Consumer-Directed Attendant Support Services
Attendant Wage Setting Guide

This guide is for Consumer-Directed Attendant Support Services (CDASS) members or their Authorized Representatives (CDASS employers). It will walk you through each step of setting a fair hourly wage for your attendants and make sure you stay within your CDASS budget. If your budget ever changes, you should complete these steps before adjusting your attendants' wages.

Key Terms and Definitions

- AR (Authorized Representative): Someone you choose to help manage your CDASS services if you need help.
- Attendant: Also called caregivers; you hire them to provide your services.
- CDASS: Consumer-Directed Attendant Support Services. A program that lets you hire and manage your own caregivers.
- Cost to You: The full cost of paying your attendant, including employer taxes, not just their hourly wage.
- Employer/Employer of Record: You or your Authorized Representative. The person in charge of hiring, setting pay, and managing workers.
- EIN: Employer Identification Number issued by the Internal Revenue Service.
- FMS: Financial Management Services. A company that helps with paperwork, taxes, and payroll for your attendants.
- Monthly Allocation: The total amount of money you can spend each month for care services.

Tips When Setting Attendant Wages

- You can have multiple pay rates based on when or where your attendant is providing services, or what tasks are being done.
    - For example, a specific rate for evening shifts or one for when only skilled care is provided.
- Pay must be between the state minimum wage and the CDASS maximum wage.
    - As of 1/1/26, Colorado's Direct Care Worker Base Wage is $17.00/hour. In Denver, it's $19.29/hour.
    - The CDASS maximum wage is $57.12.
- You can offer higher pay for harder-to-fill shifts or more skilled attendants.
- Make sure you stay within your monthly budget when setting rates.
- Know what pay rates you can offer before you negotiate initial rates or raises with any attendant.

Section A – Standard Pay Rate Steps

Your monthly CDASS allocation is the amount available each month to pay your attendants' hourly wages and pay your employer taxes.

1. Look at your Monthly Allocation Worksheet provided by your case manager to find your monthly CDASS allocation. Write it down in box 1 in the chart on the next page.
2. Write in box 2 the Financial Management Services (FMS) contractor you chose to work with.
3. On lines a and b, write at least two attendants' names and the hourly wage you want to pay each of them.
4. Look at your FMS Cost to You worksheet and find the Cost to You amount next to each of your attendants' wages. Write the amounts in the Your Cost to You Rate column.
    a. This Cost to You amount includes employer taxes that you must pay unless you qualify for tax exemptions. See Section B to find out if you qualify for any exemptions.
5. Write the number of hours per week each attendant will work.
6. Multiply each of the Cost to You rates by the number of hours each attendant will work per week, put the result in the Cost Per Week column.
7. Add up all your attendants' Cost Per Week amounts across lines a through f. Put the number in box 3. This is your Total Cost Per Week.
8. Multiply the amount from box 3 by 4.33 to find your Total Cost Per Month. Put that number in box 4.

Monthly CDASS Allocation	**=**		**1**
My Financial Management Services	**is**		**2**

Attendant	**Attendant's Hourly Rate**	**Your Cost to You Rate**		**Hours Per Week**		**Cost Per Week**	
			X		**=**	$ 0.00	**a**
			X		**=**	$ 0.00	**b**
			X		**=**	$ 0.00	**c**
			X		**=**	$ 0.00	**d**
			X		**=**	$ 0.00	**e**
			X		**=**	$ 0.00	**f**
Total Cost Per Week *Add (a) through (f)*						$ 0.00	**3**
Total Cost Per Month *Multiply box 3 by 4.33 (average weeks in a month)*						$ 0.00	**4**

9. Compare the amount in box 4 with the amount in box 1. If box 4 is not less than or equal to box 1, you must adjust your attendants' hourly rates, weekly hours, or both to say in budget.

☞ **Tip: If you want to pay more, you must reduce the number of service hours you want your attendants to work so you stay in budget.**

Section B: Steps If You Qualify for Tax Exemptions

You may qualify for lower employer tax rates if your attendant is a relative or a working student.

1. Look at your FMS Cost to You worksheet for the section that outlines the tax exemptions based on your relationship to your attendant.
2. Take the Total Rate according to the correct relationship (if it is provided) or add up all the applicable tax percentages using the following Employer Tax Exemptions chart.
   a. Social Security & Medicare (FICA)
   b. Federal Unemployment Tax (FUTA)
   c. State Unemployment Tax (SUTA)*
   d. Workers' Compensation Insurance
   e. Sick Time Employer Premium
   f. Family Medical Leave (FML)*

   *SUTA rates are assigned by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment; your individual rate may be cheaper. *FML Rate is 0.45% for employers with 10 or more employees working 20 or more weeks in a year.

