



**Presentation of Initial Recommendations**  
**from the DD Rate and Payment Options Study**

The Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) is in the process of reviewing service requirements, provider payment rates, and processes for establishing individual budgets for services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Burns & Associates, a division of Health Management Associates (HMA-Burns) is assisting with this review. HMA-Burns has developed initial recommendations for public review.

**Public Review and Comment**

BHDDH and HMA-Burns want to hear from community stakeholders before recommendations are finalized. HMA-Burns will be facilitating two online public meetings during the week of September 26 to present the recommendations. Recordings of these webinars and associated materials will then be posted online.

Both meetings are open to all interested stakeholders, but each will have a different focus. Session 1 will provide more technical details that may be of interest to service providers. Session 2 will be designed more for individuals, families, and other community members.

Session #1: **Wednesday, September 28, 2022**  
**12:30pm – 3:00pm**  
Session 1 link:  
<https://healthmanagement.zoom.us/j/92956195995?pwd=eGl4eXNoTGRRMNDI4bThoemR2TC9UUT09>

Session #2: **Thursday, September 29, 2022**  
**1:30pm – 3:30pm**  
Session 2 link:  
<https://healthmanagement.zoom.us/j/91070802990?pwd=VnM1Q0dDbUNKYlNDRDYxS3J5TtpUT09>

These webinars represent the beginning of the public comment process. **Interested stakeholders will have until October 21, 2022 to submit comments.**

Recordings, materials, and instructions for submitting comments will be posted after September 29 on the BHDDH website at <https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmental-disabilities/initiatives/rate-and-payment-methodology-review-project>.

## DD State Workforce Initiative Participation Opportunities

BHDDH, the Department of Labor & Training (DLT), DD providers, and other community partners are working together to address the shortage of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs).

The State Workforce Initiative has a vision that Rhode Island will have a sustainable, comprehensive, diverse DSP workforce who have the knowledge and skills to provide high quality services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities.

There are three ways people who use DD services and DSPs can participate.

### **1. Tell your story about what DSPs do**

Whether you're a current or former DSP or you are someone who is supported by a DSP, the initiative would like your help to develop testimonials to use in social media recruiting efforts. A \$50 honorarium will be provided in recognition of the time commitment.

### **2. Help with recruiting events**

We are also looking for people interested in participating in recruiting events. An honorarium will also be provided to DSPs who participate in recruiting events. How much will be paid will be based on the length of each event.

### **3. DSP Advisory Council**

The statewide workforce initiative is convening a DSP Advisory Council. This council will meet quarterly.

**If you are interested in any of these opportunities,  
please email [RI.Workforce@sagesquirrel.com](mailto:RI.Workforce@sagesquirrel.com)**

## BHDDH and The Arc of RI Pilot Project to Help Self-Directed Individuals Hire DSPs

The ARC of Rhode Island, in partnership with BHDDH, has begun an outreach campaign to increase interest in the role of DSPs. The campaign consists of radio ads in English and Spanish, social media ads, and community based recruiting. People who are interested may call the ARC at **401-363-9899** or see the RI ARC website for more information on [applying to be a DSP](#).

If you self-direct your BHDDH services and are looking for support staff, please call ARC at 401-363-9899 to learn more about connecting with people who have expressed interest in becoming a DSP.



## Direct Support Professionals (DSP) Job Fairs

The Department of Labor and Training (DLT) is part of the statewide, multi-agency initiative to improve recruitment and retention of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). DLT is coordinating efforts to meet the immediate and long-term need for DSP talent among service providers throughout the state.

DLT is providing outreach, recruitment, and referral tools to the provider network including social media outreach and advertising, virtual recruitments, in-person job fairs, direct referrals, and sharing positions with and through the state job coaches/counselors. In addition, providers will be offered access to the state job board, [EmployRI.org](https://www.employri.org). By accessing the state job board, providers will have the ability to post employment opportunities, review resumes of available job seekers, and host virtual job fairs.

The following upcoming job fairs have been scheduled for the DD network.

