



# Advocacy

# *Toolkit*

## 2026

In this toolkit, you will find tools to connect with your elected officials about the New York State budget.

Also included is a message you can deliver as you advocate for a high-quality, sustainable I/DD service delivery system.

**CONTACT DDI TO COORDINATE  
ADVOCACY EFFORTS.**

DDI is available to assist with advocacy efforts.  
Email [info@ddiny.org](mailto:info@ddiny.org) to connect with a team member.

## BUDGET PRIORITIES

**MODIFY:** Health and Mental Hygiene **Part P** – Increase the TII from 1.7% to 4% and Restore Care Coordination Organizations

**INCLUDE:** **CareForce Affordability Initiatives** – Affordable Housing Lottery Preference (S.8676), Employer-Assisted Housing Matching Grant Program (S.8672), and SONYMA CareForce Home Ownership Incentive (S.8675)

**ACCEPT:** Revenue **Part A** - Enhancing the New York Child and Dependent Care Credit

**RESTORE:** OPWDD Healthcare Enhancement to help provider agencies improve and expand employee health coverage affordability.

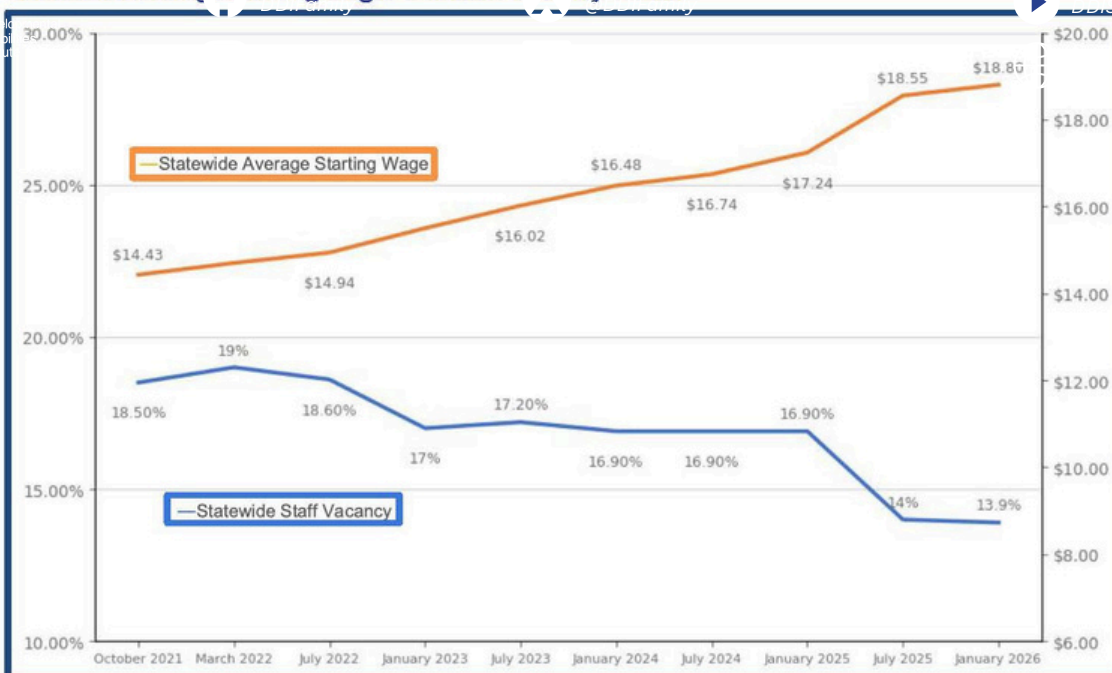
## Targeted Inflationary Increase (TII)

Including a **4% Targeted Inflationary Increase (TII)** in SFY 2026–27 is crucial to ensuring access to support and services. Over the past five years inflation has increased by 23.7% and minimum wage has increased by 26.5% while increases have increased by 15.8%. Without a 4% increase funding will continue to lag behind the actual cost of delivering services—leaving non-profit providers unable to competitively compensate Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), sustain existing programs, or meet the growing needs of New Yorkers with I/DD.

