



Happy New Year!



Wishing you a safe,
healthy, and happy
New Year!

Rhode Island Minimum Wage Increases

The minimum wage in Rhode Island increased to \$12.25 as of January 1, 2022.

As a reminder, if you are receiving DD waiver services and working, the increase in wages must be reported to BHDDH and Medicaid. The BHDDH Integrated Community Employment Reporting Form is shared by BHDDH and Medicaid, so you only need to complete this one form and submit it to BHDDH. You can [download the form in English](#) or in [Spanish](#) from the [BHDDH website Forms page](#) or ask your social caseworker to send you a copy of it.

If you are receiving Social Security, a change in earned income will need to be reported to Social Security separately. Please contact your Social Security office with questions or for help on reporting income.

ABLE Account Contribution Limits Increase

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has announced that the cap on contributions to ABLE accounts is growing from \$15,000 to \$16,000 annually. The increase is due to changes to the federal gift tax exclusion, which statutorily governs the size of permissible ABLE account contributions.

People with disabilities who are employed can also save some of their earnings in the accounts above and beyond the gift tax amount. For those in the continental U.S., that means up to an additional \$12,880 this year. Alaska residents can save \$16,090 in compensation and that figure is \$14,820 in Hawaii.

Update on Conflict Free Case Management

BHDDH is actively working with an interagency committee to implement conflict free case management (CFCM) and person-centered planning (PCP). The CFCM/PCP Committee is an interagency work group that comprises BHDDH, DHS, OHA, and Medicaid/EOHHS. Our goal is to create a person-centered planning and case management network that complies with federal and state requirements, adheres to stakeholder agreed upon set of principles, and uses standards and IT solutions to streamline services access, foster quality, and promote person-centered goals and outcomes. Below is a high-level summary of our recent activities to date and key next steps:

Recent Updates:

In late 2021, BHDDH and the CFCM/PCP Committee partnered with New Editions and Guidehouse to assist us in our effort to implement CFCM/PCP. New Editions comprises of home and community-based supports (HCBS) specialists and will provide technical assistance through Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS). Guidehouse will provide project management and implementation support. The Guidehouse team recently supported Colorado through its CFCM design and implementation efforts.

The CFCM/PCP Committee is committed to this effort and has weekly meetings to support design and implementation. The CFCM/PCP Committee is currently reviewing the stakeholder developed design for CFCM and is evaluating the impact this design will have on its existing case management network.

Next Steps:

The CFCM/PCP Committee will continue to finalize the state strategic plan for CFCM/PCP in collaboration with stakeholders and create a detailed work plan to support implementation. We will continue to engage and update stakeholders as this work progresses and as we outline a clear timeline for implementation.

ISP Planning?

Invite Your Social Caseworker To Your ISP Meeting!

Are you preparing for an upcoming ISP? You have the right to invite anyone you wish to your ISP meeting. Please let your social caseworker and others know when and where the meeting will be held. Your social caseworker can help to advocate for you by ensuring your voice is heard and your ISP reflects your wants and needs.

The Sherlock Center Wants to Hear from You!

Please take a few minutes to tell The Sherlock Center what the needs are in Rhode Island. Your information will help the Sherlock Center to write a plan for the next five years. The plan will be a roadmap of the services they will offer and the projects they will do.

Depending on how you self-identify, click one of the online surveys below. The survey should take you less than 15 minutes to complete.

<u>Click Here for Youth/Adult with a Disability</u>	<u>Click Here for Family</u>	<u>Click Here for Professional</u>
Youth or Adult with a Disability Available in English - Spanish - Portuguese	Family Member Available in English - Spanish - Portuguese	Professional

Where listed, the online surveys are available in multiple languages and plain language with symbols. Links to the surveys can also be found on the Sherlock Center's website.

