

Developmental Disability Direct Support Professional (DSP) Stabilization Funding

Not-for-profit OPWDD funded provider agencies deliver about **85% of the needed day-to-day services** to the more than 130,000 people with developmental disabilities in NYS. More than **90% of the funding to pay DSP salaries comes from the government** but years of government funding freezes and sparse increases means DSPs no longer earn a living wage.

Provider agencies can no longer compete with fast food restaurants and big box stores. **Stabilization funding is necessary to help these organizations provide a living wage for their 97,000 DSPs.**

Requested 4/1/19 - 1/1/20 Funding

A commitment to years three and four of the living wage funding in the NYS Budget. This funding will help not-for-profit Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) agencies properly compensate direct care workers for their hard work and dedication to those they support.

Secured 2017 - 2018 Funding

The final 2017-18 NYS budget included a \$55 million appropriation to take effect December 31, 2017 and another one of \$55 million to take effect in April 1, 2018. However, there is much more to be done.

The Goal

Current low wages for DSPs has led to a crisis for attracting and retaining staff, destabilizing the workforce and threatening the ability of providers to sustain the supports people with disabilities and their families require. When the stabilization funding is fully implemented, average salaries for DSPs will be \$17.72 in the NYC/ Long Island region and \$15.54 in other parts of NYS.

Living Wage Calculation

The living wage model is a market- based approach that draws upon geographically specific expenditure data related to a family's basic needs, such as food, child care, health insurance, housing, and transportation. The model shows the minimum full-time salary for meeting the basic necessities, without needing public assistance or suffering from housing or food insecurity.

Direct Care Staff Shortages Growing Vacancy & Turnover Survey Results

Not-for-profit OPWDD provider agencies that support people with developmental disabilities were surveyed to provide calendar year 2017 data on the growing turnover and vacancy rates for professional direct care staff (DSPs) and other support staff. Last year we collected 2016 data on the same questions to allow the measurement of workforce changes over time.

The results show the staffing crisis is getting even worse, as competition for their workers stiffens from retail, food service and big box stores.

Vacancy Rate

14.4% of all DSP jobs were vacant in 2017. This is an increase of 30% since 2016 and up 80% since 2014, when the vacancy rate was 8%.

Turnover Rate

Staff turnover rate is **26.7%** annually, an increase of 8% since 2016 and up 42% since 2014, when the turnover rate was 19%.

Overtime Hours

More than **10 million** overtime hours were logged, an increase of 8% since 2016 and up from 5.6 million hours, in 2014, an increase of 79%.

Workforce Demographics

Statewide, DSPs are

- 73% Women
- 44% African American
- 9% Latino

The 2017 data reflects responses from 155 non-profit agencies in all regions of NYS, representing more than 80,000 full and part-time DSPs.

WANTED:

A Fair Day's Pay for a Fair Day's Work

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are the lynchpin of the system of supports for more than 130,000 people with developmental disabilities in New York. The more than 110,000 DSPs (97,000 working for not-for-profit agencies) enable the individuals they support to live self-directed, meaningful and productive lives and are key to making it possible for an individual with disabilities to live in the community. The demands of the job far exceed the compensation, with average **hourly wages between \$10.50 and \$14.**

WHO DSPs ARE

DSPs are the men and women who carry out incredibly varied and important responsibilities to support New Yorkers with developmental disabilities and help them live safe, fulfilling lives.

DSPs exemplify diversity. Nearly three-quarters are women, many of whom are single mothers, and half are either black or Latino. They are professionals who are highly trained in a wide variety of critical areas that include administering medications, giving first aid and CPR, de-escalating dangerous situations, behavioral intervention, and providing for the safety of those they support.

DSPs must comply with OSHA regulations, fire drills/emergency evacuation procedures, on-the-job Core Competency requirements, and a Code of Ethics developed by National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP). They also must know the laws, regulations and procedures designed to protect individuals.

WHAT DSPs DO

- Provide services and supports for activities of daily living, including meal preparation, grooming and toileting.
- Medication administration, which requires extensive training leading to certification and annual retesting.
- Lift and move of individuals to meet their mobility needs and the performance of daily activities.
- Tube feeding, diabetic & wound care, oxygen administration and they must be knowledgeable of the operation of durable medical equipment including that are used for lifting, bathing and transporting individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Transport individuals with disabilities to all activities throughout the community.
- Teach personal care skills, money management and social skills.
- Supporting the delivery of physical and behavioral health services in both routine and crisis situations.
- Form close, trusted relationships with individuals with disabilities and their families, making community living in New York State a reality.
- Respect the human dignity and uniqueness of the people they support and serve as advocates through the promotion of human and civil rights.
- Understand and communicate complex information to others via daily logs, progress reports and electronic means.

"ONE MIGHT SUMMARIZE THE JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE DIRECT SUPPORT WORKER AS REQUIRING THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON, THE PATIENCE OF JOB AND THE CARING OF FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE."

- CLARENCE SUNDRUM, GOVERNOR CUOMO'S SPECIAL ADVISOR ON VULNERABLE PERSONS

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