



Action Alert #8 Two Opportunities to Share Your Thoughts on the FY25 Budget

March 15, 2024

Next week, advocates have two opportunities to share their thoughts about the Louisiana Department of Health's (LDH) proposed budget ([HB1](#)) for Fiscal Year 25 (FY25) which begins July 1st:

- House Appropriations plans to hold Public Testimony on HB1 Wednesday, March 20th. ([Agenda](#))
- Senate Finance will discuss LDH's budget the following day Thursday, March 21st. ([Agenda](#))

The Council and LaCAN will be advocating for the following issues not included in the proposed budget:

1. [Recurring Funding for Families Helping Families Regional Resource Centers](#)
 - During the last three legislative sessions, an additional \$500,000 in state general fund (SGF) was added to the Council's budget specifically for FHF Centers. The Council's request to include this additional funding in its FY25 budget was denied leaving these Center's in an unfortunate situation. Total SGF needed is \$1,007,517. This would ensure a standstill budget for the Centers.
2. [Eliminate the Flexible Family Fund Waitlist](#)
 - The Flexible Family Fund program is administered through the local human services districts/authorities and provides families of children with the most severe intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and/or behavioral health needs a monthly stipend to help cover the excessive costs associated with their care. In the link above, you will find the amount of SGF each district/authority needs to serve all eligible children on the FFF waitlist, which totals approximately \$9.4 million.
3. [Increase the Waiver Rate for Night Services](#)
 - Funding is needed to increase the rate for night services to match the current day rate within home- and community-based waivers for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Currently, the night rate is \$5 less than the day rate (\$13.52 vs \$18.52). This disparity is impacting the availability of Direct Support Workers willing to work nights leaving individuals and families in desperate situations. Approximately \$10.1 million in State General Fund is needed to fix this issue.

If you feel any of these issues are important and should be considered in the budget, let members of both committees know, and join us for Yellow Shirt Day!

How to Take Action

Share your personal story with the House Appropriations and Senate Finance committees. Explain how you or someone you know has been impacted by any of the issues above or will be impacted should these issues not be funded.

House Appropriations – Public Testimony

Email or call the Chair and members of the House Appropriations Committee before the committee meets Wednesday, March 20th

- House Appropriations member list can be found [here](#). Click on member's names to see their contact information.
- With your comments, please include your name, address, phone number, email address, bill number (HB1) and let them know the specific issues you are writing about.

Email h-app@legis.la.gov your public comments about the budget by Tuesday, March 19th

- With your comments, please include your name, address, phone number, email address, bill number (HB1) and let them know the specific issues you are writing about.

Attend Yellow Shirt Day

- Wednesday, March 20th at 8:45 AM
- Louisiana State Capitol – House Committee Room 5

Senate Finance – LDH Budget Discussion

Email or call the Chair and members of the Senate Finance Committee before the committee meets Thursday, March 21st

- Senate Finance member list can be found [here](#). Click on member's names to see their contact information.
- With your comments, please include your name, address, phone number, email address and let them know the specific issues you are writing about.

Email sfnce@legis.la.gov your public comments about the budget by Wednesday, March 20th

- With your comments, please include your name, address, phone number, email address and let them know the specific issues you are writing about.

Attend Yellow Shirt Day

- Thursday, March 21st at 10 AM
- Louisiana State Capitol – Senate Committee Room A-B

If you plan to attend Yellow Shirt Day, want to meet with your legislator(s), need help preparing your testimony, need a yellow shirt or want to find out about carpooling options, contact your [LaCAN Leader](#).

Can't make it for Yellow Shirt Day? You can watch the committee meetings live from the [legislature's website](#). When the meeting is in progress, click the camera icon to access the broadcast.

Confirm Your Action

- Email your [LaCAN Leader](#) after you take action
- Why confirm your action? This helps the Council know how effective we are reaching you with important information and engaging members across our state in advocacy for systems change.

Tips & Tools for Advocacy

Looking for tips and tools to help you in your advocacy? Check out the Council's [Advocacy 101](#) page. You can also find tips for:

- [Writing/emailing your legislators](#)
- [Calling your legislators](#)
- [Writing your story](#)

Contact Us

LaCAN is an initiative of the LA Developmental Disabilities Council. If there are any questions about the information in this email, contact the Council by replying to this email, or calling the toll free number listed below:

phone: 1-800-450-8108

email: info@laddc.org

website: www.lacanadvocates.org

facebook: www.facebook.com/LaDDCouncil

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Louisiana Developmental
Disabilities Council