[Download or print the Youth or Adult with a Disability Survey in plain language with symbols](#)



The mission of the Sherlock Center is to promote membership for all in school, work and the community. We use four main tasks to do our work. Those tasks are:

- *training of future teachers and professionals,*
- *community services,*
- *sharing of information, and*
- *doing research.*

Learn Strategies For Transformation: Free Webinar

Wednesday, January 19

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

[Register Here](#)

Why is transformation especially important in the human services field? What are you doing to enact change at your organization? How do you build investment across your agency – and beyond – so that all stakeholders are on board in your evolution?

In this webinar, hosted/presented by the [National Leadership Consortium](#) and the [Council on Quality and Leadership \(CQL\)](#), attendees will learn the fundamentals for embracing and promoting transformation.

From challenges that may be encountered to strategies that can be implemented, this training will detail relevant and practical information can be put in place at your organization.

Don't miss this dynamic presentation, [The Fundamentals Of Transformation In Human Services](#) by leading national experts in the human services field!

Let's Get to Work!
Advocates in Action Conference Encore

Thursday, January 20

1:00-2:00 PM

Register here: www.tinyurl.com/EncoreWork



Advocates in Action is bringing back Tracey Cunningham and Jay MacKay to discuss information and ideas about choosing a career path and landing the job you want!

Everyone who attends this Conference Encore will be eligible to win a \$25 Amazon gift card!



Stay Tuned for more Conference Encores coming in February, March, and April of 2022!

Launch of the Affordable Connectivity Program

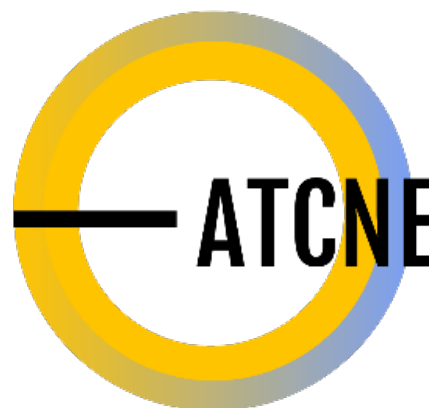
On December 31, 2021, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) launched the Affordable Connectivity Program. This program, created by Congress in the Infrastructure and Jobs Act, replaces the Emergency Broadband Benefit which has helped almost 9 million households afford internet access during the pandemic.

This investment in broadband affordability will help ensure households can afford the internet connections they need for work, school, health care and more. See the flyer attached to this newsletter for more information, or visit www.fcc.gov/ACP for more information.

Assistive Technology Conference of New England

ATCNE 2021-2022 will feature 16 half-day presentations that will take place between November of 2021 and May of 2022! The full session list is available at the [Conference Website](#).

Join the email list so you can be kept up-to-date on the latest conference happenings! You can do this by scrolling to the bottom of the [home page](#) and entering your email.



DRRI Supported Decision Making
Webinar Series with Jonathan Martinis
Session 5: Thursday, January 27 at 6:00 PM
[RSVP for Session 5](#)

We are proud to partner with Jonathan Martinis in offering this dynamic webinar on the practical application of Supported Decision-Making. The 5th and final live session will be on Thursday, January 27th at 6:00 pm. This session will focus on **Bringing it All Together: The Culture of Coordinated Support Model**.

Too often, services for people with disabilities are "silo-ed" – agencies, organizations, and providers focus only on what they do and do not communicate or collaborate with others providing similar supports. As a result, people with disabilities can receive ineffective, redundant, or even contradictory advice and support.

This session will demonstrate ways to create and implement effective and efficient support plans and services. Using the Culture of Coordinated Support Model, based on SDM, people can improve their services and ensure that providers work together, allowing them to specialize in the areas where they perform best - so people and providers can do better work in less time, with less effort and waste of resources.

This is a free event and will offer direct access to Mr. Martinis via live questions and answers.

We are also pleased to announce the series will be co-sponsored by our DD Network partners, **[RI Developmental Disabilities Council](#)** and the **[Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities](#)**.

Additional updates and information will be available on the **[DRRI website](#)** and social media channels.

This will be a dynamic, interactive, and live webinar series. Each session will allow time for Questions & Answers from participants. If you are unable to attend, these sessions will be recorded and available on the DRRI website after the event.

