



Save the Date – Next DD Community Forum Tuesday, September 19 from 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM

[Click Here to Register](#)



Join BHDDH for the Fall DD Community Forum on Tuesday, September 19th 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.

CBPP Examines Raising SSI Resource Limits

The [Center for Budget Policy and Priorities](#) (CBPP) has issued a brief which analyzes several ways to increase Supplemental Security Income's (SSI's) resource limits, including raising them to \$10,000 per beneficiary, raising them to \$100,000 per beneficiary, and eliminating them altogether. The brief also examines excluding retirement savings from SSI's resource limits (as proposed in the SSI Restoration Act), in combination with each of these options.

CBPP finds that increasing SSI's resource limits to \$10,000 per beneficiary would increase SSI participation by up to 3 percent. Increasing limits to \$100,000 per beneficiary would increase participation by about 5 percent, while eliminating limits would increase participation by about 6 percent. Excluding retirement accounts would only slightly increase participation. According to the brief, "even radical changes in SSI's resource rules would not dramatically increase program participation, because few people who meet SSI's other criteria have substantial savings."

Read [The Case for Updating SSI Asset Limits](#).

Raising Awareness to Increase Safety in Employment (RAISE)

The [Raising Awareness to Increase Safety in Employment \(RAISE\)](#) team at the [University of New Hampshire's Institute on Disability](#) is proud to offer two new trainings, *A Guide for Staying Safe at Work* and *Advocating for Your Safety at Work*, both supplements to the revised *Staying Safe at Work (SSAW)* trainings they continue to offer. Both of these supplemental trainings build on the skills attendees learned as part of the SSAW training. Please visit the [Available Trainings page](#) to learn more about these exciting training opportunities.

These three FREE trainings will be offered on the following dates:

***A Guide for Staying Safe at Work* trainings**

Guide Training 1

Tuesday, August 22, 2023, 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Guide Training 2

Wednesday, September 27, 2023, 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

***Advocating for Your Safety at Work* trainings**

AFYSAW Training 1

Thursday, August 31, 2023, 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

AFYSAW Training 2

Thursday, September 28, 2023, 9:00 p.m. to 11:30 a.m.

***Staying Safe at Work, 3rd Edition* trainings**

SSAW Training 32 (One Day)

Thursday, August 24, 2023, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

SSAW Training 33 (Three Days)

Thursday, September 7, 2023, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Thursday, September 14, 2023, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Thursday, September 21, 2023, 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

SSAW Training 34 (Two Days)

Wednesday, September 20, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Thursday, September 21, 2023, 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

View our [Upcoming Trainings](#) page for more information, including links to register.

If you are interested in scheduling a training specific to your group of eight or more, please reach out to Caitlyn Fulton at caitlyn.fulton@unh.edu.

Increase Your Safety Skills with the R3 App

The University of Rhode Island (URI) just created a new app to support people with disabilities. The app is called R3: Recognize, Report and Respond. The purpose of the app is to help people with disabilities learn more about the different kinds of abuse including how to get help.



R3: Recognize, Report, Respond to Stop Abuse
Disabled Persons Protection Commission

The finished app uses a combination of straightforward text, images, videos, and interactive follow-up activities to teach users to recognize different types of abuse—sexual, verbal, physical, financial and neglect—and teaches them how to report and respond to the abuse. Users can report abuse in multiple ways. Also, the app helps all users contact a designated trusted person who can help. The app is available for free download through the Apple and Amazon app stores. To learn more, [read the full article on the URI website here](#).

Supporting Direct Support Professionals

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are important to the DD system of care. DSPs help support people with disabilities to become more independent and achieve their goals at home and in the community. Unfortunately, the number of DSPs in the workforce right now is low. This means many people with disabilities may have a delay or disruption in their DD services.

Plans have been created to increase the number of DSPs in the workforce. In Rhode Island, the [Statewide Workforce Initiative \(SWI\)](#) is a collaboration of state agencies including BHDDH, the Department of Labor and Training (DLT), The Sherlock Center at Rhode Island College, provider agencies and self-directed individuals who employ DSPs, schools and colleges, and DSPs themselves to focus on recruitment, retention, and professionalization of the DSP career.

The SWI has a goal to create a sustainable, comprehensive and diverse DSP workforce who will have the knowledge and skills to provide high quality services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities. The SWI's online hub provides information on what it's like to work as a DSP, how to find a DSP job, think of ways for DSPs to be more supported and happier in their jobs, and create opportunities for DSPs to continue to learn and grow in their jobs.

There are also new national laws that have been proposed to support DSPs:

[The Supporting Our Direct Care Workforce and Family Caregivers Act](#)

If passed, this law will provide agencies with funding to create, recruit, train, retain, and promote DSPs. The law will also provide funding to support family caregivers that are doing DSP work.

[Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals Act](#)

If passed, this law will recognize DSPs for their hard work. The law will do this by changing the way the country identifies the DSP profession. The DSP profession will be identified as a healthcare support occupation under this law.

Joint Meeting of Advisory Committees on Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities and Disasters Tuesday, September 19, 2023 from 1:00-3:00 PM

[Click Here to Register](#)

The Administration for Strategic Preparedness & Response at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is hosting the next virtual joint meeting of the [National Advisory Committee on Seniors and Disasters](#) (NACSD) and the [National Advisory Committee on Individuals with Disabilities and Disasters](#) (NACIDD).

The NACSD and NACIDD will provide advice and guidance to HHS and discuss recommendations regarding the specific needs of older adults and people with disabilities related to disaster preparedness and response.

Anyone may submit questions or comments ahead of the meeting to the committee members by emailing NACSD@hhs.gov or NACIDD@hhs.gov. If time allows, committee members will address as many written comments as possible. All meeting materials, including drafts of the recommendations for public review, will be available on the [NACSD and NACIDD public meeting page](#).

American Sign Language translation and CART will be provided during the meeting. If you want to apply to speak at the meeting, request accessibility accommodations, or have other questions, email NACSD@hhs.gov.

"Take A Walk In Our Shoes" Podcast: A Journey of Diversity, Inclusion, and Candid Conversations

The Take A Walk In Our Shoes Studio announced their new podcast, "[Take a Walk in Our Shoes](#)" is now available on popular platforms such as [Spotify](#) and Apple Podcasts. Listeners are invited to embark on an engaging and informational journey with James, Paul, and their friends as they delve into a variety of thought-provoking topics, ranging from day-to-day life with disabilities to community inclusion, diversity issues, bizarre cuisine, music, wrestling, sports, movies, TV, and even light political discussions.

The podcast boasts a dynamic team of hosts and contributors, with James Boucher leading the charge as the content creator and primary host. His wealth of experience and passion for open dialogues make for captivating episodes that leave audiences both entertained and informed. Joining him as a co-host and content contributor is the charming Paul Scott, whose unique insights and perspectives enrich the conversations in unexpected ways.

The heart of the podcast lies in its commitment to showcasing diverse voices and shedding light on crucial subjects. Local guests regularly join the show to share their experiences, offering deeper insights into various topics, making it an inclusive platform for meaningful conversations. Whether you seek inspiration, a fresh perspective, or simply an enjoyable listening experience, this podcast promises to deliver something for everyone.

Announcing IntellectAbility's Podcast on IDD Health



In a new podcast titled *IDD Health Matters with Craig Escudé, MD*, host and president of [IntellectAbility](#), Dr. Craig Escudé speaks with a wide range of leaders, self-advocates, agency directors, clinicians, administrators, and others from across the globe involved in designing and facilitating service delivery to people with IDD.

“The idea is to highlight the work being done to address challenges and to improve support services, especially relating to health and wellness, for people with IDD,” states Dr. Escudé. “Additionally, we want to help people see this field as a place where you can have a rewarding and fulfilling career. You’ll be amazed by the number of guests that started in this field as a direct support professional and now run an agency or state program.”

Currently Released Episodes

Currently released episodes include conversations with Dr. Rick Rader with the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry, who is a physician and pioneer in the field of healthcare for people with IDD, Gabrielle Sedor, Chief Operating Officer of ANCOR, Micheal Seereiter, CEO of NY Alliance for Inclusion and Innovation, and Mary Sowers, Executive Director of NASDDDS.

Upcoming Guests

- Diane Moore, Executive Director of DDNA
- Dr. Maggie Nygren, Executive Director of AAIDD
- Pam Merkle, Executive Director of the Association on Aging with Developmental Disabilities
- Dr. Julian Trollor, Chair of Intellectual Disability Mental Health and Head of the Department of Developmental Disability Neuropsychiatry at UNSW in Sidney, Australia
- You’ll also hear interviews with direct support professionals and self-advocates who will share their stories and journeys related to their experiences in the field.

You can listen to the podcast by [clicking here](#) or searching on any platform for *IDD Health Matters*. New episodes are released every Monday.








The podcast is presented in collaboration with Friends for Life Residential Care based in Toledo, OH. CEO, Tony Stuart sought out Dr. Escudé as the host of this new podcast because “I was impressed by Dr. Escudé’s knowledge of and compassion for individuals with IDD as a physician because I saw a lack of empathy and understanding of the individuals I serve at Friends for Life at nearly every medical appointment.” Tony decided to start podcasting about the field of IDD services because “I saw a lack of meaningful conversation about how to make the individuals we serve more independent and able to function in day-to-day society.”

ABCs of Disability Planning Podcast

From Eric Jorgensen, founder of *The ABCs of Disability Planning Podcast*:
“Frequently families like mine don't know what's available to help us, we're too focused on getting through our day-to-day. But even if we had time, we would need to know what to look for. There had to be a better way, so I launched ABCs of Disability Planning. It's my mission to introduce a new organization or individual that is serving those with disabilities every week.”



