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### ***What's a Direct Support Professional (DSP)?***

A Direct Support Professional provides the hands-on supports to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). DSPs are the reason people with I/DD are able to live meaningful lives in the community. DSP's must complete extensive training and continuing education to attain the knowledge needed to support the diverse physical and intellectual needs of individuals with I/DD. DSP's implement complex behavioral health plans, oversee and administer essential medical care, comply with regulations and reporting requirements, and serve as advocates, companions, mentors and caregivers.

### ***What's the problem?***

The community-based, disability service system is in crisis with 44% turnover and nearly 30% vacancy rates because DSP wages are not proportional to the responsibility and skill required to do the job. DSP wages are simply not competitive when the average starting wage is just \$12 per hour (\$24,960 per year). It is very challenging to hire and retain staff and it's only getting harder with an increasing number of retailers paying \$15-18 per hour and New Jersey's minimum wage on a path to \$15 per hour for entry-level jobs that are far less demanding. The worsening DSP shortage is threatening the safety and health of individuals with IDD living in community-settings.

### ***What's needed to address the DSP workforce crisis?***

Raising New Jersey's minimum wage was the right thing to do, but DSPs are far from minimum wage workers and cannot be left behind. In order to stay competitive and maintain a stable, quality DSP workforce for individuals with I/DD, **New Jersey must index DSP wages to the minimum wage. Every time the minimum wage is raised, there should be a corresponding increase to DSP wages. For example, a 10% increase in minimum wage must equate to a 10% increase to the average starting salary of a DSP.**

### ***What funding is needed to raise the starting DSP wage to accommodate the January 1, 2020 increase to New Jersey's minimum wage from \$10 per hour to \$11 per hour?***

A FY20 supplemental appropriation of \$16.5 million (plus a \$16.5million federal match) is needed to index DSP wages to the minimum wage increase that went into effect on January 1, 2020.

### ***What additional funding is needed to raise the starting DSP wage to accommodate the next scheduled increase to NJ's minimum wage on January 1, 2021 to \$12 per hour?***

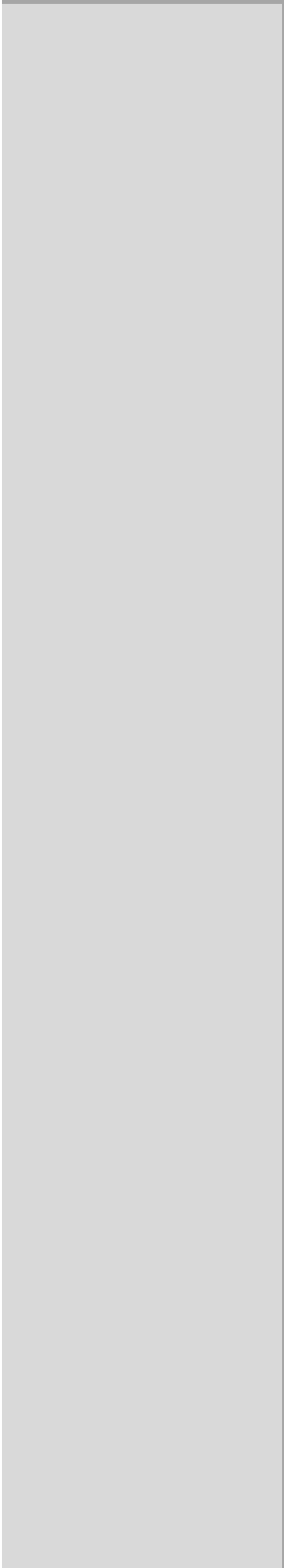
In FY21, an **additional** \$16.5 million in state funding (plus \$16.5 million federal match) is needed to raise DSP wages to accommodate the next increase.

**NJ MUST INDEX DSP WAGES. WE CAN'T WAIT!**



# Coalition for a DSP Living Wage

*Valuing Workers Who Support  
People with Developmental Disabilities*





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***The Coalition for a DSP Living Wage***

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