

11,932 and Counting...

There are 11,932 people with developmental disabilities on the waiting list for the New Opportunities Waiver (NOW). The list is currently serving the people who signed on in June 1997. People are waiting almost ten years to receive the waiver services they need now.

It is time for Louisiana to provide adequate long-term care funding to reduce the number of people on the NOW waiting list and the length of time they wait, and increase the capacity of the community to serve them.

What Louisiana Legislators Can Do

1. Provide funding for 3000 NOW Slots in FY 08/09

- Louisiana took a positive step in 2007 by adding 1,500 NOW slots that reduced the waiting list by 703 people – but we can't stop there.
- Three thousand waiver slots each year are needed for the waiting list to move at a steady pace and reduce the length of time people wait. Act 481 of 2007 established a mechanism that will generate funding for a portion of these slots. An additional appropriation in the 2008 Legislative Session will be needed for the balance.
- To fund 3000 NOW slots in FY08/09, \$26,004,812 in State funds and \$66,145,480 in Federal funds are needed. Fifty million dollars in state funds are expected to be deposited into the Act 481 NOW Fund in May 08. The amount appropriated for FY08/09 NOW services from the fund will be determined by the legislature.

2. Provide funding for a \$3 Direct Support Professional (DSP) Wage increase in FY 08/09

- There is a need to recruit and maintain a quality workforce to meet the growing demand for home and community-based services.
- Louisiana took a positive step in 2007 by raising DSP wages with a \$2 wage pass through, but an additional wage increase is necessary to compete with the demand for workers by other service industries
- To fund the \$3 DSP wage increase for the three waivers for people with developmental disabilities in FY08-09, \$20,983,579 in State funds and \$53,373,542 in Federal funds are needed.



3. Align Resources with Demand

- Funding six state developmental centers¹ for 1,165 residents when almost 12,000 people with developmental disabilities wait nearly ten years for home and community based waiver services is an unnecessary, inefficient, and ineffective use of resources.
- Paying for the state's developmental center system is preventing the state from affording the waiver services the vast majority of people with developmental disabilities need and desire.

SFY 08 *Developmental Center costs*: \$ **177,000** per person for 1,165 people²

SFY 08 *NOW waiver costs*: **\$ 67,359** per person for 5,201 people²

- On average the cost for waiver services is only 38% of the cost for serving people in a developmental center. The waiver is clearly the more cost effective model.
- Developmental centers are an outdated service that other states are finding to be unnecessary considering the cost effective advantage of waiver services.
- Per capita, Louisiana serves more than twice as many people in developmental centers than the national average, and ranks 4th in the nation in the number of residents in developmental centers.
- Nine states and the District of Columbia have closed ALL of their developmental centers.³
- Between 1980 and 2006 there was a 70.5% decline in the total U.S. average daily population of developmental centers compared to only a 53.8% decline in the average daily population of Louisiana's developmental centers. Louisiana has had the 9th slowest decline of developmental center populations in the nation.
- Savings realized from the consolidation and closure of developmental centers should be re-allocated to home and community-based waiver services for persons with developmental disabilities.

The NOW waiting list will continue to grow unless sufficient funds are appropriated to outpace the demand. There were 1,523 people added to the waiting list in FY 2007. Louisiana must reprioritize how resources are allocated and appropriate additional funds to meet the growing demand for home and community based services for Louisiana's citizens with developmental disabilities.

¹ DHH changed the name of Developmental Centers to Supports and Services Centers in 2007.

² Data obtained from the DHH Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities.

³ Alaska, District of Columbia, Vermont, Rhode Island, Hawaii, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Maine, West Virginia, and New Mexico