Look for the podcast on Apple, Audible, Spotify, iHeart, and other platforms. Some episodes are also available on YouTube. The picture below shows the last few episodes.

-  **Protecting and advancing the rights of individuals with...** Jul 31, 2023
Together for Choice's Mission is to unite to protect and advance the rights of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to live, work and...
[See more](#) 51:01
-  **Excellence powered by a neurodivergent team - Aspiritech** Jul 24, 2023
More than 90 percent of the Aspiritech team members are on the autism spectrum. TAspiretech hires and trains team members and aims to pair them with a client and ...
[See more](#) 45:23
-  **Developmental Disabilities and Sexuality. Elevatus helps you ha...** Jul 17, 2023
Developmental Disabilities and Sexuality. Elevatus helps you have these essential conversations. As national leaders in the field of sexuality and intellectual, ...
[See more](#) 50:43
-  **Raising Kellan - Empowering, connecting, and educating parent...** Jul 10, 2023
Raising Kellan Started in 2019. Most non-profits about children with a disability begin with a heart-rending story and the endless search on how to fix the disability. ...
[See more](#) 41:50
-  **No parent should feel alone. Ever. Parent to Parent USA is her...** Jul 03, 2023
Parent to Parent's Vision: Parent to Parent USA will support a network of viable, sustainable, fully-functioning, and effective Parent to Parent programs in all ...
[See more](#) 41:07

Focus on Ability Short Film Festival

Rhode Island had two entries in the international film festival [Focus on Ability](#).

RI APSE entered in the category of International Documentaries, with “[Customized Employment a Success Story](#)”. The Community Provider Network of Rhode Island also entered with “[What Disability Employment Can Look Like](#)”.

[Learn more about the Film Festival.](#)

[Click here to learn more about RI APSE](#) or email riapse@apse.org.

[Click here to learn more about CPNRI.](#)



For the 15th consecutive year NOVA Employment presents the Focus on Ability™ Short Film Festival (FOA). This festival asks film makers to "Focus on the Ability" of people with a disability and tell a story on film for the world to view.

The 2022 festival saw 281 finalists from across 19 countries.

The 2023 Focus on Ability Short Film Festival is set to be the biggest yet, and generous sponsors have donated over \$100,000 worth of cash and prizes to encourage film makers and people with disability to tell their stories.

To be a part of the festival, entrants must simply make a short film or documentary that is less than 5 minutes long, has a disability theme or has people with disability as the main actors.

Previous years films have been both educational and inspirational. Feedback from people who have viewed the films has shown that these entries have the power to change attitudes and challenge perceptions.

For full festival details and to view the over 2,500 films from years past head to www.focusonability.com.au



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
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.

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 or:

Call or text 988 if you need crisis support- you can also chat at 988lifeline.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**