The videos for earlier sessions can be found here:
<https://drri.org/supported-decision-making/>.

For questions, contact Bruce Conklin, (401) 831-3150, Ext. 20



Announcing RIPIN's New Strategic Plan

Friday, January 28 at 12:00 PM

[Register Here for the Virtual Meeting](#)

After a comprehensive, year-long process, RIPIN is excited to announce RIPIN2025, a new strategic plan that will guide the organization for the next three years.

Please join RIPIN for a virtual community conversation with Executive Director Sam Salganik on Friday, January 28 at 12:00 PM.

Hear about RIPIN2025 from Sam, ask your questions and share your insights.

Can't make it? Share your feedback at info@ripin.org.

The new strategic plan is built on four pillars:



[Click to read more about the RIPIN2025 Strategic Plan](#)

1. **Tell RIPIN's Story.** All Rhode Islanders who can benefit from RIPIN's work will know about RIPIN and the full scope of services that are provided.
2. **Community Connections.** RIPIN will be an active presence and trusted resource within diverse communities.
3. **The Best Employees at the Best Employer.** RIPIN will maintain the strongest nonprofit workforce in the State by building its reputation as an exceptional place to work and grow.
4. **Forge Systemic Solutions.** RIPIN will be a respected leader in promoting and securing policies that help constituents get the support they need.

COVID and the Americans With Disabilities Act

Below are some questions about how the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) impacts COVID issues. Visit ADA.gov for more information about COVID and the ADA.

- Q. Can a hospital or medical facility exclude all "visitors" even where, due to a patient's disability, the patient needs help from a family member, companion, or aide in order to equally access care?**
- A.** No. To limit the spread of COVID-19, medical providers have changed many of their policies, including restricting non-patients from entering health care facilities. However, where these policies do not account for the needs of people with disabilities, they may result in unequal care and violate the ADA. For instance, where a patient's disability prevents them from providing their medical history or understanding medical decisions or directions, the medical provider should explore whether a modification to its visitor policy may be safely carried out.

Several important limitations apply. Not every person with a disability needs someone with them in order to equally access medical care. For those who do not, excluding a companion does not violate the ADA. Also, the ADA recognizes that protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities may need to be balanced with other safety concerns. For instance, the ADA allows health care providers to impose “legitimate safety requirements” that are necessary for safe operation. But a blanket ban on all non-patients in all care settings does not fall into this narrow category—even in the midst of COVID-19. Where the exclusion is necessary from a public health perspective, medical providers should think creatively about how to best serve the needs of the patient with a disability.

EXAMPLE: An adult with Down Syndrome who cannot speak has severe chest pain and goes to the hospital with his parent. Due to COVID-era restrictions on visitors, the hospital stops the patient’s parent from joining him in the hospital’s Emergency Department, resulting in delayed treatment and critical medical history not being communicated to the medical team. This is a violation of the ADA.

EXAMPLE: A person with severely limited mobility is admitted to a hospital for appendicitis. This patient would like his adult daughter to accompany him during his hospital stay. In this case, the ADA would not require the hospital to modify its COVID-era “visitor policy” to permit the daughter to enter because the daughter’s presence plays no special role in ensuring that the patient receives equal access to care.

EXAMPLE: The spouse of a patient who is being treated for a traumatic brain injury tested positive for COVID-19 two days ago. The medical office providing rehabilitation services is justified under the ADA in excluding the spouse from entering the facility. However, the provider should work with the spouse, including through the use of technology, to allow the spouse’s remote participation to ensure that the patient receives equal access to care.

Q. Are there resources available that help explain my rights as an employee with a disability during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- A. Yes. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has information about [the ADA and other federal laws that protect you against employment discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

For more information about your rights, visit the EEOC website at www.eeoc.gov, or call 1-800-669-4000 (voice), 1-800-669-6820 (TTY), or 1-844-234-5122 (ASL Video Phone).

