

# 2024-25 NYS Budget Priorities

## INVEST IN NEW YORKERS WITH I/DD

Non-profit providers that support 85% of New Yorkers with I/DD have not received the investment from the State to address the decade's long workforce crisis that impacts the quality and availability of services to people with I/DD.



**85% of individuals with I/DD in NY are supported by non-profit providers**



**Non-profit provider agencies are dealing with a crippling 30% annual workforce turnover rate**



**Nonprofit provider agency staff vacancy rates across the state has increased to over 17% since 2022**

### WORKFORCE INVESTMENT

#### DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

**Permanent investment in Direct Support Professionals' (DSP) salaries is essential to recruit and retain staff for the future viability of the field.** As highly skilled professionals dedicated to the essential care of individuals with I/DD, DSPs take on numerous critical responsibilities to uplift the safety, productivity, and well-being of the entire I/DD community.

DSPs are responsible for providing important practical & administrative support such as first aid & CPR, administering medication, meal preparation or transport facilitation, as well as, attending to the comprehensive social, emotional, & psychological needs of those they care for. Whether it's teaching personal care skills and money management or directing crisis de-escalation, DSPs are required to be well trained, skilled, and constantly prepared for all the essential life-support services their profession demands.

Through their fundamental support & services, DSPs are integral pillars of support for New York's I/DD community and are crucial in ensuring that over 130,000 New Yorkers with I/DD can live their highest quality of life.

#### DIRECT SUPPORT WAGE ENHANCEMENT (DSWE)

**NYDA is recommending the establishment of a new Direct Support Wage Enhancement (DSWE) as part of the SFY 2025 New York State budget.** Through the proposed DSWE, provider agencies would receive an annual funding allocation of \$4,000 per eligible employee to be used for the purpose of enhancing the hourly rate of pay for all staff that have direct care/support responsibilities for individuals with I/DD.

The proposed \$4,000 increase equates to approximately \$2.19/hour for a full-time employee. This investment in the critical workforce is essential to recruiting and retaining staff to work for non-profit provider agencies that support people with I/DD. Over the past two years, OPWDD has provided significant increases to their own DSPs workforce who provide the same supports and services to the same population. Currently OPWDD employed DSPs make up to \$10/per hour more for the same job.

Therefore, the inclusion of the DSWE is critical to provide an equitable increase to employees who are providing the same services to the majority of people with I/DD in New York State.

**INCLUDE: ESTABLISHMENT OF A DIRECT SUPPORT WAGE ENHANCEMENT AS PART OF FY25 EXECUTIVE BUDGET**

## SYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY

### COLA - 3.2% FOR SFY 2025

Due to the inflationary growth that has occurred over the past year, not-for-profit provide agencies' operating costs have subsequently increased accordingly necessitating a 3.2% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) in the upcoming Executive Budget.

This Medicaid rate increase is essential for non-profit provider agencies to maintain operations given the increased cost of operations.

Cost increases related to mandated fringe benefits, repairs and maintenance, utilities, food, supplies, transportation, and insurance over the past year has resulted in financial pressure on agencies. Additionally, since the I/DD provider agencies are solely funded by Medicaid, **agencies are unable to increase reimbursement for services to compensate for increased costs of operations.**

**INCLUDE 3.2% COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT (COLA) TO PROVIDER AGENCY RATES IN FY25 EXECUTIVE BUDGET**

NYDA provider organizations found that high levels of staff turnover costing the state's nonprofit disability service provider \$100.5M annually. This cost directly hampers funding essential supports and services for New Yorkers with disabilities. **The 2023 NYDA survey results reflect staffing data as of July 2023.**

It is important to note that the Draft OPWDD Strategic Plan highlights the 2019 NCI Staff Stability Survey, which was published in January 2021 and cites vacancy rates and turnover rates, "11.9 percent of full-time positions were vacant, and 17.5 percent of part-time positions were vacant. The turnover rate for DSPs was 36.2%..." The July 2023 NYDA survey shows that statewide staff vacancy rates still remain at crippling amounts that are severely impacting the services and care that provider agencies can provide to those who need it the most. **Notably, the July 2023 NYDA survey also collected wage information for DSPs from provider agencies, which showed the following results.**

Region	Average Statewide Staff Vacancy Rate	Average Statewide Annual Turnover Rate
Region 1 (NYC METRO)	17.77%	26.65%
Region 2 (Hudson Valley)	18.42%	21.16%
Region 3 (Capital District)	19.19%	34.73%
Region 4 (Western, Central & North Country)	14.93%	38.08%
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>17.22%</b>	<b>31.09%</b>

Average DSP Starting Wage at Non-Profit Provider Agency	\$16.13
Region 1 (NYC METRO)	\$16.45
Region 2 (Hudson Valley)	\$15.78
Region 3 (Capital District)	\$16.13
Region 4 (Western, Central and North Country)	\$16.15

State Operated Hourly Starting Wage	
Upstate	\$23
Downstate	\$25