



## Investment in Human Services Workforce in FY'26 State Budget Through Chapter 257 & Human Service Reserve (Line-Item 1599-6903)

*The Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers (ADDP) represents more than 130 organizations statewide that deliver essential services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) including Autism, and to people with brain injuries.*

Adequate funding for human services staff is a statutory requirement under Chapter 257 and should be treated as a contractual obligation. Addressing wage disparities in the human services sector is a social justice issue, as our workforce is predominantly women and people of color. The Commonwealth must ensure equitable compensation for these and all employees.

We are grateful for the historic Chapter 257 investment by the Administration and the Legislature in the FY'25 state budget, which helped reduce vacancy rates for direct support professionals (DSPs) from 24% to 19%. However, vacancy rates remain troubling compared to the state's 5% jobless rate. Vacancy rates for LPNs and clinicians have worsened, exacerbating workforce challenges.

Our sector is experiencing the largest workforce shortage in its history. As part of *The Collaborative\**, ADDP's long-term goal is to align salary benchmarks for human services staff with the 75th percentile of the MA Bureau of Labor Statistics index. This would ensure competitive compensation and help recruit and retain critical staff.

While we recognize the Commonwealth's competing fiscal demands, ADDP's sole **budget priority for FY'26 is to implement a salary benchmark at the 63<sup>rd</sup> percentile of the MA Bureau of Labor Statistics salary index for all human services positions in the Chapter 257 Rate Reserve (1599-6903)**. This would raise the median entry-level DSP salary to \$22.35 per hour (currently \$20.79, the 53<sup>rd</sup> percentile). This investment, costing an additional \$100 million, will have a significant impact on reducing vacancy rates and ensuring a well-staffed, high-quality community-based service system.

We urge the Commonwealth to prioritize these investments in the FY'26 budget to stabilize and strengthen the human services workforce, ensuring critical services for those who depend on them.



The human services sector employs more than **160,000 individuals** who provide safety net services.



Scan to watch

*\*The Association for Behavioral Healthcare, ADDP, The Children's League & The Providers' Council.*