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

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
Christine Botts	Deputy Administrator	462-2766	Christine.Botts@bhddh.ri.gov
Jackie Camilloni	Coordinator, Self Direction	462-6608	Jackie.Camilloni@bhddh.ri.gov
Brenda DuHamel	Associate Director, Admin Services	462-3010	Brenda.DuHamel@bhddh.ri.gov
Cynthia Fusco	Interdepartmental Project Manager	462-6689	Cynthia.Fusco@bhddh.ri.gov
Melissa Greenlief	Administrator, Community Services	462-2459	Melissa.Greenlief@bhddh.ri.gov
Susan Hayward	Administrator, Youth in Transition	462-2519	Susan.Hayward@bhddh.ri.gov
Anne LeClerc	Associate Director, Program Performance	462-0192	Anne.LeClerc@bhddh.ri.gov
Tracy Levesque	Associate Director, Clinical	462-0209	Tracy.Levesque@bhddh.ri.gov
Gerard (Jay) MacKay	Associate Administrator, Employment	462-5279	Gerard.Mackay@bhddh.ri.gov
Erin Perron	Associate Director, RICLAS	462-2180	Erin.Perron@bhddh.ri.gov
Kelly Petersen	Chief of Training & Staff Development	462-6592	Kelly.Petersen@bhddh.ri.gov
Jacqueline Reilly	Programming Services Officer	462-0126	Jacqueline.Reilly@bhddh.ri.gov
Steven Seay	Coordinator, Integrated Community Svcs	462-6609	Steven.Seay@bhddh.ri.gov
Elvys Ruiz	Administrator III, Employment	462-3857	Elvys.Ruiz@bhddh.ri.gov
Johanna Mercado	Coordinator, Communications	462-6646	Johanna.Mercado@bhddh.ri.gov
Amethys Nieves	Associate Admin, Communications	462-6629	Amethys.Nieves@bhddh.ri.gov
Peter Joly	Principal Training Specialist	462-6638	Peter.Joly@bhddh.ri.gov
Vacant	Clinical Training Specialist		
Natalie Munoz	Chief Implementation Aide	462-3016	Natalie.Munoz@bhddh.ri.gov
CASE MANAGEMENT UNITS			
Marguerite Belisle	Casework Supervisor II	462-0714	Marguerite.Belisle@bhddh.ri.gov
Amie Adams	Social Caseworker II	462-2480	Amie.Adams@bhddh.ri.gov
Suzanne Porter	Social Caseworker II	462-1972	Suzanne.Porter@bhddh.ri.gov
Heather Soares	Social Caseworker II	462-6097	Heather.Soares@bhddh.ri.gov
GinaMarie Debartolo	Social Caseworker II	462-3402	GinaMarie.Debartolo@bhddh.ri.gov
Amber Matson	Social Caseworker II	462-1555	Amber.Matson@bhddh.ri.gov
Janice Bijesse	Casework Supervisor II	462-4290	Janice.Bijesse@bhddh.ri.gov
Mary Cameron	Social Caseworker II	462-1307	Mary.Cameron@bhddh.ri.gov
Lauree Champagne	Social Caseworker II	462-2728	Lauree.Champagne@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
Erin Simonelli	Social Caseworker II	462-2502	Erin.Simonelli@bhddh.ri.gov
Judy Smith	Social Caseworker II	462-1327	Judith.Smith@bhddh.ri.gov
Mary Beth Stevens	Casework Supervisor II	462-2438	Marybeth.Stevens@bhddh.ri.gov
Marisa Abbruzzi	Social Caseworker II (RICLAS)	462-6099	Marisa.Abbuzzi@bhddh.ri.gov
Timothy Cronin	Social Caseworker II	462-1721	Timothy.Cronin@bhddh.ri.gov
Jennifer Gouveia	Social Caseworker II	462-0098	Jennifer.Gouveia@bhddh.ri.gov
Celestina Okai	Social Caseworker II (RICLAS)	462-3896	Celestina.Okai@bhddh.ri.gov
Jill Murphy	Social Caseworker II	462-2409	Jill.Murphy@bhddh.ri.gov
Lena Sousa	Social Caseworker II	462-1834	Lena.Sousa@bhddh.ri.gov
Joseph Tevyaw	Social Caseworker II	462-2474	Joseph.Tevyaw@bhddh.ri.gov
Stacey Perry	Casework Supervisor II	462-3402	Stacey.Perry@bhddh.ri.gov
JoAnn DiMuccio	Social Caseworker II	462-2523	JoAnn.DiMuccio@bhddh.ri.gov
Souphalak Muriel	Social Caseworker II	462-2512	Souphalak.Muriel@bhddh.ri.gov
Yolande Ramos	Social Caseworker II	462-1059	Yolande.Ramos@bhddh.ri.gov
Crystal Morel	Social Caseworker II	462-1329	Crystal.Morel@bhddh.ri.gov
Vacant			
ELIGIBILITY UNIT			
Karen Lowell	Casework Supervisor II	462-2209	Karen.Lowell@bhddh.ri.gov
Christine Harding	Social Caseworker II	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	Casework Supervisor II	462-2628	Donna.Standish@bhddh.ri.gov
Wendy Cormier	Social Caseworker II	462-1302	Wendy.Cormier@bhddh.ri.gov
Jamie Fitzgibbons	Social Caseworker II	462-2510	Jamie.Fitzgibbons@bhddh.ri.gov
Meaghan Jencks	Social Caseworker II	462-2113	Meaghan.Jencks@bhddh.ri.gov
Kristen Miga	Social Caseworker II	462-0449	Kristen.Miga@bhddh.ri.gov
Stephanie Andreozzi	Implementation Aide	462-1859	Stephanie.Andreozzi@bhddh.ri.gov
TRANSITION UNIT			
Susan Hayward	Administrator, YIT	462-2519	Susan.Hayward@bhddh.ri.gov
Carolee Leach	Professional Services Coordinator	462-1723	Carolee.Leach@bhddh.ri.gov
Laurie Rossi	Implementation Aide	462-2563	Laurie.Rossi@bhddh.ri.gov

Working While Disabled—Work Incentives Sessions

SSI Overview:
September 20, 2023, 12-1 pm

SSDI Overview:
October 11, 2023, 12-1 pm

**Work Pays! An Introduction to YOUTH SSI
Work Incentives:**
October 25, 2023, 12-1 pm



ALL SESSIONS will be 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

Upon registration please share your questions.

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

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 IS LIMITED! 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.

Accommodation requests or registration questions: Contact Elaine Sollecito at esollecito@ric.edu, 401-456-2764.

