LACAN
LOUISIANA COUNCIL'S ADVOCACY NETWORK

INVESTING IN WAIVER SERVICES AND DSWS

RELIABLE SUPPORT STARTS WITH FAIR FUNDING

Home- and community-based services (HCBS) help people with disabilities live at home and take part in their communities. Direct Support Workers (DSWs) provide much of this daily help.



WHY THIS MATTERS

Keeping experienced workers matters. They learn each person's needs, routines, and ways of communicating. This helps people receive safe, reliable support.

HOW SHORTAGES AFFECT PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

Being approved for services does not always mean a worker is available. When shifts go unfilled, people may miss needed support, and families must fill the gaps.

DSW PAY REMAINS TOO LOW

Thanks to funding from the Legislature in 2026, Louisiana plans to raise the DSW wage floor (the minimum amount workers must be paid) from $9.00 to $9.27 per hour.

However, this is still below the $11.48 hourly wage estimate in Louisiana's own 2026 rate study. The study used federal data on wages paid to Louisiana workers.

Advocates want to raise the DSW wage floor to $11.48 per hour to help attract and keep qualified workers.

PLANNED DSW WAGE FLOOR

$9.00 → $9.27

per hour

ADVOCATES' PROPOSED WAGE FLOOR

$11.48/hr

Based on Louisiana's own 2026 rate study

A FAMILY'S EXPERIENCE

"They did not leave because they did not care about Harrison. They left because they could not afford to stay in this profession. ... If I lose this one remaining worker, I will be forced into early retirement ... so that I can care for Harrison full time."

Amy Veuleman, Parent, Calcasieu Parish

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2026 FUNDING PROGRESS

$10.7M
New state funds

~$33M
State + federal

~3%
Rate increase

Many waiver rates rose on October 1, 2026. More funding is needed to meet the study goals.

BUILD ON THE PROGRESS

$42.9 MILLION

Additional state funding needed in FY28



The 2026 study estimated $53.6 million in state funds were needed. The Legislature provided $10.7 million in 2026, leaving $42.9 million.

The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) plans to update the study in early 2027 using new provider cost reports. The amount needed may change.

STATE FUNDS BRING FEDERAL DOLLARS

For every $1 spent on eligible Medicaid services:

About 68% federal | **32% state**

$42.9M state + ~$91.2M federal = ~$134.1M total

This example uses a rounded federal share. Actual funding depends on the matching rate and services covered.

WHY BOTH RATES AND WAGES MATTER

ADEQUATE WAIVER RATES

Help cover the cost of services, including wages, training, and supervision.

BETTER DSW WAGES

Help hire and keep workers so people receive steady support.

Sources: 2026 Milliman rate study; LDH 2026 rate changes; FY 2027 Medicaid match.