B. Does the Department of Justice (DOJ) issue exemptions from mask requirements?

- A. No. The DOJ does not provide exemptions from mask requirements. We are aware of postings and flyers on the internet, which include the Department of Justice’s seal. [These postings were not issued or endorsed by DOJ.](#)

Advocates in Action: RI Applications for The Leadership Series and Leadership Graduate Academy

Applications for the next Leadership Series are due by **Friday, January 21**. [Click here to apply online](#)

[Click Here](#) if you'd like to view a PDF copy of the application. While everyone needs to apply online, this PDF can help you prepare your answers before you begin. The application form includes video voice-overs so you can hear the questions read aloud. If you think you'll need assistance completing the form, [click here to send us an email](#) and one of our Peer Mentors will be happy to meet with you over Zoom and walk you through the form.



Watch a recorded video of the [virtual Open House Session](#) for more information about the Leadership Series.

About The Leadership Series

THE LEADERSHIP SERIES

DECISION-MAKING
 PERSON-CENTERED LIFE
 INFORMED RISK
 THE RI DD SERVICE SYSTEM
 INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PLANS
 TECHNOLOGY
 GOVERNMENT AND VOTING
 SELF-ADVOCACY
 COMMUNICATION SKILLS
 LIFE OUTSIDE THE BOX
 DISABILITY RIGHTS
 COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS
 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

FIND YOUR PASSION & FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS

Nothing ABOUT US Without US

Join us for the next Leadership Series!
The Class of 2022 begins in January

The Leadership Series is an in-depth learning experience that's user-friendly, interactive, informative and fun! We created the Series with a team of Self-Advocates and other allies to empower Rhode Islanders age 18 and older who have an intellectual/developmental disability (I/DD) to speak up for themselves, connect with community, and live life on their own terms (just like everyone else). While the Series is designed primarily for individuals who have an I/DD, family members, staff, and friends who will be supporting a class member are also welcome to apply.

You don't need to be able to read or write in order to participate. We use pictures, video, music, games, and other materials to make information accessible, engaging, inclusive, and easy to understand. We also match students with one of our Peer Mentors, who will be available to answer any questions, assist with homework, and offer other support to help make your experience a success. Our Peer Mentors are Leadership Series graduates who we hire to help teach future classes. Once you've completed the class, you might be interested in joining our team here at Advocates in Action, too!

AinA has been offering the Series free of charge since 1995, thanks to funding from the RI Division of Developmental Disabilities at the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH).

In 2020 the global pandemic forced AinA to adapt the curriculum mid-way through and help members of that year's class complete their training virtually.

In 2021 AinA conducted the entire Leadership Series virtually, from the application and interview process, to the 2-day kick-off retreat, weekly meetings, and extra-curricular activities, to a Zooming graduation ceremony and celebration.

As our most recent graduates explained when they received their diplomas, meeting via Zoom enabled them to attend weekly and participate in related events without worrying about transportation. It also allowed participants to meet with their Peer Mentor for individual support sessions as needed, and connect with fellow class members. In fact, the virtual experience was such a success that they have decided to do it again!

There's NO COST to participate. Eligible applicants must be a Rhode Island resident with a developmental disability, age 18 or older. And while you don't need to read or write, you'll need a way to send and receive email, which many people do with help from a family member, friend, or support staff. You'll also need the ability to participate in classes and other events virtually through Zoom and the ability to go online for homework assignments, team games and other activities.

All Leadership Series and Partners-RI Graduates Can Join The Leadership Graduate Academy

Advocates in Action (AinA) will be launching the first [Leadership Graduate Academy](#) in January. This is open to all graduates of The Leadership Series (2002-2021) and Partners-RI (1995-2001).

The Leadership Graduate Academy will feature short courses of about 4 classes each and will cover all kinds of topics. Once a former graduate has applied for the Academy, they will be able to sign up for any available course on a first come/first served basis. Watch the [Graduate Academy Open House Recording](#) for more information.

The Leadership Graduate Academy will be a new experience for all. The individual courses are much shorter than either Partners-RI or the Leadership Series, and there will be fewer students in each of them. All courses will be taught online.

