



of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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2011-2013 Legislative Budget and Policy Priorities

LONG TERM CARE WORKFORCE

Direct Support Professionals are the backbone of the community long term care system. They provide personal care and a wide variety of other supports in people's homes and in the community.

Survival Recommendations:

- Increase Family Care rates to specifically address DSP salaries.
- Increase wages and access to benefits for Direct Support Professionals.
- Implement the College of Direct Support, a national training program that has proven to decrease turnover and increase retention rates among DSPs.
- Support WIDCA (WI Direct Care Alliance) to empower DSPs to network, to get advanced training, and to advocate for themselves.
- Provide training and support on employment issues to people who hire their own DSPs through the use of Self-Directed Supports.

Background: Direct Support Professionals provide personal care and a wide variety of other supports in people's homes and in the community. Wisconsin will need at least 5000 new DSPs in the next five years, and the turnover rate for existing jobs is as high as 50%. Although there is a great need to find DSPs, the low salaries and limited benefits make it difficult to recruit and retain good workers.

Other reasons that DSPs leave the field include a concern that they have not been fully prepared to do the work, feeling that they have no input into the way the jobs is done, a the general lack of respect for this work. Improve training so DSPs are fully prepared to provide high-quality services will improve job retention.

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