

I am Seth Johnson, Executive Director of Opportunity Foundation of Central Oregon. We employ 200 team members and we support about the same number of people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. This is only possible because of our wonderful team of Direct Support Professionals.

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) provide crucial supports the adults we are honored to empower. Their work includes managing medical needs, behavior health supports, intimate care and support to maintain employment and make real connections in the community.

!Diverse workforce that is 87% women; 59% people of color; and 27% immigrant
!Persistently low wages - current average wage is \$13.94
!Not minimum wage work, yet low wages force agencies to compete with minimum wage jobs

While DSPs are NOT state employees – their work is almost entirely funded by state and federally matched funds (average of 98.2%).

DSPs in our agency recently met a new resident. The resident had been living without our support and was making dozens of false 911 call on an almost daily basis over weeks. This was due to her loneliness, her IDD and to the fact that her needs were not being met. This eventually led to incarceration.

We intervened with the court and mental health system and offered her our 24 hour residential support. She accepted and since moving into our services upon her conditional release, she has lost 40 pounds, is healthy, employed, and is acing her required post release supervision. There have been 0 false 911 calls.

At every court check in, her assigned Judge is amazed at her progress and success and has been very complimentary of our supports. This is only one example of the work of DSPs, the hands of our mission.

Our turnover has much improved due to our significant efforts over the past few years. Due to COVID, however, we cannot fill open positions no matter what we try. We have our highest vacancy rate yet, 25%. Without this funding, it is likely we will begin closing homes and the people we serve will have nowhere to go. Please help us help our team members. They earn more than we are able to pay. Only you can help us help them.

?We need a strong IDD budget with a focus on DSP wages
!Fully fund I/DD Direct Support Professionals - value the work and raise the wage.
?DSPs are essential workers who have been on the frontlines of the COVID-19 crisis
!They deserve a significant investment in their wages in 2021

How to get there:

POP 119 - \$34.4M GF

This closes the hole from 2019-21/rolls up to 21-23 and ensures no significant rate/wage reductions. Includes 3.2% across the board rate increase in the current rate models in the 1st year of the biennium and new rate models in 2nd year of biennium.

Average DSP Wage: \$14.82

+

POP 120 - \$36.6M GF

This fund rates and wages to about 80% of full funding needed, or about a 3% rate increase across the board

Average DSP Wage: \$15.31

+

Fully Funded Rate Model - \$48.8M

Average DSP Wage: \$17.81

+

HB 2964 – \$110.2M

This policy bill ensures direct support professionals are funded at least 150% of the metro area minimum wage.

Average DSP Wage: \$21.00