



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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Governor Shapiro, DHS Secretary Arkoosh Hear from Pennsylvanians with ID/A, Caregivers, and Advocates About How Historic Budget Proposal Would Expand ID/A Services

The Governor visited BARC Development Services in Warminster to hear how his proposed budget investments would address the workforce shortage of direct support professionals and help more Pennsylvanians with ID/A receive the home and community-based services they need, when they need them.

The Governor's 2024-25 budget proposes \$483 million to support reimbursement rates for direct support professionals and \$78 million to serve an additional 1,500 Pennsylvanians in the next fiscal year.





Warminster, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** and **Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary Dr. Val Arkoosh** visited BARC Developmental Services in Bucks County to meet with Pennsylvanians with intellectual disabilities and autism (ID/A), caregivers, and advocates to hear how the proposed investments in the Governor’s [2024-25 budget](#) will expand access to support home and community-based services and address the shortage of direct support professionals in our Commonwealth, and set a course to end Pennsylvania’s emergency waiting list for ID/A services.

Governor Shapiro [proposed](#) **\$483 million** in federal and state funding to provide more resources for home and community-based service providers, so they in turn can pay competitive rates to attract and retain the staff who provide these essential services. The investment in direct support professionals (DSPs) and service providers will increase the average starting salary from approximately \$15/hour to \$17/hour – spurring additional raises for more experienced DSPs at the same time.

“A budget I think is more than just a set of numbers on a spreadsheet – it’s a statement of what your priorities are and what your principles are. My priorities and principles are helping folks like you, both the people who are receiving the support and the people who are providing the support,” said **Governor Josh Shapiro**. “This year in our budget, we’re making an unprecedented investment – all in nearly a half a billion dollars of money from the state, money from the federal government – to create more opportunities for services to pay people a higher wage and to be able to hire more people to do this work.”

Last year, Governor Shapiro [announced](#) that DHS would conduct an early review of reimbursement rates to better support ID/A service providers and the direct support professionals who help Pennsylvanians with intellectual disabilities and autism.

Typically, reimbursement rates are readjusted every three years, but Governor Shapiro ordered an early review to address critical workforce shortages among service providers. The Governor's budget proposal would fund the entirety of this rate increase and support recruitment, retention, and higher wages for direct support professionals who make inclusive, enriching lives possible for people with intellectual disabilities and autism.

To illustrate the importance of this investment, Governor Shapiro invited [Cindy, Judy, and Matthew Jennings](#) – who live in Lititz – to his budget address in the Capitol Rotunda. He talked about how Matthew requires 24/7 support, something that Cindy hasn't been able to find because Pennsylvania doesn't pay direct support professionals enough. So instead, Cindy, a 60-year-old single mom who's battled her own health challenges, is forced to provide care herself – along with Matthew's grandma, Judy.

The Governor's proposal also outlines a plan to eliminate the emergency waiting list for services for adults and reduce barriers to care for thousands of Pennsylvanians over the next several years. The proposal includes a **\$78 million** investment in federal and state funds to serve an additional 1,500 Pennsylvanians with ID/A currently on the waitlist in the next fiscal year.

Governor Shapiro understands that expanding services and ending the emergency waiting list is crucial to recognize basic dignity and opportunity for all people. To accomplish, this DHS is restructuring program administration to give more flexibility to county program administrators to serve more people based on local needs, real-time service utilization, and overall costs.

“Achieving a vibrant, everyday life with dignity is a goal for so many of our neighbors, friends, and loved ones in ID/A communities, but when they have to wait for services, we are falling short in helping them meet this goal. Every Pennsylvanian with intellectual disabilities and autism should receive the supports they need when they need them,” said **DHS Secretary Val Arkoosh**. “Under Governor Shapiro's budget proposal, Pennsylvania will become a leader in the home and community-based services space by working to eliminate the waiting list for services, investing in the value and importance of ID/A service providers and direct support professionals, and, most importantly, demonstrating our commitment to a better future and opportunity for all Pennsylvanians.”

While at BARC Developmental Services, Governor Shapiro and Secretary Arkoosh met with Pennsylvanians with ID/A who benefit from BARC's residential and vocational services, and caregivers and advocates to discuss how the Governor's proposed investments will support the ID/A communities. BARC is a non-profit organization based in Bucks County that serves more than 700 individuals with ID/A annually and has provided care through early intervention and residential and vocational programs for over 70 years.

“We applaud Governor Shapiro’s proposed investment in ID/A services in Pennsylvania for increased rates, supplemental payments, and more capacity to address the waiting list. The foundation of BARC Developmental Services are the direct support professionals (DSPs) who work tirelessly every day to provide the care needed so our supported individuals can lead happy, fulfilled lives and contribute to their communities,” said **Mary Sautter, Executive Director of BARC Development Services**. “The Governor’s proposed budget includes critical investments into the ID/A system that will help increase wages for DSPs so agencies like BARC Developmental Services can recruit and retain qualified staff. We are hopeful that the state legislature will maintain this funding in the 2024-25 budget.”

This announcement is the latest effort by the Shapiro Administration to support the ID/A community, after the Governor ‘s [2023-24 budget](#) secured **\$17.49 million** to help an additional 850 Pennsylvanians with ID/A get off waitlists for home and community-based services.

Governor Shapiro’s 2024-25 proposed budget investments in ID/A services and direct support professionals have [received praise](#) from [advocates](#), [editorial boards](#), and [caregivers](#) across Pennsylvania.

For more information about the Governor’s proposed 2024-25 budget and the bold investments to support Pennsylvania’s ID/A community, programs, support staff, and more, click [here](#).

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