



Blossom Hill  
Letter Writing Campaign | LTE Guidance  
March 9, 2023

## **O V E R V I E W .**

We're on a mission to get the attention of our elected officials and make clear the need for crucial funding to be added to Ohio's biennial budget. We, along with the other 200 organizations throughout Ohio who also serve adults with disabilities, are **seeking a \$749 million increase in Medicaid funding**. These funds will be fully allocated to frontline wages of direct support staff – allowing us and other organizations to **raise wages for our DSPs from \$14 an hour to \$20**.

- DeWine proposed \$579 million during his State Address and while that is a historic increase, if approved, it would only increase our offering to \$16 an hour, thus not solving this issue at hand.

As we begin our lobbying efforts, **we need your help**. A great way to garner attention of community and its officials is through local media.

[Read the opinion piece by CEO of Welcome House, Tony Thomas, that was published on Cleveland.com and in The Plain Dealer on Friday, February 3, 2023.](#)

The below is a guide you can use to write a letter to the editor of your local paper.

Blossom Hill, Inc. · Blossom-Hill.org

Center Ridge House · 28700 Center Ridge Rd. Westlake 44145 · 440-892-2042  
Haven House / Blossom House · 10983 Abbey Rd. North Royalton 44133 · 440-652-6749  
Parma House · 7211 W. 130<sup>th</sup> St. Cleveland 44130 · 440-884-0220



## HOW TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

A letter to the editor can be a powerful way to get your issue in front of thousands of readers while increasing search results when published and shared online.

Your letter should communicate the issue at hand, show your connection to it and give an actionable way the reader can help the cause at hand. The following are tips on what to include in a letter to the editor.

- > Be direct. Quickly get to the point of why you are writing. State your reason in the first 2-3 sentences.
  - Blossom Hill, Inc., along with the 200 other organizations across the state who serve those with disabilities, are seeking a \$749 million increase in Medicaid funding to increase the hourly wage for direct support staff
  - Qualified, reliable care is desperately needed for individuals with disabilities and higher wages are needed to attract and retain the Direct Support Professionals who provide this care
  
- > State the facts. Include hard numbers to help prove your point and add credibility to your statements.
  - Blossom Hill, Inc. is down 15 staff members this year – forcing cuts to programming and the number of individuals we're able to serve
  - The current hourly rate for a Direct Support Professional is \$14/hour. Target and Amazon pay \$15+/hour

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- The current proposed budget increase of \$579 million would only allow us to raise pay to \$16/hour. Blossom Hill and others are seeking a \$749 million increase to raise pay to \$20/hour
- > Make it personal. Include a short story/anecdote on why this issue is important to you. For example:
  - **How it impacts you as a DSP** – pay unable to keep up with financial demands of life (car repairs, childcare, etc.), hard but meaningful work deserving of higher financial reward to retain dedicated staff
  - **How it impacts your family member** – high turnover not ideal for those with disabilities, retaining the right staff gives Blossom Hill, Inc. the ability to provide the highest care to your loved ones
  - **How it impacts our services** – Blossom Hill, Inc. has had to cut services and/or turn away families that need us based on staff shortage
- > Ask for action. Conclude strongly with the action you hope your letter inspires. In this case it would be the below:
  - Write a letter to your local representative or Governor DeWine to help plead our case (Medicaid budget increase to fund increased wages for direct support staff for individuals with disabilities)

## **HOW TO SEND A LETTER TO THE EDITOR.**

Find information on who/how to submit a letter to your local publication below. Questions or concerns? Feel free to reach out to Lisa or Michelle at our PR agency to ask for help.

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- > Akron Beacon Journal – email [vop@thebeaconjournal.com](mailto:vop@thebeaconjournal.com)
- > Alliance Review – email [laura.kessel@cantonrep.com](mailto:laura.kessel@cantonrep.com)
- > Ashland Times-Gazette – email [Letters@Times-Gazette.com](mailto:Letters@Times-Gazette.com)
- > Ashtabula Star-Beacon – use this [form](#) (250 words or less)
- > [Canton Repository](#) – email [laura.kessel@cantonrep.com](mailto:laura.kessel@cantonrep.com)
- > Chagrin Valley Times – use this [form](#) (250 words or less)
- > Elyria Chronicle-Telegram – email [letters@chroniclet.com](mailto:letters@chroniclet.com)
- > Geauga Times Courier - use this [form](#) (250 words or less)
- > Lisbon Morning Journal – use this [form](#)
- > Lorain Morning Journal – email [letters@morningjournal.com](mailto:letters@morningjournal.com)
- > Mansfield News Journal – use this [form](#)
- > Massillon Independent – email [steven.grazier@indeonline.com](mailto:steven.grazier@indeonline.com)
- > Medina Gazette – email [letters@medina-gazette.com](mailto:letters@medina-gazette.com)
- > Salem News – use this [form](#)
- > Solon Times - use this [form](#) (250 words or less)
- > Steubenville Herald-Star – use this [form](#)
- > The Villager (Westlake, Bay Village, Avon Lake, Avon, Fairview Park, North Olmsted, North Ridgeville, Rocky River) – email [info@thevillagernewspaper.com](mailto:info@thevillagernewspaper.com)
- > Warren Tribune Chronicle – use this [form](#)
- > West Life News (Westlake) – email [editor@westlifenews.com](mailto:editor@westlifenews.com)
- > Willoughby News-Herald – email [comment@news-herald.com](mailto:comment@news-herald.com)
- > Wooster Daily Record – email [letters@the-daily-record.com](mailto:letters@the-daily-record.com)

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