

Good evening,

I am currently the manager of Shangri-La's Community Employment Services Department. In the two years I've worked here, we've seen extremely high rates of employee turnover. Recently, for example, we had four staff members resign in one day. The low, non-competitive wages they were receiving made it a very easy decision for them to leave and find alternative employment.

As Direct Support Professionals we pour our heart and soul into our work every day, with little regard for benefiting from it ourselves. We strive to see others live meaningful and fulfilled lives, and to do this requires physical, emotional, and financial resources.

The support we provide for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities is crucial to improving and maintaining quality of life. Without increased wages for employees who provide the direct care to these individuals, we will continue to see a high turnover rate and decreases in new-hire skills and overall experience. Altogether this will put individuals with I/DD and their families at risk of being inadequately supported or not supported at all. Lack of support leads to job loss, seclusion from community activities, and from living a full and enriched life.

If the wages for our Direct Support Professionals were increased, we would see an increase in employee satisfaction with their current employment and an influx of more highly skilled workers applying for such positions.

Please consider all the factors mentioned above in your decision to provide additional funding for increased DSP wages. With the economy changing so quickly and inflation increasing, this is a necessary step towards the success of companies who support individuals with I/DD.