

# About the Ron Yost Personal Assistance Services Program (RYPAS)

## RYPAS Funding

In 1999 The West Virginia Legislature created and established the Ron Yost Personal Assistance Services Act to expand personal assistance services for persons with severe disabilities to enable them to **live in their own homes and communities** in lieu of more restrictive settings. Recipients of the RYPAS program are able to make decisions regarding the provision of services including, but not limited to, hiring, training, managing, paying, and terminating an assistant's employment.

In the state treasury a **special fund was created and designated** the "Ron Yost Personal Assistance Services Fund". This fund is an appropriated account within the division of rehabilitation services and all moneys are expended exclusively for the purposes of RYPAS.

These funds **may be used only** for the planning, designing, delivering and administering of personal assistance services and training.

Funds are disbursed in a manner that **ensures maximum consumer control** of the services provided under the program.

As of August 2019, the average nursing home cost for an individual in West Virginia is \$123,370 per year, according to [www.payingforseniorcare.com](http://www.payingforseniorcare.com). The current average cost for an individual on RYPAS living comfortably in their own home is \$18,336 per year.

## Who is Ron Yost?

**Ron Yost** was an advocate for disability rights in West Virginia for fifteen years.

This program was named in his memory by the legislators who sponsored the bill that created it. Ron was an individual with a severe disability himself, a spinal cord injury resulting in quadriplegia. He understood the need for such services and how much difference having an attendant or personal assistant can make in the independence and quality of life of a person with a disability.

**He was involved in establishing** the Employment Attendant Care Program, operated by the WV Division of Rehabilitation Services, and advocated for the Personal Assistance Services (PAS) program that would later bear his name. He had a great impact on his community in Huntington and on the disability community across West Virginia.

Thank you, Ron, for your **advocacy efforts and service** to the disability community in West Virginia.

## About

The Ron Yost Personal Assistance Services (RYPAS) Act, was established by the Legislature in **1999**.

The statewide program is managed by a seven member, **consumer controlled** board. Board members are people with disabilities, most of whom have their own personal assistants.

RYPAS enables people with severe disabilities to live in their **own homes** and communities.

RYPAS recipients have **control** over their own care, become employers, pay taxes and **contribute** to society.

## How It Works

To qualify for RYPAS the applicant must have a severe disability that affects one or more major life activity, and:

- have a disability that will last for 12 months or longer
- need assistance to take care of the essential tasks of daily living
- not be currently receiving personal assistance services through any Medicaid program
- **meet the responsibilities of an employer** or have a designee that can
- manage your own financial and legal affairs or have a designee that can
- meet the income guidelines for adjusted annual income

The RYPAS program provides reimbursements to qualified applicants to pay personal assistants they hire. Recipients **may directly hire** an assistant or purchase services through a provider agency.

You may request an application by contacting our office or downloading it from the WVSILC website at [www.wvsilc.org](http://www.wvsilc.org).



# Impact of the Ron Yost Personal Assistance Services Program (RYPAS)

The RYPAS program provides financial assistance to **West Virginians** with severe disabilities so they may hire personal assistants to help them with everyday tasks that they cannot perform on their own.

So far this 2020 FY, RYPAS has served or is **serving 17** West Virginians with disabilities, with reimbursement obligations of **\$273,988**.

Because of **budget cuts**, when someone leaves the program we have been **unable to reduce the waiting list**.

For more information about the RYPAS program, visit

[www.wvsilc.org](http://www.wvsilc.org) or call the **WV Statewide Independent Living Council** at 304.766.4624 or 855.855.9743

Each year **qualified applicants die** waiting for RYPAS services.

**More funding** is required to eliminate the waiting list so we may keep these **West Virginians** in their homes.

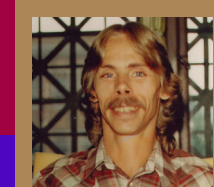
Recipients of RYPAS **employ** fellow West Virginians, pay state income taxes, are **active** in the community, **contribute** to society, are **healthier** and happier and **live longer** than their counterparts in nursing homes or institutions.