In addition, we are requesting that Care Coordination Organizations (CCOs) are **restored** as eligible programs under the TII. Doing this is critical to preserving person-centered planning, navigation of services, and coordination of medical and behavioral health care for individuals with I/DD—functions that are foundational to quality outcomes and cost-effective care.

## NYDA SURVEY DATA

Statewide Average Starting Wages and Staff Vacancy Trends





SFY	COLA/TII	Average Wage Increase
2021-22	1.0%	2.7%
2022-23	5.4%	6.9%
2023-24	4.0%	4.6%
2024-25	2.84%	3.5%
2025-26	2.6%	9.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>26.8</b>


## CareForce Affordability Initiatives

In 2023–24, NYDA in partnership with Miami University, conducted a first-of-its-kind statewide study examining Direct Support Professionals’ (DSPs) quality of life and the barriers affecting workforce stability. One of the most striking findings: **nearly half of all DSPs experience housing insecurity.**

To respond to this challenge—and related pressures tied to childcare and healthcare—NYDA is advancing the following targeted policy proposals:

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❑ **Affordable Housing Lottery Preference:** Establishing a CareForce Affordable Housing Lottery Preference within state-supported housing programs would prioritize these workers for affordable units near their workplaces, supporting workforce stability and community continuity. (S.8676)
- ❑ **Establish an Employer-Assisted Housing Matching Grant Program:** A state Employer-Assisted Housing Matching Grant—providing a 50 percent match, up to \$3,000 per worker annually—would be used to support employees with security deposits, rent support, emergency arrears, or first-time homebuyer costs, reducing turnover and strengthening service continuity. (S.8672)
- ❑ **Create a SONYMA “CareForce” Homeownership Incentive:** This would expand access to homeownership for DSPs and similar workers through interest rate reductions and down-payment assistance and align with existing state incentives for other essential professions. (S.8675)
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❑ **Enhance the New York State Child and Dependent Care Credit:** This would lower out-of-pocket care costs, support workforce participation, and improve financial stability for working families. (**Accept:** Revenue Part A - Enhancing the New York Child and Dependent Care Credit)
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❑ **Restoring the Healthcare Enhancement Program:** Reinstate funding to allow nonprofit providers to create or enhance health insurance coverage or reduce frontline workers’ out-of-pocket costs. A \$2,500 annual credit per eligible employee is crucial to maximize affordability without further straining provider agency budgets.

	Cost Increases from 2023-2025	Projected Costs for 2026
<b>Health Insurance</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>11.5%</b>

# MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

## Contact My Governor

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### Governor Kathy Hochul

Call: (518) 474-8390

Facebook: @govkathyhochul

Instagram: @governorkathyhochul

X: @GovKathyHochul

## Find My State Senator

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### Senate Majority Leader

### Andrea Stewart Cousins

Email: [scousins@nysenate.gov](mailto:scousins@nysenate.gov)

Albany Office: (518) 455-2585

District Office: (914) 423-4031

Facebook: @andrea.stewartcousins

Instagram: @andreastewartcousins

## Find My Assemblyman

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### Assembly Speaker

### Carl Heastie

Email: [speaker@nyassembly.gov](mailto:speaker@nyassembly.gov)

