DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL (DSP) STABILIZATON FUNDING

Not-for-profit OPWDD funded provider agencies deliver about 85% of the needed day-to-day services to the 130,000 people with developmental disabilities in NYS. Stabilization funding is necessary to help these organizations provide a living wage for their tens of thousands of professional direct care staff (DSPs) and other support staff. More than 90 percent of the funding comes from government to pay salaries for staff who care for New Yorkers with autism, serious brain injury, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities and have the most important jobs at our organizations. The current low wages have led to a crisis for attracting and retaining staff, destabilizing the workforce and threatening the ability to sustain the supports people with disabilities and their families require.

Caring for people with complex needs is a rewarding yet difficult job which requires a high level of responsibility and skill. Years of government funding freezes and sparse increases mean our employees no longer earn a living wage. We were once an employer of choice and now we can't compete with fast food restaurants and big box stores.

CONTINUE MINIMUM WAGE FUNDING

New York State has begun to provide funding to transition employees who work with people with developmental disabilities up to the new minimum wage and this phase-in funding must be continued and included in subsequent state budgets. But these are not minimum wage jobs!

PROPOSED 2017-2018 STATE BUDGET STABILIZATION FUNDING

To address the current 9.3% vacancy rate and 23.07% one-year turnover rate for professional direct care and other support staff, government not-for-profit provider stabilization funding will transition these staff to an hourly **living wage** that exceeds the minimum wage over the next six years. When the stabilization funding is fully implemented, average salaries will be $17.72 in the NYC/ Long Island region and $15.54 in other parts of NYS.

COST OF PROPOSAL

An investment of $45 million in additional state funding per year, reaching $270 million in the sixth year, is needed to achieve a living wage.
(Funds to be matched by an equal amount of federal Medicaid funds)

The total investment to achieve the living wage will equate to a 2.3% annual increase each year for the next 6 years for OPWDD services provided by not-for-profit agencies.

LIVING WAGE CALCUATION

The living wage model is a market-based approach that draws upon geographically specific expenditure data related to a family's basic needs, such as food, child care, health insurance, housing, and transportation. **The model shows the minimum full time salary for meeting the basic necessities, without needing public assistance or suffering housing or food insecurity.**

#bFair 2DirectCare
#bFair2DirectCare
bfair2directcare@gmail.com

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