



A Call to Action!

Crisis in Direct Support Professional Workforce in Illinois Endangers Our Most Vulnerable Citizens — People with Developmental Disabilities

- > There are approximately **200,365** people with developmental disabilities (DD) in Illinois.
- > There are approximately **28,000** Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) supporting people with DD in Illinois.
- > People with DD, their families, and support networks, **need trained, valued, and creative DSPs** to assist them in living quality lives and fully participating in their communities.
- > **Inadequate wages and benefits, lack of career and educational ladders, and societal devaluation** of helping professions take their toll on this vital workforce endangering those who rely on this support.
 - The **average starting salary** for a community-based DSP in Illinois is **\$8.99** per hour (Lakin, Polister, & Prouty, 2003).
 - The **U.S. poverty level** for a family of four is **\$8.70** per hour (ASPE, 2002).
- > **We are asking you to support our efforts to increase wages to DSPs** and other non-administrative staff by \$3.00 per hour over the next three years.

The Illinois Direct Support Professional Workforce Initiative's Steering and Advisory Committee (see back page) is seeking your assistance to help us achieve these strategic steps over the next three years —

- > Improve recruitment and retention strategies in Illinois
 - Increase the wages and benefits of DSPs and supervisors by \$3/hour
 - Create tools that employers can use to recruit and retain quality DSPs
 - Improve educational opportunities for DSPs and supervisors
- > Create career ladders for DSPs to advance professionally
- > Improve the public image of DSPs and the value of their work
- > Develop a professional association for DSPs in Illinois with national affiliations
- > Improve mentoring and supervision practices in Illinois
- > Identify methods for tracking workforce data and using this data to evaluate and report on workforce conditions

Please join us

in our efforts to improve the quality of DSPs supporting people with developmental disabilities in Illinois.

For more information, contact Katie Keiling at kkeiling@uic.edu or (312) 996-1002 or visit <http://www.rtc.umn.edu/ildspworkforce/>

The Illinois Direct Support Professional Workforce Initiative's Steering and Advisory Committee

AAMR of Illinois
AFSCME Council 31
The Arc of Illinois
Arc of Rock Island County
Clearbrook
Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities in Illinois
Community Support Services
Cornerstone Services
Department of Human Services
Division of Developmental Disabilities
Division of Rehabilitative Services
Equip for Equality
Family Support Network
Gateway Services
Habilitative Systems
Illinois Association of Rehabilitative Facilities
Illinois Community College Board
Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities
Illinois Health Care Association
Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living
Institute on Public Policy
Neumann Association
New Hope Center
Oak/Leyden Developmental Services
Office of the Governor
Parents: Jill Garrett, Scott Aiello
Ray Graham Association
Seguin Services
Self-Advocates: Denise Horn, Mark Karner, Carla Norrick, Paula Vanier
SEIU Local 880
Sparc
United Cerebral Palsy of Illinois
US Department of Labor

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