

Adult Day Services Entrepreneurship & Operations Certificate

An 8-Week Program on Starting, Financing, Licensing, Operating & Growing an Adult Day Services Business

PROGRAM PROMISE

By the end of 8 weeks, learners will have a realistic, state-informed plan for opening, licensing, funding, operating, marketing, and growing an adult day services business.

Target Audience

Human services professionals, administrators, nurses, direct-care leaders, case-management professionals, and aspiring entrepreneurs who want to launch, acquire, or operate an adult day services organization.

Program Design

Eight weekly instructional units, applied assignments, downloadable operating tools, a cumulative Adult Day Center Launch Plan, and a final assessment. The program covers social adult day and adult day health/medical models while emphasizing that licensing, staffing, Medicaid, reimbursement, and facility rules vary by state and payer.

Developed for Training & eTracking Solutions

Program Outcomes

- Select an adult day service model, target population, and market.
- Identify federal, state, local, and payer requirements affecting the operation.
- Develop a startup budget, financing strategy, operating budget, and break-even model.
- Explain Medicaid, managed care, private-pay, VA, and other potential payment pathways.
- Design staffing, documentation, software, transportation, meals, activities, and quality systems.
- Build a referral pipeline and census-growth strategy.
- Evaluate profitability using utilization, reimbursement, labor, transportation, occupancy, and other costs.
- Identify state and national advocacy resources and participate effectively in efforts to improve sustainable reimbursement.
- Produce a practical launch plan for a real or hypothetical adult day services business.

Core Framework: Federal -> State -> Payer

Learners are taught how to research what actually applies to their operation: federal requirements, state licensing and Medicaid rules, and additional waiver, managed-care, or payer requirements. The course avoids presenting one state's rules as a national standard.

Eight-Week Curriculum

Week 1 - Adult Day Services as a Business

- Industry overview and populations served; social adult day vs. adult day health/medical models.
- For-profit, nonprofit, franchise, independent startup, and acquisition models.
- Defining the customer: participant, family, case manager, payer, and referral partner.
- Market feasibility: demographics, competitors, unmet need, reimbursement environment, transportation radius, and potential census.
- Choosing services, hours, capacity, target population, and value proposition.
- Owner/operator mindset: mission, compliance, quality, financial sustainability, and risk.

Applied assignment: Define a proposed center, target population, service model, geography, capacity, and preliminary market case.

Week 2 - Licensing, Laws & Regulatory Requirements

- Finding the correct state licensing/certification authority and Medicaid agency.
- Federal HCBS concepts and other federal requirements that may affect operations.
- State licensing, Medicaid provider standards, and program-specific requirements.
- Zoning, occupancy, fire/life safety, accessibility, facility approvals, and emergency preparedness.
- HIPAA/privacy, OSHA, participant rights, abuse/neglect and incident reporting, and background checks.
- Staff qualifications, ratios, training, nursing/clinical requirements, medication-related rules, and documentation.
- Policies and procedures, compliance calendars, proposed rules, agency guidance, waivers, and payer manuals.

Applied assignment: Produce a licensing and regulatory roadmap for the chosen state and service model.

Week 3 - Building the Business & Financing the Startup

- Entity structure, registration, EIN/NPI and other identifiers where applicable, banking, accounting, payroll, and insurance.
- Lease vs. purchase; site selection; buildout; furniture, equipment, technology, kitchen/activity needs, and vehicles.
- Startup costs and estimating working capital through the ramp-up period.
- Business plans and presenting the opportunity to lenders or investors.
- Owner capital, bank/SBA financing, investors, grants, and community-development resources.
- Cash-flow planning and basic financial statements: P&L, balance sheet, cash flow, and budget vs. actual.

Applied assignment: Build a startup budget, sources-and-uses schedule, and financing strategy.

