



***The Arc***<sup>®</sup>

*New York*

## **The Arc New York FY25 Budget Testimony**

Joint Legislative Hearing of Senate Finance and Assembly  
Ways and Means Committees on FY25 State Budget

**February 13, 2024**



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### **Introduction**

Chairwomen Krueger and Weinstein, Senator Brouk and Senator Mannion, Assembly Member Seawright and Assemblywoman Gunther, and other members of the Senate and Assembly, thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed Executive Budget and its impact on our field and the people we support.

The Arc New York is a family-led organization, with a 75-year history working toward our mission to “provide people with intellectual, developmental, and other disabilities the ordinary and extraordinary opportunities of life.” With 36 operating Chapters across New York state, our organization supports more than 60,000 individuals and families and employs more than 30,000 people statewide. The Arc New York is the largest provider of supports and services for New Yorkers with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the state.

The parents who created our organization were among the earliest advocates for quality services and opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). In the 75 years since our founding, we have witnessed – and at many times driven – massive transformation and progress in our field. Over those seven decades, New York has developed a robust system of exceptional, comprehensive individualized services and programs that aid independence, support families, and emphasize inclusion in communities.

That system is in crisis, and those essential supports are at risk.

New York has a legal and ethical obligation to provide essential services, quality care and integration for its citizens with I/DD. Our shared responsibility to the people we support is nonnegotiable. Regretfully, Governor Hochul's Executive Budget falls short of meeting that obligation.

In her State of the State address and briefings, Governor Hochul stated that she, "...has put equity at the center of the Administration's work across all agencies and initiatives," and, "...will continue to take action to break down barriers to stability and equity and support greater inclusion – both social and economic – for communities across the state."<sup>1</sup>

For individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, and the skilled and dedicated staff who support them around the clock, every day, these statements ring hollow.

We have long advocated for recognition of our essential frontline staff, sustainable investment, and common-sense policy. For over a decade, that call had consistently gone largely unheard. We are grateful for being acknowledged under the Hochul administration. However, despite investments over the past few years, neglect of our vulnerable population over time has resulted in an escalating crisis that threatens the safety, opportunity, and future of people with I/DD. This may not be a crisis of your making, but it must be addressed with urgency.

As policy makers, you have a responsibility to your constituents to leverage the power of government to ensure our systems have the necessary resources to complete the mission for which they were created. Your responsibility is most critical when it comes to populations who will be at the highest risk if these systems fail.

## **COLA and DSWE: Realities of the Executive Budget Proposal**

The governor's proposal includes only a 1.5% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for non-profit OPWDD services, which is less than half the actual increase in inflation. A true COLA would include the full 3.2%. But this is not a true COLA; it is a meager trend

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<sup>1</sup> 2024 State of the State Briefing Book, page 138.

factor. This COLA is being touted as a way to address wages for direct support staff, but it barely addresses cost increases related to mandated fringe benefits, repairs and maintenance, utilities, food, supplies, transportation, and insurance. These represent significant financial pressures. As every family knows, it takes money to put a roof over your head, pay for transportation, and put food on the table. A sufficient COLA is applied to more than just staff wages; it involves all aspects of the system of supports.

Further, there is no dedicated funding in the Executive Budget to specifically support wage increases to bring direct care workers' compensation closer to state-operated direct care staff, and no tangible support for special education schools other than rate studies, which are now being extended through 2027.

This is not equitable. This does not promote inclusivity. This is unacceptable.

For decades, New York state has not made adequate investments to sustain the programs and services people with I/DD rely on. Our field has received very few cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) to keep up with inflation and rising costs in the last decade. The annual COLA is intended to increase budgets appropriately to adjust for these factors. Within the past decade, inflation rose nearly 30%, yet our field received only a 10.5% COLA. Funding included in last year's budget was touted as a "historic investment," yet it equated to less than half the rate of inflation. We are on trend to repeat the mistakes of the past unless we correct this course.

The Governor clearly acknowledged the need for investment in her budget address, stating "Another very important constituency that too often gets overlooked, is our community with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They've suffered from disinvestment and neglect, and we're setting out to change that." Yet, her proposed budget does not adequately address this need and continues the pattern of disinvestment. It is up to you as legislators to take meaningful action to reverse this neglect.

In addition to the inclusion of a 3.2% COLA to support wages and agency operations, the establishment of a Direct Support Wage Enhancement (DSWE) is a critical and equitable request to ensure that nonprofit employees are compensated fairly, and individuals supported by nonprofit providers receive quality care. Under the Direct Support Wage Enhancement (DSWE), provider agencies will receive \$4,000 per

eligible employee to be used for the purpose of enhancing the hourly rate of pay for staff that have direct care/support responsibilities for people with I/DD. This wage enhancement will enable provider agencies to immediately raise wages of eligible employees by an average of \$2.19 per hour, which would begin to bring their compensation more in line with the skill and responsibility of their roles.

The proposed 3.2% COLA for 2024-25 is derived from NYS statute, which states the annual COLA will be calculated based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) from July of the previous year. Upholding the COLA will help support the increased cost of delivering quality services and sustain supports for the future, but it is not a panacea. Consistent investment is essential moving forward, but it will not reverse a decade of neglect in our commitment to New Yorkers with disabilities. If we do not act, many years of progress toward community integration, choice, and deinstitutionalization for people with I/DD will be lost. This is not the way to secure the foundation for a stable system of care.

