

# DHSS Announces Direct Support Professional Recruitment and Retention Bonuses

NEW CASTLE (Oct. 12, 2021) – The Delaware Department of Health and Social Services' Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance (DMMA) and Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) are pleased to announce immediate efforts to stabilize and strengthen the home and community-based services (HCBS) workforce that serves thousands of individuals across Delaware. The State will make targeted payments to recruit and retain the Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) who are the critical infrastructure of the human services support system.

Through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Congress provided a temporary 10% increase in federal matching funds to enhance, expand, and strengthen home and community-based services supported by Medicaid.

“Investing in our Direct Support Professional workforce is the first step toward strengthening and expanding our system as a whole,” DHSS Secretary Molly Magarik said. “These investments will be used to support DSPs operating across our entire network of home and community-based services, but will be made available first to DSPs supporting Delawareans with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Maintaining the integrity of this workforce ensures continued availability of this community lifeline for the individuals and families who rely on DSPs every single day.”

Approximately 3,000 DSPs play a vital role in providing critical support for Delawareans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) living in the community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these essential staff are

enabling Delawareans with IDD to maintain their jobs and live safely in their communities.

In order to access this additional federal funding, states must develop a detailed spending plan demonstrating how and where the funds will be used. Delaware's spending plan will include payments directly to DSPs:

- Each new DSP, employed on or after May 1, 2021, who works a minimum of 25 hours a week could receive a recruitment payment of up to \$1,000.
- Existing DSPs who were employed prior to April 30, 2021, and who worked an average of 25 hours a week would be eligible for a one-time \$1,000 payment.

DHSS intends to begin submitting payments to providers later this month.

Additional details on supports for DSPs working in other sectors of HCBS will be released soon. Additional information on Delaware's ARPA spending plan can be found on the [DHSS website](#).

-30-

*The Department of Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of life of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations.*