



PROVIDING PEOPLE WITH  
INTELLECTUAL, DEVELOPMENTAL,  
AND OTHER DISABILITIES  
ORDINARY &  
EXTRAORDINARY  
OPPORTUNITIES  
of Life!

## INVESTING IN NEW YORK'S CARE ECONOMY

### 5.4% COLA for FY2023

For over a decade, New York state did not make adequate investments to sustain the programs and services its citizens with I/DD rely on. During this time, inflation rose approximately 25%, yet the I/DD field received only a 1.2% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). This systemic lack of investment resulted in wage stagnation for direct care staff and the inability of providers to maintain physical infrastructure. The Executive Budget has accepted the 5.4% statutorily required COLA for FY23.

**We ask legislators to include the full 5.4% COLA in their one-house budgets.**

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## Workforce Solutions

### Direct Support Retention Bonuses

Immediate and sustained investment in Direct Support Professional (DSP) salaries is needed to recruit and retain staff and ensure the future viability of the field. The Executive Budget includes a proposal to make bonus payments of up to \$3,000 available to frontline health care and mental hygiene workers. This critical proposal would provide additional resources to help address the current workforce crisis.

We fully support these bonuses, but recommend changes to the eligibility requirement to be more equitable better reflect real-life workforce scenarios. We propose modifying the bottom-tier requirements to include part-time employees who work at least 15 hours per week on average, and to reduce the top-tier threshold from 40+ hours to 35 hours.

**We ask legislators to include funding for bonus payment in their one-house budgets with amended eligibility requirements.**

### Personal Income Tax Credit For Direct Care Staff

A personal income tax credit of up to \$5,000 for DSPs should be established to provide recruitment and retention incentives to these vital employees, recognize their essential work, and address the significant workforce challenges of Mental Health and I/DD service systems.

**We urge legislators to include this tax credit in their one-house budgets. Model bill language for inclusion can be found in S7643/A9200.**

## Recruitment And Retention Initiatives

The Governor's Proposed budget includes initiatives aimed to enhance recruitment and retention of direct care staff., including:

### Implementation of Statewide Recruitment Programs

- Expansion of the current BOCES and Community College Programs statewide to create a pipeline for the DSP care field.

### Implementation of Credential and Career Ladder Programs

- Credential Program – Advance language in the SFY 2023 Budget to implement a statewide standardized DSP credential program.
- Career Ladder – Advance language in the SFY 2023 Budget to establish a career ladder program, which will provide a pathway to an associate's degree in the human services field for current DSPs.

**We ask legislators to include these recruitment and retention initiatives in their one-house budgets.**

The Governor has made a clear commitment to address the low wages for frontline healthcare and mental hygiene workers. DSPs and the I/DD sector must be considered in any budget discussions about permanently increasing wages to support a strong, stable and equitable healthcare service system.

## Capital Funding

The Executive Budget proposes authorizing additional funds for the Statewide Health Care Transformation Program (SHCFTP) and new funding for the Nonprofit Infrastructure Capital Investment Program (NICIP), which was created to make targeted investments in capital projects that aim to improve the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of nonprofit human services organizations. These investments are vital to spurring innovation and efficiencies in the service delivery system to improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities, however, community-based I/DD providers are not currently eligible under SHCFTP.

**We ask the legislature to support the inclusion of the NICIP, and amend the SHCFTP language to include community-based I/DD providers that are authorized, approved and/or funded by OPWDD as eligible applicants.**

## Special Education

After decades of severe underfunding for 853 and 4410 special education schools, we are pleased to see an 11% COLA included in the FY23 Executive Budget. Inequitable funding has created a significant compensation gap compared to public school teachers, and resulted in a retention crisis for essential educators. Combined with the FY22 4% COLA, the proposed investment reflects a 15% increase over a two-year period, which will help stabilize this critical education system.

**We ask legislators to include the 11% COLA for 853 and 4410 schools in the final Enacted Budget, and pursue long-term solutions for funding parity.**