## **Direct Support Jobs are Not Minimum Wage Jobs**

The lack of investment in our system has resulted in a crippling workforce crisis, which we are calling for enhanced wages for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) to address. Not only has that call gone unanswered, actions are instead being taken that will drive us deeper into crisis. Historically, Direct Support Professionals were compensated for their skilled work at well above minimum wage. Today, the average DSP starting wage is just \$16.48 an hour. For years, we have not been able to compete with starting wages in retail, fast food, and other industries. For little more than minimum wage, DSPs are expected to carry out vital and complex responsibilities over the course of their day, supporting people who rely on them for routine daily activities that others may take for granted.

DSPs are the backbone of services for New Yorkers with I/DD. Their 24-hour support includes:

- Supporting activities of daily living
- Administering medication (and potentially more complex nursing duties)
- Tube feeding, wound care, mobility support, and oxygen administration
- Delivering physical and behavioral health services

- Personal hygiene
- Teaching money management
- Learning and teaching inter-personal communication
- Transporting to appointments and community activities

While wages in New York advanced around them, DSP wages have stagnated. These complex and critical roles have largely become minimum wage jobs. 15 years ago, the average DSP wage was nearly twice the minimum wage. Meanwhile, most of these dedicated frontline workers are women and people of color – historically disadvantaged groups for whom the state has committed to improve equity and opportunity.

A study conducted by Miami University of Ohio found that nearly half of DSPs reported they are experiencing food insecurity and/or food insecurity related distress. Compounding those pressures, nearly half of Direct Support Professionals reported that they experience housing insecurity. The Governor’s stated commitment to improve equity and opportunity is not being met for our staff. They work every day to ensure the basic needs of the people they support are met, but that work does not earn them enough to meet their own.

Inadequate wages are eroding the quality and sustainability of essential services. One in three DSPs leave the field every year, from a role where continuity of care is essential<sup>2</sup>. Turnover costs for non-profit providers have risen to more than \$100 million annually—\$100 million that would be better invested in keeping staff, rather than losing them.

Seventeen percent of DSP positions are currently vacant across the state, totaling nearly 20,000 unfilled positions. This number is on the rise from one year ago.<sup>3</sup> More than one-third of providers reduced or eliminated programs or services in a single year. We are unable to meet current need. In addition, nearly two-thirds of providers were unable to expand program offerings to meet growing need due to staffing shortages. More New Yorkers need our support, and we don’t have the staff to support them. An already long waitlist for care is growing.

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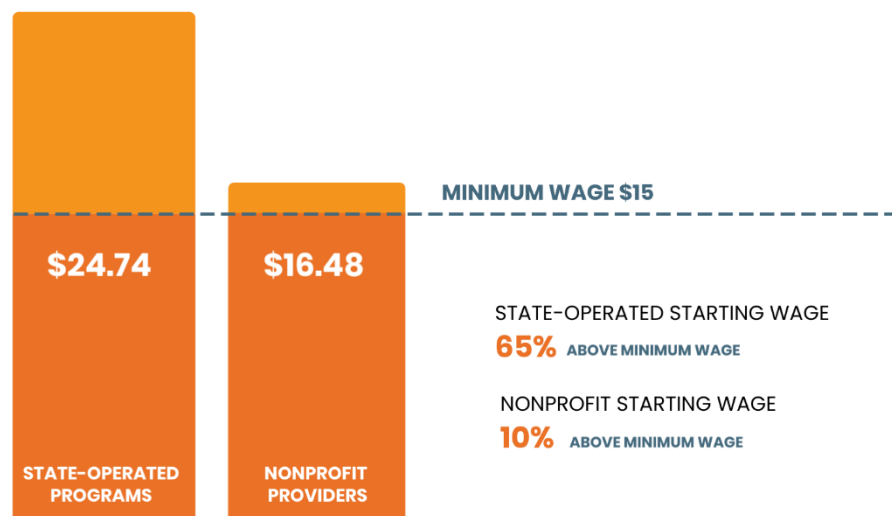
<sup>2</sup> According to the most recent NYDA provider survey, turnover statewide is almost 34% (up from 31% in July 2023).

<sup>3</sup> Also according to the most recent NYDA provider survey, statewide vacancies are at 17.47%, an increase from 16.95% in December 2022.

Without adequate funding, I/DD providers simply cannot offer competitive wages to recruit and retain the skilled direct support staff that provide the foundation of care for New Yorkers with I/DD. Without investment, this workforce emergency will continue to force service reductions, program closures, and loss of supports for people with I/DD throughout the state. The state needs to recognize that these are not minimum wage jobs and must take decisive action to reverse this trend.

## DSP Wage Inequity: Not Equal Pay for Equal Work

Today, DSPs at nonprofit providers make 30% less than their peers employed by state-operated residences and programs. New York state has provided two significant wage increases for state-operated direct care workers over the past several years, including a 13% increase in calendar year 2022, \$4,000-\$6,000 proposed increases in 2023, and an



additional \$50M announced in 2024. The state has followed through with their commitment for Direct Support Professionals in the state-operated system, but did not include the nonprofit workforce. New York provides supports and services for 130,000 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the state. Most of these services are provided by nonprofit providers like The Arc New York. All these programs are comparable. All are funded by the state, but they are not being funded equitably.

It is difficult enough to compete with for-profit national conglomerates, who offer better wages and less responsibility, and who can raise prices to support higher wages, but now the voluntary sector must compete with the state-run operations in our own field, where wages start at \$24.74 per hour on average, compared to \$16.48 at nonprofit providers.