If you've never used Zoom before, that's one of the courses the Leadership Graduate Academy will be offering! The AinA team of Peer Mentors will also be available to meet with you one on one to help you learn more about Zoom so you'll be ready and prepared to participate.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view or download a PDF copy of the Graduate Academy Application. Please note: This is for reference only. Applications must be completed online. Here's the link to the online Leadership Graduate Academy application: <https://aina-graduateacademy.questionpro.com>

Contacting DD Staff

See the full Division Contact List attached to this newsletter.

Monday-Friday 8:30-4:00
for questions or support

(401) 462-3421

Para español, llame

(401) 462-3014

Send general questions to the
AskDD email address.

BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov

Please do not email critical issues.

Sign Up for Our Email List

If you aren't receiving email updates
and newsletters from BHDDH, you can
[sign up here](#) or on our website. Go to

<https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmentaldisabilities/events/newsandupdates/> to sign up or to see
past quarterly newsletters and issues of DD News.



SIGN UP FOR THE BHDDH NEWSLETTER

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, BH Link is here for you

BH Link's mission is to ensure all Rhode Islanders experiencing mental health and substance use crises receive the appropriate services they need as quickly as possible in an environment that supports their recovery. Call 911 if there is risk of immediate danger. Visit the BH Link website at www.bhlink.org or for confidential support and to get connected to care:

CALL (401) 414-LINK (5465) If under 18 CALL: (855) KID(543)-LINK(5465)

Visit the 24-HOUR/7-DAY TRIAGE CENTER at 975 Waterman Avenue, East Providence, RI

Stay Informed with Information on COVID-19

Rhode Island Department of Health COVID-19 Resources

Hotline (401) 222-8022 or 211 after hours;

Email RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov

Website <https://health.ri.gov/covid/>

Center for Disease Control COVID-19 Information

Website cdc.gov/coronavirus

Videos <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/videos.html>

Includes a link to ASL videos

RI Parent Information Network (RIPIN)

