



Questions & Answers

Can SLA providers also be paid staff for the participant if they self-direct their day services?

No. SLA providers cannot also be an employee of the participant. This changes the relationship and can jeopardize the SLA provider’s stipend.

I completed an Interim ISP for COVID. When do I need to do my new ISP?

The Interim ISP for COVID (COVID IISP) was developed to simplify the submission of a new plan given the stay at home restrictions put in place in response to the coronavirus. It was developed to be in place until the end of the COVID-related state of emergency, with a new plan due within 90 days of the end of the state of emergency. This state of emergency has been extended several times now. The current expiration date is August 4th, which would mean a new plan would be due on November 2nd. We don’t know yet if it will be extended again. As long as the state of emergency is extended, the due date for a new plan will be extended as well.

Help to spread the word about the benefits of employment

We are looking for a few great people to join a peer-to-peer panel or a family-to-family panel to share their stories. We are looking for individuals and family members who were initially apprehensive about working but who are now enjoying the benefits of employment. BHDDH is collaborating with RIPIN to develop a series of virtual panels where you can share your experience of how you got past the myths, learned the facts, took the leap to employment, and what working means to you. We know others can learn and benefit from hearing from you! If interested in joining either panel, please contact:

Tracey at Tracey.Cunningham@bhddh.ri.gov or (401) 462-3857
or **Jay** at Gerard.MacKay@bhddh.ri.gov or (401) 462-5279

DD Community Forum

The next DDD Community Forum will be held virtually on
Monday, August 17th from 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.

- Hear from Director Kathryn Power and meet Kevin Savage, the Acting DDD Director
- DDD will provide updates on the impact of COVID-19 on services and plans to resume services
- We welcome your questions and comments!

Questions and ideas for topics you’d like to see addressed can be sent in advance to
BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov

Click this link to register:

<http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=87gazgoab&oeidk=a07eh7pwk0t1f1232ba>
[\[events.constantcontact.com\]](http://events.constantcontact.com)

Save the Date
August 17
4:00 PM - 5:30 PM
DD Community Forum
Via Zoom or by Phone



30th Anniversary ADA Virtual Rally

Join fellow members of the disability community from across the U.S.

When: July 26, 1:00 PM EDT

Where: [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)

Grassroots activism was crucial to the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act three decades ago. Though we can't meet in person we can still gather online to hear from disability leaders, share personal experiences, celebrate all that has been accomplished and reflect on what still needs to be done. **Speakers** include Senator Tom Harkin (retired), Senator Bob Dole (retired), Judy Heumann, Claudia Gordon and Alex Watters, among others.

Silver Linings

RI teachers' smile-friendly mask business ramps up production

from: [IT'S GOOD NEWS](#) by: Alexandra Leslie

CRANSTON, R.I. (WPRI) — Two Rhode Island women say their unique face mask is in such high demand they had to move production from their home to a printing shop in Fall River.

Back in May, Linda Greco and Linda Harnois teamed up to make smile-friendly masks. Greco is a first-grade teacher at Thornton Elementary School in Johnston and Harnois is a retired English teacher at East Providence High School.

Their masks feature clear vinyl inserts so the wearer's mouth can be seen. Their first design was dubbed, "The Communicator."

With more mask-wearing mandates being issued across the country, the women say they were getting "inundated" with emails, calls and online orders. Now, they've gotten Potters Printing in Fall River to help ramp up their production, which they say is in the thousands.

"We just couldn't get it out there fast enough, so now we can at least produce a couple thousand in a week if we need to," Harnois said.

The women say school departments, health care professionals, and car dealerships have shown the most interest. "They were telling us, 'Listen, we don't want the traditional, or original, mask,'" Harnois said. "We want something that we can see emotions, we could see facial expressions. So important, especially today, so that we can feel more comfort."

The women say 'The Speak E-Z' mask is even more smile-friendly, compared to their original design. The cut-out is shaped more like a smile, versus the rectangle version in the first design.

