

medina county board of developmental disabilities

Direct Support Professionals



One of the most vital pieces in helping people with developmental disabilities is the front-line caregivers known as Direct Support Professional (DSPs).

What You Should Know

834

Number of DSPs in
Medina County

20%

Percent of
DSP Positions
Vacant in Ohio

26%

Increase in
DSP Positions over the
next 10 years

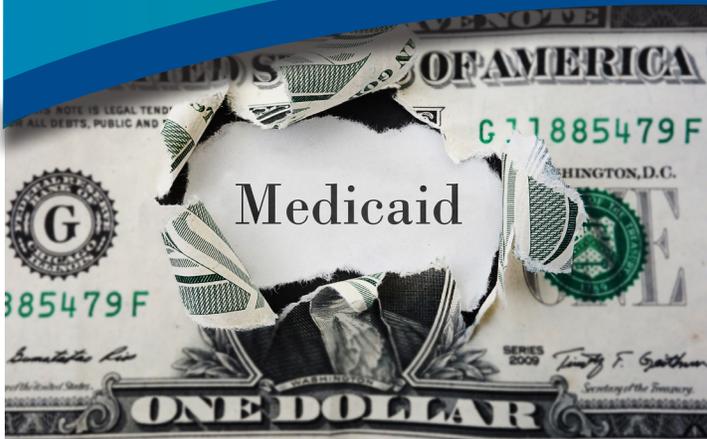
Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are people who work directly with individuals with disabilities. They assist the individuals with a wide range of tasks, with the goal of helping them become integrated into the community to the best of their ability. A DSP may provide supports to a person with a disability at home, work, school, church, and other community places.

The daily support and guidance these workers provide is essential in allowing thousands of people with disabilities to live safe and healthy lives.



4691 Windfall Road, Medina, Oh 44256
330.725.7751 • www.mcbdd.org

While federal and state Medicaid rules and regulations do not allow the Medina County Board of DD to directly send funding to service providers for DSP wages, we are committed to helping them in other ways to ease their financial and staffing demands.



Funding at the Heart of the DSP Crisis

At the heart of the DSP workforce crisis is a lack of federal and state funding. Service providers receive Medicaid reimbursement funding from the state to help pay the wages of their DSP staff. These reimbursements rates are set by Medicaid at the federal and state level. These rates are historically low and do not meet the actual costs associated with DSP staffing (i.e. hourly wages, benefits, etc.). Service providers must find other revenue sources and ways to direct existing funds to be able to offer competitive wages and benefits - fundraising, reducing staff, cut non-essential programs, etc.

Medicaid rules and regulations prevent County Boards of DD from changing, supplementing or increasing any rates at the local level. This lack of funding for wages has contributed to a 50% annual turnover rate with many direct support workers leaving the field for other jobs with higher wages and benefits.

While this has been an ongoing concern for the past few years, the pandemic has accelerated the rate at which DSPs are leaving the field. Providers are becoming unable to financially support payment of overtime to current DSP workers. Providers are beginning to cut non-essential services and programs to try and meet the financial demands such as the increased wages and benefits needed to retain their current staff and to attract new DSPs into the workforce.

How MCBDD is Addressing DSP Crisis

Daily Support

The MCBDD has developed an internal DSP Crisis Team which talks daily with local service providers to address emergency staffing situations that arise. The team works with service providers to make sure they have the staffing they need or to find other options for meeting the needs of the people they work with.

Family Outreach

The MCBDD has begun working with families to discuss and address caregiver situations when staff become unavailable. We are looking at creative ways to support in-home care needs, such as technology, finding natural supports and the sharing of services, if needed.

DSP Recruitment

The MCBDD is working with service providers on ways to attract, recruit, and maintain DSP staff to meet needed staffing levels for the health and safety of the individuals they serve. We are working with agencies to create incentives for more successful recruitment efforts. The MCBDD is also working in the community to help DSP recruitment by sharing information about the DSP role at high school/college career fairs, through public awareness and marketing campaigns. Finally, the MCBDD is reaching out to current Independent Providers to explain the benefits of becoming an agency DSP.

DSP On-Boarding Support

The MCBDD is helping local providers by handling many of the processes associated with hiring DSP staff (i.e. criminal background checks, First Aid/CPR training, medication certifications, etc.). This reduces overhead costs for providers so they may use those funds towards DSP wage increases.

