



## GUIDE FOR PROVIDER AGENCY MEETING WITH NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATORS

### Purpose of the Meetings

- **Advocate for a 7.8% rate increase** for provider agencies serving New Yorkers with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD).
- **Promote the creation of a Wage Commission for Human Service workers.**
- Showcase the vital work you do and encourage legislators to **Invest in Us** to ensure quality care and support services for individuals with I/DD.

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### Preparing for Your Visit

- **Coordinate Schedules:** Confirm your appointment time and the location of the meeting with the legislator's office (either in-district or at the Capitol).
- **Gather Materials:**
  - Talking points (see below)
  - "Invest in Us" and "Invest in Me" signs (bring extras)
  - Any handouts or fact sheets detailing your agency's services, local impact, and how additional funding will be used.
- **Assemble Your Team:** Include agency leadership, direct support professionals, and (if possible) family members or individuals who receive services. This diversity demonstrates the broad impact of your work.

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### During Your Meeting

- **Lead with Gratitude:** Begin by thanking the Legislator and their staff for their time and any past support for I/DD initiatives.
- **Make It Personal:** Share real-life stories or examples of how your agency's work impacts individuals' lives—if possible, ask a staff member, family member or individual receiving services to speak briefly.
- **Emphasize Local Impact:** Use local data points or success stories: how many individuals you serve, how many jobs you provide, and the positive outcomes you've seen, with a particular emphasis on the legislator's district.
- **Clearly Present Your "Ask":**

- 7.8% Targeted Inflationary Increase
  - Establish a Human Services Wage Commission
  - Move Provider Rate Setting Back to OPWDD from DOH
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### Showcase Support with “Invest in Us” / “Invest in Me” Signs

- **Ask the legislator** to take a picture with you and your group holding the “Invest in Us” sign and ask that they place it on their office door to illustrate support for individuals with I/DD.
  - **Bring extras** so each member can keep one—and possibly share them with fellow legislators.
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### Amplifying on Social Media

#### 1. Take Photos:

- **Pose with your legislator (and anyone from your agency) holding the “Invest in Me” signs.**

#### 2. Post & Tag:

- To amplify our shared advocacy efforts, we recommend including: A 7.8% Targeted Inflationary Increase and a Wage Commission for Human Service workers.
- Use platform-appropriate handles (e.g., Twitter/X, Facebook, Instagram).
- Tag your legislator, your provider association, and [New York Disability Advocates](#) to increase visibility and ensure our collective advocacy is highlighted.
- Use hashtags (e.g., #InvestInUs #InvestInMe) to amplify your message.

### Sample Social Media Post Copy:

These sample posts are flexible. Feel free to personalize them to reflect your organization’s voice and the specifics of your meeting.

**Example 1:** Today, we met with @[LegislatorHandle] as proud members of @nydisabilityadvocates to discuss supporting #NewYorkers with I/DD. The disability service system needs a 7.8% targeted inflationary increase and the establishment of a #WageCommission for Human Service workers. Thank you for your commitment to advancing these priorities! #InvestInMe #InvestInUs

**Example 2:** Had a great meeting with @[LegislatorHandle] today to discuss critical issues for #NewYorkers with disabilities. As members of @nydisabilityadvocates, we emphasized the need for a 7.8% targeted inflationary increase to sustain essential services and the establishment of a #WageCommission to ensure fair pay for Human Service workers. Thank you for your support in advancing these priorities! #InvestInMe #InvestInUs

**Example 3:** Thank you, @[LegislatorHandle], for taking the time to meet with us today! Representing our organization as part of @nydisabilityadvocates, we discussed the urgent need for a 7.8% targeted inflationary increase to sustain services and the creation of a #WageCommission to support Human Service workers. These measures are essential for securing a #StableCareSystem for New Yorkers with disabilities.

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## Follow-Up After the Meeting

1. **Send a Thank-You Email** or letter to your legislator and staff. Recap your key points and restate your appreciation for their time.
2. **Share Additional Information:** If the legislator or staff requested any data or follow-up materials, send them promptly.
3. **Stay Engaged:** Tag the legislator in relevant social media posts in the future and invite them to visit your agency for a tour or upcoming event.
4. **Use One Click Tool:** Share with your staff and encourage them to contact their legislators and amplify our message.



You can use each online advocacy tool once a day, every day!

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## Talking Points and Key Asks

- **Increase the Targeted Inflation Adjustment**  
We respectfully request that the Legislature modify Health and Mental Hygiene Part FF to **raise the Governor's proposed 2.1% Targeted Inflation Increase to 7.8%** in the one-house budgets. This increase is crucial for provider agencies to keep pace with the rising costs of caring for individuals with I/DD.
- Provider rates are all-inclusive, covering every aspect of care—from direct support professionals to housing, food, and transportation. Adequate funding ensures each component of an individual's support needs is met.
- While provider rates were rebased last year – this is a federally required process to reflect changes in the actual cost of delivering services, we need continued investment going forward to be able to continue to provide high quality services.
- **Address the Workforce Crisis**  
For more than a decade, non-profit I/DD providers have struggled with a severe workforce crisis, marked by **high turnover and vacancy rates**. Underinvestment has taken its toll, and the workforce now requires immediate relief and sustained support.

- **Establish a Human Services Wage Commission**

We also urge the Legislature to **include the creation of a Human Services Wage Commission** in the one-house budgets. A long-term solution is needed to address systemic wage and staffing challenges in human services.

