

**Families Helping Families  
Resource and Recreation Center  
112 (B) Petrus Avenue Staten Island, NY 10312  
718-227-2171  
www.fhfnyc.org**

**Suggested Donation Schedule for Advocacy Services**

*Families Helping Families is a New York State Education Department approved not for profit 501 C 3 agency and as such we are prohibited in making any profit or personal gain from our endeavors. We are totally volunteer supported and do not have any paid staff members. Additionally, we do not nor have we ever charged a fee for advocacy. Becoming a sponsor or making a donation is not a requirement for advocacy services.*

**We are all Volunteers**

Please be aware that Families Helping Families (FHF) staff are all volunteers, meaning, that they are not compensated for the time they dedicate to your child's case. It is also important to note that as a volunteer our advocate's time is very limited due to the high volume of cases. Your patience in working with the advocates is greatly appreciated.

Please understand that all expenses (car, gas, tolls, supplies, printing, phone bills, faxes, postage, etc.), are all paid out of pocket by the volunteers.

It has been determined by the conflict of interest laws that any not for profit agency receiving funds or grants from the state, city, political officials or municipalities are prohibited from advocating for parents against the NYC Department of Education. That said, in order to best support you in your efforts in providing your child with a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), FHF has rejected such funding.

In addition to that, in order to receive grant funding or insurance reimbursement we would be forced to provide such agencies with your child's personal and confidential information such as IEP, social history and evaluations. In order to protect your child's confidentiality now and in the future FHF has also rejected such funding.

In order to sustain our quality of services and level of advocate availability FHF is solely dependent upon private donations to reimburse **some** of the out of pocket expenses incurred by our volunteers. ***However, at no time are donations required or expected in order for us to advocate on behalf of your child.***

Below you will find the services our advocates render as well as a suggested donation schedule for each service. As you can see, these suggested donation amounts are *not* based on the current private sector fees for these services, they are *significantly less*. The suggested donation schedule is solely based on the direct cost to FHF to provide these services such as administrative costs, travel expenses, and supplies (paper, ink, photocopies, etc.).

All advocacy assistance is available at no cost. Depending on the case and the circumstances, this assistance will be provided via a phone conference consisting of no more than 20 minutes per issue. ***All phone conferences will be scheduled at the advocates convenience and availability. Please be***

**advised that advocacy requires much field work attending school based meetings and hearings. Our "in" office hours are very limited. Only Donors and emergency (time urgent) cases will receive a guarantee of an in office consultation within 7 days of their call.**

<b>Advocacy service</b>	<b>Suggested donation</b>	
In-Office Consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of evaluations and IEP</li> <li>• In depth discussions</li> <li>• Development of letters, etc.</li> </ul>	\$30	To cover administrative costs and supplies
In-Person Representation and Attendance at your child's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IEP meeting</li> <li>• Resolution meeting</li> <li>• Mediation meeting</li> </ul>	\$50 per hour	To cover travel expenses, time and administrative costs

**Impartial Hearings**

An impartial hearing is time consuming and in most cases equals over 100 man hours. All requests for representation at hearings, writing hearing requests, developing evidence packets etc. will be accepted dependent on the availability of our advocates and will be determined on a case by case basis judged by the merits of the case.

- Writing an impartial hearing request can take anywhere from 2 – 3 ½ hours.
- Resolution meetings (which are mandatory meetings to the hearing process) usually take from 45 – 90 minutes.
- Developing an evidence packet and writing subpoenas (between one and two hours)
- Witness prep, depending on the number of witnesses can take from 2 to 8 hours in total
- Writing Opening and Closing arguments can take up to 2 hours for each.

Please be advised that the DOE has a tendency to drag hearings out for a long time and for many hearing dates. It is important to note that the exchanging of evidence, witness disclosure lists, and opening arguments can take up to two hours from the start time. The direct examination and cross examination of a single witness can take up to two hours and a single hearing date can last anywhere from three to seven hours including a lunch recess. In most cases the DOE has 3 to 4 witnesses and the parent's case usually consists of the testimony of both parents and various sundry providers. This is why many hearings take multiple hearing dates to completion.

**The suggested donation for all of the above Impartial Hearing services as well as the provision of priority scheduling and availability is \$500.00.**

*If you wish to use our advocates to assist you in only one or two steps to this process, please consider the following suggested donations:*

<b>Suggested donation for:</b>	
Development of hearing request (in office visits)	\$125
Preparation of evidence packet and subpoena development (in office visit)	\$125
The development of opening and closing arguments	\$125
Witness prep for all witnesses by phone (3 witness limit), to include the development of direct examination questions and cross examination questions	\$125
Attendance and representation at resolution session	\$50 for first hour \$25 each additional 30 minutes
Attendance and representation at hearing	\$200 per 3 hour hearing date \$75 per hour above the 3 hours

***For non-donors, there is a required reimbursement of travel expenses for all meetings: \$15 on Staten Island; \$30 off Staten Island***

***All donations are fully tax deductible and receipts will be given.  
Please make checks payable to Families Helping Families and mail to 112 Petrus Avenue Staten Island, NY 10312***