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.**

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.

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

www.theydeservemore.com
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

Illinois is behind

- **$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
- **47th** Illinois’ rank among states for spending commitment for people with disabilities
- **18%** Cumulative rate of inflation over the last ten years

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

DSP wages are not competitive

- **$10.59** Average hourly starting wage for a direct support professional in a community setting
- **$13.38** Average hourly wage for a full-time employee at Walmart
- **$15.00** Advertised hourly wage for a call center representative
- **$20.00** Advertised hourly wage for a part-time snow shoveler
- **$21.00** Advertised hourly wage for a pizza delivery driver

40% of some agencies are understaffed, a dangerous gap.

50% of direct support professionals in Illinois are turning over, a high turnover rate.

25% of 80 responding agencies closed program sites in the last year.

27,000 children and adults with developmental disabilities depend on direct support professionals.

Illinois is ranked 47th among states for spending commitment for people with disabilities.

A $0.75 wage increase for direct support professionals is far from keeping up with the 18% cumulative rate of inflation over the last ten years.

Thousands of parents, siblings, and family members rely on DSPs to care for loved ones.

Average hourly wages for different roles:

- Direct support professional: $10.59
- Full-time employee at Walmart: $13.38
- Call center representative: $15.00
- Pizza delivery driver: $20.00
- Part-time snow shoveler: $21.00

Parents, siblings, family members, and children with developmental disabilities rely on DSPs for care and support.

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