They also say while it's snug, it's more breathable, too.

"I'm sure everyone that has a covering on that covers their lips, one time or another has had difficulty understanding and even hearing what another person is saying," Greco said.

"And, as we said before, who doesn't want to see a smile?" Harnois added.



Virtual Community Center

<https://agefriendlyri.org/>

The physical closure of seniors' and community centers due to the coronavirus has left a void in many older people's lives. Gone are cards and fitness, book clubs and memory café—along with the exercise, mental stimulation and social connection that are so vital for the health and well-being of Rhode Island seniors.

Thanks to the power of technology and the creative thinking of Age-Friendly Rhode Island (AFRI) and its many community partners, and funding from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation, there is now a way for seniors to enjoy many of the same types of programs they used to attend in person, but from the safety of home.

The [Virtual Community Center \(VCC for short\)](#) is a great new service for all Rhode Islanders to take advantage of.

“The VCC offers a full schedule of free online activities and events to look forward to every day when in-person experiences aren't possible. We hope they will help keep Rhode Islanders' bodies healthy, minds sharp and spirits high during this time of pandemic and beyond, when we're staying close to home and limiting our contact with others, and when many of the places we normally go are closed.”

There truly are [virtual events taking place every single day](#) at the VCC, and they are all free!

The programs are offered through various online tools, such as Zoom, Facebook Live and live streaming on websites. Some are live, meaning that they take place at a set time, and others can be accessed on demand whenever you'd like.

Because technology can be a challenge for many, there are also helpful [tutorial videos](#) that guide participants through the process of creating a Gmail account, using FaceTime, signing up for Facebook, and creating a Zoom account.

Lt. Gov. Dan McKee recently shared [a conversation with Catherine Taylor](#), AFRI's new director, who described how the VCC simulates the experience of a brick-and-mortar senior center, with the schedule of the day's events. As they were brainstorming how to adapt to the pandemic, Taylor and her colleagues realized that “people miss the experience of looking forward to things.” The VCC gives people that feeling of anticipation about events that are happening later in the week and month.

As Taylor described, AFRI also sees this as a tool with enduring value:

“We developed this in response to the crisis now. But it's really something that's going to be helpful to a lot of people going forward, even when this is all over. Because there are always going to be times in our lives when for whatever reason, we are just not able to participate in in-person sessions. Maybe it's something as simple as you have a bad cold, and you don't want to give it to people, so you're going to stay home. But guess what, you don't have to miss that class you wanted to go to.”

Check out the VCC today, and be sure to spread the news with others who could benefit from it!

Article from: <http://www.hefflaw.com/2020/06/a-virtual-community-center-for-ri-seniors/>

digIAGE: Bridging the digital divide for Rhode Islanders

Today we live in a digital world. From how we shop, work and bank to how we socialize - technology is now in the forefront. For some older adults with limited-to-no access or fluency in technology, the result is an inability to participate fully in modern-day life. This technology gap severs vital connections to services and opportunities for these older adults. The Office of Healthy Aging (OHA) - in collaboration with our State, Federal, and local community partners - developed the digIAGE collaborative to help bridge the digital divide for older Rhode Islanders. digIAGE has three principal objectives:



Device

Increasing the availability of user-centric technology among older Rhode Islanders and adults with disabilities.

[ATEL Program](#)

The Rhode Island Adaptive Telephone Equipment Loan (ATEL) offers specialized landline telephone equipment and wireless communication devices: landline devices include amplified telephones, captioning telephones, emergency devices and handsfree speaker phones, and wireless devices include iPhone, iPad, Google Pixel, Lucia and Jitterbug. To receive equipment the person must have the following: a resident of Rhode Island, Hard of Hearing, Deaf, or have either a speech or neuromuscular disability that inhibits use of a standard telephone, and meet income criteria of 250% of the federal poverty line. ATEL also has a Hearing and Speech Lab available for demonstrations, short term loans of many devices, and education about accessibility options and Apps that are designed to make smartphones and tablets easier to use and more approachable for older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Contact: Denise Corson

denise.corson@ors.ri.gov

Voice: (401) 462-7857

TTY: (401) 222-1679

Connection

Expanding internet connectivity among older people, adults with disabilities, and their family caregivers.