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



PERSON-CENTERED THINKING FACILITATOR TRAINING

This free course is available to those supporting persons with I/DD living in Rhode Island

Online Course from September 12 – November 7, 2023

Course Details:

The Sherlock Center is now offering Person-Centered Thinking Facilitator Training as an online course. The next course runs from September 12 – November 7, 2023. Learners will use Moodle, an online platform, to independently access course materials and assignments. Learners will also participate in four scheduled virtual group sessions with the instructor. Learners are required to complete an Orientation to Moodle and initial readings prior to the first group session on September 19.

The four required group sessions will take place from 10:00 –11:30 AM on September 19, October 3, October 17, and November 7.

Technology Requirements:

To access Moodle and participate in the group sessions, learners will need a computer, laptop or tablet with internet access and a camera. We recommend using the latest version of Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, Microsoft Edge, or Safari for the best Moodle experience.

Every effort has been made to create this course and course documents in an accessible format. All course materials will be provided electronically using Moodle and/or email. It is recommended that learners install a free version of Adobe Reader on the device that will be used for the course.

Course Description:

Rhode Island is in the process of expanding and refining Person-Centered practices throughout the state. One of the most important components of Person-Centered Thinking is the facilitator who advises and assists the person to actively participate in developing a plan for all domains of their life. To get the most from this course, it is recommended that learners identify an individual with whom they might engage in person-centered planning. The course will provide the opportunity to practice the skills and knowledge learned and to reflect on learner experiences.

This course focuses on the knowledge and skills a facilitator needs to help individuals to prepare for the plan, develop the plan, and implement the plan.

Time Commitment:

This time-intensive training takes place over 3 months and will require approximately a 40-hour commitment to successfully complete the course. Learners must complete 11 online modules, quizzes, 3 assignments, and participate in 4 instructor-led group sessions via Zoom (1.5 hours each).

Register Online by September 6 at <http://bit.ly/2xeV6pT>

Priority registration will be given to support coordinators, managers and other front-line supervisors, as well as families and people with lived experience. You will receive a confirmation by email once your registration is processed.

If you need a reasonable accommodation (e.g., ASL/close captions) to participate in this course, please indicate your request on the registration form. For registration questions, contact Vanessa Hollands at vhollands@ric.edu or call 401-456-8072, TTY via RI Relay: 711.

Supporting Meaningful Employment Training Series

A Person-Centered Approach to Career Planning, Job Development and Retention



In-Person Training

All sessions will be held in person at the Sherlock Center on Disabilities, Providence. See SME Training Schedule for details.

ACRE Certificate

To earn an ACRE Certificate, learners must attend an orientation session, 12 instructor-led modules, 3 mentor/fieldwork sessions and successfully complete fieldwork assignments. SME Training Schedule is below.

The Sherlock Center offers two paths to earn an ACRE Certificate. The recommended path is to register for the full ACRE series, which allow learners to complete the required modules and fieldwork assignments within 6 months.

The alternative path is to build an ACRE Certificate by completing three SME mini-series and required fieldwork assignments within a 24-month period. Complete details are available on the SME Training page of the Sherlock Center website www.sherlockcenter.org.

Learner Technology Requirements for Online Mentor/Fieldwork Sessions

Learners will participate in instructor-led sessions using Zoom. To participate, learners will need a computer, laptop or tablet with reliable internet access with sufficient bandwidth, and a camera. It is recommended that learners have dedicated time and space when attending sessions.

Learner Time Commitment

Each training module is 3.5 hours. Learners are also required to participate remotely in an orientation session (1.5 hours) and three mentor/fieldwork sessions (1.5 hours each), in addition to satisfactory completion of fieldwork assignments.

To support course completion, learners are expected to begin fieldwork during the course and meet projected assignment due dates. Learners are encouraged to access 1:1 fieldwork support offered through the Sherlock Center.

REGISTRATION

Register Online: <http://bit.ly/2Lt4vTP>

Registration and training schedule are also available on the Sherlock Center website www.sherlockcenter.org. Register by **September 6**.

Fees: Sessions are offered free of charge to participants working for a RI organization/school, including Self-Directed Supports staff/representatives.

Requests & Questions: If you need a reasonable accommodation (e.g. ASL Interpreter, large print), please make your request known when you register. For registration questions, email Elaine Sollecito at esollecito@ric.edu 401-456-2764. For training questions, email Vicki Ferrara at vferrara@ric.edu.



Build an ACRE!
SESSION MODULES

Module 1: Foundations in Community Employment Services and Supports

Module 2: Work Incentives to Support Employment and Retention

Module 3: Vocational Assessment I - Getting to Know the Job Seeker

Module 4: Vocational Assessment II - Person-Centered Employment Planning - the process

Module 5: Vocational Assessment III - Strategies for Community Exploration & Individualized Job Search Planning

Module 6: Employment Law, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Disability Disclosure

Module 7: Job Development I - Job Search Practices to Support Meaningful Employment

Module 8: Job Development II - Employer Assessment and Individualized Approach to a Job Match

Module 9: Job Development III - Employer Relationships and Negotiations

Module 10: Job Retention and Coaching I - Foundations in Job Retention Success

Module 11: Job Retention and Coaching II - Teaching the Job - Task Analysis and Systematic Instruction

Module 12: Job Retention and Coaching III - Fading Support, Quality Services and Career Development



PHOTO ID BUS PASS

Need a RIPTA Photo ID Bus Pass?