This is not equal pay for equal work. And it is not an equitable investment in the New Yorkers with disabilities supported in different branches of the same system. It destabilizes our entire field, and places the people we support at risk.

Including the DSWE in the Enacted Budget would make progress toward wage parity and equity for direct care professionals who work diligently throughout their careers but are not compensated accordingly or recognized appropriately. We had to fight to have our workforce recognized as essential employees during the pandemic, and for them to receive the bonuses granted to critical frontline staff. This includes the DSPs, janitorial staff, cooks, drivers, nurses and other clinicians who rise to the moment every day to meet the needs of people with I/DD, implement complex health and safety protocols, and contribute to a persons' life pursuits and goals.

Direct care is often celebrated as fulfilling work. But staff's satisfaction in their work, their passion for care, and their desire to support people with I/DD will not pay their bills or provide security for their families. If we do not invest in our workforce, we will permanently lose these valuable support staff to employers who will.

While it is commendable that the governor and Division of Budget seek to solidify the "rainy day fund," for future storms, the current reserve stands at nearly \$20 billion.<sup>4</sup> Our system is in the midst of a perfect storm today, and our request to help alleviate the crisis requires a minimal investment compared to these robust reserves. Our total request for a 3.2% COLA and the Direct Support Wage Enhancement (DSWE) would equal approximately \$221.2 million State Share – leading to a total investment of approximately \$737 million with federal matching funds. This request represents less than one-quarter of 1% of the proposed NYS budget. Making that investment would generate hundreds of millions of federal dollars for New York – hundreds of millions of dollars that will be left on the table if the state neglects to commit this reasonable investment. Our investments in staff, supports, services, and third-party

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Slide 10<sup>4</sup> <https://www.budget.ny.gov/pubs/archive/fy25/ex/fy25-director-presentation.pdf>



vendors is immediately infused into our local economies.<sup>5</sup> There must be a reality check about what is happening outside the halls of the Capitol.

The state has articulated the need to increase Direct Support wages to combat the workforce crisis. The state has met this need for their own staff. You need to meet it for ours. If you do not, our programs will be reduced or eliminated due to lack of staffing and many years of progress toward community integration, choice, and deinstitutionalization will be lost. The funds are available to help correct the large pay disparity and inequity between state and voluntary DSPs and preserve quality services for New Yorkers with I/DD. Decision makers must be resolute to fight for fairness and equality on behalf of workers who are not receiving equal pay for equal work, and New Yorkers with disabilities who have long been marginalized.

## **Supporting Special Education**

Students and children with I/DD must be educated with free and appropriate supports and services in the least restrictive environment, which address their individual needs. However, these educational institutions have historically been inequitably underfunded. Due to this systemic underfunding, teacher salaries at 853 and 4410 schools are not comparable with public school opportunities, resulting in significant challenges retaining these essential educators.

Over the recent budget cycles there have been significant investments in 853 and 4410 schools. Combined, FY22 through FY24 provided a 15% trend factor and allowed a certain portion of these rate increases to be retained over time. While FY24 provided less new funding, it retained certain flexibilities.

However, given how rate methodology is applied, these increases merely represent opportunity and not reality, since education providers are unable to maintain the surpluses they need in order to plan ahead of the current school year. The provision of Interim-Plus Rates would help alleviate some of this pressure by allowing increases for current and previous school years and not having to wait years for funding through reconciliation. Additionally, the continuation of 65/35 cost screens for direct

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<sup>5</sup> <https://thearcny.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/State-District-Impact-Sheets-Assembly-2023fs.pdf>

and non-direct expenses will help alleviate pressure and give greater flexibilities for allocating spending. The FY 2025 Executive Budget provides an additional \$1.4 million for SED to study and design a new special education tuition rate-setting methodology to streamline and improve the timeliness of tuition rates for providers, bringing total available project funding to \$3.9 million. The Executive Budget also extends the deadline for SED to present its recommendations from July 1, 2025 to July 1, 2027.

We are encouraged that the governor, SED, and DOB recognizes this broken methodology in both FY24 and FY25 budgets and fully support this investment. Additional resources are always appreciated, but the extension of the study to 2027 will not address the needs today.

We have concerns that the final decision of adopting any of the studies' recommendations will be left solely to DOB. Over the years, DOB has consistently ignored the funding and policy recommendations provided by SED when it comes to 853 and 4410 schools. We should not assume this exercise will be any different. We maintain that the study and process must be open for public comment and hearings by the legislature and subject to final approval by the governor and not the bureaucracy of the DOB.

Furthermore, we are calling for a 4.3%% trend factor for state-approved special education schools in FY25, including all early intervention to support the recruitment and retention of staff and cover inflationary factors. The children who attend 853 and 4410 schools are public school children who need additional supports that their public school districts cannot provide. They should be afforded the same opportunities as all New York's children.

## **Article VII & Appropriation Recommendations**

HMH bill Part EE <sup>6</sup> allows Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) in certain OPWDD community-based settings, such as a person's private home or apartment, to perform certain nursing tasks. This flexibility would increase the availability of nursing task services outside of certified residential settings.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.budget.ny.gov/pubs/archive/fy25/ex/artvii/hmh-memo.pdf>

Increasing the availability of nursing tasks outside of certified residential settings may provide greater opportunities for more independent settings and is a worthy pursuit, but we must assess appropriate wage increases that come with increased responsibility in the healthcare space. While DSPs are fully capable and often perform similar responsibilities, there needs to be a reconciliation of what we require them to do and how they are compensated while performing tasks typically associated with higher paying professional fields.

