



Save the Date – Next DD Community Forum

Tuesday, December 5

3:00 PM to 4:30 PM

[Click Here to Register](#)



Join BHDDH for the Fall DD Community Forum on Tuesday, December 5th from 3:00-4:30 PM to get the latest news from the BHDDH Division of Developmental Disabilities.

Everyone must register in advance. After you register, you will receive a confirmation email with your unique login details to join the forum.

When you register, you can enter your questions or comments about the RI DD System. Director Kevin Savage and the DD team will answer questions and share other information and updates at this quarterly online event.

The forum will be hosted by Advocates in Action and will be held on Zoom. You will also be able to call in. If you can't join us, the forum will be recorded to watch later. [Click Here to find recordings of past forums.](#)

An ASL interpreter will be present at this event. For other accommodation requests, please email MichelleWhite@AdvocatesinAction.org. If you have any questions or need assistance registering, call Advocates in Action toll-free: 1-877-532-5543, or email aina@AdvocatesinAction.org.

State Offices Closed on Thursday, November 23

BHDDH offices will be closed on Thursday, November 23 in observance of Thanksgiving

Happy Thanksgiving





We Want to Hear from You!

We are thinking about updating our newsletter and website, but we need your help! Please let us know what you like and dislike about our newsletter and website by completing these surveys: [Newsletter feedback survey](#) and [Website feedback survey](#).

Update on the Assessment Process

The last BHDDH Newsletter provided information about the new DD 3-step assessment process. The last part of the process was called the “Individual Meeting”. This third part of the assessment process will now be called the “Individual Follow-up”, and all individuals will receive this follow up.

The purpose of the follow up is to provide participants and their identified supports the chance to share more details about themselves and to discuss any additional support needs with the SIS social caseworker. The SIS social caseworker will follow up with individuals about one week after the SIS-A and Additional Needs and Support Questionnaire are done.

This follow-up will build upon the SIS-A and Additional Needs and Support Questionnaire to make sure all support needs have been reviewed. The combination of the SIS score, the Additional Needs and Support Questionnaire results, and the information provided through the Individual Follow-Up will be the basis for calculating each individual’s funding level. The more information we have, the better. We want to make sure everyone’s voice has been heard and that we have identified everything each participant needs.

Update on ISP Meetings: Facilitating Success Conversations

BHDDH Social Caseworkers (SCW) will be starting something new this year. During your ISP meeting, a SCW will share information with you about any new Division resources, processes, and supports. The SCW will also ask you questions about your services, such as:

1. Did you get the services and supports included in your ISP?
2. How happy are you with your level of community participation?
3. Are you working now or interested in working?

The SCW will continue to check-in with you each month to see how you are doing. The SCW’s goal is to ensure you’re getting the supports you want and to encourage and support your efforts to be involved in your community and to be meaningfully employed.

Disability News You Can Use

Podcast Episode 6 – Interview with Anne LeClerc from the Division of Developmental Disabilities



Join Deanne Gagne and Andrew McQuaide as they discuss topics impacting Rhode Island's Disability Community and share practical ways you can use information from each episode in your life. This month, join us for [Episode 6](#) as we interview Anne LeClerc, Associate Director of Program Performance at the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), and learn more about individual budgets, service changes, and more. Sponsored by Advocates in Action RI.



Listen now on your favorite platform! Search for “Disability News You Can Use” on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, iHeart, Stitcher, and Amazon Music. Note: You may need to install these apps on your device before you can use them. They are all available FREE!



You can contact the Division with questions by emailing BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov. Or check out the [BHDDH website](#) for more about these changes and updates.

To get the latest updates, sign up to receive the [DD Newsletter](#) or read past ones. Lastly, you can contact your assigned [DD social caseworker](#) for assistance.

Online Trainings on Dating and Sexuality

The organization [Elevatus Training, LLC](#) is offering two online trainings for professionals, educators, and self-advocates. The trainings are on dating and sexuality for people with disabilities. Learn more about these training opportunities below:



[Tinder, Grindr, and More: Supporting People with I/DD who are Dating Online](#)

Learn about online dating and how to stay safe doing it.



[Sexual Rights: Are They Honored or Taken Away?](#)

Learn about your sexual rights and how to protect them.