DATE	EMPLOYER(S)	LOCATION
09/20/2022	Groden Center	Providence Career Center 1 Reservoir Ave, Providence
09/20/2022	Action Based Enterprises	Woonsocket Career Center 219 Pond St, Woonsocket
09/22/2022	Maher Center	Maher Center 906 Aquidneck Ave, Middletown
09/26/2022	Refocus Inc.	Providence Career Center 1 Reservoir Ave, Providence
10/04/2022	Perspectives Corporation	West Warwick Career Center 1330 Main St, West Warwick

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## **Supported Decision Making (SDM)**

Study after study has shown that when people with disabilities have more control over their life and make more decisions for themselves – when they have more self-determination – they have better lives. People with disabilities who are more self-determined are more likely to live independently, work, be integrated into their communities, and avoid abuse.

When people with disabilities use Supported Decision Making (SDM), they work with friends, family, and professionals so they can understand their choices and make their own decisions. As a result, SDM can help people be self-determined, have better life outcomes, and avoid unnecessary guardianship!

### **Resources on Supported Decision Making**

#### **[Disability Rights RI Resource page on Supported Decision Making](#)**

Includes recordings of the 5 sessions of the DRRI Webinar Series featuring Jonathan Martinis

#### **[Disability Rights RI SDM Powerpoint](#)**

A copy of a presentation by Disability Rights RI explaining SDM in Rhode Island

#### **[Rhode Island Supported Decision Making Form.pdf](#)**

#### **[Rhode Island's Statute on Supported Decision Making](#)** (RI General Laws §42-66.13)

#### **[Video on Supported Decision Making \(RIPIN\)](#)**

Jordan was just hours away from a court hearing that would have awarded his parents guardianship. In this video, Jordan shares his supported decision-making story and how he almost lost his rights. Jordan and Ashley also talk about a new project they are working on for the Center of Youth Voice, Youth Choice to train other self-advocates about alternatives to guardianship.

#### **[National Resource Center for Supported Decision Making](#)**

The National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making (NRC-SDM) builds on and extends the work of [Quality Trust's Jenny Hatch Justice Project](#) by bringing together vast and varied partners to ensure that input is obtained from all relevant stakeholder groups including older adults, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), family members, advocates, professionals and providers. The website includes a section with [Stories of Supported Decision-Making](#).

#### **[Supported Decision Making - Your Support, My Decisions](#)**

Video explaining SDM from the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council

## National Voter Registration Day



Tuesday, September 20, is National Voter Registration Day. If you aren't registered to vote, or if you have moved, changed your name, or haven't voted in a while, it's a good day to register to vote or update your voter registration.

### Rhode Island Voter Registration Dates

General Election: Tuesday, November 8

Deadline to Register to Vote: Sunday, October 9

Deadline for Mail Ballot Application: Tuesday, October 18

Visit the [RI Voter Information Center](#) to register or download the mail ballot application. If you fill out the mail ballot application online, it will be mailed to you for your signature, then you will have to mail it to your local board of canvassers.

Voters who are “permanently disabled, incapacitated or nursing home residents” can submit an [Application for a Permanent Mail Ballot](#) to their [local board of canvassers](#). This allows eligible voters to be designated to receive a mail ballot application for each election in their jurisdiction.

RespectAbility is developing State Disability Voter Guides to ensure that people with disabilities know the positions of candidates for public office on disability issues. To learn more, please visit [The RespectAbility Report](#).

**The CDC has approved a new COVID-19 booster for anyone over age 12.  
Do you need help getting information or scheduling an appointment for this new booster?**



A new booster vaccine which targets recent variants of the Covid-19 virus are now available for everyone over the age of 12. The CDC recommends getting a booster this fall to increase your immunity and slow the spread of the virus in your community. We can help you get the information you need to decide when, how and where to get a vaccination or booster.

We can also help you arrange an appointment at a pharmacy, clinic or drive thru site to get your vaccination or booster. If going to one of these sites is very difficult for you, it is possible to arrange to be vaccinated in the comfort of your home.

If you need assistance or have questions about getting access, scheduling an appointment or finding transportation for a vaccine or booster shot, you can call 401-216-9660 or email [vaxhelp@AccessibleRI.org](mailto:vaxhelp@AccessibleRI.org). Then we will call back to assist you.