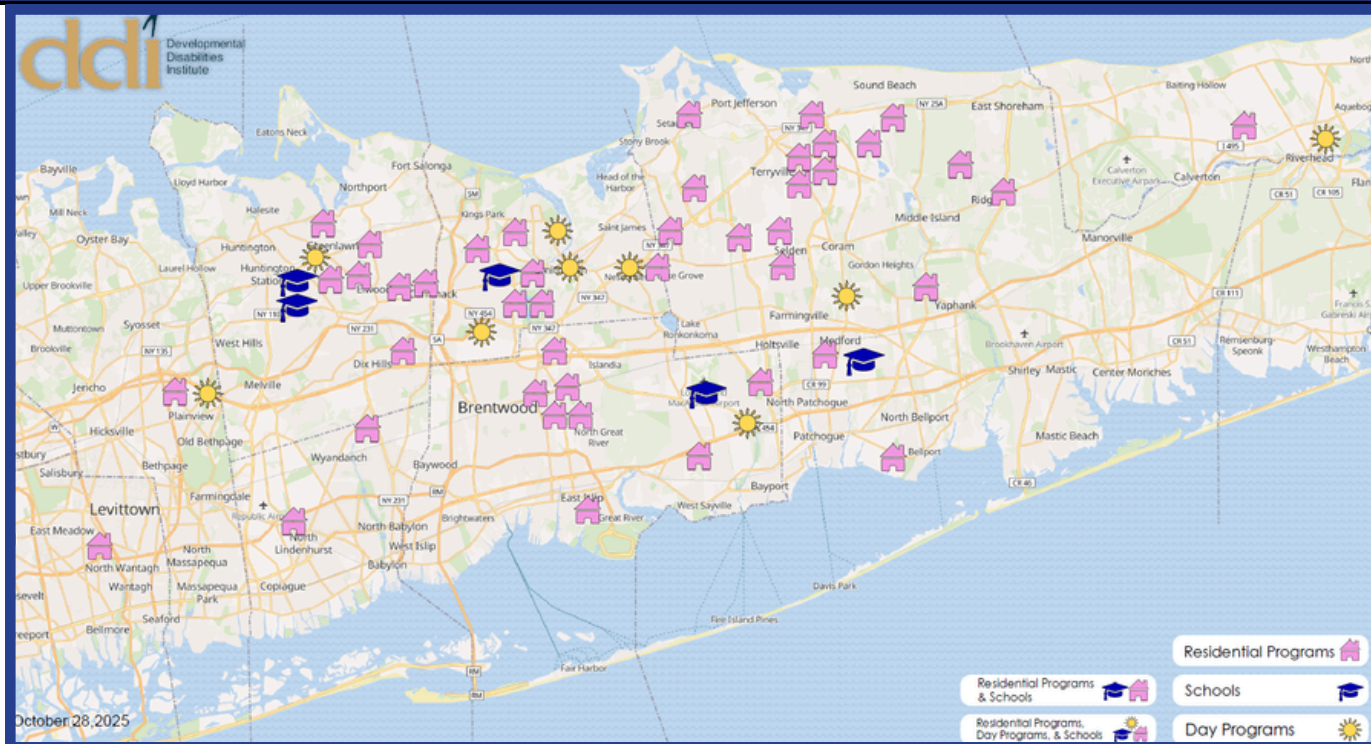
Albany Office: (518) 455-5197

District Office: (518) 654-6539

Facebook: @govkathyhochul

Instagram: @governorkathyhochul

# DDI LOCATIONS



Since 1961, DDI has been a cornerstone of support for the Long Island community. As we celebrate 65 years of service, we continue to provide a comprehensive continuum of care to more than 1,600 children and adults with autism and other developmental disabilities.

With the April 1st budget deadline fast approaching, your advocacy could be the deciding factor in securing a sustainable future for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and the New Yorkers they support.

While we are pushing for a 4% Targeted Inflationary Increase (TII), there are several other vital priorities being negotiated in Albany to ensure our service delivery system remains sustainable. Your voice matters. Developmental Disabilities Institute (DDI) is here to help you craft your message, provide data, or join you in advocacy efforts.

Together, we can ensure that the final State Budget reflects the true value of the I/DD community.

## How to Take Action

Direct outreach to leadership is the most effective way to ensure these priorities remain in the final "Big Three" negotiations (between the Governor, Senate Leader, and Assembly Speaker).

## Your Message (Template)

"I am a constituent and an advocate for the I/DD community. I am calling to urge [Governor/Senator/Assembly Member] to support the 4% Targeted Inflationary Increase (TII) for DSPs in the final State Budget. The Governor's 1.7% proposal is not enough to keep up with inflation or solve the staffing crisis. We must also protect Medicaid and invest in workforce affordability to ensure the safety and dignity of New Yorkers with disabilities."