

LOUISIANA CITIZENS FOR ACTION NOW

Advocating for Louisiana Citizens with Developmental Disabilities

Unfilled Waiver Slots

November 16, 2009

- Action Alert – Urgent Action needed by Thursday, Nov. 19, 2009
- Contact Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget
- Sample Message
- Reply to this Email to Confirm your Action
- Any Questions?

Action Alert - Urgent Action needed by Thursday, Nov. 19, 2009

1. Contact members of the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget and urge them to direct the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) to fill every New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) slot available without further delay.
2. Over 9,000 people with developmental disabilities in Louisiana wait up to nine years to get the waiver services they need now! **Hundreds of available waiver slots remain unfilled. DHH has recently reduced the number of slots they are filling each month. At the current pace, it will be impossible to fill all available slots in this fiscal year.**
3. Contact information and a sample message are included below.
4. Reply to this email to confirm your action.

Sample Message – You are encouraged to personalize your message

Dear Representative/Senator _____:

I urge you to direct the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) to fill all available New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) slots immediately. In 2007 and 2008 the Legislature appropriated funding for a total of 3,525 additional NOW slots to provide home and community based services to Louisiana citizens with developmental disabilities. Unfortunately, a report from DHH at the end of October revealed that with a waiting list of 9,263 people, over 700 NOW slots remain unfilled! DHH has also recently reduced the number of slots they are filling each month.

Individuals on the waiver waiting list have waited nine years for services. If their natural support structures fail to continue supporting them it will result in more costly and undesired institutional services. How much longer are they expected to wait for services they need now? Please require DHH to fill all available slots without further delay so people on the waiting list can receive the services they so desperately need.

Sincerely,

Please use this map as a guide to find your Senator and Representative.



Contact Information for Members of the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget

Region 1

Senator Edwin R. Murray, 1540 N. Broad St., New Orleans, LA 70119, (504) 945-0042, murraye@legis.state.la.us

Representative Walt Leger, III 600 Carondelet Street, 9th Floor, New Orleans, LA 70130, (504) 556-9970, legerw@legis.state.la.us

Representative Karen Carter Peterson, 1215 Prytania Street, Suite 364, New Orleans, LA 70130, (504) 568-8346, larep093@legis.state.la.us

Representative Charmaine Marchand Stiaes, 4030 St. Claude Ave., New Orleans, LA 70117, (504) 942-7835, larep099@legis.state.la.us

Region 2

Senator Robert M. Marionneaux, Jr., P.O. Box 577, Livonia, LA 70755-0577, (225) 648-3115, lasen17@legis.state.la.us

Senator Sharon Weston Broome, P. O. Box 52783, Baton Rouge, LA 70892, (225) 275-7995, lasen15@legis.state.la.us

Senator Dan Claitor, 7520 Perkins Road, Ste. 170, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, (225) 765-0206, claitord@legis.state.la.us

Representative Eddie J. Lambert, P.O. Box 241, Gonzales, LA 70707,
(225) 644-4947, larep059@legis.state.la.us

Representative Patricia Haynes Smith, 525 Florida Street, 3rd Floor 300G & 300H,
Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-7106, smithp@legis.state.la.us

Representative Thomas H. McVea, P. O. Box 217, Jackson, LA 70748,
(225) 634-7470, larep062@legis.state.la.us

Representative Hunter V. Greene, 11281 Old Hammond Hwy. Building C-1, Baton
Rouge, LA 70816, (225) 275-8064, larep066@legis.state.la.us

Representative M.J. "Mert" Smiley, Jr. 18590 Highway 16, Suite 5, Port Vincent, LA
70726, (225) 698-9694, larep088@legis.state.la.us

Region 3

Senator Joel T. Chaisson, II, P.O. Box 1255, Destrehan, LA 70047
(985) 764-9911, websen@legis.state.la.us

Representative Gary L. Smith, Jr, P. O. Box 189 Norco, LA 70079,
(985) 764-9122, larep056@legis.state.la.us

Representative Joe Harrison, P.O. Drawer 159, Labadieville, LA 70372,
(800) 935-2081, harrisoj@legis.state.la.us

Region 4

Senator Michael J. "Mike" Michot, P.O. Box 80372, Lafayette LA 70598,
(337) 262-1332, lasen23@legis.state.la.us

Senator Nicholas "Nick" Gautreaux, 209 E. St. Victor Street, Abbeville, LA 70510,
(866) 740-6425, gautreauxn@legis.state.la.us

Senator Eric LaFleur, P.O. Box 617, Ville Platte, LA 70586,
(337) 363-5019, lafleure@legis.state.la.us

Representative Simone B. Champagne, 1407 Main Street, Jeanerette, LA 70544,
(337) 276-4916, champags@legis.state.la.us

Representative Patrick Page Cortez, 1720 Kaliste Saloom Road, Suite D-4, Lafayette,
LA 70508, (337) 993-7430 cortezp@legis.state.la.us

Representative Mickey James Guillory, P.O. Box 986, Eunice, LA 70535,
(337) 457-0194, larep041@legis.state.la.us

Representative H. Bernard LeBas, 115 Southwest Railroad Ave., Ville Platte, LA 70586,
(337) 363-0152, lebasb@legis.state.la.us

Region 5

Senator Willie L. Mount, P.O. Box 3004, Lake Charles, LA 70602
(337) 491-2016, lasen27@legis.state.la.us

Senator John R. Smith, 611-B South 5th Street, Leesville, LA 71446
(337) 238-2709, smithj@legis.state.la.us

