



They Deserve More

THE CRISIS

You know about the staff shortage ... the one that we are feeling in all aspects of our life? Empty shelves at the grocery store ... half the restaurant empty because no one is there to serve guests ... classes cancelled because no sub available ... long waits for appliances ... reduced hours at a retail store ...

Now think about a staff shortage at a home for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities ... You can't just reduce the hours or seat less people... they need support and care every day, all day 24/7/365 ... **their lives and quality of life depend on proper staffing and compassionate care.**

Direct support professionals (DSP) who provide that care are paid through the state's established rate for services which have been deplorably low, even with some incremental raises. The state has not kept up with the job market, inflation, minimum wage or even its own Guidehouse report in its support of community home care for people with disabilities.

The Governor's Office recently launched a statewide campaign to address direct care shortages in state-run facilities, including those for people with disabilities. They highlighted the importance of "homes for persons with developmental disabilities" and "employees at facilities that are open 24/7, which are unique and may require specialized resources." We couldn't agree more!

Community providers face these exact same challenges, if not to a worse degree—while state-run facilities are far more expensive to taxpayers and are far better resourced.

Thousands of lives hang in the balance, and thousands more cannot find placements for desperately needed care as homes across the state are closing and consolidating or spending dollars they don't have on overtime pay for the minimal staff they can retain.

Please prioritize the community support system for people with disabilities with one-time supplemental funding of \$56 million from the American Rescue Plan funds. Community providers desperately need this funding and the flexibility to use it to address the critical staffing shortage and rising costs until the spring-approved increase can finally be implemented in January 2023.

THE STAFFING CRISIS BY THE NUMBERS

Fifty-three community agencies serving people with (I/DD) responded to a June survey focused on staffing challenges and the impact it had on services to people living in community residences and attending day services.

2,137

Number of unfilled DSP positions at 53 Illinois provider agencies, averaging 40 unfilled positions per agency

25% DSP vacancy rate

85,477

Weekly DSP hours not provided due to vacant positions

28%

Survey respondents not accepting new admissions for services due to staff shortages

14%

Survey respondents who closed a residential setting in 2022 due to staff shortages

Mounting Pressures Ahead of January Rate Adjustments

Even with a \$56 million investment, DSP wages would STILL be well below the recommended Guidehouse rate in Chicago/Collar Counties of \$20.70 and below \$18 recommended for the rest of the state. But it would help enormously!



ABOUT THEY DESERVE MORE

They Deserve More is a statewide coalition of nearly 90 community provider agencies, trade and advocacy organizations, and friends and family of people with disabilities. The coalition was founded in 2017 to ensure that Illinois meets its obligation to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.