

Direct Support Professionals Talking Points on INARF Budget Request

HELPFUL LINKS: Indiana General Assembly website: iga.in.gov
INARF Statehouse News: <http://www.inarf.org/statehouse-news.html>
Find Your Legislator: <https://iga.in.gov/legislative/find-legislators/>
What is a DSP Infographic: [click here](#)

WE NEED YOUR HELP:

INARF is requesting a budget appropriation to increase rates for waiver services with a goal of raising the Direct Support Professional (DSP) wage for all DSP-provided waiver services. In Indiana, non-profit organizations and their employees ***must follow very specific laws regarding lobbying and we encourage you to focus on educating.*** Lobbying consists of asking a legislator to vote a certain way on legislation, whereas educating is simply providing them with information about your job and the people you support.

Therefore, we are asking for your help to **educate** legislators on the impact of a wage increase for **YOU!** INARF will lobby for the money to pass through, but your contribution is the “why is it important to increase the rates so you can have better pay.” If you focus on that area, INARF will do the rest.

INARF’s budget request is already in the budget that passed out of the House of Representatives so we need your help to keep it there!

BEFORE YOU REACH OUT TO YOUR LEGISLATOR:

Get to know your legislators. You never know when you might have a connection. Perhaps you go to the same church, or sit on a Board with similar missions. These are all things that will help build your relationship and make your interactions more memorable.

- What do they do for a living? If they are a teacher, maybe they taught one of your kids or siblings. Maybe they own a business where your clients could do part time work for them? Many legislators are independent business people because of the demands of their legislative schedules. There are realtors, doctors, lawyers, financial advisors, teachers, nurses, farmers and the list goes on. Think of ways to tie in their jobs with your work.
- Interests – perhaps you both volunteer at an organization with similar missions.
- Awards – the awards they receive, and there are many, can help you narrow down what kinds of bills they author, what their interests are, and how they spend their free time. Check those out to give you a lot of clues.
- Social media – a very large number of legislators are on social media. Do some Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram investigating before your meeting/communication. Check out their interests, their families, their posts, and their routines. Again, great insight into what drives them to serve.

Each legislator has a page where you can see what committees they sit on, and what leadership roles they have on those committees. Also, this page tells you what legislation they authored in the last session. You can click on any of them to read about them. These pages are accessible through the [Find Your Legislator page](#).

Read [INARF ON-LINE articles](#). Has this person been mentioned as a champion this session or during past sessions? If so, be prepared to thank them for that.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS:

If meeting with a legislator, remember the “3 Bes”: Be early, Be flexible, Be a resource. If you are meeting with them in Indianapolis during Session, the calendars can change at a moment’s notice so be early in case something has already changed, be flexible in case something does change, be a resource so they know to call on you if they have any follow-up questions.

How to address them in-person:

- Representative (LAST NAME) – for instance “Good morning Representative Clere” {CHECK PRONUNCIATION IF UNSURE}
- Senator (LAST NAME) – for instance “Good morning Senator Glick”
- Sir – “Thank you for your time, Sir.”
- Ma’am – “Great to see you again, Ma’am.”

How to address them in written format:

- Dear Representative (FIRST NAME) (LAST NAME) – for instance “Dear Representative Ed Clere”
- Dear Senator (FIRST NAME) (LAST NAME) – for instance, “Dear Senator Phil Boots”

When contacting them in writing:

- Use your personal email address.
- Focus on the subject line. Use it to help you get your message across.
- Setting up a meeting – “Meeting Request for Senator Glick”
- Follow-up/Thank you email – “Follow-up to Meeting with Senator Glick, January 4, 2017”
- Information on a certain bill – “House Bill 1001 – Information on INARF’s Direct Support Professional Budget Request”

Their Legislative Assistant will likely respond to your email.

WHAT TO SAY:

Don’t forget – YOU ARE THE EXPERT!!!

Tell them your story:

- How did you become a DSP and how long have you been a DSP? For instance, I answered an ad in the paper but loved working with people with disabilities and stayed 10 years, etc.
- Why do you do this job? Is it the clients? Is it your co-workers? What is the most rewarding part of the job?
- What are your clients like? Do they have a job? Do they live with family or friends? How long have you worked with them?
- What would a wage increase mean to you? For instance, less overtime, more money for your family, etc.
- Why is it important to increase wages for DSPs? For instance, more reliable co-workers, better supports for your clients, etc.
- Thank them for their assistance with our request.

INARF materials to assist you:

- [What is a DSP?](#)