Website <https://ripin.org/covid-19-resources/>

Call Center (401) 270-0101 or email callcenter@ripin.org

Advocates in Action – for videos and easy to read materials

Website <https://www.advocatesinaction.org/>

Website offers BrowseAloud, which will read the website to you

Division of Developmental Disabilities - All Staff Contacts

Name		Title	Phone	Email
Kevin	Savage	Director	462-0581	Kevin.Savage@bhddh.ri.gov
Heather	Mincey	Assistant Director	462-1218	Heather.Mincey@bhddh.ri.gov
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Anne	LeClerc	Associate Director, Prgm Perf	462-0192	Anne.LeClerc@bhddh.ri.gov
Tracy	Levesque	Clinical Administrator	462-0209	Tracy.Levesque@bhddh.ri.gov
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Case Management Units				
East Providence/Pawtucket/Central Falls region				
Marguerite	Belisle	Casework Supervisor	462-0714	Marguerite.Belisle@bhddh.ri.gov
Amie	Adams	Social Caseworker II	462-2480	Amie.Adams@bhddh.ri.gov
Carl	Desjarlais	Social Caseworker II	462-1555	Carl.Desjarlais@bhddh.ri.gov
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Northern RI/West Bay/Kent Region				
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Mary	Cameron	Social Caseworker II	462-1307	Mary.Cameron@bhddh.ri.gov
Jackie	Camilloni	Social Caseworker II	462-3022	Jackie.Camilloni@bhddh.ri.gov
Megan	Gilbert	Social Caseworker II	462-2524	Megan.Gilbert@bhddh.ri.gov
Dayna	Hansen	Social Caseworker II	462-2505	Dayna.Hansen@bhddh.ri.gov
Natalie	Sam	Social Caseworker II	462-2529	Natalie.Sam@bhddh.ri.gov
Erin	Simonelli	Social Caseworker II	462-2502	Erin.Simonelli@bhddh.ri.gov
South County/West Bay/Kent Region				
Meredith	MacDonald	Casework Supervisor	462-1329	Meredith.Macdonald@bhddh.ri.gov
Lauree	Champagne	Social Caseworker II	462-2728	Lauree.Champagne@bhddh.ri.gov
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Jill	Murphy	Social Caseworker II	462-2409	Jill.Murphy@bhddh.ri.gov
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Providence/West Bay/Kent Region				
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Yolande	Ramos	Social Caseworker II	462-1059	Yolande.Ramos@bhddh.ri.gov
Judy	Smith	Social Caseworker II	462-1327	Judith.Smith@bhddh.ri.gov
Vacancy		Social Caseworker II	462-2563	
Eligibility Unit				
Karen	Lowell	Eligibility Supervisor	462-2209	Karen.Lowell@bhddh.ri.gov
Marisa	Abbruzzi	Social Caseworker II (RICLAS)	462-6099	Marisa.Abbuzzi@bhddh.ri.gov
Christine	Harding	Eligibility Caseworker	462-3233	Christine.Harding@bhddh.ri.gov
Lori	Lombardi, RN	PASRR	462-0089	Lori.Lombardiburns@bhddh.ri.gov
Kim	Wright	Information Aide	462-2584	Kimberly.Wright@bhddh.ri.gov
SIS Unit				
Donna	Standish	SIS Supervisor	462-2628	Donna.Standish@bhddh.ri.gov
Wendy	Cormier	SIS Caseworker	462-1302	Wendy.Cormier@bhddh.ri.gov
Kristen	Miga	SIS Caseworker	462-0449	Kristen.Miga@bhddh.ri.gov
Vacancy		SIS Caseworker	462-2510	
Transition Unit				
Susan	Hayward	Administrator, YIT	462-2519	Susan.Hayward@bhddh.ri.gov
Carolee	Leach	Prof. Services Coordinator	462-1723	Carolee.Leach@bhddh.ri.gov
Support Staff				
Stephanie	Andreozzi	Implementation Aide	462-1859	Stephanie.Andreozzi@bhddh.ri.gov
Lori	Vandall	Clerk Typist	462-6086	Lori.Vandall@bhddh.ri.gov

SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORTS NETWORK

A NETWORK OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILY MEMBERS USING SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORTS IN RHODE ISLAND

ONLINE MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2022
7:00 – 8:30 PM

Join the discussion!

- Enduring COVID
- Designing a plan to support what you need
- Recruiting and keeping good staff
- Making friends and community connections

This meeting will take place online using Zoom. When you RSVP, you will receive an email with the directions and a password to join the meeting. You can connect by computer, mobile device or listen using your telephone. You may be prompted to download an app depending on the device you plan to use.

The Self-Directed Supports Network is a resource for individuals and families using self-directed supports through the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Meetings provide an opportunity to share experiences and learn from others.

RSVP LINK: <https://bit.ly/2YUamqz>

Please RSVP using the link above. Click the link or cut and paste into your browser. If you need a reasonable accommodation (e.g., ASL Interpreter, large print) or information in a language other than English, please make your needs known when you RSVP.



For questions, call or email Claire Rosenbaum, Sherlock Center on Disabilities:

Email: crosenbaum@ric.edu Voice: 401-456-4732

TTY via RI Relay: 711 or (800) 745-5555

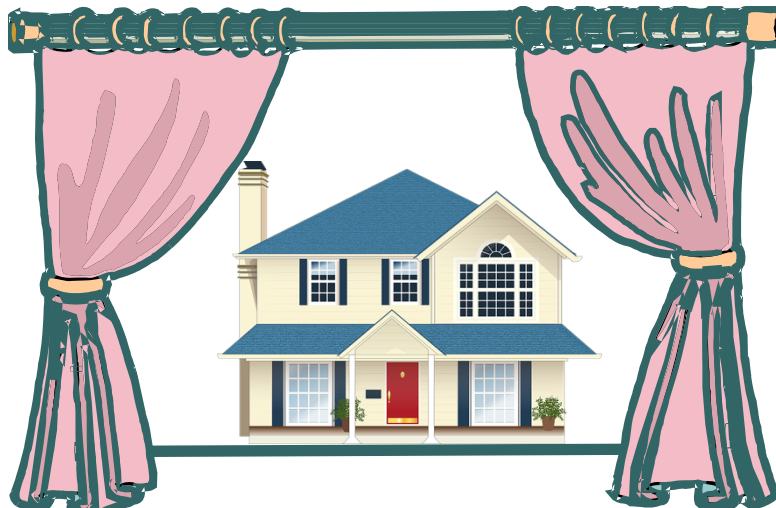
Spanish via RI Relay: 711 or (866) 355-9241

