

**Direct Support Professionals**

A well-trained, fairly compensated direct support professional workforce is essential to providing the necessary supports and services to our constituents where they live and work. Medicaid is the primary source of funding for the programs employing these workers. The current Medicaid reimbursement system, cost cutting actions by state legislatures and Medicaid officials, and recent strides to raise the minimum wage in several cities and states have exacerbated the workforce crisis already hampered by low wages, a lack of affordable health insurance, high turnover, and a shortage of staff. Demand for these workers from private industry and other human services sectors is also high, leading to competition among industries for workers. These problems have been compounded over three decades, leading to a crisis that presents a grave threat to the lives of our constituents and their families.

During the 115th Congress, our public policy goals are to:

* Ensure adequate funding so that direct support professionals are paid a living wage, including appropriate benefits;
* Require that CMS incentivize states to develop and implement a plan to address all relevant components that drive the crisis, including low wages and reimbursement rates, high turnover, and inadequate training;
* Require state reimbursement rates for services to incorporate any local, state, and federal minimum wage increases or changes in employment standards;
* Ensure adequate reimbursement rates to cover services including appropriate staffing levels to ensure the provision of person-centered services;
* Ensure financial support, including payment of wages, to provide pre-service and in-service training and other relevant educational opportunities for direct support professionals to meet the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities; and
* Implement programs aimed at the direct support labor market to increase the pool of available workers, including individuals with disabilities, and improve recruitment, retention, training, and supervision of direct care professionals to better serve individuals with disabilities.

To download the full legislative agenda, visit: <http://www.thearc.org/what-we-do/public-policy/legislative-agenda>