



Alliance for the Betterment of
Citizens with Disabilities

Empowering People: Providers Shaping Policies
**The State Must Consider an Annual Across the Board Rate Increase for Division of Developmental
Disabilities Community Providers'**

Transformative Investment Needed – 5.5% FY 2023¹
\$65 Million (State Dollars)

Due to the commitment, hard work, and talent of the Murphy Administration, the NJ Legislature and the Department of Human Services, the DSP wage remains above NJ's minimum wage² and the miscalculations of the past have been corrected - the Division of Developmental Disabilities day program and support coordination rates³ have caught up with that of residential. Now is the time to build on this success and make the most of a fortuitous moment in NJ politics.

A recurrent theme for social service agencies is the expectation that they will do more and more with less and less. But we jeopardize their existence and their ability to fulfil their mission when we fail to acknowledge that social service agencies are business organizations. And since they are rate takers and not rate makers, they are forced into a "make do and do without culture" - a culture that slowly starves them until the inconsistent intervention of government.

Meanwhile social service agencies are asked to take on an increasing share of society's most important and difficult work. In our case, further diversifying our world by supporting people with IDD to be free to fully live and participate in an integrated community, insuring that people on both sides of the disabled divide can thrive in the same place, and building a better system that stands up for human rights. Regrettably, agencies' financial reality undermines their ability to focus on achieving these results.

For this they need transformative investment in the form of rates which would continuously cover all costs, considering the full financial context in which the community provider operates. This transformative investment would help prevent crisis and interruption of services, enable leaders to focus on mission and outcomes, and invest in the immediate and future health of the organization.

The current political climate provides us with a window of opportunity to create lasting reform. Delay or inaction may mean a missed opportunity. "Politics is the art of the possible"⁴ but it always seems impossible until it is done.

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¹ NYS FY'23 Enacted Budget contains a 5.4% COLA for all OPWDD services.

² Assuming the continued increase to DSP wages through January 2024.

³ Assuming the annualization in the FY'24 Budget of the current Support Coordination rates.

⁴ Prince Otto von Bismarck, 1895