**Best Buddies at Providence College
Polar Express Event
Sunday, December 6
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM**



Best Buddies® at Providence College is looking for people with I/DD to join their program. Buddies must be between the ages of 18-35.

Events are hosted at Providence College on Sundays. The location is accessible. Events are usually from 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM.

Anyone interested in becoming a Best Buddy is encouraged to attend the Best Buddies Polar Express event on 12/3/2023 at the Providence College campus from 4pm to 6pm.

Folks can register to become a Buddy at the event. Interested people can also apply through this link: <https://bestbuddies.org/join>. This must be redone each year, and the membership applications will be automatically approved unless there is something missing in the application.



For more information, contact Cami Young, President of Providence College Best Buddies, at (508) 654-5343 or cyoung10@friars.providence.edu.



RI Developmental Disabilities Council Receives 2023 Diversity Equity and Inclusion Award

The [Rhode Island Developmental Disabilities Council](#) (RIDDC) announced that they received Providence Business News's Annual Summit and Awards program on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Specifically, RIDDC was the winner in the Non-profit/Social Services category, where they were recognized among 12 other businesses and organizations for their efforts in diversity and inclusion. The presentation will be made at a breakfast ceremony and summit on December 7 at 9:00 AM at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick.

The scope of projects is wide-ranging and multi-faceted, with RIDDC working collaboratively with the RI Cross Disability Coalition (RICDC) in expanding outreach to RI businesses, as well as to the I/DD members, families, and community agencies supporting adults with disabilities. Among them:

- The Rhode Island Developmental Disabilities Council created the [Rhode Island Cross Disability Coalition](#) under its advocacy mission in 2009. Individuals with all disabilities can connect and talk about what is important in their lives and learn leadership skills to advocate for what they can do together to improve quality for all people. Also, the Coalition creates an opportunity for members to become familiar with various services available from agencies in Rhode Island, and to learn what support the agencies can provide.
- 
- The RICDC spearheaded the project [A New Way of Thinking... RI WINS](#) (Workforce Investment & New Solutions) about the personal futures of people with disabilities so that individuals and their families make more informed choices, have more opportunities for living meaningful and inclusive lives, and receive the necessary support for preparing them for employment in Rhode Island's workforce, either in wage jobs or potential business-within-a-business connections. One of the components of this project is a Speakers' Bureau of 20+ individuals with disabilities who have been giving presentations all across the state in the areas of employment, self-employment, meaningful lives, and human rights to High Schools, Transition Centers, and community agencies supporting individuals with disabilities.
- 
- The Rhode Island Cross Disability Coalition established a new collaborative project with the RI Developmental Disabilities Council and Skills for RI's Future. They designed a model to transform and enhance the workforce model in RI to educate employers about the abilities of people with disabilities and their potential for contributions to improving RI's economic development which spotlights the abilities of the disability community. That initiative continues, with participating community agencies continuing to receive monthly consultative support and strategies identified for follow-up with RI businesses for potential job opportunities for adults with disabilities.
- The RI Cross Disability Coalition secured funding for its project from the Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) to work with RIDDC and Skills for RI as the lead agencies heading up a collaborative effort by 14 organizations and agencies to professionally train their staff with new approaches. These approaches include learning to connect and engage with Rhode Island employers through informational interviews to determine their workforce needs and potential solutions, including future job opportunities for people with disabilities.

The project also included working collaboratively with the Business Services Division of the Rhode Island Secretary of State's Office and a diverse committee of individuals with extensive experience in this area to develop a new 3-part "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility" educational series. The series, which is offered by the RI Secretary of State's Office provides RI employers with:

- Information about the benefits of creating a more inclusive workforce,
- Ideas for action steps to initiate to build diversity,
- Details about the incentives and resources available to RI businesses, and
- Opportunities to hear the perspectives of RI employers who creatively manage a diverse workforce.

"We're just thrilled," notes Sue Babin, RIDDC special projects director. "This award reflects the efforts of many people within RIDDC/RICDC and community partners who have collaborated on various aspects of "A New Way of Thinking and RI WINS" to help build more inclusive and meaningful lives for people with disabilities. We're excited by the synergy we've been able to build with people with disabilities and their families, RI employers, community agencies supporting individuals with disabilities, and the momentum that goes along with it. We're so happy to share this recognition with all who are involved, and are excited for what's to come, as there's so much more to do."

