



February 7, 2023

To: Representative Lisa Reynolds, Chair
Representative Hoa Nguyen, Vice-Chair
Representative Anna Scharf Vice-Chair
Representative Tom Andersen, Member
Representative Tracy Cramer, Member
Representative Lucetta Elmer, Member
Representative Annessa Hartman, Member
Representative James Hieb, Member
Representative Travis Nelson, Member
Representative Courtney Neron, Member

From: Natasha Atkinson, Executive Director, Umpqua Homes Inc. (UHI)

RE: **Support** for House Bill **2457**

UHI serves over 40 individuals who experience Intellectual/ Developmental Disabilities (IDD) in Douglas County. Each person is assisted by a team of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). UHI currently has over 150 employees, working throughout Douglas County.

DSPs are the very backbone of our industry. A great DSP is an individual that can smoothly transition from preparing and administering medications, to encouraging the individual to advocate for a strong change in their lives and then seamlessly assist someone through a challenging moment. This complicated, difficult work is often paid less than fast food employees. Please **support HB 2457**, to show we value these remarkable DSPs.

Last session, due to your wonderful investment we were able to fund the new Rate Models. We are forever grateful, as here at UHI, it allowed us to raise the DSP wage by over \$1.25 an hour. Without this investment in our system we would not have survived the past year.

HB 2457 serves to protect and enhance last year's investment. Even though the rate models were fully funded, the current reimbursements were built on case studies done years ago, prior to the pandemic. These models are now significantly behind the current market. Please see the flyer below, it highlights key points and shows how DSP wages consistently trend above the reimbursement rate.

Please vote **YES** on **HB 2457**. This bill helps to ensure that DSPs are paid a wage they deserve, by moving wages to 150% minimum wage and covering the Paid Leave Oregon Payroll expense. Please vote yes, DSPs, the people they support and their families are counting on your support!



HB 2457

Value the Work. Raise the Wage.

We must continue to move the Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce out of crisis.

The 2021 Legislature made a historic investment in services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and for the first time the I/DD system was FULLY FUNDED. Even though this investment allowed us to increase wages for DSPs by \$1.25 an hour (current average reimbursement wage for DSPs at \$17.81), providers still report an average DSP vacancy rate of 23%.

Additional increases in wages are needed to address the current workforce shortage. Per a recent ORA survey, 85% of providers are no longer accepting referrals to serve new people and 86% have reduced capacity or closed services and anticipate closing additional services.



ABOUT DSPs: Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) provide crucial supports to adults and children experiencing intellectual and developmental disabilities. Their work includes managing medical needs, challenging behaviors, personal hygiene, and support to maintain employment and make real connections in the community. These incredibly dedicated individuals are not state employees, rather they work for small and medium non-profits and entities that provide community based services across Oregon. While not state employees, their wages (via I/DD rates) are funded almost entirely by state and federally matched funds.



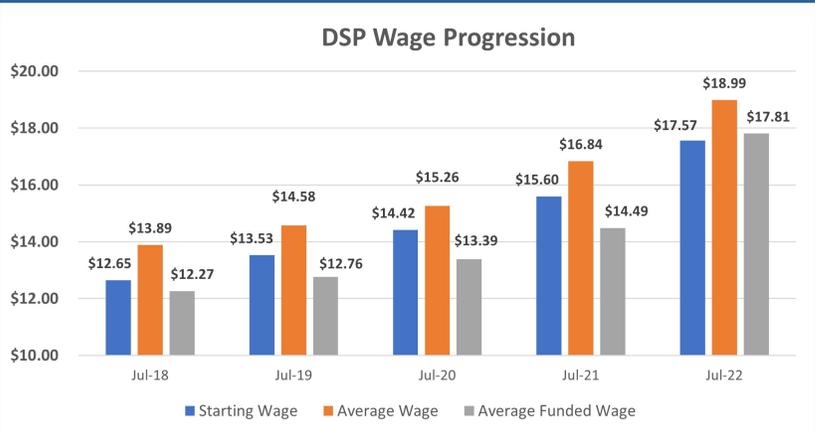
Protect your investment and continue fully funding I/DD rates while prioritizing DSPs!

In 2023 we must continue to increase DSP wages by supporting HB 2457!

HB 2457 will make two critical long-term investments in Direct Support Professionals:

1. Moves average DSP wage to 150% of the Portland metro minimum wage to recognize the value of the DSP workforce- that this is not a minimum wage workforce. Also ensures this essential workforce receives an annual increase above minimum wage.
2. Covers the costs of employer AND employee contributions for Paid Family & Medical Leave to ensure every dollar directed toward DSP wages stay as wages and supports new recruitment and retention opportunities.

Average Wage Providers Pay Versus Wage That Is Funded:



Amanda Dalton | Amanda@DaltonAdvocacy.com
 Jack Dempsey | Jack@dempseypublicaffairs.com



HB 2457

**Value the Work.
Raise the Wage.**

ODDS POP 132 - Targeted Rate Increase
Includes wage inflation and rate increases that bring DSP wages in payment category 1 to \$19.36, payment category 2 to \$20.38, and to \$22.42 in payment category 4 in the first year of the biennium. Increases the health insurance assumption to \$628.45 (currently \$525) per employee per month and adds the 0.4% employer Paid Leave Oregon payroll tax pick-up.

\$162M

The Math:
General Fund: \$162,144,945
Federal Funds: \$294,067,672
Total Funds: \$456,212,617



HB 2457 - 150% of Minimum Wage + 1% Paid Leave Oregon Pick-up
This bill will make further investments into DSP wages - because DSP work is not minimum wage work! HB 2457 statutorily sets DSP wages at 150% of the metro minimum wage and includes the full 1% Paid Leave Oregon pick up (0.4% Employer + 0.6% Employee pick-up).

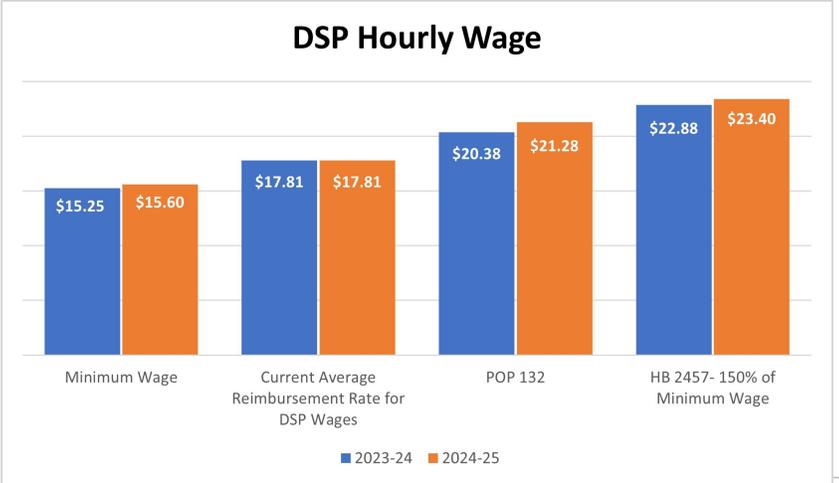
\$116.9M

The Math:
General Fund: \$116,913,261
Federal Funds: \$215,343,792
Total Funds: \$324,349,246



What do these investments mean for DSP wages?

Total GF Investment: \$279M



Value the Work. Raise the Wage.