Personal Lifetime Advocacy Networks of RI

Housing Alternatives Information Service

*Are you a parent of a person with a disability,
wondering where your son or daughter will live
when it is time to move out of your home?*

**Find a new window on the world
of creative housing options**



Please contact one of our housing information and referral consultants:

- Deb Langevin at (401) 317-0200 or dlangevinplanri@gmail.com. She is actively working to assure a customized community living option for her son
- Iraida Williams at (401) 317-0212 or iwilliamsplanri@gmail.com, a Spanish-speaking parent, who has proactively sought out a variety of person-centered outcomes for her loved one
- Heidi Showstead at (401) 317-0217 or heidishowstead@verizon.net, a woman with disabilities who has lived independently throughout her adult life

*PLAN RI is grateful for the support of the John E.
Fogarty Foundation, RIFORCE & the Carpcionato Group*





Affordable Connectivity Program

Helping Households Connect

The Affordable Connectivity Program is an FCC program that helps connect families and households struggling to afford internet service.

The Affordable Connectivity Program provides:

- Up to \$30/month discount for broadband service;
- Up to \$75/month discount for households on qualifying Tribal lands; and
- A one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet purchased through a participating provider if the household contributes more than \$10 but less than \$50 toward the purchase price.

The Affordable Connectivity Program is limited to one monthly service discount and one device discount per household.

Who is Eligible?

A household is eligible if a member of the household meets at least one of the criteria below:

- Has an income that is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines;
- Participates in certain assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, SSI, WIC, or [Lifeline](#);
- Participates in one of several Tribal specific programs, such as Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribal Head Start (only households meeting the relevant income qualifying standard), Tribal TANF, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations;
- Is approved to receive benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch program or the school breakfast program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision;
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year; or
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating broadband provider's existing low-income program.

Check out www.fcc.gov/ACP for a **Consumer FAQ** and other program resources.

Two-Steps to Enroll

1. Go to ACPBenefit.org to submit an application or print out a mail-in application; and
2. Contact your preferred participating provider to select a plan and have the discount applied to your bill.

Some providers may have an alternative application that they will ask you to complete.

Eligible households must **both apply for the program and contact a participating provider to select a service plan.**

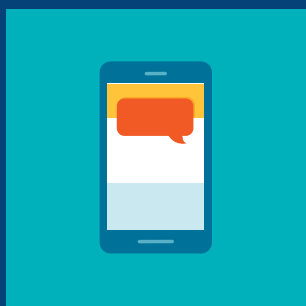
Call 877-384-2575

or find more information about the Affordable Connectivity Program at fcc.gov/ACP

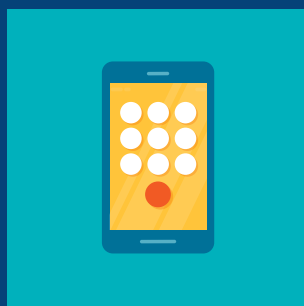
DON'T WAIT! GET YOUR COVID-19 BOOSTER SHOT.



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[Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)



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438829



Call toll-free:
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Ask your
doctor

CDC recommends boosters for **EVERYONE** ages 12+

Your initial vaccination is effective at preventing severe illness, but it may not work as well over time or against new variants. Increased protection is even more important as winter keeps us indoors and we gather for the holidays.

Get your booster:

- **5 months** after your second **Pfizer-BioNTech** or **Moderna** shot.
- **2 months** after your **Johnson & Johnson/Janssen** shot.

