



Steering Committee

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The New Jersey Association of Community Providers

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New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities

The Family Support Coalition of New Jersey

The New Jersey Statewide Self Advocacy Network

The Statewide Regional Family Support Planning Councils

FAQ: \$20 Million Appropriation for DSPs in FY18

Following the distribution of Fiscal Year 2018 funds, the Coalition for a DSP Living Wage received many questions about our campaign and how the funds will be delivered to Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) who provide the hands-on assistance to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in the community. With that mind, we offer this FAQ to provide additional clarification:

Q. What did the Coalition for a DSP Living Wage advocate for in FY18?

A. In FY18, the Coalition advocated for a \$72 million appropriation for a \$1.25 an hour wage increase for DSPs who work with people with I/DD.

Q. What did the final FY18 budget actually include?

A. Although the FY18 budget did **NOT** include funding for a \$1.25 an hour increase, we did secure a **one-time sum** of \$20 million that was distributed via the Departments of Human Services, Children and Families and Labor and Workforce Development. Most employers will give this funding as a bonus, **NOT A WAGE INCREASE**, but DSPs should speak to their employer for details. It's important to note that this initial \$20 million was a critical first step in raising awareness among policymakers for the need for the state to make a long-term investment in the DSP workforce by enacting sustainable DSP living wage in NJ.

Q. Who received money as a result of the \$20 million appropriation?

A. Direct Support Professionals who work with children or adults with I/DD. This includes DSPs who are employed by a contracted provider or by an individual who self-directs his/her services. However, there is a small group of agencies who were not identified as part of the budget language because the three departments must follow **exactly** what the budget language says. The Coalition for a DSP Living Wage was not involved in making this decision and thus does not have a record of nor the ability to know which specific agencies are in this category. Our goal is to prevent this issue from happening again in FY19 (see Budget Fact Sheet)

Q. What is the Coalition advocating for in FY19?

A. Because funding in FY18 did not go toward a wage increase, we intend to keep up the fight in FY19 to raise salaries by \$1.25 an hour for Direct Support Professionals. We are asking the Governor and the Legislature to support a rate increase, for the rates that are connected to DSP delivered services, and that are funded through the Division of Developmental Disabilities within the Department of Human Services. This amounts to a \$72 million appropriation.

Q. What is the Long Term Goal of the Coalition?

A. The goal of the Coalition is to bring the DSP starting salary to a \$16.75 per hour living wage by 2023. To that end, we need to secure rate increases in FY19 through FY23 to raise salaries by \$1.25 every year for the next five years. This is a goal that we can only accomplish by working together.