



**Steering Committee  
Members**

The Arc of New Jersey

The Alliance for the  
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with Disabilities

The New Jersey  
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New Jersey Council on  
Developmental  
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The Family Support  
Coalition of New  
Jersey

The New Jersey  
Statewide Self  
Advocacy Network

The Statewide  
Regional Family  
Support Planning  
Councils

The Department of Human Services is working on determining funding priorities for Fiscal Year 2018. This means that now is the time to weigh in with Commissioner Connolly about the issues impacting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

The most critical advocacy issue this year is the impact of the Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce shortage. DSPs are critically important to a successful life in the community for people with I/DD. But our community is at a crisis point in the hiring and retention of DSPs. We must work together to get higher wages for our DSPs, and the first step is for the Commissioner to hear from as many people as possible on this critical issue. Please take a few minutes to join us in advocating for additional funding for higher wages for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs).

Below you will find talking points that you can refer to when writing to the Commissioner. These talking points are meant as a guide and we strongly encourage you to personalize your correspondence. The unique details about you and your loved one with I/DD is what makes your message strong.

Thank you for participating in our advocacy efforts. Your voices are crucial to our success.

***You can submit comments three ways:***

1) Go to The NJ Department of Human Services 2017 Budget Listening Session

Tuesday, November 22, 2016

10 AM – 4 PM

Department of Human Services Central Office, First Floor Conference Room

For more details go to: [www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/news/news/index.html](http://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/news/news/index.html)

2) Please send in written comments by email

DHSBudgetInput@dhs.state.nj.us

or

3) mail to

DHS Budget Input

222 South Warren Street

PO Box 700

Trenton NJ 08625-700

Please share this important information with your personal and professional contacts. Every submitted letter and email is counted – You can make a difference!

Talking Points on the DHS FY 2018 Budget:

- Thank you Commissioner Connolly for the opportunity to provide input into the 2018 DHS budget.
- Individuals with I/DD deserve to live rich and meaningful lives, as fully integrated members of our communities.
- Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) play a critical role in supporting people with I/DD to live meaningful lives in the community.
- Low wages make the hiring and retention of qualified DSPs very difficult for agencies, as well as families and individuals.
- We need to ensure a fully-staffed delivery system for people with I/DD in NJ.
- The only way to address this critical issue is by giving our DSPs a living wage. Please include funding in the DHS budget for FY 2018 to support a wage increase for all DSPs working with individuals with I/DD.
- We support the work of the Coalition for a DSP Living Wage in their fight to increase wages for DSPs.
- Add a personal story that highlights the importance of DSPs in your loved one's and family's life.