Among its well-established projects, the RIDDC has taken a multi-faceted approach to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, having developed a successful nationally recognized self-employment business program for people with disabilities and other aspiring entrepreneurs, complete with a series of eight classes, one-on-one mentoring, direct sales opportunities for small business owners, ongoing networking support, as well as a mini-grant program for its participants. The program is funded by the State Department of labor and Training (DLT). At the outset, entrepreneurs are connecting to their local and business communities while developing their small businesses and demonstrating that people with disabilities are also contributing to the growth of RI's economy.

RIDDC Executive Director, Kevin Nerney, citing the organization's goals and mission, notes "Leadership and Policy changes are among our top priorities. This award attests to the value of the projects, programs, educational and collaborative efforts designed to improve the lives of people with disabilities. And it shows the unmistakable value of the people who work with us to demonstrate daily their passion for making a difference in those lives. We're truly honored to receive this award from Providence Business News, an organization that intentionally recognizes these efforts and collaborated with us to help make it happen."



Google is Making Apps More Accessible

[Google updated their applications](#) (apps) so they are easier to use and are more accessible to people with disabilities. Highlights of the new updates are:



1. Google and Map searches will tell you if a business is owned by someone with a disability.
2. Google Maps has a new feature called Lens in Maps. Lens in Maps will use your camera to learn about the community you are in. The app will then use a screen reader to tell you things about the community, like restaurants and bus stops around you.
3. Google Maps will let you search for wheelchair accessible walking routes, like stair-free walking directions. The app will also let you search for public places that are wheelchair accessible.
4. Google Assistant Routines will let you add your own pictures and create your own home screen. This will make your daily routine list more personal.
5. Google Camera will let you zoom in on things to see better. It will work like a magnifying glass.

Silver Linings

The holidays are a fun time of year. They can also be stressful. Just for fun, check out these creative ways to celebrate while practicing coping skills:

1. Show off your artistic side by making your own [Thanksgiving decorations](#)
2. Ask your family or friends to join you in special [Fall activities](#)



3. Make your favorite [festive fall snacks](#), like cookies, pie, or pizza
4. Take time to relax with [fall themed deep breathing exercises](#)

Federal Efforts are Underway to Improve Access to Clinical Trials for People with Disabilities

The Food and Drug Omnibus Reform Act (FDORA), signed into law by President Biden on December 29, 2022, includes several provisions aimed at increasing diversity in clinical trials. Section 3603 requires public workshops to gather input from a variety of stakeholders, including patients and disability advocates. According to the law, these workshops must solicit feedback on approaches to support the participation of underrepresented groups and people, considerations regarding informed consent, and inclusion and exclusion criteria for people with I/DD.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is holding a two-day virtual public workshop to promote diversity in clinical trials on November 29 and 30. The information gathered during the workshops, in addition to comments submitted by the public, will form the basis for a report that the FDA will submit to Congress. The following sessions are of special interest:

- **November 29, 2023, 1:25-1:55 PM**
Session 3B: Approaches to Support the Inclusion and Clinical Study Participation of Individuals with Disabilities Including Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities
- **November 30, 2023, 10:05-10:35 AM**
Session 3C: Approaches to Support the Inclusion and Clinical Study Participation of Individuals with Mental Illness

You can view the [full agenda for the two-day workshop](#) and [register for the event](#) via Zoom. You can also [submit comments](#) for 60 days afterwards (until January 29, 2024).

Why are Clinical Trials Important?

Clinical trials evaluate the safety and effectiveness of medical interventions like drugs, vaccines, and devices. To understand how the results of clinical trials will translate into the real world, a trial must have a diverse pool of research participants. Despite this being the case, people from underserved communities [have historically been underrepresented in clinical trials](#).

[One in four people have disabilities](#), yet disabled people are frequently excluded from clinical trials. Recent research shows that [nearly 75% of clinical trials either directly or indirectly excluded people with intellectual and developmental disabilities](#) (I/DD). For example, [few trials for Alzheimer's disease have included people with Down syndrome](#), even though they are disproportionately affected by Alzheimer's and dementia. Furthermore, [people with I/DD want to participate in clinical trials](#) and have strong confidence in their own ability to do so.

