

# Direct Care Workers Provide Essential Support: **We MUST Invest in Them TODAY**



Direct care workers, including Direct Support Professionals or DSPs, provide critical services to people with disabilities and older adults. But, they do not earn what they should for what they do. This is because of decades of no funding to support raising their wages. Many leave their positions quickly because of the low pay. This leaves people with disabilities and their families without essential support. We must invest in funding for direct care workers so that they receive fair pay and so everyone can get the help they need.

## **Direct care workers do many things, like supporting people with:**

- Getting around their home or community
- Working in their community
- Communicating with others
- Completing household tasks
- Building strong relationships
- Personal care and hygiene like bathing, toileting, and getting dressed
- Taking important medications
- And much more!



Direct care workers may have many titles.

### **People may call them:**

- Direct Support Professionals or DSPs
- Personal care attendants
- Home care workers

## What is the problem?

The wages that direct care workers get paid are too low.

On average, direct care workers get paid less than \$11 per hour.

Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) pays for most of the support that direct care workers provide.

The federal and state governments pay for Medicaid HCBS.

The federal and state governments have not increased how much funding is given to support HCBS enough.

The funding levels have often not been increased in decades.



### The wages do not account for:

- The wages that people can make in other similar jobs
- The skills it takes to be a direct care worker
- The actual costs to provide direct care to people

Most direct care workers cannot work at such a low rate.

And, they should not have to.

They cannot pay for what they and their family need.

As a result, many quit.

Each year, over half of all direct care workers leave their jobs.

This creates uncertainty for the people who receive support from direct care workers.

People with disabilities, older adults, and their families must start over when a worker leaves.

They must find and train a new direct care worker on how to support them.

But, they may not be able to find people who are willing to provide care at the wage that direct care workers receive.

And, direct care workers may come and go quickly when a higher paid job comes along.

As a result, people must often rely on unpaid family caregivers or go without essential care.

Many family caregivers are also getting older and may need care themselves.

Or, they may need additional support to make sure their family members get the services they need.



## **We must act now to invest in our direct care workers!**

The Better Care Better Jobs Act calls for a \$400 billion investment in Medicaid HCBS.

This funding would give more people with disabilities a chance to live in the community.

And, it would help make direct care jobs better, raise wages, and create more direct care jobs.

### **These changes would:**

- Allow families not to have to rely so much on unpaid family caregivers,
- Create an HCBS system with enough workers to provide needed services,
- Lower the turnover rates for direct care workers, and
- Allow people with disabilities, older adults, and their families to get the consistent care they need to live their lives fully and independently.

Learn more and act now to help make this change at:

[\*\*TheArc.org/COVID19recovery.\*\*](https://www.TheArc.org/COVID19recovery)