



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES DESERVE MORE IN ILLINOIS

In 2017, the *They Deserve More* Coalition was formed to ensure that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout the state get the services they deserve...by fighting for better wages for **direct support professionals (DSPs)** who care for them. Last July, the state legislature came through with a 75-cent-per-hour raise for these workers – the first raise in nearly a decade.

While this was a step in the right direction, wages reimbursed by the state are still below poverty level, and much more is needed to ensure that our state's people with disabilities have access to the quality care they deserve.

People with disabilities deserve the opportunity to lead a full meaningful life. But they must have support for everything from eating, bathing and administering medication to job and life-skills training.

That support comes from **DSPs whose starting wages, on average, are now just \$10.59 per hour.**

Illinois state funding for wages is among the worst in the country!

We call on state leaders to make the needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities a top priority.

***Support Senate Bill 3508 and House Bill 5622:
Raise DSP wages to \$13.50 per hour in 2018,
and ramp up to \$15 per hour in 2020.***

Thousands of these positions go unfilled every year, and DSPs are leaving their jobs in droves to take retail, warehouse and fast food positions – just to make ends meet. Caring, compassionate people who want to do this important work simply cannot afford to.

Children and adults with disabilities and their families now face constant change and uncertainty. And worse – it can be dangerous, even life-threatening, when there isn't enough staff. More and more providers are forced to shut down programs and turn people away who need and deserve support.

People with disabilities deserve more – they need caregivers who earn a living wage.

THE DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL (DSP) CRISIS

People with disabilities are suffering



40%

Rate at which some agencies are understaffed; a dangerous gap



50%

Turnover rate of direct support professionals in Illinois in the last year based on a national survey



25%

Of 80 agencies that responded to a statewide survey closed program sites in the last year



27,000

Children and adults with developmental disabilities who depend on services

Hundreds of Thousands

Parents, siblings, family members of children and adults with developmental disabilities who rely on DSPs to care for and support their loved ones

Illinois is behind



Illinois' rank among states for spending commitment for people with disabilities

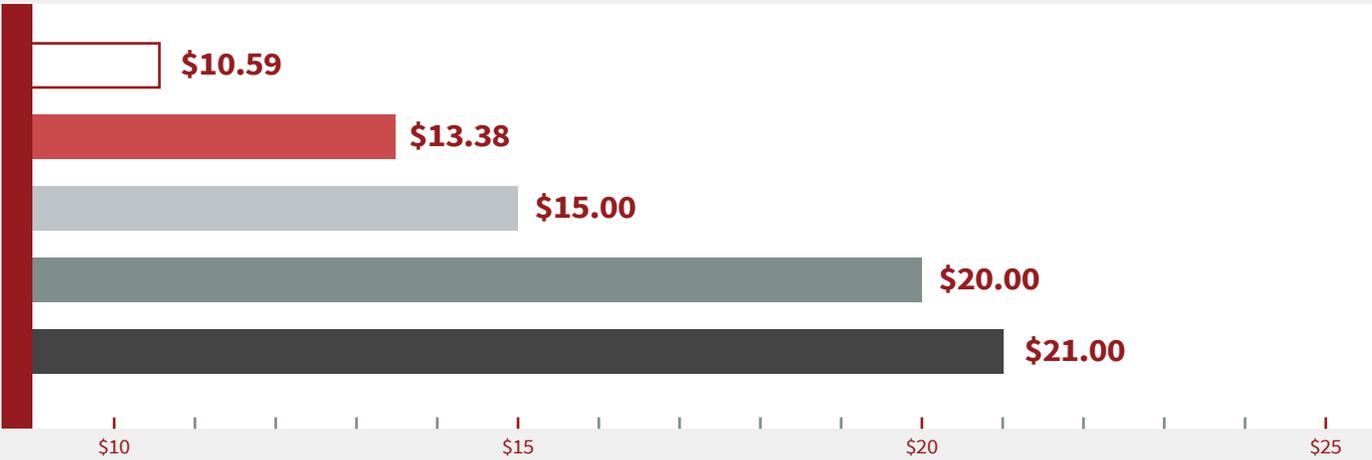
\$0.75

Wage increase that direct support professionals received in this year's state budget – first such increase in ten years – far from keeping up with the rate of inflation

18%

Cumulative rate of inflation over the last ten years

DSP wages are not competitive



- Average hourly starting wage for a direct support professional in a community setting
- Average hourly wage for a full-time employee at Walmart
- Average hourly wage for a call center representative

- Advertised hourly wage for a pizza delivery driver
- Advertised hourly wage for a part-time snow shoveler