Week 4 - Getting Paid: Medicaid, VA & Private Pay

- Medicaid HCBS programs, waivers, state-plan services, provider enrollment, managed care, and contracting.
- Per diem, hourly, tiered/acuity-based, bundled, and other reimbursement structures.
- Revenue lifecycle: license -> enrollment/contract -> eligibility -> authorization -> service/documentation -> claim -> adjudication -> payment/denial -> reconciliation.
- Documentation supporting billing, denials, recoupments, accounts receivable, and compliance risk.
- Private-pay pricing, agreements, attendance policies, autopay, invoicing, and collections.
- Potential VA and long-term-care insurance pathways and verifying program-specific rules.
- Payer mix: balancing rate, burden, volume, predictability, and mission.

Applied assignment: Map expected payers, enrollment pathways, rates, authorization, billing, and cash timing.

Week 5 - Designing & Operating the Center

- Intake, assessment, care/service plans, attendance, documentation, discharge, and record retention.
- Daily schedules, activities, meals, personal care, clinical functions where applicable, and supervision.
- Facility flow: arrival/departure, activities, dining, rest, clinical/medication space, bathrooms, storage, and staff areas.
- Software: participant management/EHR, scheduling, payroll, billing, accounting, LMS/training, CRM, document storage, and communications.
- Vendor management: food, supplies, maintenance, technology, and applicable clinical relationships.
- Quality assurance, incidents, audits, complaints, emergency drills, infection control, and continuous improvement.
- Compliance calendars and management dashboards.

Applied assignment: Create an operating model, software/vendor stack, documentation system, and compliance calendar.

Week 6 - Staffing, Leadership & Transportation

- Roles of owners, directors, nurses, CNAs/DSPs/aides, activity staff, drivers, and administrators.
- Translating licensing requirements and participant acuity into a staffing model.
- Recruiting, interviewing, screening, onboarding, competency, training, supervision, performance management, and retention.
- Scheduling around census; overtime control; compensation, payroll burden, workers' comp, benefits, and turnover.

- Transportation radius, pickup windows, routing, participant assistance, capacity, and dispatch.
- Own vs. lease vs. contracted transportation; drivers, maintenance, insurance, inspections, backups, and records.
- Leadership culture, communication, burnout prevention, and quality during growth.

Applied assignment: Build an organizational chart, staffing/cost model, hiring plan, and transportation strategy.

Week 7 - Getting Participants: Referrals, Sales & Growth

- How referrals happen and the roles of participant, decision-maker, referral source, and payer.
- Case managers/support coordinators, hospitals, MCOs, Area Agencies on Aging, IDD systems, senior living, physicians, home care, rehabilitation, community organizations, and families.
- Building professional referral relationships without improper inducements.
- Website, local SEO, educational content, community events, tours, outreach, and reputation.
- Inquiry-to-admission workflow: response, qualification, tour, assessment, authorization, follow-up, and conversion.
- CRM/referral tracking and metrics: leads, tours, conversion, time-to-admission, census, utilization, and discharge.
- Growth through capacity, services, payer contracts, populations, and additional locations.

Applied assignment: Create a 90-day referral-development plan and census-growth dashboard.

Week 8 - Profitability, Advocacy, Resources & Launch

- Revenue per participant-day, average daily census, utilization, contribution margin, fixed/variable costs, and break-even census.
- Expense drivers: labor, occupancy, transportation, food, insurance, software, administration, training, and compliance.
- Scenario planning for reimbursement changes, wage inflation, low census, transportation increases, payer concentration, and delayed collections.
- Owner compensation, reserves, reinvestment, and sustainable growth.
- State adult day services associations, the National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA), and relevant aging, disability, HCBS, and provider organizations.
- Why associations matter: regulatory updates, peer learning, data collection, networking, legislative representation, and collective advocacy.
- How reimbursement changes: provider operating data -> association/coalition -> Medicaid agency/legislature -> rate study/budget/waiver action -> implementation.
- Building the case for higher, sustainable reimbursement using wage, transportation, occupancy, staffing, census/utilization, inflation, wait-list/access, and reimbursement-history data.
- Working with legislators and agencies through data-driven meetings, testimony, comment letters, coalitions, and long-term relationships.
- Final pre-opening and first-90-days launch checklist.