Representative Brett F. Geymann, P.O. Box 12703, Lake Charles, LA 70612-2703,
(337) 491-2315, larep035@legis.state.la.us

Region 6

Senator Gerald Long, P.O. Box 151, Winnfield, LA 71483,
(318) 628-5799, longg@legis.state.la.us

Representative Lowell C. Hazel, 1013 Main Street, Pineville, LA 71360,
(318)767-6082, hazelc@legis.state.la.us

Representative James R. "Jim" Fannin, 320 6th Street, Jonesboro, LA 71251,
(318)259-6620; (800) 259-8694, larep013@legis.state.la.us

Region 7

Senator Sherri Smith Cheek, 9973 Mansfield Road, Keithville, LA 71047,
(318) 687-4820, smithcheek@legis.state.la.us

Senator Lydia Patrice Jackson, 330 Marshall Street, Suite 706, Shreveport, LA 71101
(318) 676-7029, jacksonl@legis.state.la.us

Senator Gerald Long, P.O. Box 151, Winnfield, LA 71483,
(318) 628-5799, longg@legis.state.la.us

Representative Patrick C. Williams, 609 Texas Street, 1st Floor, Shreveport, LA 71101,
(318) 676-5990, larep004@legis.state.la.us

Representative James H. Morris, P. O. Box 217, Oil City, LA 71061,
(318) 995-6852, larep001@legis.state.la.us

Region 8

Senator Francis C. Thompson, P.O. Box 68, Delhi, LA 71232,
(318) 878-0068, thompsf@legis.state.la.us

Senator Michael A. Walsworth, 4007 White's Ferry Rd., Suite A, West Monroe, LA
71291, (318) 369-5499, walsworthm@legis.state.la.us

Representative Noble E. Ellington, 4272 Front Street, Winnsboro, LA 71295,
(318) 435-7313, ellingtn@legis.state.la.us

Representative James R. "Jim" Fannin, 320 6th Street, Jonesboro, LA 71251,
(318) 259-6620; (800) 259-8694, larep013@legis.state.la.us

Region 9

Senator Jack Donahue, 3840 Hwy. 22, Suite 200, Mandeville, LA 70471,
(985) 727-7949, donahuej@legis.state.la.us

Representative John M. Schroder, Sr., 222 N. Vermont, Suite K & M, Covington, LA
70433, (985) 893-6262, schrodej@legis.state.la.us

Representative Mack A. "Bodi" White, Jr., 35055 La. Hwy. 16, Suite 2 A, Denham
Springs, LA 70706, (225) 791-2199, larep064@legis.state.la.us

Representative J. Kevin Pearson, 620 Oak Harbor Blvd., Suite 203, Slidell, LA 70458,
(985)646-6487, pearsonk@legis.state.la.us

Representative Thomas H. McVea, P. O. Box 217, Jackson, LA 70748,
(225) 634-7470, larep062@legis.state.la.us

Region 10

Senator John A. Alario, Jr., 1063 Muller Parkway, Westwego, LA 70094,
(504) 340-2221, alarioj@legis.state.la.us

Representative Jim Tucker, 732 Behrman Highway, Suite C-2, Terrytown, LA 70056,
(504) 393-5646, larep086@legis.state.la.us

Representative John LaBruzzo, 3331 Severn Ave., Ste. 204, Metairie, LA 70002,
(504) 833-7788, larep081@legis.state.la.us

Representative Anthony V. Ligi, Jr., 4425 Clearview Pkwy., Suite B, Metairie, LA
70006, (504) 456-3173, ligit@legis.state.la.us

Representative Patrick Connick, 1335 Baratavia Blvd., Suite B, Marrero, LA 70072,
(504) 371-0240, connickp@legis.state.la.us

State Representatives' Email Addresses

http://house.louisiana.gov/H_Reps/H_Reps_Email.asp

State Senators' Email Addresses

<http://senate.legis.state.la.us/Senators/>

Background Information

LaCAN was successful in advocating for 1,500 NOW slots in 2007 and an additional 2,025 NOW slots in 2008. However, during the 2009 Legislative Session, it was discovered that none of the funds that had been appropriated for the 2,025 NOW slots

had been used due to the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities' (OCDD) slow pace in filling slots.

OCDD reported that the delay was due to implementation of a new and improved planning process that would bring the cost of the NOW down, but assured legislators and advocates that all slots would be filled in the first few months of the new fiscal year (October/November 2009). However, at the end of October, over 700 slots were still unfilled.

OCDD has even slowed down how many offers are being made to people to accept a waiver slot. Due to expected budget shortfalls, OCDD Assistant Secretary Kathy Kliebert has been instructed to reduce the number of slots she is offering every month. Last year 300 offers were being made per month. In the fall of 2009 only 100 slots per month are being made thereby making it impossible for OCDD to fill the targeted number of 2,025 slots by the end of the current fiscal year (June 30, 2010)!

Senate Concurrent Resolution 116 passed in the 2009 legislative session directs DHH to report the number of waiver slots for people with developmental disabilities offered, filled, and served to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget (JLCB) on a quarterly basis. This report is on the JLCB agenda for November 20th.

LaCAN members are encouraged to contact members of the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget (listed below) to express their feelings about this situation and attend the Joint Legislative Budget Committee meeting on November 20th (in your yellow rally T-shirt) when DHH presents their report in accordance to SCR 116.

Any Questions?

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If there are any questions about the information in this email contact LaCAN's Coordinator by replying to this email, or calling the toll free number listed below.

**Contact Information**

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Email: Kay.marcel@cox.net
Phone: 1-800-450-8108
Web: <http://www.lacanadvocates.org>
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