As of August 2019, the average **nursing home cost** for an individual in West Virginia is **\$123,370** per year, according to [www.payingforseniorcare.com](http://www.payingforseniorcare.com).

The current average **cost for an individual on RYPAS** living comfortably in their home is **\$18,336** per year.



With this assistance, individuals are able to **live in their own homes** and communities.



Recipients of the RYPAS program report they would not be able to **remain in their own homes** without the financial support the program provides and they would be **forced into a nursing home** or another institutionalized setting.



According to data from the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS), it is estimated, the overall percentage of **people with any type of disability** over 18 for whom poverty status is determined in WV was **22.8 percent**.

In other words, in 2018, **319,196** of the **1,398,701** individuals of all ages in WV reported one or more disabilities.



In Fiscal Year 2017 RYPAS received **\$54,870 in cuts** directly affecting the number of individuals the program is able to keep in their homes.



West Virginia has the **highest percentage** of citizens with **disabilities in the nation**. It also has the fastest growing elderly population in the nation.

RYPAS is a good way for West Virginia to **help serve the needs** of people with disabilities and the elderly.

**We call on the WV Legislators to reverse budget cuts to the RYPAS program to its previous \$400,000. Additionally, increase the program budget by \$100,000 for an investment of \$500,000.**

Save money and help West Virginians.



There's no place like home!



## 2019 Annual Report July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019

This Annual Report is respectfully submitted to:  
The Honorable James C. Justice, Governor  
The Honorable Mitch Carmichael, President of the Senate  
The Honorable Roger Hanshaw, Speaker of the House  
Lee Cassis, Clerk, West Virginia Senate  
Steve Harrison, Clerk, West Virginia House of Delegates

Presented by:  
The Ron Yost Personal Assistance Services Board  
The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services

## Financial Overview

### Funding 2019

	Total	Admin (7%)	Services (93%)
Budget Appropriation	333,828	23,368	310,460
Previous FY Carryover	68,123	0	68,123
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>401,951</b>	<b>23,368</b>	<b>378,583</b>

Expenditures	2018	2019
Recipient Reimbursements	243,835	235,472
Administrative Costs	21,870	21,993
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>265,705</b>	<b>257,465</b>

### Recipient Overview

Current Recipients	2018	2019
Number of Recipients	16	17
Average Age	62	65
Average Hours	212*	200*
<b>Average Cost Each</b>	<b>\$1,652*</b>	<b>1,528*</b>

### Waiting List

Currently Waiting	4	2
Average Age	57	37
Average Hours	233*	274*
<b>Average Funding Needed</b>	<b>\$1,689*</b>	<b>1,932*</b>

\*Per Month

## Recipients Wait List

Counties Represented	Recipients	Wait List
Cabell	1	
Grant		1
Harrison	4	
Kanawha	2	
Marshall	1	
Mercer	1	
Mineral	1	1
Monongalia	1	
Raleigh	2	
Randolph	1	
Wood	3	
<b>Total Recipients</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>



## Program Summary

### Funding

The appropriation for the RYPAS Program during FY-19 was \$333,828. Through contracts with the WV Division of Rehabilitation Services and the RYPAS Board, the Statewide Independent Living Council administered the funds for the operations of the Board, provided staff support to the Board and the Program, and served as the fiscal agent processing reimbursements to RYPAS recipients.

### Recipient Information:

During fiscal year 2019, a total of 19 individuals received personal assistance reimbursements through the RYPAS program. Two recipients passed away, and as a result, funds were available to add four new applicants from the wait list to the recipient list.