RIPTA's Customer Service staff regularly travel to rural and urban communities throughout the state to provide reduced fare bus passes to **qualified seniors and individuals with disabilities**. Look out for us at these locations where we will be processing photo identification bus passes, accepting bus pass applications, and answering your transit questions.

2023 Community Site Visits

8/9	William Donovan Manor 19 Chapel St., Newport 10am - 12pm
8/19	PVD Mayor's Senior Day 1 Sabin St., Providence 11am - 2pm
8/31	West Warwick Senior Center 145 Washington St. 10am - 12pm
9/29	Lincoln Senior Center 150 Jenckes Hill Rd., Lincoln 10am - 1pm

Can't make it to one of our site visits?

Visit our Photo ID Office at RIPTA Headquarters
(705 Elmwood Ave., Providence)
Monday - Friday from 8am - 4pm
(closed 12pm - 1pm).

Or **apply online** at [RIPTA.com/ReducedFare](https://www.ripta.com/ReducedFare)



RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY

[RIPTA.com/ReducedFare](https://www.ripta.com/ReducedFare) | 401-784-9500 x2012

Black and Aging Health and Wellness Fair!

Embrace Wellness: Empowering Black and Brown Lives through Health and Mental Well-being

Hosted by Butler Hospital's Memory and Aging Program



Saturday, September 23rd



9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.



Black Lives Matter RI –
235 Main Street, Pawtucket, RI 02860

No registration – open to the general public.

We will provide:

- Health resources
- Nutrition services
- Giveaways
- Live music

We invite you to join us for the 2nd Black and Aging Health and Wellness Fair!

This event is being held in collaboration with Black Lives Matter RI's mental health symposium, featuring keynote speaker Dr. Victoria Downs. Our health summit is committed to providing a comprehensive and holistic experience for the elderly community.

Vendors and attendees will have the chance to network with mental health experts. At the same time, various community organizations and public agencies offer wellness resources and health insurance programs to Black seniors and their caregivers.

Don't miss this opportunity to prioritize your health and well-being.



*This is a project of the
RI Cross Disability Coalition*



**EMPLOYER
NEWSLETTER**
AUGUST 2023
ISSUE 1

RI WINS (Workforce Investment & New Solutions) is the name utilized by the RI Cross Disability Coalition for our DD Transformation Grant in collaboration with the RI Developmental Disabilities Council (RIDDC) and Skills for RI's Future. The goal of the project is to create sustainable change for meaningful and inclusive lives for individuals with disabilities within local communities in Rhode Island. The focus of this newsletter is to highlight the excellent work of community agencies in building relationships with RI employers and assisting people with disabilities to obtain competitive employment.

RI WINS - Collaboration of Organizations

Skills for RI's Future along with The RI Cross Disability Coalition and The RI Developmental Disabilities Council (RIDDC) convenes monthly group meetings for staff from community agencies involved with building employer relationships to assist people with disabilities with opportunities for employment. In the initial group meetings, Danna Spencer, Associate Director of Client Services for Inclusion at Skills for RI's Future, commented, "anything that develops any outreach to develop relationships or that participants learned through the training, Skills for RI's Future wants to be able to share that wealth, those needs, the leads, and work on filling those needs together."

Skills for RI Future wants to get employers into their software system for tracking, and then "work together with agencies on how to develop this opportunity together for the greater good of the candidates that we all represent from this group."
"The group is for... the greater good" - Danna Spencer.



FEAST & FETTLE

Feast & Fettle- A Spurwink Success

Mary Anne Maciel, Director of Employment/Community Services at Spurwink RI, has been working with the I/DD community for years, connecting individuals and employers to create a more diverse workforce. As part of RI WINS, she has attended Doug Crandell's trainings to gain insight into his model and take the opportunity to integrate those practices with the proven practices her team at Spurwink was already using.

She had already been working with Jordan (last name withheld) for a bit of time when he expressed a specific interest in working within the food service industry as a dishwasher. He also wanted - as most people do - a position close to home. On a whim, Mary Anne decided to adjust her normal practice and approach a business - Feast & Fettle - on a cold call. The business is located quite close to his home and Mary Anne thought it was worth the time to quickly stop in.

Upon arriving, Mary Anne and Jordan were told that Feast & Fettle typically only hires full-time employees. As a small business that's rapidly expanding they had more than enough responsibilities and job opportunities to go around. However, after speaking with the pair, the team at Feast & Fettle decided that they would make an exception to their "full-time only" practice so that they could add Jordan to the team.



Feast & Fettle (cont.)