Attendant Relationship to the CDASS Employer	FICA	FUTA	SUTA
Child employed by Parent	Exempt until 21st birthday	Exempt until 21st birthday	Exempt until 21st birthday
Parent employed by Adult Child (including Adoptive or Step-Parent)	Exempt	Exempt	Not Exempt
Spouse employed by Spouse	Exempt	Exempt	Exempt
Minor Students (full-time students under age 18)	Exempt	Not Exempt	Not Exempt

3. Divide the total tax rate from step 2 by 100, then add 1. Multiply that number by your attendant's wage to get the unique Cost to You Rate with your tax exemptions included.

☑ **Contact your FMS to submit an Attendant Rate Form Once you're done setting wages.**

Need Help?

Consumer Direct for Colorado: InfoCDCO@ConsumerDirectCare.com, 1-844-381-4433

FMS Contact Info

Public Partnerships LLC (PPL): cocdassadmin@pplfirst.com, 1-888-752-8250

Palco, Inc.: CO-CDASS@palcofirst.com, 1-866-710-0456

Step-by-Step Example For Section A: Standard Pay Rate Steps

1. Look at your Monthly Allocation Worksheet provided by your case manager to find your monthly CDASS allocation. Write it down in box 1.

   ! All of the numbers outlined are examples, including the Adjusted Hourly Rates. !

Service	Weekly Service Hours	Adjusted Hourly Rate	# of Weeks	CDASS Period Allocation	Daily Rate	Monthly Allocation
Homemaker	5.00	$19.14	52.14285714	$4,989.55	$13.67	$415.80
Personal Care	5.00	$19.14	52.14285714	$4,989.55	$13.67	$415.80
Health Maintenance	10.00	$30.08	52.14285714	$15,684.05	$42.97	$1,307.00
Totals	**20.00**			**$25,663.15**	**$70.31**	**2,138.60**

2. Write in box 2 the Financial Management Services (FMS) contractor you chose to work with.

Monthly CDASS Allocation	**=**	**$2,138.60**	1
My Financial Management Services	**is**	**Company FMS**	2

3. On lines a and b, write the names of at least two of your attendants and the hourly wage you want to pay each of them.

Attendant	Attendant's Hourly Rate	Your Cost to You Rate		Hours Per Week		Cost Per Week	
James David	**$19.00**		X		=		a
Rita Taylor	**$22.00**		X		=		b

4. Look at your FMS Cost to You worksheet and find the Cost to You amount that is next to each of your attendants' wages. Write the amounts in the Your Cost to You Rate column. See the next step-by-step example for calculating tax exemptions.

Hourly Rate	Cost to You Rate	Hourly Rate	Cost to You Rate
$18.50	$20.97	$20.50	$23.23
$19.00	$21.53	$21.00	$23.80
$19.50	$22.10	$21.50	$24.37
$20.00	$22.67	$22.00	$24.93

$21.53 is the cost to you rate for James and $24.93 is the rate for Rita.

5. Write the number of hours per week each attendant will work.

6. Multiply each of the Cost to You rates by the number of hours each attendant will work per week, put the result in the Cost Per Week column.

Attendant	Attendant's Hourly Rate	Your Cost to You Rate		Hours Per Week		Cost Per Week	
James David	**$19.00**	**$21.53**	X	**10**	=	**$215.30**	a
Rita Taylor	**$22.00**	**$24.93**	X	**10**	=	**$249.30**	b

7. Add up all your attendants' Cost Per Week amounts across lines a through f. Put the number in box 3. This is your Total Cost Per Week.

8. Multiply the amount from box 3 by 4.33 to find your Total Cost Per Month. Put that number in box 4.

Attendant	Attendant's Hourly Rate	Your Cost to You Rate		Hours Per Week		Cost Per Week	
James David	**$19.00**	**$21.53**	X	**10**	=	**$215.30**	a
Rita Taylor	**$22.00**	**$24.93**	X	**10**	=	**$249.30**	b
			X		=		c
			X		=		d
			X		=		e
			X		=		f
Total Cost Per Week *Add (a) through (f)*						**$464.60**	3
Total Cost Per Month *Multiply box 3 by 4.33 (average weeks in a month)*						**$2,011.718**	4

Compare the amount in box 4 with the amount in box 1. If box 4 is not less than or equal to box 1, you must adjust your attendants' hourly rates, weekly hours, or both to say in budget.

Total Cost Per Month *Multiply box 3 by 4.33 (average weeks in a month)*	**$2,011.72**	4

Monthly CDASS Allocation	=	**$2,138.60**	1

$2,011.72 is less than $2,138.60. These wages will keep you within this example CDASS budget.

