ASSEMBLY, No. 3297

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 25, 2020

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE
District 37 (Bergen)
Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON
District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)
Assemblyman ANDREW ZWICKER
District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Co-Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman Murphy and Assemblyman Verrelli

SYNOPSIS

Makes FY 2020 supplemental appropriation of $16.5 million for direct support professional wage increase.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/16/2020)

A SUPPLEMENT to "An Act making appropriations for the support of the State Government and the several public purposes for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 and regulating the disbursement thereof," approved June 30, 2019 (P.L.2019, c.150).

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. In addition to the amounts appropriated under P.L.2019, c.150, there is appropriated out of the General Fund the following sum for the purpose specified:

94 INTERDEPARTMENTAL ACCOUNTS

70 Government Direction, Management, and Control
74 General Government Services
9420 Other Interdepartmental Accounts

GRANTS-IN-AID

04-9420 Other Interdepartmental Accounts	$16,500,000
Total Grants-in-Aid Appropriation, Other Interdepartmental Accounts	$16,500,000

Grants-in-Aid:

04	Direct Support Professional Wage Increase	($16,500,000)

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill makes a FY 2020 supplemental appropriation of $16.5 million for direct support professional (DSP) wage increase. These funds would increase the existing appropriation of $40 million, for a total FY 2020 appropriation of $56.5 million. A DSP provides hands-on supports to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and are the reason people with I/DD are able to live meaningful lives in the community. DSPs implement complex behavioral health plans, oversee and administer essential medical care, comply with regulations and reporting requirements, and serve as advocates, companions, mentors, and caregivers. Although the appropriation benefits DSPs providing services under provider contracts or fee-for-service agreements within several departments, the vast majority is ultimately allocated to the Division of Developmental Disabilities in the Department of Human Services.

At an average starting salary of $12 per hour, DSP wages are not competitive, with an increasing number of retailers paying $15 to $18 per hour and New Jersey’s minimum wage on a path to $15 per hour for entry-level jobs that are far less demanding. To compound the issue,

there is a growing DSP shortage that is threatening the safety and health of individuals with I/DD living in community-settings.

It is the sponsor's goal that this supplemental appropriation will provide the funding necessary in order for the DSP workforce to stay competitive and stable. According to the Coalition for a DSP Living Wage, these funds, along with a federal match of $16.5 million, will result in a $1.20 per hour increase for DSPs, which is needed to accommodate the impact of the State's minimum wage increase to $11 per hour for most workers on January 1, 2020.