

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2414 (Nguyen) – As Introduced February 20, 2026

Policy Committee: Human Services Vote: 7 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill defines direct support professional (DSP) and requires the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), by April 1, 2027, to develop billing guidance necessary to facilitate a pay differential associated with required training.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Changes the title of “direct service professional” to instead be “direct support professional” and defines direct support professional as an individual who receives compensation to provide direct support to children or adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, is employed by a service provider receiving regional center funding, and spends at least 50% of their working time completing direct support tasks, including, but not limited to, all of the following:
  - a) Services that enhance independence and community inclusion.
  - b) Assisting with skill development, including personal and vocational coaching.
  - c) Providing assistance with activities of daily living.
- 2) Requires DDS, by April 1, 2027, and subject to appropriation in the annual budget act, to develop the billing guidance necessary to facilitate a pay differential associated with required training.
- 3) Requires any proposed or active pay differential associated with training to be established and included in the rate model review.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

Estimated ongoing General Fund costs of an unknown, but potentially significant amount, likely greater than \$150,000. DDS explains it already utilizes the term direct support professional and is also currently developing billing guidance to support enhanced training-based pay differentials using existing funds. Requiring any proposed or active pay differential be incorporated into the current rate model review is expected to increase the DSP rate for workers who earn the differential on an ongoing basis if it is tied to the rate models.

According to the Legislative Analyst’s Office, the General Fund faces a structural deficit in the tens of billions of dollars over the next several fiscal years.

**COMMENTS:**1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

DSPs are on the front lines, providing direct and essential support to California's community of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This workforce ensures that folks with IDD maintain their dignity, independence, and access to social opportunities by providing a wide range of supports, including job coaching and employment support, mobility assistance, wound care, and the administration of medication. Unfortunately, California is currently facing a DSP workforce shortage, which severely reduces supports and services for the IDD community. Low wages in exchange for this highly skilled labor are forcing workers to seek employment in other industries to make ends meet. [This bill] standardizes references to DSPs throughout state law, strengthening workforce recognition, enabling consistent data collection, and supporting more effective policy development. By ensuring DSPs are formally recognized in state law, this bill also increases access to supports and services for individuals with IDDs.

2) **Background. DSP Role.** DSPs work directly with people with IDDs to assist the people they work with to become independent and integrated into their community. Historically, DSPs primarily served as caregivers for the people they supported. Today, the role of a DSP focuses more broadly on supporting people with disabilities to participate fully in their communities, live in integrated settings, and seek competitive integrated employment.

Advocates assert that despite the essential role DSPs play in the disability services system and the broader economy, state law references them inconsistently and does not clearly define their responsibilities. This lack of clarity makes it more difficult to measure workforce needs, track turnover, and implement effective strategies to build and sustain the workforce. This bill addresses the inconsistent references in statute and clearly defines the role of a DSP.

**DSP Training.** California has implemented a number of workforce initiatives including a training stipend for DSPs and an internship program. In addition, existing law requires DDS to develop and implement a DSP training curriculum that promotes person-centered services that are culturally and linguistically sensitive and improve consumer outcomes. DDS is implementing this by establishing the "DSP University," which, according to DDS's webpage, is set to begin in winter 2026. This bill requires DDS to establish billing guidance necessary to facilitate a pay differential associated with required training.

**Rate Model Review.** AB 2434 (Mathis), Chapter 904, Statutes of 2024, required DDS to review and update the rate models per the cost inputs available at the time of the review and post the updated rate models on its website every two years. The first rate model was published this year. The rate model is not required to be implemented and is merely a model of what rates would be if they were fully funded. This bill clarifies that DSPs must be included in the rate model review.