

Direct Care Workers Provide Essential Support to People With Disabilities

Direct care workers provide critical services to people with disabilities and older adults.

Sometimes direct care workers have other titles. People may call them:

- Direct support professionals (DSPs)
- Personal care attendants (PCAs)
- Home care workers

Direct care workers do many things, like supporting people with:

- Getting around their home or community
- Working in their community
- Communicating with others
- Completing household tasks
- Building strong relationships
- Personal care and hygiene
- Taking important medications
- And much more!



We must invest in our direct care workers!

The wages that direct care workers get paid are too low.

On average, direct care workers get paid just \$14 per hour.

Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) pay for most of the support that direct care workers provide.

The federal and state governments pay for Medicaid HCBS.

But they have not increased enough how much funding is given to support HCBS.

The wages do not account for:

- How much money people can make in other similar jobs
- The skills it takes to be a direct care worker
- The actual costs to provide direct care to people

Most direct care workers cannot work at such a low rate, and they should not have to.

They cannot pay for what they and their family need. As a result, many quit.

Each year, over half of all direct care workers leave their jobs.

This creates uncertainty for the people who receive support from direct care workers.

People with disabilities, older adults, and their families must start over when a worker leaves.

They must find and train a new direct care worker on how to support them.

But they may not be able to find people who are willing to provide care at the wage that direct care workers receive.

And direct care workers may come and go quickly when a higher paid job comes along.

As a result, people with disabilities must often rely on unpaid family caregivers or go without essential care.

Many family caregivers are also getting older and may need care themselves.

They may also need additional support to make sure their family member gets the services they need.





What changes are needed?

We need Congress to make a historic investment in Medicaid HCBS.

More funding would give more people with disabilities a chance to live in the community.

It would allow families not to have to rely so much on unpaid caregivers. It would create more direct care jobs, help make direct care jobs better, and raise wages.

These changes would:

- Allow families not to have to rely so much on unpaid family caregivers,
- Create an HCBS system with enough workers to provide needed services,
- Lower the turnover rates for direct care workers, and
- Allow people with disabilities, older adults, and their families to get the consistent care they need to live their lives fully and independently.

Find out what you can do to help make this change at [TheArc.org/Action](https://www.TheArc.org/Action).