While the exclusion of people with disabilities may sometimes be appropriate given the nature of the research being conducted, too often it is based on stereotypes or biases against specific disabilities or a failure to take into account accommodations that can enable participation.

The exclusion of disabled people from a clinical trial may impair its usefulness by excluding populations most in need of the intervention being tested. Limiting the participation of people with disabilities in clinical trials also deprives them of benefits that may be offered through the trial, such as cutting-edge diagnostic or medical care that is unavailable elsewhere.

Report Suspected Abuse

Mandated Reporting

Reporting suspected occurrences of abuse, neglect, and mistreatment of individuals with developmental disabilities

To report abuse and serious incidents call the QA hotline at **(401) 462-2629**

The Quality Assurance (QA) Unit at BHDDH operates a 24-hour hotline, seven days per week, 365 days per year. Staff respond to reported incidents of abuse, neglect, mistreatment, and financial exploitation.

For More Information on DD Initiatives

Consent Decree: see <https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmental-disabilities/consent-decree>

Conflict Free Case Management: see the [EOHHS CFCM website](#) or [DD Initiatives-CFCM](#)

RI DSP State Workforce Initiative: see <https://riswi.org/> or [DD Initiatives-SWI](#)

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

Contacting DD Staff

See the full Division Contact List attached to this newsletter.

Monday-Friday
8:30 AM - 4:00 PM
call **(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.

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. Visit the BH Link website at www.bhlink.org.

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

VISIT the 24-HOUR/7-DAY Triage Center at:
975 Waterman Avenue, East Providence, RI

Call **911** if there is a risk of immediate danger.

If you or someone you know needs support now, call or text **988** or chat 988lifeline.org



Division of Developmental Disabilities - All Staff Contacts

Main Phone #: (401) 462-3421 **TDD:** (401) 462-3226 **Website:** <https://bhddh.ri.gov/>
Fax: (401) 462-2775 **Spanish Line:** (401) 462-3014 **BH Link:** (401) 414-5465

To report abuse/neglect:
(401) 462-2629

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Employment Add-On Budget Requests

Add-On Budget

As of October 1, 2023 if you are looking for more or new Supported Employment funding (money) you must request it through an Add-On Budget amendment request.

You will not have to take away from your community support funds (money) in order to get more or new employment assistance. This gives you extra funding for supports that will help you find and keep a job. There are currently 4 services available on the Add-On Budget.

1. Job Development

For help finding a job

- Limit of 200 hours per year.
- You are encouraged to spend the same number of hours looking for work as you would want to work.

2. Job Coaching

For help learning a new job

- Support to help you learn a new job or task.
- Provided at work during your shift.
- Temporary- until you learn the skill.

3. Job Retention

Support to help you keep a job

- Service provided to you after job coaching has ended.
- Provider checks in with you and your job to make sure everything is going well.

4. Personal Supports in the Workplace

Non-work-related supports you need at all times

- This is not an employment service, but is part of the add-on budget.
- For supports you need in any setting, such as personal care or behavioral supports.



A detailed [Guide to Employment Add-On Budget Requests](#) to providers is available by clicking on the link or by scanning the QR code below. The purpose of this guidebook is to give you information in detail on how to complete and add on budget request on a separate page on the purchase order.

For more on Employment services contact: Jay MacKay
Email: gerard.mackay@bhddh.ri.gov
Phone: 401-462-5279



SCAN ME



[\[r20.rs6.net\]](https://r20.rs6.net)

REGISTER
HERE
[\[r20.rs6.net\]](https://r20.rs6.net)

Event: What is SIS-A? An Interview with BHDDH

Time: November 28 at 6:00 PM

Location: [Zoom \[r20.rs6.net\]](https://zoom.us/j/9171111111)

Join us for an exclusive interview with **Donna Standish**, from **Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH)**, as we delve into the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS-A). The SIS-A is a vital tool for individuals and families navigating the complexities of support systems. It helps in understanding the unique support needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. During this webinar, Donna Standish, an expert in the field, will share her insights, experiences, and expertise on SIS-A.