Regarding HMM Part R, we fully support the interstate licensure compacts for medical professionals: the Interstate Medical Compact for licensed physicians and the Interstate Nurse Licensure Compact for registered nurses (RNs) and licensed practical nurses (LPNs). Additionally, we support such measures and agreements for education professionals.

On ELFA Part M, we support the sunset the State's COVID-19 Sick Leave Law as of July 31, 2024. Throughout 2020 and prior to the creation of a COVID-19 vaccine, the measures put in place by this law were some of the few ways to mitigate potential harm to our staff, the people we support, and society at large. However, following the end of the federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) declaration on May 11, 2023, this policy continued to exist as an unfunded mandate for non-profit providers. To date, our Chapters have collectively spent millions of dollars to fund this benefit. With mandatory quarantine no longer in effect, we feel it is an appropriate time to sunset this provision.

## **Moving Forward**

To be painfully clear, our workforce crisis is a threat to the people we support. Without adequate staff, we cannot guarantee their safety. And ensuring their safety is our most fundamental responsibility.

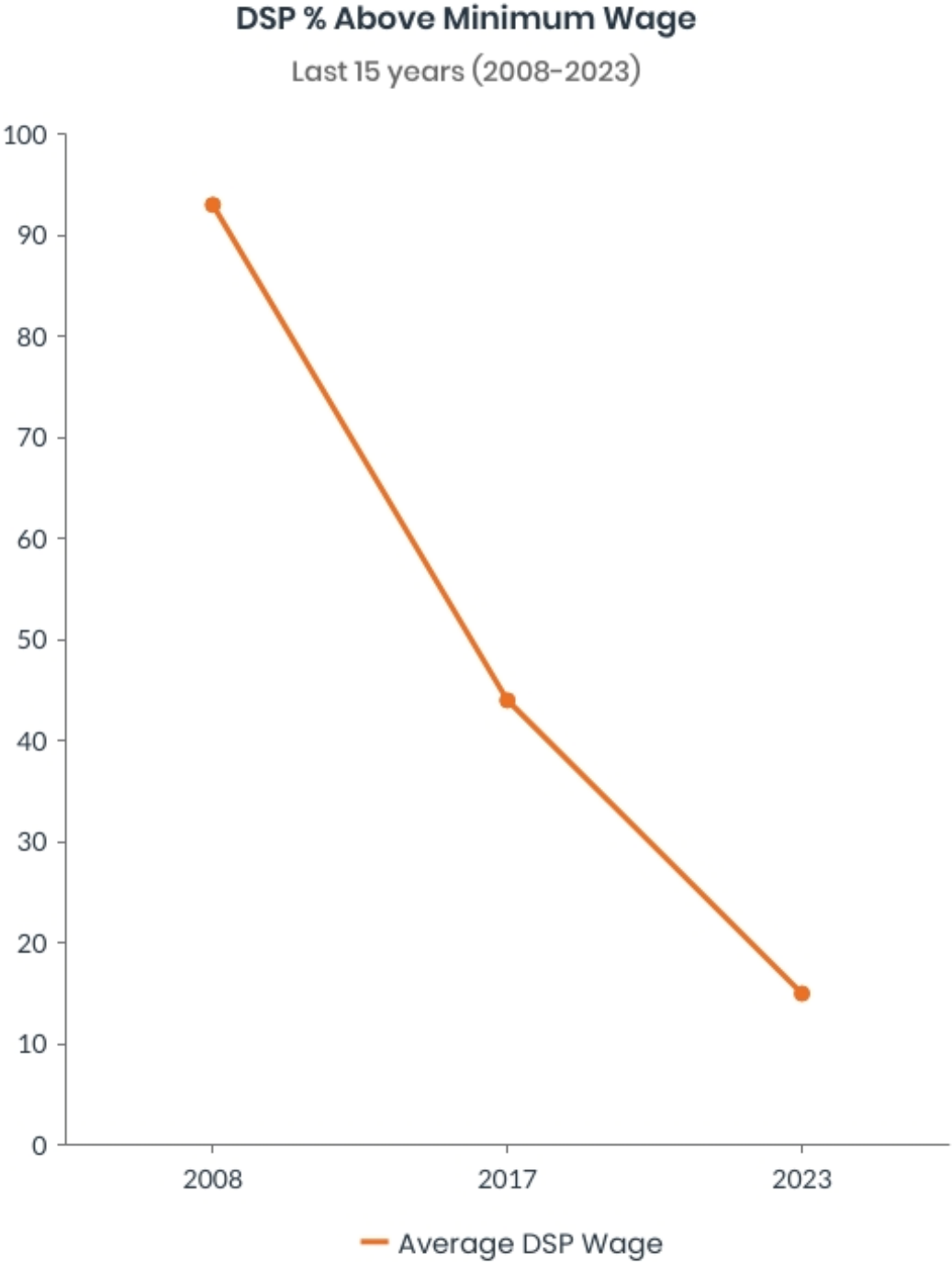
Over many years The Arc New York has consistently collaborated with the administration and legislators to develop solutions to problems we face. We mobilized to support each other and our communities. We innovated and evolved. We sought opportunity in every challenge, and today, we have hope that New York

can seize the moment and continue the foundational support accomplished over the past two years.

