



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals
DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
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Frequently Asked Questions

General questions about the Division:

1. How is the Division doing with the Consent Decree?

Answer: The Division sends the Consent Decree Court Monitor a quarterly report. A **quarterly report** is a report sent every three months. In the reports, the Division shares updates on its progress towards meeting Consent Decree tasks. [The last report came out November 15, 2024 \(PDF\)](#).

2. Are there any new Division initiatives?

Answer: The Division published its first annual report. The report shares the Division's progress over the last year. It also shares the Division's future goals.

The Division's Communication Team is working to grow its "Your Life, Your Rights" Program. The goal is to offer live virtual or in-person classes members of the community can join. Visit the ["Your Life, Your Rights Program" website](#) to learn more about the program. If you have comments or suggestions for the program, please share them by emailing the Communications Team at bhddh.ddcomms@bhddh.ri.gov.

The Division wants to learn how you would like to get news and updates. Please complete the ["Tell Us What You Think" online survey](#) to share how you would like Division news and updates.

3. Are there website updates?

Answer: The [Division's website](#) is slowly being updated. The goal of these updates is to make information even easier to find and understand. If you have comments or suggestions for the website, please share them by emailing the Communications Team at bhddh.ddcomms@bhddh.ri.gov.

4. What are the Division's strategic priorities?

Answer: The Division commits to keep working to support the community. The Division's goals in 2025 are:

- A. Continue to meet Medicaid and Consent Decree orders:
 - Meet consent decree rules.
 - Connect all participants with CFCM.

- B. Continue to strengthen quality of support provided to adults with disability:
 - Train, coach, and mentor providers to improve outcomes for people with disabilities.
 - Share information in ways more people can access, including video and other languages.
 - Work with adults with disabilities to create tools for adults with disabilities.
- C. Continue to build and support opportunities for adults with disabilities to make informed choices:
 - Share information about options for services and individual budgets.
 - Work with employers to create more access to job opportunities for adults with disabilities.
 - Improve access and options for adults with disabilities to make use of community resources.

Questions about Developmental Disability (DD) services and supports:

5. Can you share information about Support Brokers?

Answer: The Division has expanded Support Brokerage with new rates and 3 new Support Broker providers:

- Lazo
- Best Life RI
- RI Self-Direct Coalition

Support Brokers help you develop the skills you need to self-direct. They also help with the day-to-day administrative tasks that come with self-direction. Support Brokers act as your agent and take direction from you. They help you work towards your plan goals by supporting you in these ways:

- Helping you run your Person-Centered Plan.
- Talking about both paid and unpaid services and supports.
- Helping you find, interview, hire, schedule, supervise, and pay your workers.
- Working with you to create a community resource map.

For more, visit [RIPIN's webpage](#) to review a recording from the "Meet Local RI Support Brokers" webinar.

6. Are there new updates on Goods and Services?

Answer: There are no new updates on goods and services. Information about goods and services can be found on the [Division's Self-Directed Supports webpage](#).

7. Are Professional Services part of the 5,000 max for Goods and Services?

Answer: No, Professional Services are not part of the \$5,000 max for Goods & Services. Professional services are a separate service.

8. Are there updates about the new SIS?

Answer: The Division is still using the two new assessment processes: (1) three-step assessment process, and (2) two-step assessment process. To learn more, visit the [Division's website](#).

In the [10/25/24 Newsletter \(PDF\)](#), the Division shared an update about supplemental funding requests (S109). The Division will change how some S109s are approved for some people. For some individuals who have had an approved S109 for the last 2 years or more, the approval will be for longer. The approval will be for the rest of their current plan year and the following plan year. A new S109 request will not be needed.

The Division will send out letters to anyone who has had a S109 for the last 2 years or more that meet criteria for the extension. This letter is the supplemental request outcome letter (S110). The approval can come from either the ANSQ Committee or S109 Committee. If you are a participant and your support needs change before your next assessment, please let the Division know.

9. What happens after a request for new technology is submitted for the Tech Fund?

Answer: The Division's Tech Fund helps people getting services buy technology. This technology must help the person in their daily life. This is a one-time fund you can request anytime. This fund is separate from a person's service funding.

The Division will contact you by email or mail about your request.

If approved, then your request will go to the next step. The Division will send your request to your service provider or Fiscal Intermediary (FI). Your service provider or FI will buy your technology for you.

If not approved, then the Division will let you know why your request was not approved. You can make changes to your request and resubmit it.

Please email BHDDH.DDTechRequest@bhddh.ri.gov if you have questions.

Visit the [Division's Technology Fund webpage](#) to learn more.