As of 6/30/19 Seventeen (17) recipients from ten (10) counties were receiving reimbursements<sup>1</sup>

- 1,590 hours per reimbursement period approved at \$7.25 per hour – 16 recipients
- 111 hours per reimbursement period approved at \$6.96 per hour – 1 recipient
- Reimbursement period (26 periods/year) amount approved: \$12,996.06
- Annual reimbursement amount approved: \$337,897.56

### Waiting List Information:

As of 6/30/19: 2 applicants, from 2 counties, were waiting for the program<sup>2</sup>

- Estimated 86 hours per reimbursement period needed at \$7.25 per hour
- Estimated 188 hours per reimbursement period needed at \$6.96 per hour
- Reimbursement period (26 periods/year) amount needed: \$1931.08
- Annual reimbursement amount needed: \$50,231.00

## RYPAS 2019 FYE Financial Report

Line Item	FY 2018 Carryover Budget	FY2019 Budget	Total Expenditures 7-1-18 to 6-30-19	Balance 6-30-19
RYPAS Reimbursements	68,123	310,461	235,472	74,989
SILC Administrative Fee		6,676	6,676	0
Contract Staff		14,060	14,060	0
Board Travel/Conference calls		657	389	268
Staff Travel		100	0	100
Board Training/Consultants		434	0	434
Printing		890	663	227
Postage		350	165	185
Marketing		100	40	60
Misc.		100	0	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>68,123</b>	<b>333,828</b>	<b>257,465</b>	<b>76,363</b>

<sup>1</sup>based on sliding scale

<sup>2</sup>estimates prior to functional assessment

## RYPAS Satisfaction Survey FY 2019

The RYPAS Board conducted a survey of consumer satisfaction with all the recipients of the RYPAS Program in West Virginia. Recipients were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the RYPAS Program and how RYPAS has affected their life and ability to live independently in their homes and communities.

The surveys were distributed to all RYPAS Recipients who were served during the October 2018 to September 2019 time period. A total of 17 surveys were mailed to recipients, and 9 were completed and returned. Thus, the response rate was 53% (9/17).

This section of the RYPAS Annual Report summarizes the responses to the survey.

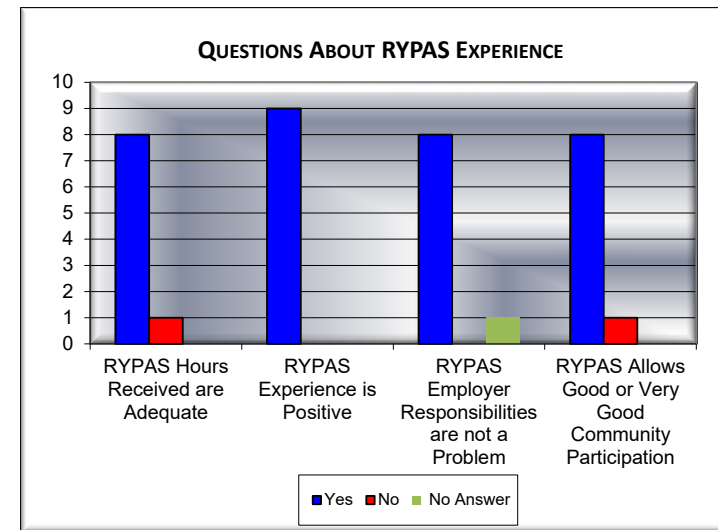


Chart A

### RYPAS Recipient Experience

As Chart A shows, 8 of 9 respondents stated that the hours they receive from RYPAS adequately meet their needs. All 9 respondents indicate their RYPAS experience is a positive one. Eight out of 9 RYPAS respondents answered the question if employer responsibilities are a problem, and all 8 replied that these responsibilities are not a problem; one person simply did not answer. And finally, 8 of the 9 indicate that the RYPAS program allowed for good or very good community participation.

### What RYPAS Recipients Like Least

According to the RYPAS recipients that responded to the satisfaction survey, the two least liked things were the paperwork and/or tax obligations and the reimbursement rate which is \$7.25 per hour.

Although there is not much we can do about the IRS tax requirements, with your help, we can increase the reimbursement rate by increasing the funding provided to the RYPAS program.

