

# Building a Sustainable Workforce to Support People with Disabilities



Minnesotans with disabilities make up more than 10% of Minnesota's population. Their goals, passions and unique abilities thrive with support from Direct Support Professionals (DSPs).

**DSPs are skilled members of our community who empower Minnesotans with disabilities to live their best lives. But this dignified profession is in crisis.**

- **Underpaid:** The average hourly wage for direct care is \$13.15 which is 17% less than jobs requiring similar skills and experience.
- **Understaffed:** With 18,500 current openings within our workforce of 93,000 the profession has a 19.3% vacancy rate, one of the largest in the state.
- **Under pressure:** 50% of DSPs stay in their position for less than a year.

*\*Data based on Department of Human Services 2019 Cost Reporting Pilot Labor Market Reporting Preliminary Findings*

Last session, legislators made a critical investment in the disability services workforce by beginning to address the 17% DSP wage gap.

The Competitive Workforce Factor, which was passed in 2019 at 4.7%, will equate to an average 3% to 4% increase in the dollars individuals receive for accessing services, the majority of which go to staff wages and benefits.

This is a significant step forward in strengthening the DSP workforce. However, there are additional steps that can improve the wages and benefits of DSPs, enhancing the competitiveness of these positions in a tightening labor market.

**Our 2020 legislative proposals present options for legislators to continue making direct support positions more attractive to current and prospective caregivers.**



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Building off the **foundational** step legislators took last year by establishing the Competitive Workforce Factor, there are additional measures legislators can take that will enhance the wages and benefits of the DSPs that are vital in supporting Minnesotans with disabilities in living their best lives.

- Implement regular adjustments to the Competitive Workforce Factor to reduce the wage gap that exists between DSPs and comparable occupations, increasing the CWF by 2% on an ongoing basis. **(HF 3551/SF3353)**
- Continue to refine the Disability Waiver Rate System so it is an accurate reflection of market costs by using most currently available data. **(HF 3551/SF 3353)**
- Study and make recommendations on how the Disability Waiver Rate System can be responsive to the impacts of local and statewide minimum wage increases. **(HF 3551/SF 3353)**
- Establish a tax credit for DSPs to enhance recruitment and retention of this critical profession. **(HF 4350/SF 4241)**
- Create a Pilot Project that would develop a Direct Care Service Corps for Personal Care Assistants and Direct Support Professionals. **(HF 2182/ SF 2080)**



## DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

Empowering people with disabilities  
to live their best lives



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