

# WANTED: A FAIR DAY'S PAY FOR A FAIR DAY'S WORK

*"One might summarize the job description of the direct support worker as requiring the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job and the caring of Florence Nightingale."*

Clarence Sundrum, Governor  
Cuomo's Special Advisor on  
Vulnerable Persons

**Direct Support Professionals currently earn on average between \$10 and \$13 per hour, yet the demands of the job far exceed their compensation.**

**Direct Support Professionals are the men and women who carry out a myriad of responsibilities to ensure that people with developmental disabilities live safe, fulfilling lives.**

There are over 110,000 Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), with 97,000 working for not for profit agencies. Direct Support Professionals are the lynchpin of the system of supports for more than 130,000 people with developmental disabilities in New York. They enable individuals with disabilities to live self-directed, meaningful and productive lives and are key to making it possible for an

individual with disabilities to live in the community. In order to become a DSP, an individual must complete a series of pre-employment requirements regulated by the state that include fingerprinting and criminal and various background checks.

## WHO THEY ARE

- Direct Support Professionals and other staff who work in programs that support adults and children with developmental disabilities are a diverse group. 73% are women, many of whom are single mothers. 50.8% are either black or Latino.
- DSPs are the people who provide services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- DSPs are professionals who are highly trained in a wide variety of critical areas that include medication administration, first aid, CPR, safe behavioral de-escalation and intervention, safety, including OSHA regulations, fire drills/emergency evacuation procedures, on-the-job Core Competencies, and Code of Ethics developed by NADSP. DSPs must be knowledgeable of the laws, regulations and procedures designed to protect individuals.
- Being a DSP is physically strenuous work. It often involves the lifting and moving of individuals to meet their mobility needs and the performance of daily activities.

## WHAT THEY DO

- DSPs are proficient in understanding and communicating complex information to others via daily logs, progress reports and electronic means. They must deal with an enormous burden of paperwork essential to regulatory compliance and service delivery documentation used for billing Medicaid.
- DSPs provide services and supports for activities of daily living including meal preparation, grooming and toileting.
- DSPs are responsible for medication administration. They receive extensive training leading to certification and are retested annually.
- DSPs are also responsible for tube feeding, diabetic & wound care, oxygen administration and must be knowledgeable of the operation of durable medical equipment including that are used for lifting, bathing and transporting individuals with developmental disabilities.
- DSPs transport individuals with disabilities to all activities throughout the community.
- DSPs teach personal care skills, money management and social skills.
- DSPs support the delivery of physical and behavioral health services in both routine and crisis situations.
- DSPs form close, trusted relationships with individuals with disabilities and their families, making community living in New York State a reality.
- DSPs respect the human dignity and uniqueness of the people they support and serve as advocates through the promotion of human and civil rights.

**WE CALL ON NEW YORK STATE TO GIVE DSPS AND OTHER WORKERS WHO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES A "FAIR DAY'S PAY FOR A FAIR DAY'S WORK."**

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