

THEY DESERVE MORE

Statement from They Deserve More Coalition on Governor Pritzker Budget Address February 21, 2024

They Deserve More – comprising nearly 90 agencies and organizations that serve and advocate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities – released the following statement after Governor J.B. Pritzker’s budget address today:

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), their families and provider agencies have spent years advocating for the State to adequately fund Illinois’ IDD community support system. The General Assembly and the Governor have responded -- making small but incremental progress over the last seven state budgets, after no increases for nearly a decade. But, the response does not meet the State’s obligation, and the proposed FY25 budget offers nothing for Direct Support Professional (DSP) wages.

People with IDD have suffered for too long from a critical shortage of frontline caregivers and repeated underfunding of the community system. Meanwhile, thousands languish on the state waitlist without vital services. The State reinstated funding for DSP work hours that it had just recently planned to cut, but we are still left without adequate wages that allow us to recruit and retain employees essential to serve people with disabilities.

While it is admirable that Governor Pritzker’s budget proposal meets some of Illinois’ pressing needs, we need him and the General Assembly to prioritize people with IDD. The State has been out of compliance with the [Ligas Consent Decree](#) since 2017, and nationally Illinois ranks 49th of the 50 states when it comes to funding support for community-based services.

The State-commissioned Guidehouse Rate Study recommends that the State DSP wage reimbursement be at least 150% of minimum wage. We urge the General Assembly to pass a \$3 per hour DSP wage increase in FY25 to reach that crucial level of support.