[PCs for People](#) sells mobile hotspots (\$95) with the ability to prepay 1, 3, 6, or 12 months of internet access (\$15 for one month; \$180 for 12 months); buyers must prove low-income status to be eligible. Limit one per customer.

[Verizon](#) operates the Lifeline program for the FCC in Rhode Island, offering a \$9.95/month discount for households on public assistance who are Verizon customers. See their application.

[Cox](#) is offering a \$29.99 option for new Starter internet customers, no annual contract or qualifications. Cox has opened up all CoxWifi hotspots across the state. Log-in using your Cox login information.

[T-Mobile](#) has launched T-Mobile Connect, a new smartphone plan with unlimited talk-text and 2GB of data for \$15/month. Some local **libraries** have wifi hotspots available for loan, including Pawtucket, Providence, Warwick, and Barrington. Information on these programs is [here](#).

Use the [WiFi Map App](#) to locate public wifi options in RI or enable Facebook Wifi Locator to search through Facebook.

[Providence Public Library](#) also has a list of outdoor-accessible WiFi from libraries and higher education institutions. See if you qualify for additional offers through [EveryoneOn's Find Offers](#) database.

Training

Building social engagement platforms that promote connection and digital literacy.

[Cyber-Seniors](#) is an intergenerational program that connects college students with older adults. It is designed to provide benefits to all that participate.

[Senior Planet](#), powered by OATS (Older Adults Technology Services), harnesses technology to change the way we age. Offering courses, programs, and activities help seniors learn new skills, save money, get in shape, and make new friends.

[Generations On Line](#) is national nonprofit that provides free internet training for seniors with instructions on every screen in large type and simple English.

[URI Geriatric Education Center](#) provide guides on setting up a gmail account to using facetime to connect with friends and family.

[AARP TEK Workshops](#) offer simple and targeted tutorials for various tech functions, ranging from using your smart phone calendar to changing your notification settings.

[TechBoomers](#) offers 100+ free tech-related courses. Used by some libraries.

Self-Advocacy Resources Online

Advocates in Action RI

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

Advocates in Action Rhode Island is a Statewide Self-Advocacy organization. Our mission is to empower people who have a developmental disability to advocate for themselves and others, to support and strengthen the Self-Advocacy movement and to raise awareness about disability issues in the community. We strive to help people become educated about their options, aware of available resources, able to make informed decisions, in control of their own lives, and involved within the community.

In light of the current Coronavirus Pandemic that is sweeping through the world and across our country, we've decided to focus on using our website to help Self-Advocates stay informed and connect with others. Our goal is to help support Rhode Islanders who have a developmental disability and others during these difficult and uncertain times. We've organized all of this into the 4 categories listed below. Click on any of them to open another page with the information that's listed.

- [Information about the Coronavirus](#): User-Friendly Resources to be informed and stay safe
- [Communications from the RI Division of Developmental Disabilities](#)
- [Technical Assistance Made EZ](#): Tools, simple guides, and "how to" tips for the internet
- [Online Opportunities](#): Information and support to help people use the internet

Self-Advocacy Online

<http://www.selfadvocacyonline.org>

Self Advocacy Online is a place to find accessible information and videos on current topics in self-advocacy. Visitors to the site will discover multi-media lessons on a variety of topics such as living self-determined, healthy, contributing lives in their communities. The site includes a story wall of videos of self-advocates sharing their stories.

The Riot

<http://www.theriotrocks.org/>

The Riot is about self-advocacy. We offer a newsletter, a blog where self-advocates can share opinions, toolkits, games, and services to help individuals become stronger advocates. We cover topics that are important to self-advocates. And we really don't like silly rules that just keep people down. We are serious about self-advocacy issues, but we also want to make you laugh and feel good about life. Join us in celebrating the strengths of self-advocates. Help take on the barriers that stand in the way. Most of all, let's work together to help people live the life they want with the support they need.