10. Are there updates on Self-Directed Supports?

Answer: Many Division staff went to RIPIN's first Self-Direct Conference on Friday, November 8, 2024. The event was at the Crown Plaza in Warwick. The event was open to the community. Adults with disabilities, their families, support staff and professionals went to the event. It included training, support, and resources on self-direct services.

With 300 attendees, the conference had 12 interesting breakout sessions covering important topics like:

- Employment Supports
- Self-Direction 101
- BHDDH State Panel
- Goods & Services
- Natural Supports
- Link With Your Community
- Supported Decision-Making
- Hiring & Training Staff
- Blending Services

The event also had a special session with a Peer Advocates panel. On this panel, people shared their personal experiences.

11. How can overnight respite services be accessed?

Answer: First, talk about respite options with your Social Case Worker (SCW). This service depends on what supports are needed. They also depend on whether the request is in-home or in another setting.

12. Are there Conflict Free Case Management (CFCM) updates?

Answer: CFCM is a service for people getting long-term services and supports (LTSS). The goal of CFCM is to make sure people get the services they need. A CFCM agency can only provide CFCM. This means the agency does not provide any other service. By only providing CFCM, the agency can focus on helping the person find services and supports available to them. These services and supports may be from any agency or place in the state. CFCM is required by Medicaid. The Division will also offer CFCM.

Another group of providers is called Independent Facilitators (IF). IFs are not certified by Medicaid as CFCM. IFs serve in a short-term role to help with the changeover to CFCM. Some IFs used to be called Independent Plan Writers. IFs will only be working with people who self-direct.

In September 2024, the Division began to contact people getting services to share CFCM updates. People getting services will start to work with CFCM or IF in the next few months.

The people getting services do not have to do anything but wait for the CFCM/IF to call them.

For new staff, the Division's CFCM service will be given by state CFCMs. The Division has 2 new CFCM teams for a total of 12 staff. There are many certified CFCMs working outside of the Division. These providers are known as Private CFCMs.

13. Can I choose my Independent Facilitator (IF) worker or CFCM agency?

Answer: During the initial roll out to CFCM agencies, the Division will be assigning people to one of the agencies based on their available capacity. Once all the CFCM agencies are fully staffed, people can choose to change agencies. If you prefer an agency or a case manager at one of the agencies, please let your DD SCW know before we make your referral.

If you self-direct and have worked with an IF in the past you can keep working with them. Let your DD SCW know of your preference so we can keep it on file for when your referral is done.

14. Are there any updates about the budget?

Answer No, there are no updates about the DD service budget. People who get services will still make their own individual budget. To learn more, visit the [Division's Forms webpage](#) for a copy of the Individual Budget Guide.

15. What are some resources that can help people get a new job?

Answer: There are many DD services focused on helping people find a job. Some start by helping people learn their skills and interests. Others help people apply for jobs and interview. The type of services a person gets depends on where they are on their employment journey. To learn more, visit the [Divisions Employment webpage](#).

16. What are the Tech Bulletins updates?

Answer: The Division published 2 new technical bulletins:

- [Technical Bulletin DSP Services While in Hospital 2024 \(PDF\)](#). This bulletin shares details about Direct Support Professional (DSP) services. DSP services can now be given while a participant is in the hospital.
- [Technical Bulletin Whole Life Shared Living Arrangement \(WLSLA; PDF\)](#). This bulletin shares details about WLSLA and how it is different than SLA. It shares the rules WLSLA workers and participants must follow.

17. What is the difference between Whole Life Shared Living Arrangement (WLSLA) and Shared Living Arrangement (SLA)?

Answer: The main difference is that WLSLA includes support for community participation (in place of traditional “day” supports). In SLA, participants get community support mainly from another service provider or through self-direction.

18. Are there resources that can help people move out of a group home into SLA?

Answer: The best plan of action is to start working with your support team. Explore SLA referral options with group home staff and your SCW.

19. How can someone become a Shared Living Arrangement (SLA) or group home provider?

Answer: If an agency wants to become a new group home provider, start by filling out the BHDDH licensing application. For a copy of the application, visit the [BHDDH Quality Management Unit webpage](#). Before submitting the application, contact the Licensing Unit for next steps.

To become an SLA provider, you need to connect with a licensed agency that oversees SLA. You can find agencies on the [BHDDH DD Service Provider List website](#) by searching for the SLA service.

General questions about community resources:

20. Are there any plans to expanding Special Ed/Autism programs?

Answer: Please contact the administrator from the Special Education program in the school district you would like it to be expanded in. You can also contact the [Rhode Island Department of Education \(RIDE\)](#) for more information on the state’s plan for Special Education.