Disability Rights  
RHODE ISLAND



## Disability Rights Rhode Island Seeks Public Input

Each year, Disability Rights Rhode Island (DRRI) seeks public input regarding our Focus Areas. Please take a moment to fill out the 3-question survey via the link below. *This brief survey will take only 3-5 minutes to complete.*

We appreciate your input and assistance in our efforts to identify and focus on advocacy issues that will enable people with disabilities to live independent, productive lives as fully included members of the community.



[Click Here to Take the DRRI Survey](#)

## Grant-Funded Projects at TechACCESS

TechACCESS currently has grants to provide services to Rhode Islanders with Disabilities.

### [The Smart Home Technology Grant](#)

***Funded by the Rhode Island Foundation***

The goal of the project is to help individuals in Rhode Island increase their independence through the use of smart home technology. We will be providing participants with technology that can help increase independence around the home over a 3-month loan period. The purpose of the loan period is to determine what specific smart home technology best fits individual participant's needs and abilities. At the conclusion of the loan period, we will also help identify potential funding sources to assist in acquiring the equipment that has been identified.

[Click here to apply to participate in the smart home technology grant.](#)

### [The Adaptive Gaming Grant](#)

***Funded by The Roy T Morgan Foundation***

TechACCESS will be providing participants with a 3-month loan of technology that can increase their access to gaming. The purpose of the loan period is to determine what specific gaming technology best fits individual participant's needs and abilities. At the conclusion of the loan period, we will also help identify potential funding sources to assist in acquiring the equipment that has been identified. [Click here to apply for the adaptive gaming grant.](#)

### [Free Technology Demonstrations](#)

***Funded under a grant from the US Department of Education***

TechACCESS provides free in-person or virtual demonstrations (up to 1 hour) of assistive technology to the public. All are invited. Appointments are required. These demonstrations are intended for adults and offer attendees an opportunity to preview technology in the TechACCESS adapted computer lab or Smart Space. Equipment available for demonstration includes: tablets, reading accommodations, communication, alternate access and smarthome technologies. These sessions are designed for demonstration and trial use only and are not individual evaluation sessions.

## **Be Part of an Important Study on HCBS**

Researchers from American Institutes for Research (AIR) are conducting a study to look at ways to improve care by understanding the needs of people receiving Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS).

Home- and community- based services, or HCBS, is a program for people who have Medicaid insurance. HCBS helps older adults and people with disabilities live their everyday lives in their communities. HCBS helps by providing supports to help with personal care, household tasks, community involvement, and work. HCBS also helps by providing transportation so people can run errands and see friends and family.

This study will try to answer questions like:

- “How did you hear about HCBS services?”
- “What was your experience like applying to receive HCBS?”
- “What do you think about your caregiver/support staff?”

AIR would like to interview people receiving services about their experiences with HCBS and will include questions about equity issues related to location and race/ethnicity. The interview would take about an hour and can be done over the phone or by video, whatever is preferred. All answers are completely private and will not affect any services or care received.

As a thank you, AIR is offering a \$75 gift card for participating in an interview. If you would like to participate, or know someone who would like to participate, please [click here](#).

Questions? Please email [HCBSinfo@air.org](mailto:HCBSinfo@air.org).

## **Inclusive Communication: An Introduction to the Vocabulary of the Disability Community**

**Wednesday, October 19 at 2:00 PM**

**[Click Here to Register](#)**

Regardless of intent, words or phrases can express bias. Using the National Center on Disability and Journalism’s (NCDJ) disability language style guide and other practical information, receive tools on how to communicate in an effective and inclusive way. This session covers general terms and words on physical disabilities, hearing and visual disabilities, mental and cognitive disabilities, and seizure disorders. Beyond specific language, learn from communications and nonprofit experts on how to ensure overall storytelling is inclusive of people with disabilities.

Access to the recording will be provided to registrants of the live training. Upon completion of your registration, you will be receiving an email from our webinar platform, GoToWebinar. The email will contain your unique link to the live webinar.

If you require accommodations in order to fully participate, please call (800) 421-8656 (option 3) or email [onlinelibrarian@candid.org](mailto:onlinelibrarian@candid.org). Live CART captioning will be available during this event.