### What I Like Least About RYPAS

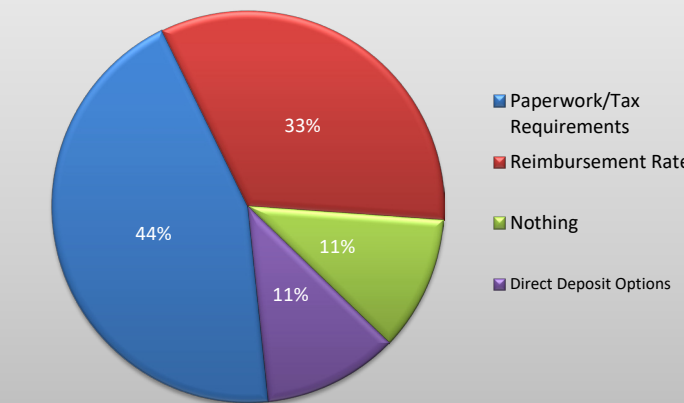


Chart B

### What I Like Most About RYPAS

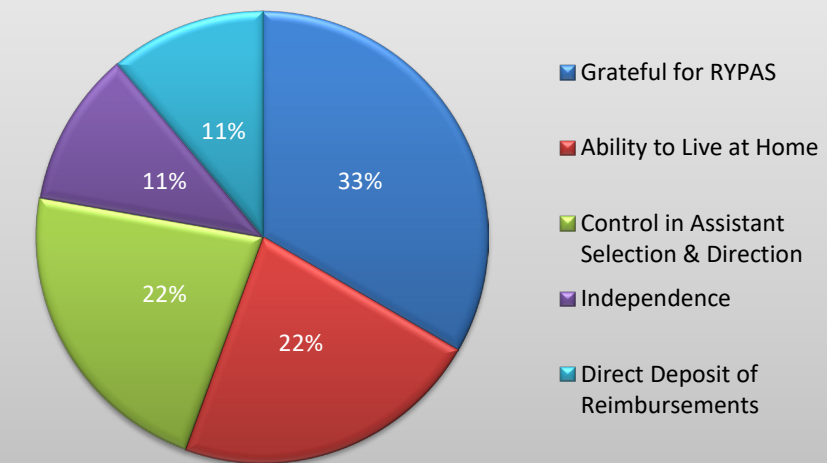


Chart C

### What RYPAS Recipients Like Most

As shown in Chart C, the majority of RYPAS recipients are simply grateful that the program exists to help them with the cost of their personal assistance services.

Next is the ability to live in the comfort of their own home instead of an institutionalized setting, which is equally liked with the control they have in selecting and directing their personal assistants

Finally, each of the following received one mention in the satisfaction survey as to what the recipients liked most about RYPAS; Independence and Direct Deposit of Reimbursements.

### Board Recommendations

The RYPAS Board, after reviewing the satisfaction surveys, analyzing the recipient & wait lists, and studying the life cycle of a RYPAS applicant, recommends the following to improve the program and the lives of the individuals who participate in the RYPAS program.

Pending availability of funding:

- Increase the reimbursement rate (currently \$7.25/hr) to match the state minimum wage, which will increase the likelihood that RYPAS Recipients will be able to find competent, reliable, and high quality personal assistants.
- Perform outreach activities throughout the state to educate West Virginians who may qualify for the RYPAS program, and organizations who serve individuals that may qualify for the RYPAS program.
- Increase in the number of recipients and counties represented.
- Request Legislature amend code to allow the RYPAS fund to be used to cover the costs of functional assessments previously covered by the WV Division of Rehabilitation Services.

Funding cuts, the reimbursement rate not keeping up with minimum wage, and no cost of living increases since the inception of RYPAS, have all been detrimental factors to the individuals who rely on the program to allow them to remain in their homes and communities instead of an institutional setting. The need for expansion of this program is especially critical for those RYPAS applicants who never make it off the waiting list.

