



## Minimum Wage Increase Good, but MUST Coincide with Rate Increases for Providers Serving People with Disabilities

The State of Illinois contracts directly with hundreds of organizations to serve more than 30,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

Illinois' reimbursement for community I/DD services ranks **47th lowest in the country**.

The most significant expense with community services is payment for care provided by the direct support workforce, referred to as DSPs. People with disabilities depend on DSPs for everything from eating, bathing and administering medication to job and life-skills training and community involvement. Illinois has failed to provide adequate reimbursement for I/DD community services, so **there is already a very severe staffing crisis**.

As momentum builds for increasing the Illinois minimum wage, which is important, policy makers must also address the impact on those who care for people with disabilities.

DSPs were never intended to be minimum wage positions, given the tremendous responsibility, capability and disposition the work demands. DSPs deserve wages that reflect their professional position, dedication and the hard work that comes with being responsible for another person's well-being and quality of life. **Rates paid to DSPs must surpass minimum wage by at least \$5 or more** to remain competitive with industry that is often paying well above the minimum, if the state is serious about meeting its obligation to care for people with disabilities.

Any minimum wage action must assure that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are supported and cared for as they deserve from the DSPs they rely upon and the agencies that employ them.