Advocating for Wage Increases

The MCBDD Superintendent and Management are involved in federal and state discussions about ways in which to raise DSP wages. In fact, these discussions have led to all 88 Ohio county boards agreeing to fund a 3% waiver rate increase for providers beginning in January 2022. While the state has not mandated it, it is our hope that providers will use these extra funds to increase DSP wages.

Looking for Rewarding Job?

People with developmental disabilities need caring and compassionate people who can assist them with daily living tasks such as preparing meals, social outings, learning new skills, etc.

Become a DSP!

Flexible Schedule - In many cases, you can work as much or as little as you wish, with lots of flexibility in shift scheduling: morning, daytime, evening, overnight, every other weekend. Being a DSP is a great option for students, parents, or other people who need flexible hours.

Every Day is Different - When you are a DSP, no two days are the same - not to mention, full of fun activities and a wide variety of environments. You get to take individuals on recreational outings (like bowling, shopping, the movies, amusement parks, fairs, etc), transport them to their activities, and hang out with them at home or the community.

Casual Work Environment - No special wardrobe is required - in fact, casual attire like jeans and sneakers is best.

In-Demand Job - There is always a demand for DSPs and the field will only continue to grow, which means there are many job openings available now and into the future.

No College Degree Required - No college degree is required to become a DSP.

Gain Skills and Training - DSPs receive training (usually paid) in areas such as first aid, CPR, medication administration, and more. You can gain many on-the-job skills that can help with career advancement.



Job Requirements:

Most employers require applicants to have a high school diploma or equivalent (such as a GED). Being a DSP also requires certain characteristics like being patient, caring, composed under pressure, and being dependable.

Basic Job Duties:

- Assist individuals with developing social skills and building relationships with others.
- Assist with daily activities like personal care, cooking, housekeeping, money management, etc.
- Provide supervision and guidance during skill-building activities.
- Transport and accompany individuals to doctor's appointments, social activities, shopping trips, etc.
- Build safe and supportive relationships with individuals.

How To Apply:

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a DSP, visit the "Careers" section of the Medina County Board of DD website at www.mcbdd.org, or email providersupport@mcbdd.org or call 330-725-7751, option 3.

Agencies Statewide Working to Address DSP Crisis



We write to you today to start an important conversation about the ability of Ohio's developmental disability service delivery system to continue meeting your needs in the weeks, months, and years ahead.

Our system has been struggling with a workforce crisis for a long time. Unfortunately, with the end of the pandemic now predicted to be much later than we expected due to the Delta variant and other factors, and with direct support professionals (DSPs) leaving our field for jobs in other industries that have significantly increased their wages to attract new employees (like restaurants, retail stores, warehouses, and others), our system is entering a new, much more difficult phase of its workforce shortage.

Examples of actions that some DD service providers have recently had to take because they don't have enough employees to support them include:

- No longer accepting new people for services (also called "closing the front door");
- Ending services to some people they already serve because their level of need can't be met with the agency's current staff;
- Creating waiting lists for some services (such as residential/Intermediate Care Facility (ICF), Homemaker Personal Care, vocational and adult day hab, transportation, and others);
- Completely shutting doors and/or closing homes.

Our system's leaders, including the Ohio General Assembly, the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, Ohio's 88 County Boards of DD, and thousands of DD service providers, have taken several action steps in response to these staffing shortages:

- Many providers have slashed all non-staffing expenses to significantly raise DSP and nursing wages.
- The Ohio General Assembly has allocated state funds to allow for a 4% rate increase for DD services when it passed its most recent two-year State Operating Budget earlier this year.
- County boards of DD across the state have provided millions of dollars in grants, resources, and—at times—even loaned their professional staff to provide direct care for people in need.

Unfortunately, these efforts are not yet enough to fix this problem. We will need your help to ensure our system can continue to meet everyone's needs.

The following are some ways you can help:

- **We are asking for your patience.** It has taken our system years to reach this point. It is going to take time and planning to work our way out of this crisis.
- **We are asking for your support.** Talk with your county board SSA about how this crisis might impact your ability to accomplish the goals in your plan. If you feel comfortable, check in with your provider and ask how they are coping with the current workforce crisis. Ask if there are ways you can help.
- **We are asking for your partnership.** Partner with your county boards and providers during the planning process to come up with creative solutions that can meet your needs with fewer staff by reading this guide ([DOWNLOAD LINK](#)).

This letter is only the beginning of our long journey with you. We will continue to keep you informed as to how you can be involved in this discussion as we move forward.

We look forward to working closely with you to ensure a bright future for people with developmental disabilities and their families in Ohio.