To secure your spot, please [RSVP \[r20.rs6.net\]](https://r20.rs6.net) [\[r20.rs6.net\]](https://r20.rs6.net) [\[r20.rs6.net\]](https://r20.rs6.net) by **November 27th**. The presentation will be recorded and made available to all registrants after the event concludes. So, whether you can make it or not, we encourage you to register so that you can receive a link to the recording.

This presentation is part of the RIPIN Self-Directed Support Program, designed to empower individuals and families with the knowledge and tools they need. If you have any questions or need assistance, feel free to contact us at selfdirectedsupport@ripin.org.

Looking forward to seeing you at the webinar!

[SIGN UP TODAY! \[r20.rs6.net\]](https://r20.rs6.net)



RIPIN is committed to providing universal access to all of our events. Please contact communicationsteam@ripin.org to request disability accommodations (e.g., sign language interpreters, alternative formats). Advance notice is necessary to arrange for some accessibility needs.

Working While Disabled—Work Incentives Sessions

Registration Now Open! Work Incentives sessions for SSI and SSDI Beneficiaries

SSDI Overview:

November 29, 2023, 12-1 pm

Working with Benefits - Yes, You Can!

December 13, 2023, 12-1 pm

SSI Overview:

January 31, 2024, 12-1 pm

Work Pays! An Introduction to YOUTH SSI Work Incentives

January 17, 2024, 12-1 pm



*ALL sessions are offered on Zoom
with subtitles in English.*

REGISTER ONLINE at <https://bit.ly/2KkUCVQ>

The Sherlock Center provides Work Incentive Information and Benefits Counseling services to SSI and SSDI beneficiaries and those that support them (family, guardian, rep payee, professionals). These sessions will be of value to anyone looking for a basic introduction to disability-related work incentives and/or has related questions. The Work and Benefits Introduction is for those starting to think about working and have general questions. The SSI or SSDI sessions provide details about the specific work incentives and other related information. All sessions provide an opportunity for you to ask questions about the following topics:

- Ticket to Work
- SSI or SSDI Work Incentives
- Resources about Work Incentive Information
- Access to Benefits Counseling
- Working and Impact on Health Insurance Medicaid/Medicare
- Other questions related to benefits and working

When you register, please share your questions.

NOTE: These sessions will not address how to apply for SSI or SSDI benefits.

IMPORTANT CHANGES FOR 2024

Social Security has announced a 3.2% COLA (cost of living adjustment) for 2024. You can view new allowance amounts at <https://bit.ly/45ZaFji>

TIP: Unsure if you receive SSI or SSDI? You can confirm which benefit you have at <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/>

Presented by Certified Work Incentives Counselors.

Registration: Advance registration is required. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the session. You can access the session by computer, mobile device or listen using a cell or landline phone.

Questions or Accommodations: Contact Vanessa Hollands at vhollands@ric.edu, 401-456-8072.

Session questions: Contact Joshua Hughes, jhughes@ric.edu, 401-456-4734 or Vicki Ferrara, vferrara@ric.edu, 401-456-8092



Free digital skills workshops at the Cranston Senior Center.



Free and walk-in workshops!
(max. capacity 10 participants)

The Cranston Senior Enrichment Center
1070 Cranston St.

Tuesdays, 9:30 - 11:30 am
October 31 to December 12, 2023

Learn the basics to use the computer and your cell phone:

Oct 31 Internet	Nov 7 Video conferencing	Nov 14 Cybersecurity
Nov 28 Email	Dec 5 Mobile devices (Android)	Dec 12 Mobile devices (iOS)

Contact Lina Bravo for more info:
lbravo@provlb.org or (401) 660-3344 call/text

SUPPORTED BY:



Presented by Cranston Public Library, Providence Public Library, y el Cranston Senior Enrichment Center.

Save the Date for the 2024 Annual College Planning Forum



This free full day conference is designed for students in high school with disabilities, their parents, and school personnel.

March 2, 2024
The University of Rhode Island
Memorial Union Ballroom

The event is for any RI transition aged student, educator, or family regardless of the college you or your student plans to attend.

Sponsored by:
RI Regional Transition Centers
RI Department of Education Office of Student, Community and Academic Support
Department of Human Services, Office of Rehabilitation Services
URI Office of Disability, Access and Inclusion

Save the Date!

Registration Information will be sent out after the New Year!