

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Fairfax County DFS receives NSDTA Quality Training Program Award at NSDTA Conference

Arlington, VA: The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) proudly announces the Fairfax County, VA, Department of Family Services (DFS), Child Welfare Institute-Onboarding Academy as the recipient of the 2025 NSDTA Quality Training Program Award. The award was presented at the 2025 NSDTA Education Conference, an annual event jointly hosted by APHSA and its affinity group, the National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA). Fairfax County DFS was recognized for setting new standards for excellence and advancing the human services profession nationwide.

Launched in February 2021, the Onboarding Academy marks a transformative step forward in child welfare training and workforce development. Developed through collaboration between Fairfax County, Accenture, Dr. Sue Lohrbach of KVC Health Systems, and the Butler Institute for Families at the University of Denver, the program integrates cutting-edge adult learning methods with the Safe & Connected™ Practice Model to better equip child welfare professionals for success.

The Academy's four-module curriculum blends e-learning, classroom engagement, learning circles, real-world simulations, and structured practice opportunities. This dynamic approach ensures new staff are not only trained but fully prepared to thrive in their roles—an achievement reflected in participants' descriptions of the program as eye-opening, practical, and deeply supportive.

Fairfax County DFS' Onboarding Academy exemplifies innovation, collaboration, and measurable impact. Its focus on sustainability and continuous improvement sets a powerful example for how human services organizations nationwide can strengthen and support their workforce.

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About APHSA

The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) supports leaders from state, county, and city human services agencies to advance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities nationwide. As a bipartisan membership association, they work with their members to generate pragmatic solutions grounded in lived experience. Visit www.aphsa.org to learn more.