

I am Dalan Moss from Warrenton. I am employed by a non-profit organization that supports adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). I am advocating for people with I/DD, the heroes who support them, and provider agencies that coordinate logistics so those heroes can focus on supporting people. Supporting people with I/DD is not just providing basic needs, but also empowering them to live a life they choose and contribute to the community despite their disabilities.

Specifically, I ask you to please consider the recommendations of the Burns & Associates Rate and Wage study as you establish the State budget.

The cost of providing services to people with I/DD in today's economy exceeds the current rates provided by the State. The current funding was framed around direct support wages that are significantly lower than today's competitive wages. The most critical issue agency providers face is attracting and retaining qualified direct care staff. Providers operate in a deficit to pay as much in wages and benefits as possible, but we are still unable to compete with the starting wages of other businesses that don't support people with I/DD. Our organization has had to reduce the number of people we can support because of insufficient staffing.

Most providers are spreading more administrative responsibilities across fewer indirect care staff to reduce the deficit spending.

Currently no funding to I/DD services can keep up with the perpetually increasing costs of rents, repairs, utilities, insurance, groceries, and other everyday needs. This applies to organizations that provide homes and basic needs to people with I/DD as well as to direct support workers who try to live on wages allowed by the current rates. The absolute best way to support direct support employees, is to provide sufficient funding and support that focuses on the needs of the individuals they help.

These challenges facing I/DD services are reflective of most providers in Oregon. Please do not judge the needs of the entire I/DD system based on a few targeted providers that appear to be excessively successful. This can leave the false impression that I/DD services are sufficiently funded. I fear decisions damaging to I/DD services have already been made based on that perception.

All I/DD programs are beneficial and need funding increases, but if the programs can't be fully funded, people with I/DD might benefit the most with the following funding prioritization:

1. Residential services (Ex. 24-hour Group Homes, Foster Homes, Supported Living): These programs provide 24-hour support to people in their homes. Finding and keeping direct care staff are the most challenging for these programs. These programs are significantly under-funded.
2. Community interactive services (Ex. Employment, Brokerage Services, Day Support Activities): These programs help people learn how to interact with and become more self-reliant in the community.
3. Day Support Activities and In-Home Supports-Standard Model are funded a little better than the others.

Please support people with I/DD by considering the Burns & Associates recommendations for improved funding of I/DD programs!

Thank you,