- While we know these issues will not be solved overnight, it is imperative that the State and all stakeholders come together to **create a comprehensive plan** to stabilize and strengthen the workforce.
- A study by NYDA and Miami University found that **half of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) face food and housing insecurity**, underscoring the urgent need for adequate wages.
- No DSP should have to work multiple jobs to make ends meet. Currently, **74.2% of DSPs are women** and **62.6% identify as a racial/ethnic minority**, making this not only a workforce crisis but also an equity issue.

- **Reform Rate Setting for Non-Profit Providers**

A decade ago, rate-setting authority for I/DD services was shifted from the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) to the Department of Health (DOH). We urge the Legislature to restore rate-setting authority to OPWDD to leverage their specialized expertise in I/DD services.

- The shift to DOH has resulted in a process that is notoriously slow and often unpredictable, causing many non-profit agencies to face precarious financial positions. Delays in establishing and adjusting rates have led to severe cash flow challenges, threatening essential services and staffing.
  - By returning rate-setting to OPWDD, this would streamline the process, enabling quicker adjustments in response to changing demands. OPWDD's deep understanding of the unique requirements and actual costs associated with serving individuals with I/DD ensures more accurate and timely rate adjustments. This stability allows organizations to maintain high-quality care without the uncertainty that currently undermines their budgeting and operations.
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## Social Media Tags for Posting

| Name                                                                 | Facebook                                                        | Instagram                 | X                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Senate and Assembly Leadership</b>                                |                                                                 |                           |                  |
| Senator Andrea Stewart Cousins, Majority Leader                      | @andrea.stewartcousins                                          | @andreastewartcousins     | @AndreaSCousins  |
| Speaker Carl Heastie                                                 |                                                                 | @cheastie                 | @CarlHeastie     |
| Senator Robert Ort, Minority Leader                                  | @Roborttnysenate                                                | @senatorortt              | @SenatorOrtt     |
| Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes, Majority Leader                | @CrystalPeoplesStokes                                           | @Crystal_d_peoplesstokes  | @CPeoplesStokes  |
| Assemblyman William Barclay, Minority Leader                         | @AssemblymanWillBarclay                                         |                           | @WillABarclay    |
| <b>Chairs of the Senate and Assembly Committees on Disabilities</b>  |                                                                 |                           |                  |
| Senator Patricia Fahy                                                | @PatriciaFahy46                                                 | @PatFahy46                | @PatriciaFahy46  |
| Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara                                      | @AsmSantabarbara                                                | @AsmSantabarbara          | @AsmSantabarbara |
| <b>Members of the Senate and Assembly Committees on Disabilities</b> |                                                                 |                           |                  |
| Senator Simca Felder                                                 | @NYSenatorFelder                                                | @NYSenatorFelder          | @NYSenatorFelder |
| Senator Monica Martinez                                              | @MartinezMonicaR                                                | @nysenatormonicarmartinez | @NYSSenatorMRM   |
| Senator Roxanne Persaud                                              | @SD19SenatorPersaud                                             | @Sd19senatorpersaud       | @SenatorPersaud  |
| Senator Jessica Scarcella Spanton                                    | @NYSenatorJSS                                                   | @nysenator_jss            | @NYSenator_JSS   |
| Senator Bill Weber                                                   | @SenatorBillWeber                                               | @nysenatorweber           | @NYSenatorWeber  |
| Senator Jake Ashby                                                   | @SenatorJakeAshby                                               | @jakeashbyny              |                  |
| Assemblymember Harvey Epstein                                        | @harveyforny                                                    | @harveyforny              | @harveyforny     |
| Assemblymember Karen McMahon                                         | @McMahonforNYS                                                  | @mcmahonfornys            | @McMahonforNYS   |
| Assemblymember Khaleel Anderson                                      | @AMKAnderson31                                                  | @khaleelanderson          | @KhaleelAnderson |
| Assemblymember Chris Burdick                                         | @ChrisBurdickAD93                                               | @assemblymemberburdick    | @BurdickAD93     |
| Assemblymember Stefani Zinerman                                      | @stefanizinerman                                                | @stefanizinerman          | @stefanizinerman |
| Assemblymember Patrick Carroll                                       | @PatCarrollNY                                                   | @patcarrollny             | @PatCarrollNY    |
| Assemblymember Jodi Giglio                                           | @JodiforNY                                                      | @jodiforny                | @jodiforny       |
| Assemblymember Joseph Sempolinski                                    | @RepSempolinski                                                 |                           | @JoeSempo        |
| <b>Provider Associations</b>                                         |                                                                 |                           |                  |
| CP State                                                             | @CPStateNY                                                      | @CPStateNY                | @CPStateNY       |
| DDAWNY                                                               | @Developmental-Disabilities-Alliance-of-Western-New-York-DDAWNY |                           | @DDAWNY_         |
| IAC                                                                  | @interagencycouncil                                             |                           | @iacnydd         |
| NYAEMP                                                               |                                                                 |                           |                  |
| NY Alliance                                                          | @NYAlliance                                                     | @nyaii1                   | @NewYorkAlliance |

|                               |                        |  |                  |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------|
| The Arc New York              | @thearcny              |  | @thearcny        |
| New York Disability Advocates | @NYDisabilityAdvocates |  | @NYDisabilityAdv |