



FLORIDA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL, INC.

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Increase Provider rates for The Individual Budgeting/Home and Community Based Services Waiver

The Council urges the Florida Legislature to increase provider rates so that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families who receive the Individual Budgeting/Home and Community Based Services Waiver have stable and qualified service provider staffing for delivering waiver services.

- **Provider rates are so low that providers are offering fewer services or going out of business. As a result, families are often unable to obtain the services their loved ones need.**
- **Providers need greater compensation. A 3% increase in provider rates for this fiscal year was a good start that must be increased for next year.**

The Individual Budgeting Home and Community Based Services waiver administered by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities offers supports and services to assist almost 30,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live in the community by ensuring that their health and safety needs are met, as well as providing services to improve their access to their community and a meaningful life.

However, the rates paid to providers of these services remain well below 2003 levels. Providers are struggling to make ends meet because of inadequate service rates, rising business expenses and costly federal mandates.

Unable to provide adequate wages, providers are faced with constant turnover and marginally qualified employees. For families, the combination of concerns about the quality of care, less provider availability and fewer service options poses a distinct threat to the health and safety of individuals with disabilities. Remaining on the current path will continue the deterioration of a network that exists to provide for Florida's most vulnerable citizens. Florida has seen a 29.8% drop in the number of providers actually providing services since FY 07-08.

The Florida Legislature started to address provider compensation during the 2016 legislative session. Funding was allocated to provide compliance with the Department of Labor Rule that calls for the provision of minimum wage and overtime for home care services and there was a 3% increase in provider rates for several major services. While this was a step in the right direction, much more is needed.

Due to new wage requirements and lack of employees, providers are limiting their services, hiring less qualified staff or even shutting down. A shrinking service system for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities may place their health, safety and well-being at risk. To help control this vicious cycle as well as maintain and expand current services, provider rates must increase.