



## *It's more than just an experiential community support program...it's a movement!*

Portland Foundation Program (207)771-7909 Auburn Foundation Program (207)783-8300 The Art Department (207)775-6355  
Publication Studio (207) 212-6971 Listen Up (207)212-6379 Composition Studio (207)212-2169 Art Certificate Program (207)689-7410

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on LD 1157.

**My name is Scott Miller**, and I am the Director and founder of Creative Trails, which is the Community Support (CS) program of Support Solutions. I have over 20+ years of experience working with adults with intellectual disabilities, 5 years as a DSP in different delivery services, 2 years as a residential manager, 1 year on a nationally recognized clinical team and 15 years as a director of Creative Trails CS program. Creative Trails serves 200 participants throughout 7 locations and 3 counties in Maine and pre-pandemic we employed over 40 DSP's. Now we are down to around 20 and need to rebuild.

**It is imperative in order for the Community Support Industry to have** adequately paid DSP's and a rate that will support that minimum wage increase. The budget parameters that we work in, based on our waiver reimbursement rates from MaineCare, allow to just pay minimum wage or slightly above. Due to this it is extremely difficult to retain our incredible DSP's more than a year and a half. The state requires a minimum of 44hrs of paid trainings, which does not include the other 40+ hours of paid training to have the DSP as an active "live" staff.

**Over the last decade** we have started collecting some exit surveys from our DSP's and over 90% say they loved their job as a DSP but can't afford to stay. How could they be working for a little above minimum wage? They can't afford rent, car payments, healthy meals, school loans, to get married, to have a family or support a current family. These are professionals that have an important therapeutic/social role in our society.

**For the Community Support industry to meet the upcoming HCBS Federal mandates** staff are requiring more trainings, which is more costs. We are also looking at a proposed waiver reform with 21% and greater cuts. How are we supposed to increase rates with more cuts and minimum wage increases in Portland and surrounding areas?

**In order for our state to provide quality services** for the IDD community it is crucial to have a minimum wage increase reflected in the rates by at least \$2 an hour. Our current rate is \$6.53 per 1/4 unit for a 1:3 avg staffing ratio. We need to get this rate at least \$8.53 with the same ratio methodology.

**By increasing the rate** will allow us to increase the DSP wage and retain staff longer, which will create better quality of services. Having better services for our participants will help give them skill sets and community ties that would lead to less services needed in the future, which will save the state a tremendous amount of funds in the big picture.

Sincerely,

Scott Miller

Creative Trails Director/ [smiller@supportsolutions.org](mailto:smiller@supportsolutions.org)

[www.creativetrails.org](http://www.creativetrails.org)



Scott Miller  
SOUTH PORTLAND

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Sincerely,  
Scott Miller  
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[www.creativetrails.org](http://www.creativetrails.org)