Austistic Self Advocacy Network

<https://autisticadvocacy.org/>

The Autistic Self Advocacy Network seeks to advance the principles of the disability rights movement with regard to autism. ASAN believes that the goal of autism advocacy should be a world in which autistic people enjoy equal access, rights, and opportunities. We work to empower autistic people across the world to take control of our own lives and the future of our common community, and seek to organize the autistic community to ensure our voices are heard in the national conversation about us. Nothing About Us, Without Us!

The Disability Visibility Project and StoryCorps

The Disability Visibility Project (DVP) is an online community dedicated to creating, sharing, and amplifying disability media and culture. The DVP believes that disabled narratives matter.

The DVP encourages people with disabilities to go to StoryCorps and record their oral histories. StoryCorps gives people of all backgrounds, typically two at a time, the opportunity to record meaningful conversations and archives the recordings at the Library of Congress. Recording a StoryCorps interview couldn't be easier: You invite a loved one, or anyone else you choose, to share a 40-minute conversation.

There are three options if you are interested in sharing your story for the **Disability Visibility Project®**:

1. You can go to a **StoryCorps recording booth** in person and record your story. StoryCorps is located in Chicago, Atlanta, and various cities on their Mobile Tour.
2. You can record remotely with friend from 2 separate locations using **StoryCorps Connect**
3. You can record a story using the **StoryCorps app** (anytime, anywhere from your smartphone)

StoryCorps records stories by audio only. For people who use visual communication or other non-verbal forms of communication, the DVP offers these suggestions/options:

1. Have a **sign language interpreter** or facilitator to facilitate communication when recording your oral history either on the app or at the StoryCorps recording booth. The DVP understands this can be a hardship and unfair burden. If you have an interpreter or facilitator at your StoryCorps appointment, the DVP has a limited budget to reimburse you for those services. This is not a guarantee, it is dependent on the current funds available. First come, first served. See the DVP website for more information. <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/>
2. **Create a YouTube video** with your story including the same info required by [the app](#) (title of your interview, name(s) of participants, keywords). Please include captions in your video (not the auto-generated ones) so it can be accessible to all members of the disability community. The DVP will record an audio version for upload to the StoryCorps app. We will post your video with audio clips from your interview. Email the link to your video: DisabilityVisibilityProject@gmail.com
3. **Write your story** including the same info (photo, title of your interview, name(s) of participants, keywords) required by [the app](#). The DVP will record an audio version for upload to the StoryCorps app. Email a photo and Word document: DisabilityVisibilityProject@gmail.com

Helpful links

- Reservations: <https://storycorps.org/reservations/>
- How to use the StoryCorps app: <https://storycorps.org/participate/storycorps-app/>
- What-to-Expect: <http://storycorps.org/what-to-expect/>
- Contact StoryCorps: <http://storycorps.org/contact/>

For more information on the Disability Visibility Project, their blog, and other events, visit their website at <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/>

DISABILITY VISIBILITY PROJECT

ACL Seeking Participants for Web-Based Caregiver Focus Groups

The Administration on Community Living (ACL) is looking for volunteers to participate in focus groups to help learn more about the experiences and needs of individuals who are supporting older adults or people with disabilities of any age. The focus groups are part of the efforts of the [Family Caregiving Advisory Council](#) and will help ACL learn more about ways to better support people and families who provide assistance to others.

Caregiver Qualification

Sometimes an individual might need caregiving help from a family member or friend. They might need help with rides to doctor appointments, other care and treatment, medication, preparing meals, and providing support, supervision and personal care such as bathing or dressing and more. When older adults or people of any age with long-term support needs, or parents of children of any age with unique healthcare needs or a disability require assistance, it often falls to family members, friends or others to provide that assistance.

