a #DSPRW2026 frame and quick-print keepsakes.
- DSP Favorite Things Day. Build snacks, playlists, activities, or small surprises around staff-submitted favorites.
- Traveling ice cream social, root beer float bar, dessert cart, or hydration station.

Use DSP Recognition Week to build lasting practices that strengthen professional pride, frontline voice, and meaningful recognition throughout the year.