

The Daily Star

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In Your Opinion: State needs to pay more to direct-care workers

Northern Rivers Family of Services is proud to have more than 40 employees in Oneonta and Endwell, serving the community through our member agency Northeast Parent & Child Society. Our team works tirelessly to help find and support loving foster homes, help families overcome behavioral health and emotional challenges, and navigate the confusing landscape of children's health. It is impossible to put a price tag on how much it is worth to provide support, training, and life-savings skills to New York's most vulnerable citizens. Unfortunately, it keeps getting harder for them to do their vitally important jobs because of a lack of support from the state.

The dedicated Northeast employees you see every day are just a few of the 200,000 human services nonprofit workers who build and maintain the well-being of the people of Oneonta and the entire state every day. These skilled professionals provide programs and services such as universal pre-kindergarten, mental health care, employment training, and intergenerational community centers. The network serves the very young children to our state's oldest adults.

Despite the human and economic impact of the service delivery sector, our workers and providers are facing an unprecedented workforce crisis. For providers, the average turnover rate for direct-care staff, clinicians and support personnel exceed 30 percent. We believe this community deserves to have dedicated, caring, top-quality staff serving our children and families. High turnover results in increased overtime costs, stress and burnout, safety risks, increased training costs, and poor quality of service. Imagine you, or a loved one, with significant support need having a different caregiver every six months or worse yet every month. This has to change. We ask that the state provide salary adjustments for those not covered by the prior year state budget for direct-care workers.

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