

Date: February 28, 2023  
To: Joint Subcommittee on Human Services  
From: Naomi Clowdus, Columbia County CDDP  
RE: Support Full Funding for I/DD Case Managers!

Co-Chair Campos, Co-Chair Valderrama, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Naomi Clowdus and I represent Columbia County CDDP.

As a DD Service Coordinator/Case Manager, it is my responsibility to provide competent service to my clients with I/DD within my service area: Columbia County. This competency comes from a blend of education, dedication, the ability to stay up-to-date on resources available to the people we serve, and flexibility regarding changes in rules surrounding service provision among many other considerations. Additionally, each client and their unique skills and challenges must be considered in order to help them thrive and live their best lives.

The service area of Columbia County CDDP covers 657 square miles requiring staff to spend their days traveling from place to place to place. This means staff must be energetic, organized, and both physically and mentally able to maintain a high level of activity and adaptability to changing conditions whether that be weather related, due to client needs, or even the seasonal changes in the amount of daylight hours. For instance, driving from a client's home after dark in the foothills can feel unsafe at times but we do it regularly for the sake of client well-being.

We must also be able to care for ourselves as well as our clients, whether that is in the form of having time for a lunch break, being able to focus on our detailed and specific paperwork, or simply spending a few extra moments with an overwhelmed and exhausted caregiver who could just use an ear to bend.

This is a highly fulfilling and worthy purpose for all of us that choose to serve. While we are dedicated, we also need full funding for our budgets to be able to adequately meet agency needs so that we can continue to provide exemplary service for the individuals in our programs. The main cost of less than 100% funding is that higher staff turnover and less interest in the social services fields due to inadequate funding for essential programs has led to higher caseloads and less certainty that agencies will be able to hire additional staff, replace those lost, or even keep the staff they currently employ. This will ultimately result in a lower quality of service which equals a lower quality of life for our clients.

CDDP's must be fully funded to attract and maintain qualified staff.

We urge you to fully fund this budget!

Sincerely,

Naomi Clowdus