☞ **Remember: If you want to pay an attendant a higher wage, you must reduce the number of service hours they will work so you stay in budget.**

Step-by-Step Example For Section B: Steps If You Qualify for Tax Exemptions

In this example, you have two attendants. One is a friend and the other is your spouse.

The first chart is an example of default employer tax rates on a FMS Cost to You worksheet. Your FMS worksheet may have different tax rates.

Employer Tax	Tax Rates
Social Security & Medicare (FICA)	7.65%
Federal Unemployment Tax (FUTA)	0.60%
State Unemployment Tax (SUTA)*	3.05%
Workers' Compensation Insurance	0.94%
Sick Leave	1.10%
Family & Medical Leave Insurance*	0.00%
Total Employer Cost to You Tax Rate	**13.34%**

*SUTA Rate assigned by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment; Your individual rate may be cheaper. *FML Rate is 0.45% for CDASS employers with 10 or more employees working 20 or more weeks in a year.

The following chart has different employer tax exemptions available depending on your relationship to your attendant.

Attendant Relationship to the CDASS Employer Holder:	FICA	FUTA	SUTA
Child employed by Parent	Exempt until 21st birthday	Exempt until 21st birthday	Exempt until 21st birthday
Parent employed by Adult Child (including Adoptive or Step-Parent)	Exempt	Exempt	Not Exempt
Spouse employed by Spouse	Exempt	Exempt	Exempt
Minor Students (full-time students under age 18)	Exempt	Not Exempt	Not Exempt

1. Look at your FMS Cost to You worksheet for the section that outlines the tax exemptions for an employer that employs their spouse.

   For the attendant who is your friend, you do not qualify for employer tax exemptions and use the default rate. For your other attendant who is your spouse, you do not have to pay FICA, FUTA, and SUTA employer taxes.

2. Take the Total Rate according to the correct relationship (if it is provided) or add up all the applicable tax percentages using the Employer Tax Exemptions chart.
   - ~~a. Social Security & Medicare (FICA)~~ – Do not have to pay
   - ~~b. Federal Unemployment Tax (FUTA)~~ – Do not have to pay
   - ~~c. State Unemployment Tax (SUTA)*~~ – Do not have to pay
   - d. Workers' Compensation Insurance – 0.94%
   - e. Sick Time Employer Premium – 1.10%
   - f. Family Medical Leave (FML)* - 0.00% (you have less than 10 attendants)

   0.94 + 1.10% = 2.04% is your Unique Cost to You percentage.

3. Divide the total tax rate you found or calculated in step 2 by 100, and add 1. You will use this number to multiply by your attendant's wage to get the unique Cost to You Rate with your tax exemptions included.

   2.04 ÷ 100 = 0.0204 , 0.0204 + 1 = 1.0204

   Your wage for Rita Taylor (your spouse) is $22.00. 22 x 1.0204 = 22.4488 or $22.45

Attendant	Attendant's Hourly Rate	Your Cost to You Rate		Hours Per Week		Cost Per Week	
James David	**$19.00**	**$21.53**	X	**10**	=	**$215.30**	a
Rita Taylor (spouse)	**$22.00**	**$22.45**	X	**10**	=	**$224.50**	b
			X		=		c
			X		=		d
			X		=		e
			X		=		f
Total Cost Per Week *Add (a) through (f)*						**$439.80**	3
Total Cost Per Month *Multiply box 3 by 4.33 (average weeks in a month)*						**$1904.334**	4

Compare the amount in box 4 with the amount in box 1. If box 4 is not less than or equal to box 1, you must adjust your attendants' hourly rates, weekly hours, or both to say in budget.

Total Cost Per Month *Multiply box 3 by 4.33 (average weeks in a month)*	**$1904.33**	4

Monthly CDASS Allocation	=	**$2,138.60**	1

$1904.33 is less than $2,138.60. These wages for your friend and your spouse will keep you within this example CDASS budget.

☞ **You may be able to increase one of your attendant's wages slightly since your Total Cost per Week is $234.27 less than your monthly CDASS budget.**

Attendant Wage Setting Worksheet

Monthly CDASS Allocation	**=**		**1**
My Financial Management Services	**is**		**2**

Attendant	Attendant's Hourly Rate	Your Cost to You Rate		Hours Per Week		Cost Per Week	
			X		**=**	$ 0.00	**a**
			X		**=**	$ 0.00	**b**
			X		**=**	$ 0.00	**c**
			X		**=**	$ 0.00	**d**
			X		**=**	$ 0.00	**e**
			X		**=**	$ 0.00	**f**
Total Cost Per Week *Add (a) through (f)*						$ 0.00	**3**
Total Cost Per Month *Multiply box 3 by 4.33 (average weeks in a month)*						$ 0.00	**4**