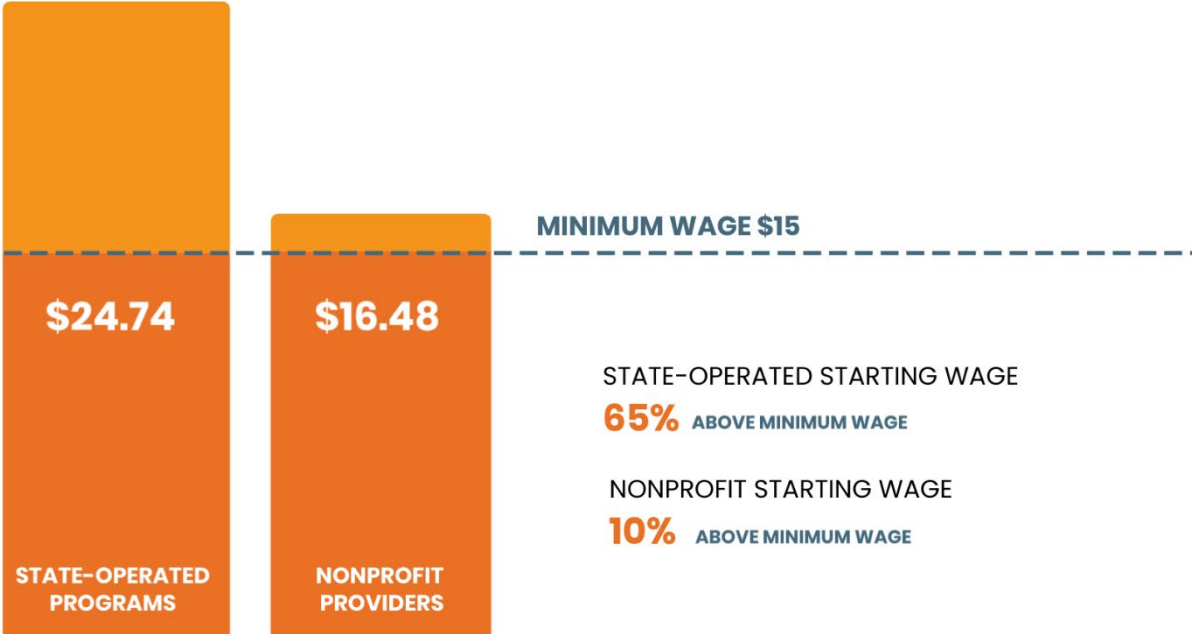
Our most vulnerable citizens require the state to honor the fundamental values of our constitution, and our ethical obligation to social justice for all New Yorkers. The services we deliver are a cornerstone of that commitment. We will continue to collaborate with government to identify solutions, implement efficiencies, fight for equity for our workforce, and sustain quality care, integration, and opportunity for New Yorkers with I/DD. To meet that goal, we must be unified in vision. We ask for your partnership and commitment in achieving this goal by including all our recommendations in the FY25 Enacted Budget.

# Appendices

# Appendix 1: Decline in Average DSP Wages Above Minimum Wage Over the Last 15 Years



# Appendix 1: Comparison of Current Non-Profit DSP Starting Wages to State-Operated DSP Starting Wages and Minimum Wage



# INVEST IN NEW YORKERS WITH DISABILITIES!



INVEST IN THE STAFF WHO SUPPORT THEM. INVEST IN THE SERVICES THEY RELY ON.

## OUR SYSTEM OF CARE

Nonprofit agencies like The Arc New York deliver supports to 85% of New Yorkers with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

These Medicaid-funded services provide support with the basic tasks of daily living, supported housing, medical and therapeutic services, job training, skill development, community connections, respite for families, and more. These essential programs ensure the health and wellbeing of New Yorkers with disabilities.

## IS A SYSTEM IN CRISIS

For more than a decade, New York state failed to make adequate investments to sustain the essential programs and services people with intellectual and developmental disabilities rely on.

Every year, inflation far outpaced investment. Systemic underfunding drove us into a critical staffing crisis and eroded New York's system of supports for its citizens with I/DD.



## THE IMPACT OF UNDERFUNDING

**20,000**

direct support positions across the state are currently unfilled

**1 IN 3**

DSPs leave their jobs every year

**38%**

of providers were forced to close or reduce programs or services in a single year

Turnover costs have risen to

**\$100,000,000** every year

\$100M that would be better spent investing in staff than replacing them





# Why are we in crisis?

In the past decade, costs more than quadrupled due to inflation, yet year after year, the state neglected to invest in I/DD services. Minimal increases made in recent years were touted as “historic investments,” yet those investments rarely covered the cost of that year’s inflation.

Without investment, wages for essential staff stagnated, our staffing crisis escalated, infrastructure deteriorated, and programs have been forced to close.

**We no longer have the resources to meet the needs of New Yorkers with I/DD.**

# What is the solution?

## 1 Invest in the field

Meaningful and ongoing investment in our service system is necessary to reverse years of underfunding and ensure quality supports for New Yorkers with I/DD are available today and sustained in the future.

## 2 Invest in the workforce

Direct support staff are the foundation of services for New Yorkers with I/DD. Without them, we cannot operate programs or meet the needs of people we support. Investment is necessary to raise wages and support recruitment, retention and development of skilled staff.