Applied assignment: Complete and present the Adult Day Center Launch Plan, including an Industry Resources & Advocacy Plan.

Capstone: Adult Day Center Launch Plan

Each learner selects a state and develops a real or hypothetical adult day services business throughout the eight weeks. Weekly assignments become sections of one practical launch package.

Required Components

- Executive summary, mission, target population, service model, geography, and proposed capacity.
- Market and competitor analysis.
- State licensing, facility, compliance, and Medicaid/provider-enrollment roadmap.
- Startup budget, financing strategy, and working-capital estimate.
- Payer mix, reimbursement model, authorization/billing workflow, and cash-flow assumptions.
- Facility and operating model, technology/software stack, vendors, and compliance systems.
- Staffing model, hiring/onboarding/training plan, organizational chart, and labor-cost assumptions.
- Transportation model and cost assumptions.
- Referral-development, marketing, admission-conversion, and census-growth plan.
- 12-month operating budget, break-even census, profitability scenarios, and key operating metrics.
- Industry Resources & Advocacy Plan.
- 90-day pre-opening and launch action plan.

Industry Resources & Advocacy Plan

The learner identifies the organizations and government actors that shape the adult day services environment in the chosen state and demonstrates how an operator can participate constructively in reimbursement advocacy.

- State adult day services association or closest relevant provider association.
- National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA) and other relevant national organizations.
- State Medicaid agency and applicable waiver/program.
- Current reimbursement structure and, where available, current rate.
- Entity or process responsible for rate setting and relevant legislative/budget committees.
- Current industry advocacy priorities.
- Evidence the operator would collect to support a request for sustainable reimbursement.
- A short advocacy message explaining how reimbursement affects workforce, transportation, quality, capacity, and participant access.

Financial Modeling Component

Students should model the center as an operating business, not simply complete a licensing checklist. A core exercise calculates annual participant revenue from average daily census, revenue per participant-day, and operating days, then layers in labor, occupancy, transportation, food, insurance, technology, administration, and other expenses to calculate break-even census and operating margin.

Example scenario: A center is licensed for 50 participants and needs an average daily census of 27 to break even. Current average daily census is 21. The learner must identify the operational, referral, pricing, payer, staffing, and cost actions available to management.

Downloadable Adult Day Startup Toolkit

- Startup-cost calculator and sources-and-uses template.
- 12-month P&L; and cash-flow template.
- Break-even census and reimbursement calculator.
- Staffing model, organizational chart, hiring, onboarding, and training checklists.
- Licensing research worksheet and Medicaid provider-enrollment checklist.
- Referral-source tracker, inquiry-to-admission pipeline, and census dashboard.
- Participant intake and pre-admission checklist.
- Compliance calendar and software/vendor evaluation worksheet.
- Transportation cost and routing-planning worksheet.
- Marketing plan and 90-day pre-opening checklist.
- Business-plan / Adult Day Center Launch Plan template.
- State association and national advocacy resource directory.
- How-to guide for locating Medicaid waivers, proposed rules, rate studies, and legislation.
- Reimbursement advocacy data worksheet and sample provider advocacy letter.

Assessment & Certificate Structure

- Weekly knowledge checks or quizzes.
- Seven progressive applied assignments plus the Week 8 capstone submission.
- Final comprehensive assessment covering business, compliance, reimbursement, operations, staffing, referrals, finance, and advocacy.
- Certificate awarded after successful completion of required coursework, final assessment, and Adult Day Center Launch Plan.

Strategic Value of the Program

The program is designed to bridge a common gap: experienced human services professionals often understand care delivery but have never been taught how licensing, financing, reimbursement, operations, census development, labor, transportation, profitability, and advocacy fit together as a business. The certificate turns those topics into one structured pathway from idea to launch.

For Training & eTracking Solutions, the program can also create a long-term ecosystem of operators who understand compliance and workforce development from the beginning. Graduates who launch organizations may later need staff training, an LMS, onboarding, compliance pathways, and other operating infrastructure.