

NEW YORK DISABILITY ADVOCATES

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NYDA Fall 2023 Talking Points

Supports and Services for New Yorkers with I/DD are in Crisis:

- For over a decade, New York's not-for-profit provider agencies serving people with I/DD have faced a historic pattern of underfunding and cuts, resulting in a dire workforce crisis brought on by wage stagnation, inflation, and the ever-increasing costs of providing these critical services.
- Over a decade of underfunding has left not-for-profit agencies struggling to recruit and retain Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), severely reducing access to services that thousands of individuals with I/DD and their families rely upon to live a life that most of us take for granted.
 - 20,000 critical direct care positions are not filled
 - 1 in 3 DSPs leave their jobs every year
 - Turnover costs not-for-profit agencies \$100,000,000 each year
 - 38% of providers reduced programs or services in the past year

NYDA's Call to Action for the SFY25 Executive Budget:

- NYDA is calling on advocates, supporters, and members of the I/DD community to urge Governor Hochul to include **BOTH a 3.2% Cost-Of-Living Adjustment (COLA) and Direct Support Wage Enhancement (DSWE)** in the SFY25 Executive Budget. These investments in not-for-profit supports and services are crucial for securing the future for New Yorkers with disabilities.
- DSWE and COLA act as both immediate and long-term investment strategies to address the staff shortage and correct wage disparities between state-employed and not-for-profit-employed DSPs.

Why COLA?

- The 3.2% COLA will offset the year's increased costs due to inflation and will help non-profit providers afford food, supplies, transportation, repairs & maintenance, and employee benefits and insurance over the coming year.

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- Due to annual inflation increases, high turnover rate costs, and years of underfunding from the State, the COLA is required for non-profit providers to be able to continue to provide life-supporting services that thousands of individuals with I/DD and their families rely upon.

Why DSWE?

- The DSWE is a **critical investment** in driving progress by providing \$4,000 to the wages of people providing direct care to people with I/DD, which equates to about a \$2 per hour increase, keeping their wages more competitive and allowing them to better support themselves and their family.
- As highly skilled professionals dedicated to the essential support of individuals with I/DD, DSPs take on numerous critical responsibilities to ensure the safety, productivity, and well-being of the entire I/DD community – yet they currently earn just above minimum wage working for a non-profit provider.
- With DSPs leaving their positions in droves, often for jobs in food service or retail that offer higher wages, an investment in DSP salaries is essential to combat widespread staffing shortages and high turnover rates in supports and services for individuals with I/DD and their families.
- 15 years ago, DSPs were paid, on average, nearly twice the minimum wage; now their wages are barely above minimum wage.
- Direct care workers for not-for-profit agencies are paid about 30% less than people doing the same work who are employed by the state of New York.