## The Issue of Inequity

Nonprofit providers are funded by Medicaid through the state, and deliver services to 85% of New Yorkers with I/DD.

While wages for direct support staff at voluntary providers stagnated, the state provided significant increases for staff doing the same work at state operated providers.

**Today, DSPs at nonprofit providers make 30% LESS than DSPs working for the state**

This inequity further destabilized our essential workforce.

## The Arc New York is Calling on State Leaders to:

- 1 Include a 3.2% COLA for I/DD Providers in the 2024-25 Budget
- 2 Establish a Direct Support Wage Enhancement (DSWE)

### What is the COLA?

The annual Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) is a planned increase in state program budgets, intended to increase funding to adjust appropriately for inflation and the rising cost of operations.

**A 3.2% COLA would compensate for this year’s inflation.**

**It would merely meet rising costs and keep our system from slipping further.**

### What is the DSWE?

The DSWE is a targeted workforce investment. It would allocate \$4,000 per eligible employee, to increase the hourly pay for frontline staff who deliver care and support to people with I/DD.

**The DSWE is a necessary investment to stabilize our workforce and recruit and retain skilled staff.**



## WHAT IS A DSP?

A Direct Support Professional, or DSP, is a skilled professional responsible for the care and support of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The varied roles of DSPs involve many types of routine and emergency supports, including:

- first aid & CPR,
- medication administration
- meal preparation & feeding
- personal hygiene
- transportation
- communication
- behavioral de-escalation
- money management
- work & life skill development

These dedicated staff are the foundation of our system of supports and services. Their essential work facilitates independence and inclusion for New Yorkers with I/DD.

## What is the DSWE?

The Direct Support Wage Enhancement, or DSWE, is a targeted workforce investment intended to bring the wages of Direct Care Staff more in line with their skill and responsibility. There is currently a bill proposal to enact the DSWE, and we are calling for funding to support it in the 2024-25 NYS Budget.

## How much funding would the DSWE provide?

Through the proposed DSWE, provider agencies would receive \$4,000 per eligible employee to enhance the hourly rate of pay for staff who have direct care and support responsibilities for individuals with I/DD.

The total amount of funding would be determined by the number of eligible employees. A provider with 10 employees would receive \$40,000 in DSWE funds. A provider with 100 employees would receive \$400,000 in DSWE funds.

This would equate to an average increase of approximately \$2 an hour for direct care staff.

## Would funds go directly to staff?

The DSWE would provide agencies with a pool of money equal to \$4,000 per eligible employee. These funds must be used to enhance the base pay and benefits of direct care staff.

Each provider would determine the best way to distribute the funds. Some possible approaches include an across the board increase for all staff, targeted increases for specific positions, or to help address wage compression for long-time employees. DSWE funds would also support the additional benefit costs associated with pay increases.

## Is the DSWE a bonus?

The DSWE is not a one-time bonus. It would provide annual funding to permanently increase the base wages of direct care staff.

# WHY DO WE NEED THE DSWE?

## Years of Underfunding

New York state failed to make adequate investments in services and supports for New Yorkers with I/DD for more than a decade. Over the last 10 years, inflation rose nearly 30%, but investment in our system only increased by 10.5%. This systemic underfunding eroded our workforce and created a critical staffing crisis.

## Stagnating Wages

More than 90% of funding for the field comes from Medicaid and other government support. The state establishes rates for individual programs and services.

Providers set salary levels for DSPs, however the amount they are able to pay is constrained by state funding and state-established program rates. All program operations, including staff wages and benefits, must be funded within the state rate structure. Without additional investment, providers cannot meaningfully increase wages.

**15 years ago, the average DSP wage was nearly TWICE minimum wage. Today, the average DSP wage is barely 10% above minimum wage.**

## WITHOUT STAFF WE CANNOT PROVIDE SERVICES

**20,000**

critical direct care positions are currently unfilled

**ONE IN THREE**

DSPs leave their jobs every year



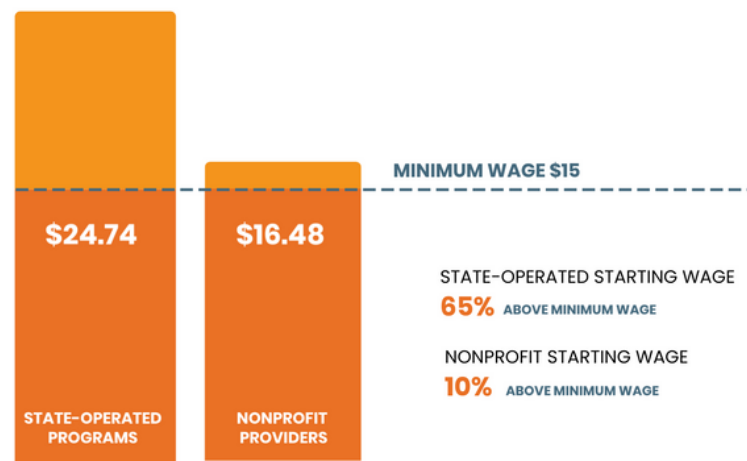
## The Issue of Inequity

New York state provides supports and services to 140,000 people with I/DD. Nonprofit providers deliver 85% of these services. The other 15% of people are supported in state-run programs.

Nonprofit and state-operated providers are all funded through Medicaid and overseen by OPWDD. The two sectors work in partnership to support New Yorkers with I/DD.