You can get any of the three vaccines—you don't have to get the same one you got initially.

Need additional help?

Trained staff are standing by to help you find vaccine locations, make appointments, and connect to local services and supports if you need them.

- For people with disabilities: 888-677-1199 or DIAL@usaginganddisability.org.
- For older adults: 800-677-1116, eldercarelocator@n4a.org, or eldercare.acl.gov to chat live.

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division of the U.S.
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5 Myths About Guardianship

RIPIN

Though each state creates its own rules for guardianship, there are some general rules that are specific to Rhode Island:

- To become someone's guardian, you must go to a [local probate court](#).
- A [local probate judge](#) will decide whether the person can make their own decisions or needs a guardian.
- The [local probate judge](#) will decide who the guardian will be and what decisions the guardian will make.

Guardianship can be expensive and time-consuming. It invites the court into the lives of the person with a disability, family, and caregivers for as long as they are under guardianship. Guardianship typically lasts until the person under guardianship dies or has their right to make their own decisions restored. Guardianship can make it harder for a person to learn how to make good decisions on their own.

There are many myths about guardianship that people with Intellectual Developmental Disabilities (IDD) and their families should understand.



Myth 1. Parents are automatically the guardian of their adult children with disabilities.

All guardianships require going to a RI probate court and getting a court order, no matter what a person's disability is or how it affects them.



Myth 2. Individuals who have been appointed guardian over a minor child with a disability remain that person's guardian when the child becomes an adult.

Guardianship over children and guardianship over adults both require going to a RI probate court and getting a court order. However, they are separate processes with different requirements and different court orders. Guardianship over a minor child ends when the child becomes an adult.



Myth 3. Parents need guardianship once their child becomes an adult to access their child's school, medical, legal, and other records.

An adult with IDD can sign a release of information or other authorization form allowing their parent to access some or all their educational, medical, and other records. Many schools have a form that students can request.

Nearly all medical providers have a form that patients can sign, allowing other individuals, including their parents or other support people, to talk to their medical providers and access some or all their medical records.

People with IDD and their families can also talk to a special needs attorney about creating an authorization form that would allow their parent to access other records as they wish.



Myth 4. Parents need guardianship once their child becomes an adult to attend IEP and other meetings related to their child's services.

Parent's rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) transfer to students when they become adults. However, as mentioned above, most schools have a form that the adult student can sign, which gives the school permission to include the parent in meetings and allows them to be aware of any changes to their child's IEP and services. This is helpful to families in supporting their children in decision making.



Myth 5. Guardianship will protect people with IDD from financial, physical, and other abuse.

Having a guardian does not stop a person from giving others money, engaging in risky behaviors, getting arrested, being injured, or otherwise being taken advantage of.

While guardianship allows a guardian to take legal action on behalf of the person after financial, physical or other abuse has occurred, parents and additional support people can also support the person with IDD to take their own legal action or have the person sign a power of attorney for the limited purpose of taking legal action.

The best way to prevent people with IDD from being taken advantage of is to educate and regularly communicate with them about safe choices, healthy relationships, and recognizing bad situations.

Important Note

[Chapter 33-15 Limited Guardianship and Guardianship of Adults](#) 33-15-1. Legislative Intent – *"The (Rhode Island) legislature finds that adjudicating a person totally incapacitated and in need of a guardian **deprives that person of all his or her civil and legal rights and that this deprivation may be unnecessary.** The legislature further finds that it is desirable to make available, the least restrictive form of guardianship to assist persons who are only partially incapable of caring for their needs."*

Before considering guardianship for an Individual with a Developmental Disability, we encourage you to learn more about Supported Decision Making (an effective guardianship alternative), by visiting [Disability Rights Rhode Island](#) and [Supported Decision-Making](#).

Rhode Island Parent Information Network has been the state designated Parent Center in Rhode Island for more than 30 years. For more information about our many programs, please visit our website at www.ripin.org or call us at 401.270.0101

Adapted from The Arc Center for Future Planning, [Guardianship Myths](#), 4/23/21

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