

INARF CEO Toolkit for 2021 Legislative Session

To Prep for a Meeting with your Legislator

- Have your data ready
 - Number of DSPs employed
 - Average DSP wage
 - DSP Vacancy rate
 - DSP Turnover rate
- Have a story on-hand about a DSP going above and beyond
- Have a story about how the workforce crisis has affected your organization and the individuals that you serve?
- Do you currently have a waitlist for services or are you turning away clients because of staffing challenges?
- What federal funding did your organization receive?
 - Did your organization use it for DSP bonuses, hero pay, etc
- Biggest competitors for jobs (retail, fast food, local industry)
- What non-financial strategies does your organization use to recruit, retain, and/or support DSPs
- Review the [INARF Talking Points](#) (linked and below)

During the Meeting with your Legislator

- The Ask: \$10M per year of the budget, total \$20M
- \$10M per year equates to an approximate \$1/hour more in wages
- How can Legislators help
 - Speak up in Caucus and encourage other legislators to support the ask
 - If the legislator is not on Ways and Means or Appropriations Committees, ask them to speak to those legislators on the committees
 - Speak to leadership
 - Talk about DSP wages at town halls and third house forums in their district
 - Visit your organization and post about it on their social media

After the Meeting with your Legislator

- Send a thank you and follow-up with any questions left unanswered
- Report back to [Katy Stafford-Cunningham](#). We will use this to follow up and ensure they do what they said they would.
 - What did they say?
 - What was their response to the fiscal ask?
 - What did they commit to do?
 - Did they have questions INARF should include in our talking points?

Direct Support Professional Wage Increase Fact Sheet

Background:

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are people who help Hoosiers with disabilities achieve greater independence and high-quality lives by assisting with every day activities including personal care, medicine administration, employment, meal preparation, and leisure. In 2017, the Indiana General Assembly appropriated \$20 million over the biennium to increase DSP wages. The 2017 legislative appropriation increased the statewide average wage from \$10 to \$11.36 per hour in 2020. Despite this, providers cannot recruit and retain staff – a situation made even worse by the pandemic. Our goal during the 2021 legislative session is to obtain an additional appropriation to raise the average Direct Support Professional (DSP) wage. **INARF is requesting a Medicaid rate increase for waiver services provided by DSPs to increase DSP compensation.** Of that increase, a provider would be responsible for passing through 85% of the increase to DSPs in the form of compensation and benefits, and the remaining 15% can be used for employer administration and overhead costs.

Talking Points

- In order to attract and retain DSPs, local providers need an appropriation over the biennium that amounts to an average statewide DSP wage of \$15/hr
- Language has been shared with House Ways and Means members and staff to obtain the appropriation.

| Projected Average Wage | \$12.25/hour Average Wage (Approximately \$1 increase) | \$13/hour Average Wage | \$15/hour Average Wage |
|--|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Rate Increase Needed | 4% | 7% | 15% |
| State Medicaid Appropriation Needed Per Year of the Biennial Budget | \$10,000,000 per year | \$18,600,000 per year | \$40,000,000 per year |
| Federal Medicaid Match | \$21,000,000 per year | \$36,000,000 per year | \$77,100,000 per year |

- Medicaid is the sole source of funding for waiver services – wages are dictated by rates
- The 2017 legislative appropriation aimed at raising DSP wages worked and drove an increase in the statewide average wage from \$10 to \$11.36 per hour in 2020.
- Providers have taken innovative steps to recruit, retain, and support DSPs.
- However, the DSP turnover rate is still an average of 51%
- Providers cannot recruit new staff, resulting in an average 23% vacancy rate
- All State Medicaid funds receive a 66% federal match
- Additional funds would increase reimbursement rates for certain waiver services. 85% of the increased rates would be required to be passed through to DSP compensation to attract and retain qualified workers

- Retail and warehouse employees make more per hour than DSPs providing life-sustaining services (e.g. Target Stores' starting pay is \$13 per hour; Amazon's minimum wage is \$15 per hour).
- The typical DSP in Indiana is a single mom, age 35, with 2 kids
- High quality staff must be able to be recruited and retained in order to ensure the health and safety of the individuals being served.
- Without DSPs, many individuals with disabilities would have to live without life-sustaining services that grow and enrich their lives. These Hoosiers deserve better.

Request:

Please support a Medicaid appropriation to increase DSP compensation and ensure that Hoosiers with disabilities continue to receive the life-sustaining services they need.

Updated 1/6/2021

Innovative Approaches for Recruiting, Retaining, and Supporting Direct Support Professionals

Background:

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are people who help Hoosiers with disabilities achieve greater independence and high-quality lives by assisting with every day activities including personal care, medicine administration, employment, meal preparation, and leisure. In 2017, the Indiana General Assembly appropriated \$20 million over the biennium to increase DSP wages. The 2017 legislative appropriation increased the statewide average wage from \$10 to \$11.36 per hour in 2020. Despite the wage increase and the numerous initiatives providers have implemented to address staffing challenges, providers cannot recruit and retain staff – the state-wide average DSP turnover rate is 51% and the average DSP vacancy rate is 23%.

Examples of provider innovation include (but are not limited to):

Financial Incentives:

- Referral bonus of \$1,800 paid in installments based on the tenure of the referred staff member
- Providing new hire bonus of \$1,000
- Offering flexible timing for planned annual compensation increases to better meet employee needs
- Paid Time Off buyback program where DSPs are able to receive 75% cash equivalent of their accrued PTO
- 4% merit-based pay increase to support additional responsibilities caused by COVID-19
- Implementing a moratorium on raising insurance costs for DSPs in 2021
- DSP quarterly reviews where they could be eligible for a performance-based bonus
- Tuition assistance program
- COVID-19 paid leave
- Staff that take extra initiative receive spot bonuses or funds that can be used to purchase items from the provider's employee store
- Pass through of DDRS Day Services sustainability grant funding to provider staff (including DSPs)
- DSPs that work nights and/or weekends receive a shift differential
- Giving DSPs gas gift cards to show appreciation during DSP Recognition Week
- Weekly pay for all employees (including DSPs) to better meet employees' cash flow needs

Career and Training Support

- During orientation, the provider's executive team connects with new hires to welcome them to the organization and encourage them to share their support needs as DSPs
- Providing additional training and a career track for an agency's most successful DSPs
- Waiving the degree requirement for DSP supervisors to increase the number of DSPs that can be promoted to supervisory positions
- Enhanced training for DSPs to further develop their skills in crisis prevention and intervention, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) & nursing
- Training retreats for all levels of the organization
- Using Pre-Employment Transition Services (a Vocational Rehabilitation program) to train high school students to become DSPs
- Offering orientation on weekends to accommodate potential employees who are unable to attend traditional orientation during the week
- Offering alternate formats for training such as pre-recorded webinar sessions

HR Support

- A clinic that provides free checkups, appointments, and medications for all agency staff (including DSPs) with insurance and their families
- Personalized retention campaign where supervisors reach out to DSPs in appreciation for their continued service
- Social media campaign where successful, long tenured DSPs are recognized and share their stories and provide advice to other DSPs
- On site flu shot clinic day
- Allowing staff to take time off without pay versus using their vacation time
- Hiring DSP liaison staff that are focused on listening to and supporting DSPs
- 24 hour call center to support DSPs who have questions or need on-demand assistance
- Implementing remote technological supports to supplement and/or replace direct staffing
- Management team provides oven ready family meals to send home with staff (including DSPs)
- Placing signage recognizing the organization's DSPs in buildings and other high visibility areas
- Human Resources staff attending job fairs, community resource fairs and other community fairs to engage potential employees

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