



DSP Wages Issue Briefing

The Issue:

The Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce is in crisis, much in part due to very low wages. It's virtually impossible to compete at an average starting wage of \$11. Many retailers already pay \$15 per hour, and the state's minimum wage is on a path to \$15 per hour for entry level and retail positions. DSP work is not minimum wage work, New Jersey's DSPs deserve a living wage.



Easterseals New Jersey Context:



Easterseals New Jersey serves over 5,000 adults with intellectual disabilities and mental health challenges each year, but none of that would be possible without our DSPs. They truly are the backbone of our agency. We need to work to ensure that they are able to be paid a fair wage for the difficult work they do. This is why we are a member of the Coalition for a DSP Living Wage and are committed to this fight.

What We Need:

We are urging the Governor and the Legislature to include much needed funding for DSPs in the FY2021 budget. We are also urging them to index the DSP wage to the prevailing minimum wage. The additional \$20 million in funding for DSP wages in the FY2020 budget was a good first step. New Jersey must continue to increase funding for DSP wages so that we can continue to draw quality workers to the profession.

