

Legislative Support for FY25 \$3/Hr DSP Wage Increase
Critical Investments for Persons with Intellectual
and Developmental Disabilities
May 2024

Executive Summary

As legislators, we know it is the state's obligation to ensure sustainable services and supports for children and adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) in Illinois. Working together we have made progress towards strengthening community-based services but recognizing further action and support must be ongoing. To that end, we have come together to sign this **Letter of Support** for a **\$3 per hour increase for the Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) wage rate**, the top priority of the Department of Human Services – Division of Developmental Disabilities (DHS-DDD) Guidehouse Rate Study, and a necessary investment for service sustainability.

Fiscal impact to the state in FY25 is \$60M (GRF) after federal matching funds beginning January 1, 2025. (Total for ½ FY25 pre-federal match requires \$120M Approp Authority)

Points for Consideration

The state-commissioned Guidehouse Rate Study calls for the DSP wage rate to be at least 150% of minimum wage, which the \$3 per hour wage rate increase will achieve. If we take no action this spring, these hard-working professionals will receive no increase for at least two years -- furthermore, it reverses the recent gains we have made as a state in funding these *court ordered* resources.

Minimum wage will increase again in January 2025 by \$1 per hour, and without an increase from the state, persons with disabilities may suffer, the more than 15,000 on the waitlist for services will continue waiting for services, and hard-working DSPs will leave the field for higher paying jobs.

The state has made incremental wage investments since 2017 but is making up lost ground after a decade without any additional support. Without our intervention in the FY25 budget, DSP wages will once again fall behind, resulting in a significant **step backwards** for the state's ability to properly serve persons with IDD and their families.

100% of increases mandated by the state are passed through to wages, differentials, and incentives paid *directly* to front-line workers. Since 2021, IDD providers, organized labor, under the oversight of DHS, and members of the legislature have agreed to a 50/50 split distribution for the wages so providers can respond to their

own workforce pressures such as overnight or weekend pay, staffing persons with complex behavioral or medical needs, and experience/seniority. To reiterate, under the current agreement, 100% of funds allocated by the state are going **directly** to frontline workers.

Conclusion

We have heard from the They Deserve More coalition, which represents persons with disabilities and their families, as well as over 90 statewide IDD community-based service providers and their representative organizations—including IARF, The Institute on Public Policy for People with Disabilities, The Center for Developmental Disabilities, The Arc of Illinois, and many more.

The message is clear: With no wage increase until 2026, DSPs will leave the field and the wait list will grow. Given that Illinois is still under a consent decree, we cannot let this happen.

We urge our colleagues to stand with us in prioritizing this request.

The estimated 300,000 people with IDD and their families need and deserve the opportunity to lead meaningful lives in their community. They should be able to depend on quality and consistent support provided by trained staff who are valued and fairly compensated for their work.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Senator Rachel Ventura (43rd [Dist](#))

Senator Laura Fine (9th Dist)

Senator Mike Simmons (7th Dist)

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Senator Jil Tracy (50th Dist)

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