People who help in this way are sometimes called “family caregivers” because they are assisting someone at no cost to the person receiving the care. An Informal Caregiver could be someone who is caring for an aging spouse or parent who needs help with personal care such as bathing and dressing, or who requires supervision due to Alzheimer’s disease. They can also be parents caring for young children with disabilities, or assisting an adult of any age, with health care needs or disabilities.

Dates and Times for the Focus Groups

ACL is looking for:

- Someone who is currently (or has previously) provided assistance to an older family member or close friend
 - July 28th, 29th, and 30th, and August 4th, 7:00 – 8:00 pm ET
- Parents who are currently supporting a young child or an adult child with a unique health care need or a disability
 - August 5th and 6th 7:00 – 8:00 pm ET

What does volunteering to participate involve?

Using web-based communication technologies, participants will respond to a series of questions posed by staff from UMass, Boston, and Community Catalyst and discuss their caregiving experiences, needs and recommendations for ways to strengthen support to families and family caregivers. All information shared during the sessions will be kept strictly confidential, and names will not be shared publically. Participants will not be contacted by a salesperson.

All participants will receive compensation of \$100 at the conclusion of the discussion.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, please call
Phone Number: 310-306-6866
and ask for Study # 19086
Find out more at [THIS LINK](#)**



Autism Society National Helpline



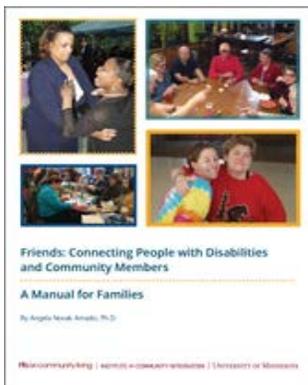
The Autism Society recognizes the many added challenges the autism community faces during the COVID-19 pandemic. We hear you, and are here for you. Access our resources below, or contact our National Helpline for more support.

The Autism Society's National Helpline welcomes your phone calls, emails and letters. Please keep in mind that our helpline does not provide direct services/assistance, such as treatment, legal services, and case management. However, our trained Information & Referral (I&R) Specialists provide many resources to services and supports across the country.

- Submit an inquiry online at <https://www.autism-society.org/about-the-autism-society/contact-us/>. To better serve you when submitting your inquiry, please be sure to provide your city, state, and zip code in the description box.
- To speak to an I&R Specialist directly, call **1-800-3-AUTISM (800-328-8476)**.
- Contact the Autism Society affiliate in your area.
 - AUTISM SOCIETY RHODE ISLAND
PO Box 16603, Rumford, RI 02916
(401) 595-3241

FRIENDS manual for families

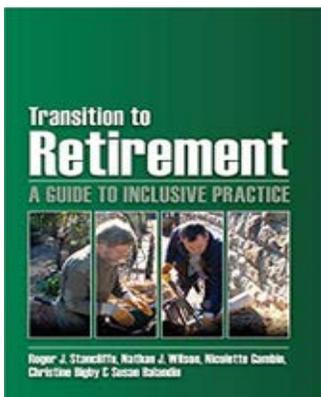
<https://ici.umn.edu/products/tpYWhm5tRHua0nutcqCX3Q> [ici.umn.edu]



A manual providing concrete, "how-to" strategies for family members to support relationships between their family members with disabilities and other community members. It describes why it is important to promote such friendships, community belonging and membership. The manual includes specific exercises to guide users in creating a plan for connecting people. This manual is designed for family members, but can also be used by support coordinators, teachers, staff, and people with disabilities to support community relationships. Additional Activity Worksheets are available.

Transition to Retirement

<https://ici.umn.edu/products/vZB4utgUTEmGLMNkk7V2YA> [ici.umn.edu]



This resource guide explores the transition to retirement for people with disability, particularly intellectual disability. The prospect of retirement unsettles most people. It's a major transition in anyone's life and change of this magnitude often arouses anxiety. But this manual shows it doesn't have to be like that and highlights the need for an effective approach to supporting older adults with disabilities to build an active, socially inclusive lifestyle after retirement. A easily understandable DVD on inclusive activities in retirement is included.

