

Serving 9 Counties: Millard, Sevier, Beaver, Piute, Wayne, Iron, Garfield, Washing, Kane

RRCI has generally operated with 16 key employee positions along with other part time/volunteer help. RRCI has four satellite offices located in Richfield, Beaver, Cedar, and Hurricane in addition to the main office in located in St. George.

**From 2021 to date RRCI lost 8 employees, 7 of which left for better paying positions.**

In the past, RRCI’s average starting rate for a typical coordinator position was $13 per hour. The majority of RRCI staff have been with RRCI for over five years. In 2021 when housing costs skyrocketed and the cost of living when up drastically in our area, a few of the newer staff members started leaving for higher paying jobs. It quickly became evident that expecting to hire and retain new staff at the old starting rate was unrealistic. We could get very few to apply and those we did hire were swiftly enticed away by better paying job offers.

After analyzing the current market, \* it was determined that $15.50 was the minimum we could offer to attract and retain potential employees. The prevailing problem was then, how can we start new staff at a higher rate than those who have been employed for three to five years?

Our emergency fix was to rase those (4) older staff members who were not at the $15.50 marker up to that rate. This was not an equitable fix but was all that could be done within the current fiscal year. With the 2023 SFY it is our intention to offer a merit increase of up to 8% for all existing staff members who qualify. (Merit increases are directly tied to percentage of yearly goals met.) Newly hired employees will only qualify for a percentage proportionate to the number of months they were working on goals set in the 2022 SFY. It is our hope that this will help even out the disparities between older and newer staff members.

This is not an ideal or long-term solution since employees were all hired at such low starting wages, the potential increase still won’t bring all employees up to the DWS median wage standard.

**Cost of vacant positions:**

**Beaver/Millard County area was left vacant for 8 months.**

During that time, we encountered:

* Loss of consumer confidence and trust in the area
* Decrease in area resource and networking connections
* Area caseload decreased by just over 50% (natural ebbs and flows happen with all caseloads but due to the lack of local staffing there was no way to build the area while closing completed cases.) This brought us to the lowest numbers we have ever had in this area.

**Cost of staff turnover:**

**Over the course of 8 months RRCI’s youth program had 7 different staff members occupying the two youth positions.**

During this time, we encountered:

* Complaints from parents about inconsistency.
* A drop in youth participating in programs due to losing staff members they trusted and had grown comfortable with.
* A gap in school programs offered to transitioning youth because of lack of staff to facilitate them.

**A main component of independent living work is building trust in the community and with the people with disabilities whom we serve. We must have competent, consistent staff to be successful. This requires fair and equitable wages.**

**REQUEST**

Proposed additional ongoing funding to facilitate a $2 an hour COLA increase for all current staff and funding to support new staff being hired at $15.50 an hour. Consideration is also being requested for funding for COLAs for all employees annually, which would be based upon the same rate the State Employees receive.

Wage increases of $2/hr. $54,080

Fringe benefits $6,841

31.3.% Indirect $19,068

**TOTAL REQUEST $79,989**

\*Living Wage Calculator: <https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/49>

\*DWS Economic Data Viewer: <https://jobs.utah.gov/jsp/utalmis/#/occupation/211099/report>