While wages for direct support staff at nonprofit providers stagnated, the state provided significant increases for staff doing the same work at state operated providers.

**Today, DSPs at nonprofit providers make 30% LESS than DSPs working for the state**



# DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

THE FOUNDATION OF SERVICES FOR NEW YORKERS WITH DISABILITIES



## HIGHLY SKILLED

### DSPs Are Skilled Professionals

DSPs are trained professionals, responsible for the care and support of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They attend to the comprehensive social, emotional, physical and psychological needs of people they support.



The varied roles of DSPs involve many types of routine and emergency supports, including:

- first aid & CPR,
- medication administration
- meal preparation & feeding
- personal hygiene
- transportation
- communication
- behavioral de-escalation
- money management
- work & life skill development

These dedicated staff are the foundation of our system of supports and services. **Their essential work facilitates independence and inclusion for New Yorkers with I/DD.**

Yet, a disturbing trend has made it nearly impossible to recruit and retain the skilled staff necessary to provide quality care and support for people with I/DD.

**These highly skilled positions have become minimum wage jobs.**

## RAPIDLY DEVALUED

### These are NOT minimum wage jobs

The role of a DSP requires an intense level of skill and responsibility, but their work is no longer valued accordingly.

**15 years ago, the average DSP wage was nearly TWICE minimum wage.**

The current average starting wage for a DSP at a nonprofit provider in New York state is \$16.48 — **only 10% above minimum wage.**

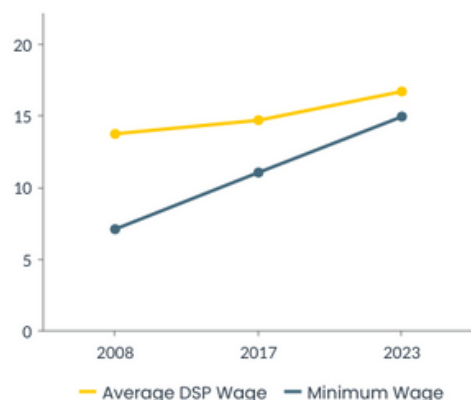
#### DSP Wage % Above Minimum Wage

The downward trend over 15 years (2008-2023)



#### DSP Wage Increase vs Minimum Wage Increase

Change over last 15 years (2008-2023)



# THE CRISIS

## WITHOUT STAFF, WE CANNOT PROVIDE SUPPORT

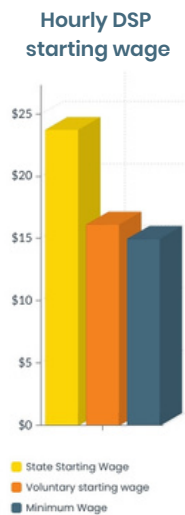
### Years of Underfunding

New York state failed to make adequate investments in services and supports for New Yorkers with I/DD for more than a decade. Over the last 10 years, investment in the I/DD field rarely even covered the year's inflation. This systemic underfunding eroded our workforce and created a critical staffing crisis.

### The Issue of Inequity

New York state provides supports and services to 140,000 people with I/DD. Nonprofit providers deliver 85% of these services. The other 15% of people are supported in state-operated programs.

Nonprofit and state-operated providers are all funded through Medicaid and overseen by OPWDD. The two sectors work in partnership to support New Yorkers with I/DD.



While wages for direct support staff at nonprofit providers stagnated, the state provided significant increases for staff doing the same work at state operated providers.

**Today, DSPs at nonprofit providers make 30% LESS than DSPs working for the state**

We can no longer compete with state programs to recruit and retain staff. Without quality staff, nonprofit providers cannot fulfill our role in the state's system of supports.