21. Are there updates about SWI and the workgroups?

Answer: The Paul V. Sherlock Center is working with the State on the Statewide Workforce Initiative (SWI). Visit the [Sherlock Center Directed Support Workforce website](#) to learn more.

22. What are some supports for people who are blind?

Answer: The Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Office of Rehabilitation Services, has many services. Some of their services are for people who are blind or visually impaired. To learn more, visit the [Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired \(SBVI\) webpage](#). This webpage shares details about SBVI and gives a list of other resources.

23. How can Direct Service Providers (DSP) support clients?

Answer: The [RI Department of Labor and Training](#) offers a 10-week DSP Training Program.

The [Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities offers resources for Direct Support Providers \(DSPs\)](#). Their website shares details on how to be a successful DSP, with some training information.

[National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals \(NADSP\)](#) is a nation-wide organization. NADSP offers DSP trainings and resources.

24. How can someone learn to advocate for themselves or others?

Answer: [Advocates in Action](#) is a local organization. They offer resources on self-advocacy. They also offer a yearly Leadership Series, which is a class to help people self-advocate. The next Leadership Series Class starts on Wednesday, February 5, 2025 from 10:30am to 2:30pm. The class meets weekly on Wednesdays from 1pm to 2pm until the end of June. You must apply to join the class. The deadline to apply is Friday, January 17, 2025. To learn more, visit the [Leadership Series Class of 2025 webpage](#).

25. What are national laws to follow?

Answer: The Division put together a [Your Life, Your Rights Program](#) this year that talks about national laws. The program includes laws that protect the right to make choices, be treated well, and be safe.

There are organizations that work to protect human rights. One organization that may be helpful to follow is the [American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\)](#).

There are national laws that protect civil rights. For a helpful guide to disability rights laws, visit the [ADA.gov website](#).

26. Where can I learn about national DD updates?

Answer: There are many organizations that share national DD updates. To start, explore these resources:

- [National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities \(NACDD\)](#)
- [Administration for Community Living \(ACL\)](#)
- [National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services \(NASDDS\)](#)
- [The Arc](#)

27. Where can I find behavioral services?

Answer: There are many behavioral health service options. It may help by starting at your [local community mental health center](#). These centers offer emergency services as well as some counseling. They can also connect you to other services in the community.

You can also review the [BHDDH Healthy Transitions and Behavioral Health Guide](#). This guide is for young adults aged 14-25 who want to learn how to find the right services for them.

If you or someone you know is unsafe and may hurt themselves or others, get help right away:

- Call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room
- Call and/or visit [BH Link](#)

28. How can I learn to make new friends?

Answer: There are many online stories about friendship. One article that may be helpful to learn about making friends is from the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#). This article shares 5 tips for making friends.

There are local organizations that focus on making friends. One organization that may be good to start with is the [Best Buddies Program](#).

29. Where can parents find help?

Answer: A few websites share a list of resources for parents of adults with disabilities. These websites may be a good place to start:

- [American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#)
- [CES Academy](#)
- [Stephen's Place](#)
- [Parents Helping Parents](#)
- [Administration for Community Living \(ACL\)](#)

30. What are some learning resources for people with disabilities?

Answer: Many local agencies help adults with disabilities learn new skills. Three agencies focused on helping people learn about their DD service options and how to get what they need are:

- [Sherlock Center](#)
- [RIPIN](#)
- [Advocates in Action](#)

For non-DD related trainings, a few agencies to start with are:

- [Rhode Island Department of Education for adults](#)

- [U.S. Department of Labor: Office of Disability Employment Policy](#)
- [Genesis Center](#)
- [Cranston Adult Education Programs](#)
- [Rhode Island Regional Adult Learning](#)
- [The Education Exchange](#)

There are many online learning options that may be helpful. A few to get started with are:

- [TED Talks](#)
- [Udemy](#)
- [Coursera](#)
- [Open Culture](#)
- [Skillshare](#)

31. What help is out there for people transitioning from teenager to adulthood?

Answer: If you or someone you know has a disability and nearing adulthood, BHDDH can help. Learn more about how the Division can help by visiting our [Transitioning to Adult Services webpage](#).

32. Where can I learn more about affordable housing?

Answer: Affordable housing programs include voucher programs, public housing, and subsidized housing. To learn more about housing vouchers, visit the [RI Housing website](#).

33. What are ABLE Accounts?

Answer: ABLE accounts stand for Achieving a Better Life Experience Act Accounts. The Rhode Island ABLE will let you save for disability related costs. You can save up to \$18,000 per year. There are rules to how you can spend this money. You must only use this money to pay for items and services related to your disability. You can spend money on things like health programs, education, housing, and more. All you need to start an account is \$25. To learn more, including how to open an account, explore [RI's ABLE website](#).