



Private Providers
Association of Texas

Protecting the Vulnerable: The Urgent Need for Equitable Support in IDD Services

Background

While an estimated 6 million Texans experience a disability, with many of these being age-related disabilities acquired well into adulthood, an estimated 500,000 Texans fall into the most vulnerable disability group, Texans with intellectual or developmental disabilities. People with intellectual disabilities¹ often struggle to communicate their needs and are unable to recognize dangerous situations, increasing their risk of abuse, neglect, and social isolation. Many rely on paid caregivers and natural supports, but inadequate resources heighten their vulnerability.

88th Legislative Session Decisions

In recognition of these distinct vulnerabilities, the 88th Legislature raised wages for direct support professionals (DSPs) working in Medicaid state-operated IDD residential facilities known as State Supported Living Centers (SSLCs) to \$17.71 per hour with a planned increase to \$19.16 per hour, effective September 2024. DSPs conducting equivalent functions in community group homes or individual residences, however, were swept into a broad category of attendants for aging and physical disability services, where wages were only increased to \$10.60 per hour.

Urgent Need to Raise Wages

As advocates for individuals with intellectual disabilities, we agree that \$10.60 per hour is too low for any workers providing hands-on care for individuals with disabilities, whether they support people with IDD, the elderly, or people with other physical disabilities. We urge decision-makers not to overlook the distinct needs of those with IDD and call on them to invest in raising community IDD DSP wages to a level commensurate with SSLC DSPs, particularly for those making life and death decisions for people in group home settings.

State Budget Considerations

Developed using an HHSC rate calculator, the table below provides a starting place for decision-makers considering the cost implications of adjusting wages for certain populations and Medicaid programs—for three combinations of workers providing direct care in various community settings—commensurate with current SSLC starting wages.

Combinations of IDD Direct Support Professionals (Various Settings) and Community Attendants	Funds Needed Biennially to Increase Rates from \$10.60/hour to SSLC DSP parity for IDD Residential and \$17/hour for IDD Non-Residential and Community Attendants		
	General Revenue	Federal Funds	All Funds (General Revenue + Federal Funds)
IDD Direct Support Professionals Residential Settings Only (ICF/IID & HCS group homes)	\$258.4M	\$387.6M	\$646M
IDD Direct Support Professionals Non-Residential ²	\$86.2M	\$129.2M	\$215.4M
Community Attendants	\$2.1B	\$3.1B	\$5.2B
Total	\$2.4B	\$3.7B	\$6.1B

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¹ Texas law defines “intellectual disability” as “significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning that is concurrent with deficits in adaptive behavior and originates during the developmental period.” Texas Health and Safety Code, Sec. 591.003(7-a).

² Non-residential refers to a community setting, other than a residential program (group home), in which DSPs work.