Initially, Jordan started on a job trial, as presented to the Feast & Fettle team by Mary Anne. After a successful job trial, he was officially onboarded and was working with them two days per week for four hour shifts, which then increased. Since Jordan already had another job working one day per week at another local retailer, he ended up with a cumulative total of 15 hours per week which suits him well.

According to Chris Smith, director of People Operations, “Jordan joined our employee community and almost immediately, we couldn’t imagine work without him! The enthusiasm and joy Jordan brings to his work is infectious and he has built strong relationships across our teams. We are so grateful for our partnership with Spurwink for introducing us to Jordan and hope to work with Jordan for many years to come!”



“The enthusiasm and joy Jordan brings to his work is infectious and he has built strong relationships across our teams.”

Chris Smith

The flexibility of the Feast & Fettle team to bend their typical scheduling structure to accommodate Jordan is an excellent example of customized employment. They were able to keep the duties and responsibilities of the job the same, while making a reasonable accommodation for the amount of time an employee needed to dedicate to the task.

Feast & Fettle is a gourmet, fully-prepared meal delivery service founded in 2016 by Chef Maggie Mulvena Pearson and her best friend, Nicole Nix. The company delivers high-quality prepared meals for busy families and professionals who are unwilling to sacrifice on quality.

Meals are prepared at local kitchens and distributed by their in-house delivery teams across Rhode Island, most of Massachusetts, and parts of Connecticut and New Hampshire.



At Access Point RI (APRI), Rory Carmody - Director of Program Development and Jennifer Quintana, job developer, have created a winning strategy for finding employers and making a match on behalf of their prospective job candidates. It begins as just looking for places that have a “job profile that meets the kind of conditions of employment needed and are community-minded,” whether that’s “mom-and-pop shops” or big box stores.

After landing the interview and the job, candidates have Jennifer’s assistance in developing the logistics and working to “design that opportunity for the person to do the job to the best of their ability.” Those details might include visual instructions on an iPad or color-coding coffee cups and napkins as they are stacked on shelves. “We make sure there’s continuity with what people are doing, that it complements what everyone else is doing. Then we fade out, but never completely walk away,” notes Rory reassuringly.

This coincides with the ongoing Employer Engagement Training series provided by Doug Crandall throughout the term of the Transformation Grant. Five APRI staffers participated in the three-day sessions focused on concrete strategies to shift from job development to economic and workforce development, plus creating ideas for building long-term relationships with employers. While Rory and Jennifer had participated previously, according to Rory, she sees the value in getting “everybody hearing the same information, rowing in the same direction.”

In 2022, Jennifer reached out to Brewed Awakenings in Warwick, requesting an informational interview, inquiring about their needs, providing a visual resume, and “demonstrating to the employer that the prospects have skills to fit those needs.” Ultimately, two of Jennifer’s candidates were hired. Both current employees – Timothy and Naquan - had expressed interest in working at Brewed Awakenings; Tim had prior food service experience and both good social skills. Timothy’s position is food prep, while Naquan is a dishwasher and busses the dining room.

Brewed Awakenings (cont.)

Working closely with Tim, Jennifer provided the context for his recent job. “Tim loves baking cakes and desserts for family and friends. He was interested in food prep, so we supported him in obtaining his food handler certificate.”

Initial job coaching for Tim included creating a checklist of reminders once he clocked in. He also needed support in requesting time off and advocating for additional hours. Long-term supports continue via APRI, including monthly check-ins, help with communications and feedback, and offsite support, as needed. Industrious Tim works two jobs, “five hours one day a week at Dave’s Market Place in their bakery department since 2016, and fifteen hours, three days a week at Brewed Awakenings since 2022,” added Jennifer.

Naquan had never worked prior to Jennifer’s working with him when they received a referral from Office of Rehabilitative Services for a vocational evaluation. She commented, “He was open to trying any position; he was very eager to start making money so he could purchase tickets for a trip to Jamaica.” (Naquan’s dad lives in Jamaica and he has family there.) Naquan was offered a part-time position during his trial/“voc eval” with Brewed Awakenings. Job coaching was initially provided as he learned the new tasks, and received support in meeting co-workers, and speaking to management and professionals. Receiving steadily fewer onsite visits, he is currently completely independent in his position, and has been working 15 hours per week since November 2022.

Not surprisingly, Jennifer remarks, “seeing someone earn their first paycheck and save for something they truly want is an incredible feeling and the reason I love doing this type of work.”

Asked about his staffers, Brewed Awakenings owner David Levesque quickly acknowledges, “Tim is a great guy. He’s funny, extremely reliable, always such a big help.” He noted that Tim is in their busiest store and is deeply involved in making myriad flavors of the protein snack balls, measuring every ingredient, and prepping for breakfast, which means portioning fresh meats, and bacon and scrambling the eggs for 1000s of egg sandwiches a week. “As far as I’m concerned, he’ll be a long-term employee.”