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

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

CALL (401) 414-LINK (5465)

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

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

Stay Informed with Information on COVID-19

Rhode Island Department of Health COVID-19 Resources

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

Email RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov

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

Center for Disease Control COVID-19 Information

Website cdc.gov/coronavirus

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

Includes a link to ASL videos

BHDDH Information on COVID-19's Impact on DD Services and the DD Community

Website bhddh.ri.gov/COVID

RI Parent Information Network (RIPIN)

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

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

Advocates in Action – for videos and easy to read materials

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

Website offers BrowseAloud, which will read the website to you

Sign Up for Our Email List

If you aren't receiving email updates and newsletters from the Division, you can sign up on our website. From the main BHDDH page at bhddh.ri.gov, select **What's New**, then go to bottom and click on **DD Community Newsletter**. The link to sign up for the BHDDH Newsletter is directly below the title, as shown in the picture at right.

DD Community Newsletter

[SIGN UP FOR THE BHDDH NEWSLETTER](#)

Contacting the Division

The department is working on a reduced workforce and therefore calls should not be placed directly to your social caseworker. DDD has put 24-hour phone coverage in place with a central business hour phone number and an on-call number for nights and weekends.

If you have a vital need, please call the numbers below. If you have any general questions or concerns, please email them if you can, in order to try to leave the phone lines free for those who need to call. We will do our best to address your questions directly or through future newsletters.

Business Development (*Self-Employment*) ONLINE Classes Available for People with Disabilities, Families and Community Agencies



NEXT CLASS STARTING August 4, 2020

These are unprecedented times but there are some opportunities for people with disabilities to safely pursue employment in owning their own business. Due to the challenges of COVID-19 entrepreneurs have had to adapt to remote workplaces mostly at home, the fluctuating economy, and the future of a “*new normal*”.

Entrepreneurship is the freedom to act when you need to and pursue ideas however you want. It is the freedom to do things that have *real meaning* for the person and to pursue opportunities as they emerge. It is something people can control themselves, without anyone’s permission. It is the ability to go out there and sell a product/service, to make a living, and cultivate the one thing in this uncertain world that you can control: *what you do with it!* Entrepreneurs have always been self-directed and resourceful. This pandemic presents an opportunity and a good time for people with disabilities to pursue self-employment!



Do you know a person with a disability who has an interesting hobby or idea for a business or who has a business but needs support to be more profitable? If so, our new ONLINE ZOOM Business Development Classes may be helpful for the person to understand the steps in self-employment and resources to build their business to improve their financial future.

The RI Developmental Disabilities Council (RIDDC), in partnership with CWE and other resources, developed a FREE Business Development Series of 6 Classes for people with disabilities and others now ONLINE through ZOOM meetings. The first Class is **Tuesday, August 4, 2020 from 1:30 pm-3:00 pm** and others scheduled every week or every two weeks. We want to assist individuals to learn business skills and access resources so they become profitable RI business owners!

The Classes provide practical advice, resources and ongoing individualized TA to participants from experienced business advisors. Business experts know how to work with people to develop good business plans and marketing strategies and set goals that the person can achieve in the industry he/she launches.

The Series will include Six Business Development Classes: 1. *Is Entrepreneurship (Self-Employment) Right for You?*; 2. Steps to Start a Small Business; 3. Developing an Effective “*Elevator Speech*” to Explain Your Business and Your Service/Product(s); 4. Writing a Good Business Plan; 5. Understanding Finances, Bookkeeping, and Resources for Business Growth; and 6. Marketing Your Business Idea.

Class 1: “**Business 101 Basics... Is Entrepreneurship (Self-Employment) Right for You?**”

Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 Time: 1:30 pm- 3:00 pm

This project is funded by DLT’s and the Governor’s Workforce Board’s “Real Pathways RI” initiative.

To Register for this Class or For More Information Call Claudia Lowe at 738-3960 or Sue Babin at 523-2300. (Seating Is Limited!)

