

On behalf of Chimes, an I/DD provider in Delaware, I wish to submit the comment below:

The most important thing the state can do is to work to stabilize and expand the workforce of people who support people with disabilities. Staff are required in order for providers to offer the maximum person-centered, choice-driven opportunities for the people we support, and we are in a staffing crisis. For this reason, Chimes suggests prioritizing paying staff hiring/sign on bonuses that could be paid out over a number of months to encourage retention. In addition, retention bonuses could be offered to staff who meet annual anniversary dates with the provider by whom they are employed. In this way, we hope to minimize losses of staff to retail establishments and other employment opportunities that offer more money and less complex work.

Another suggestion is to look into remote monitoring for I/DD residential homes. Remote monitoring would reduce the number of staff needed on shift while offering more independence to the people we support, where this technology is appropriate. In order to be successful, the FMAP funding would be used to purchase not only the equipment and technology needed for remote monitoring to work, but also ongoing training for staff regarding how to use it.

Finally, although the funds received can be spent through 2024, we recommend frontloading the money so that it is expended by the time 2024 arrives. Our workforce crisis is happening now, and we need a strong injection of funding now. If we spread the money too far out, we will not be able to make the kind of impact we need to make to jump start the response to the workforce crisis.

Thank you,
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