### THE IMPACT

**20,000**

**critical direct care positions are currently unfilled**

**ONE IN THREE**

**DSPs leave their jobs every year**

**The annual cost of staff turnover costs has risen to**

**\$100,000,000**

**38% of nonprofit providers closed or reduced programs in a single year**



## NEW YORK MUST DO BETTER

### INVEST IN THE SYSTEM

- Include a 3.2% COLA in the NYS BUDGET

### INVEST IN THE WORKFORCE

- Establish a Direct Support Wage Enhancement

INVEST IN *me!*

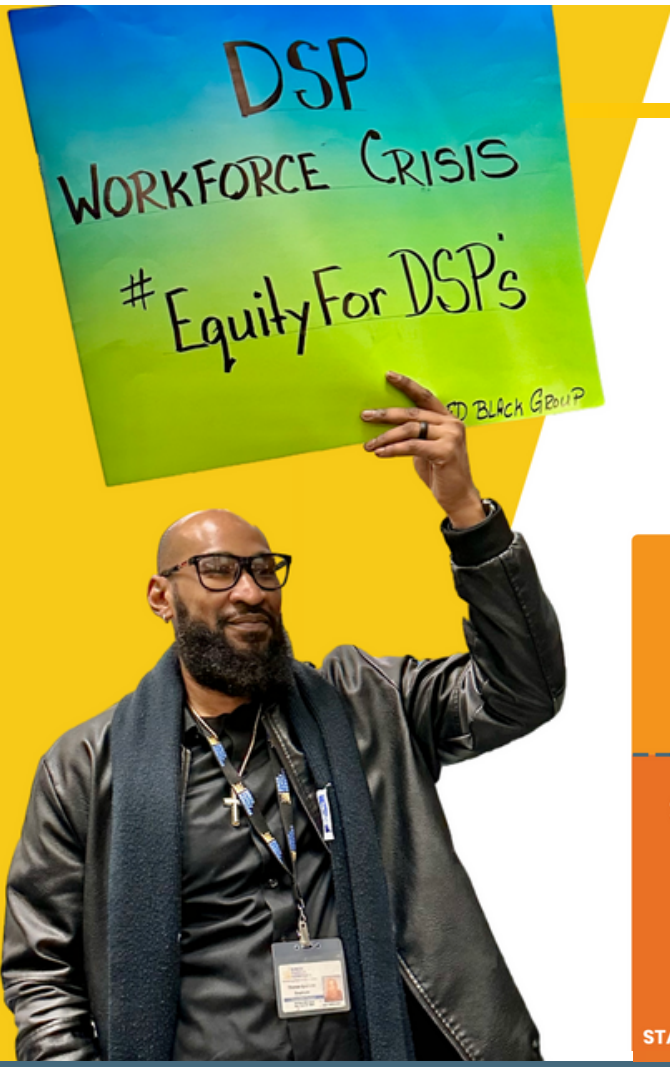
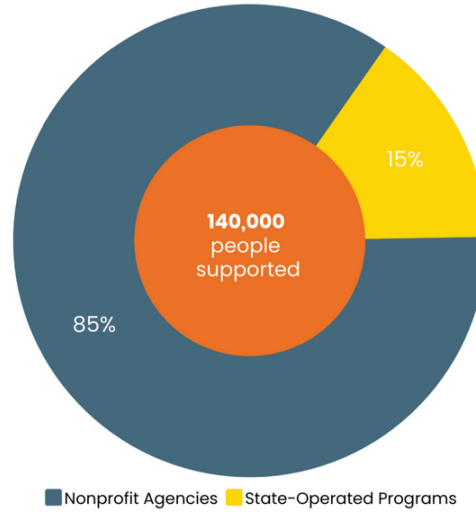
# DEMAND EQUITY FOR DSPs!



**NEW YORK'S STATE AND NONPROFIT PROVIDERS WORK IN PARTNERSHIP TO SUPPORT ALL NEW YORKERS WITH I/DD.**

New York state provides supports and services to 140,000 citizens with I/DD.

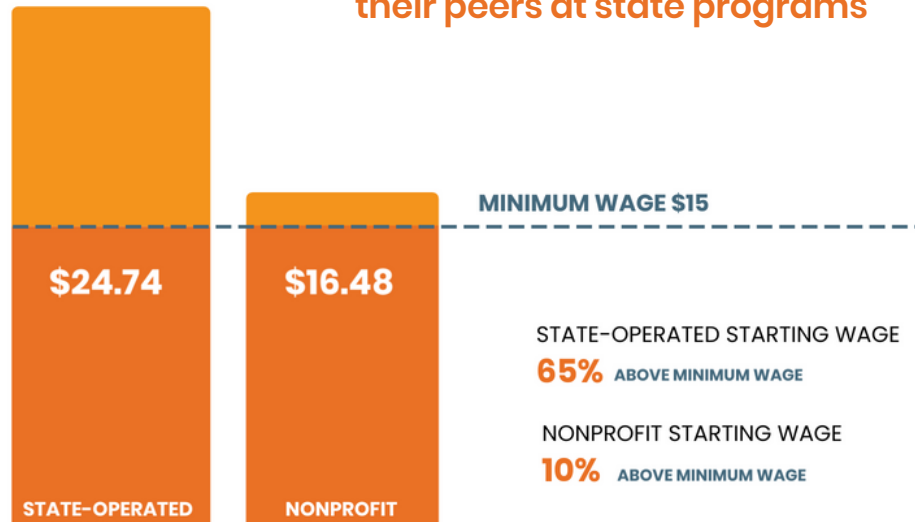
Both state and nonprofit agencies are funded through Medicaid and overseen by OPWDD.



## NEW YORK'S DSPs DESERVE EQUITY

While wages for direct support staff at nonprofit providers stagnated, the state provided significant increases for staff doing the same work at state-operated providers.

**Today, DSPs at nonprofit providers make 30% LESS than their peers at state programs**



**INCLUDE A 3.2% COLA AND A DIRECT SUPPORT WAGE ENHANCEMENT IN THE NYS BUDGET**

# NYS OPWDD FACILITIES

VS

# NYS NONPROFIT AGENCIES

## DSP JOB DESCRIPTION

Provide supports & services



Advocate, encourage, guide, and teach individuals in expressing personal choice



Ensure community integration



Assist individuals with personal hygiene care, toileting, dressing, lifts and transfers



Help individuals participate in games and recreational programs



Coach and encourage individuals in developing daily life skills



Work with staff to carry out care plans



Administer medication in accordance with special instructions



Assist with food and meal preparation, monitoring and meal modeling



## DSP JOB DESCRIPTION

Provide supports & services

Advocate, encourage, guide, and teach individuals to express personal choice and lead fulfilling lives

Follow care plans to integrate into the community

Provide daily care needs, including personal hygiene care, toileting, dressing, lifts and transfers

Help individuals participate in recreational programs and activities

Coach and encourage individuals in developing daily life skills

Work with staff to carry out care plans

Administer medication in accordance with special instructions and AMAP training

Assist with food and meal preparation, monitoring and meal modeling

**+50%** **STARTING WAGE**  
**\$24.74/hour**



**STARTING WAGE**  
**\$16.48/hour**