Owner of Brewed Awakenings, David Levesque, stresses the idea that “hiring people with disabilities isn’t the issue. It’s about the person. It’s about relationships.”



NAQUAN



TIM

Brewed Awakenings (cont.)

For years, Brewed Awakenings has given people a chance and holds everyone to the same standard. David adds, Tim and Naquan “show up and get the job done.” Importantly, David stresses the idea that hiring people with disabilities “isn’t the issue; it’s about the person. It’s about relationships.”

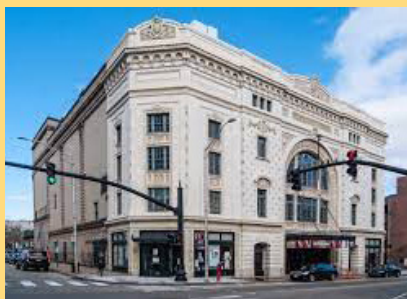
David has hired well, implementing company-wide his work philosophy. When he referred to several other longtime staffers, who then moved out of state, he remarked that they remain in touch.

Establishing good, long-term working relationships is a common thread weaving together agencies and employers for the benefit of all.



Danna Spencer has been developing business relationships as Associate Director of Client Services for Inclusion at Skills for Rhode Island’s Future, a Rhode Island non-profit workforce intermediary connecting employers, community partners and the jobseekers they support with work opportunities.

Trinity Repertory Company and the partnership that unfolded between workABILITY (SkillsRI’s Inclusion Hiring Initiative) and the highly respected Providence-based regional theater company highlights the depth and importance and most importantly the mutual benefits of such relationships fostered with employers over time. The goal is to learn more about a business’ needs while offering solutions that reflect their values and culture, and ultimately result in improvements to their business bottom line.



The first hire through Customized and Supported Employment and workABILITY turned out to be “one of the most incredible hires that I ever had.”

Bradley Widener, Director of Service and Experience, Trinity Rep.

Building a mutually beneficial relationship with Trinity Rep’s Director of Service and Experience, Bradley Widener, marked the beginning of a continuing story with the business, resulting in several successful job placements. Immediately after the introduction, Danna focused on the company and uncovering unmet needs while sharing information on Customized and Supportive Employment - and other resources that could benefit the employer. Her extensive experience with this proven process landed the all-important candidate tour and informational interview. Six candidates gained valuable, detailed insights about jobs in the theater. Most importantly, Bradley created a “customized” internship for the candidate who wanted a security job, issuing him a badge-like name tag and a walkie-talkie that is used for communication within the House Services team.

Bradley’s first hire through Customized and Supported Employment and workABILITY turned out to be “one of the most incredible hires that I ever had,” according to the Trinity Director. Time devoted to creating the business relationship and establishing an understanding of the employer’s needs made it possible to achieve the right match along with several additional matches that would eventually allow Bradley to create a “Clean Team” within House Services and let go of Trinity’s expensive outside vendor contract.

Danna’s emphasis on attending to the needs of workABILITY’s business partners is clear. When Bradley recently reached out to the workABILITY team to discuss additional support he felt a new hire needed to learn her job, she notes, “We jumped at the chance to meet with the employee’s supervisor to determine the resources needed support the worker and to make sure we to preserve that incredible relationship with our employer partner.”

Equally important for employers is the value of continued commitment to a placed candidate or a related business need . “It’s not a one and done. I will circle back...helping in any way I can,” a distinction that Danna underscores.

Trinity Rep (cont.)

WorkABILITY's approach to partnering with companies to provide services and solutions that meet their workforce development needs is modeled on the Griffin Hammis training for successfully engaging employers. The method aligns particularly well with employers who promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in their hiring practice. Griffin Hammis training has been provided to several cohorts of job developers and coaches from provider agencies across the state and made possible by a "Transformation Grant" offered by Rhode Island Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals.

The overall goal of Rhode Island's Transformation Grant projects is to improve the Human Services delivery systems to more effectively serve the individuals they support, which should ultimately have a positive impact on the surrounding communities as well. As is the case with Skills for Rhode Island's Future, the collaboration between entities to facilitate Employer Engagement training, and the partnership with Trinity Repertory Company that developed as result, the greatest impact Transition Grant funding will ultimately have is a positive one for our State's economy.

The trusted partnership that formed between workABILITY and Trinity Repertory Company has resulted in many successful hires and internships that considers applicants from all walks of life and abilities.

For More Information contact:

- Mary Anne Maciel, Spurwink RI, mamaciel@spurwinkri.org***
- Rory Carmody, Access Point RI, rcarmody@accesspointri.org***
- Jennifer Quintana, Access Point RI, jquintana@accesspointri.org***
- Danna Spencer, Skills for Rhode Island's Future, dspencer@skillsforri.com***
- Sue Babin, RIDDC, suebabin@riddc.org***
- Tanja Blicher-Ucran, RI Cross Disability Coalition, tanja@riddc.org***