## 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](mailto: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](http://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

## For Information on the Consent Decree

For information on the Consent Decree and BHDDH, see <https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmental-disabilities/consent-decree>.

## COVID-19 Information

### **Rhode Island Department of Health COVID-19 Resources**

Hotline (401) 222-8022 or 211 after hours;  
Email [RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov](mailto:RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov)  
Website <https://health.ri.gov/covid/>  
*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](mailto: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

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**Fax:** (401) 462-2775    **Spanish Line:** (401) 462-3014    **BH Link:** 401-414-5465

**To report abuse/neglect:**  
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# COVENTRY COMMUNITY WELLNESS DAY

**SATURDAY, SEPT 24TH, 2022**

Guest Speakers: Dr. Andrea Blanch of Sarasota Strong and Robin Saenger of Peace4Tarpon

EVENT ORGANIZED BY:  
Coventry Dept. Human Services  
Coventry Public Schools  
OSTICC | [www.osticc.org](http://www.osticc.org)



**OSTICC**  
*building a community of support*



## Rhode Island Workforce Recruiting and Development for the Adult I/DD System Frequently Asked Questions

### Why is there a workforce shortage?

There are many factors that lead to the shortage of direct support professionals including limited training, lack of career growth, and a high rate of stress and burnout associated with supporting people in multiple setting types at all hours of the day. The growth in the aging population, longer life expectancies and growing rates of chronic conditions results in direct support demand that is projected to grow 36.4% by 2028 according to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). Couple that with low wages and benefits and fewer people enter the job market. According to the [PHI Workforce Data Center](#), the median hourly wage nationally for all direct support workers in 2020 was \$13.56 and in Rhode Island, \$15.38. Of those Rhode Islanders providing direct support, 58% have health insurance through their employer with 36% using Medicaid, Medicare, or other public coverage. Many direct support workers (40%) in Rhode Island have income less than 200% of the federal poverty level.

### What is the impact of a workforce shortage?

The direct support professional (DSP) workforce crisis has existed long before COVID began in March 2020, though COVID has exacerbated existing challenges. According to a [2017 ANCOR report](#), turnover rates for Direct Support Professionals in the United States was approximately 45%. This report found that 35% of DSPs leave their position within six months; 56% leave within one year. Relative to Rhode Island, a survey completed by [NESCSCO](#) in 2019 with 18 RI adult service providers determined the average turnover rates across all reporting providers was 36%, and the average reported vacancy rate was 18.6%. As of 2021, a [national ANCOR survey](#) found that 77% of providers are turning away new referrals; 58% are discontinuing programs and services; 81% struggle to achieve quality standards; and 92% report challenges with recruitment and retention.

### What is the purpose of the Statewide Workforce Initiatives?

The State convened four statewide workforce initiatives (SWI) to tackle the system level change needed to address the workforce shortage.

- **Recruitment and Retention** is facilitated by a representative of the Sherlock Center to develop a comprehensive strategy focused on recruitment and retention to develop a talented, diverse, capable workforce.
- **Standards and Credentialing** is cofacilitated by a State Department of Labor and Training (DLT) representative and a Sherlock Center representative. The subgroup has endorsed the National Association of Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) Core Competencies but has recommended that the competencies be treated as voluntary guidelines rather than mandatory requirements. The group has recommended that competencies and credentialing to be tied to a career ladder, with proportionate compensation.
- **In-service Training/Professional Development** is facilitated by a Sherlock Center representative. This group is tasked with supporting efforts in providing DSPs quality Inservice Training and Professional Development opportunities to build competencies and with mapping current gaps and opportunities for Inservice Training/PD in the state.

- **Institutes of Higher Education (IHE)** is facilitated by a representative from The College Crusade of RI. The group began developing a plan to achieve two main targets: 1.) Recruit students into internships/work-based learning opportunities/jobs to fill immediate DSP openings and 2.) Develop and implement career pathways for current DSPs.

### **What are Statewide Workforce Initiative goals?**

The Rhode Island Statewide Workforce Initiatives articulated a vision that Rhode Island will have a sustainable, comprehensive, diverse DSP workforce who have the knowledge and skills to provide high quality services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities.

