

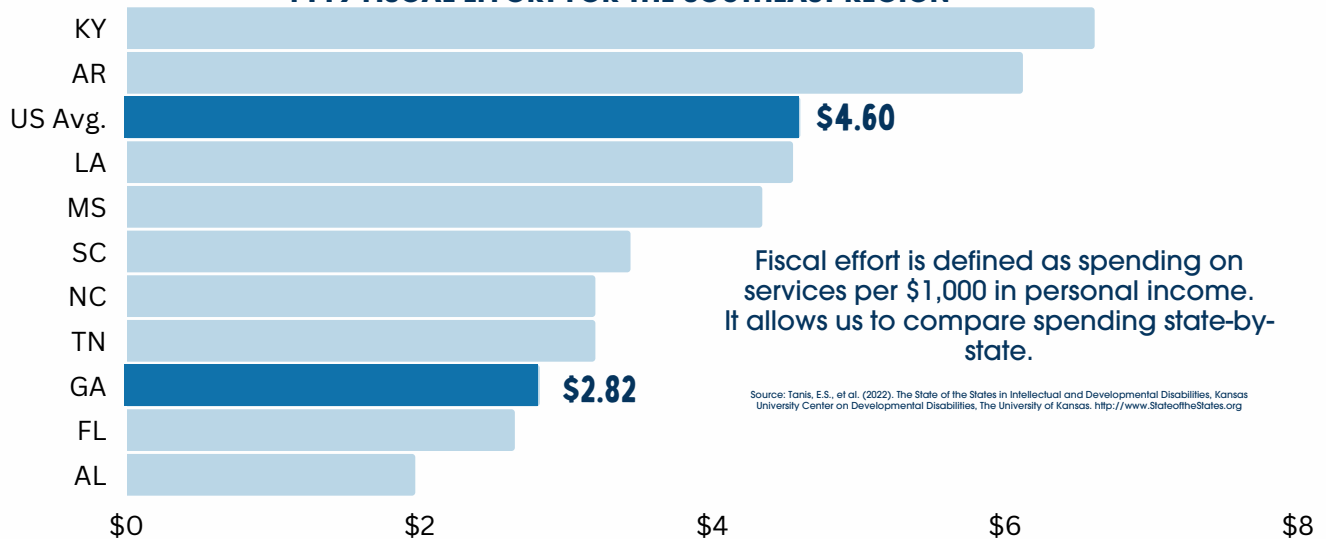
# WAIVERS & WAGES: AVOIDING THE COLLAPSE

The time is now to make an overdue investment in waivers for Georgians with disabilities and wages for the direct support professionals that support them.

HISTORICALLY, GEORGIA'S INVESTMENT IN ID/DD SERVICES HAS BEEN LOW. GEORGIA'S FISCAL EFFORT IS LOWER THAN MOST STATES IN THE REGION AND ONLY

→ **61%** → THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

FY19 FISCAL EFFORT FOR THE SOUTHEAST REGION



## LACK OF FUNDING HAS NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND PROVIDERS

Providers are turning people with disabilities away because they **cannot find staff to support them.**

Hospitals are nearing capacity including **people with disabilities who are being abandoned** in emergency rooms.

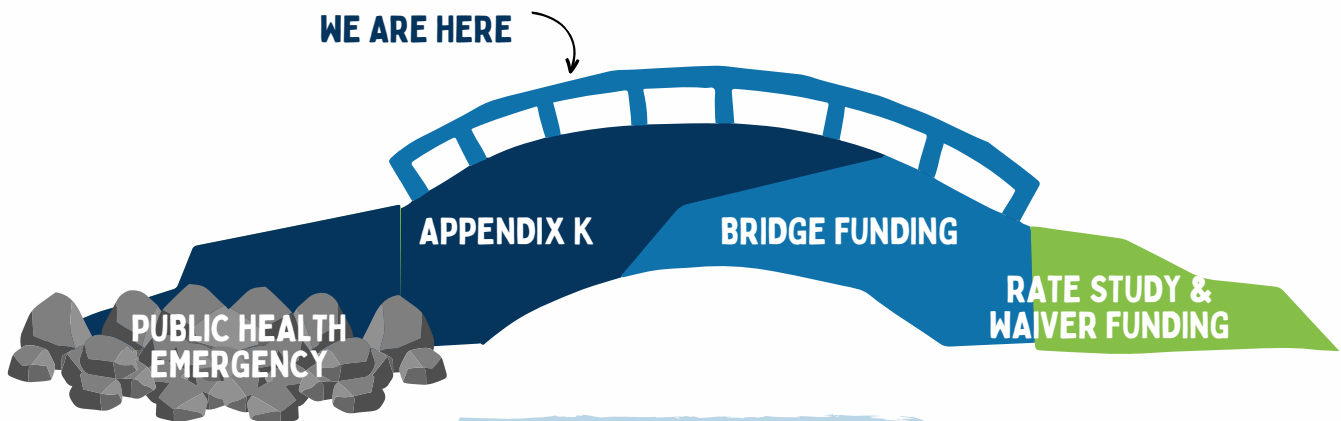
The Direct Support Professional (DSP) turnover rate hovers **around 50% and vacancy rates rate at around 30%** for some agencies.

## APPENDIX K

During the federal public health emergency, NOW and COMP waivers have had extra flexibility under a program called Appendix K. In Georgia, Appendix K allowed rate increases for some services and provided funding flexibility that allowed providers to retain more DSPs than would otherwise be possible. This prevented the system from plunging into an irreversible crisis but Appendix K will end in November. As of August 2023, Georgia may be able to take advantage of an opportunity to extend Appendix K. If not, other bridge funding will be needed. Even with Appendix K, providers are still struggling to stay in business, retain their staff, and provide crucial services to Georgians. A small number of DSPs are working large amounts of overtime for unsustainably low wages.

## WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

DBHDD recently finished a rate study, which includes a comprehensive review of the payment rates and policies for services provided through NOW and COMP waivers. This is desperately needed as providers are struggling to stay in business and retain their staff, and the small number of DSPs are working large amounts of overtime for unsustainably low wages.



## THE ASK:

- 1 Make sure we don't fall off the bridge! Ensure bridge funding to maintain current service levels until the rate study is implemented.
- 2 Fully fund the rate study recommended budget of \$107 million to DBHDD in SFY2025.
- 3 Continue Georgia's commitment to ending the waitlist with ~\$65 million to DBHDD to fund 2400 waivers. Currently, over 7,000 Georgians are on the waiting list.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT:**



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