This comprehensive workforce should be defined by:

- A common definition of DSP, inclusive of DSPs working in various contexts (self-directed/providers, etc.);
- Redefining of the position to reflect community-based responsibilities
- Core competencies, which are foundational with a build to specific roles;
- Career pathways, ladders, and lattices
- Coordinated recruitment and retention plans/strategies;
- Training and professional development aligned to competencies; and
- Compensation that is commensurate with job responsibilities

### **What impact do Transformation Fund initiatives have on the workforce?**

Transformation funds are intended to support providers as they explore business model changes to improve access to, and enhance the quality of, services and supports strengthening infrastructure and practices to reach efficient, sustainable, and person-entered outcomes. The State released \$4M in Transformation Funds in Phase 1. Awards were made to 29 providers who received funds in February 2022. Transformation Fund Applications for the first phase focused on building and/or expanding a community-based workforce that facilitates individual outcomes of employment and increased integrated community activity. These transformation fund initiatives will provide valuable lessons learned, result in strategies that can be scaled, and promote rich dialogue on the kind of workforce system Rhode Island wants to have.

### **How do BHDDH goals align with the Consent Decree?**

In 2014, Rhode Island entered into a Consent Decree Agreement with the Department of Justice that addresses findings that the State violated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by failing to serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in integrated settings, and by placing youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities at serious risk of segregation. Under the terms of this agreement, the State is committed to transform its service system over a 10-year period. Per the Consent Decree Court Monitor’s October 2021 Action Plan, The United States of America, and the State (“Parties”), and the Monitor recognized that there is need for increasing the workforce, both to increase capacity of the system but also to ensure that the system is community-based and has a well-trained workforce, including Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), Supervisors, Job Coaches, and other Employment and Community Activity Staff. The goal is to provide integrated employment and day services for Rhode Islanders living with developmental disabilities. For more information, see <https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmental-disabilities/consent-decree>.

### **Who has responsibility to meet Consent Decree goals?**

Everyone. We all play a role in meeting Consent Decree goals. We cannot change the workforce through one activity or solution. Our collective impact is multi-pronged. We all want....

.....people to have access to the supports they need when they need it. And, from people that share their values and are trained to support them to live, work, play and contribute to their communities.

.....to elevate direct support professionals; in community standing, through enhanced career pathways and training, with better wages and benefits, and in alignment with their own culture and values.

.....to support our providers to grow capacity in the way each unique organization needs and retain the workforce through clarity in job definitions, expanded pipelines, hiring and retention practices, compensation commensurate with job responsibilities, and to advance DSP professionalism through onboarding and training and career ladders.

.....to support institutes of higher education and career technical schools to grow pipelines into critical health and social care fields while also providing on the job training and awareness of direct support as a career.

### **Who will assist the State in making these changes?**

The Department of Administration, Division of Purchases, held a competitive procurement process for this important work. Sage Squirrel Consulting was awarded the contract to assist the State in implementing system-wide changes. The consultants will assist with the following activities.

- Supporting system-wide changes includes coordination with other initiatives to meet system needs and Consent Decree milestones.
- Sage Squirrel Consulting was not hired to solely recruit workers, but rather to support system change overall to include supporting providers to recruit, hire, onboard, and retain new DSPs.
- The Sage Squirrel team will support providers where they are and will not take providers “back to the beginning”. When the team speaks of collective impact at a community level, they are referring to changing the way things work one community at a time. This means unique plans of action, not a cookie cutter plan of action.
- Core strategies and activities are part of any plan of action. The Sage Squirrel team will support development of that core and will work with stakeholders to add and adapt those strategies and activities to the unique needs of different communities.

### **What can I do to help?**

Get engaged by joining a SWI workgroup, sharing your insights on what works or doesn't work, and help to expand the awareness of the DSP role in supporting people with I/DD and the value to the people in need of their support and their local communities.

### **Where can I go for more information?**

Reach out to [RI.Workforce@SageSquirrel.com](mailto:RI.Workforce@SageSquirrel.com) if you would like more information.