



**DD Community Forum**

**Wednesday, February 9, 2022**

**3:00 PM – 4:30 PM**

**[Register Here](#)**

The next DD Community Forum will be on February 9, 2022.



The forum will be hosted by Advocates in Action and will be held on Zoom, or you will also be able to call in to the forum.



## **Update On ISPs During COVID**

With the recent surge in COVID cases, individuals still have the option to develop their ISPs via video meetings rather than in person. The individual has the choice of whether to meet in-person, virtually, or a hybrid of the two. Social caseworkers are available to attend meetings in whatever the chosen format is.

If someone is unable to sign an ISP in person, digital signatures can be accepted. If a digital signature is not possible, then the plan writer can note “no signature due to COVID”, as long as the DD social caseworker knows that the individual was involved in the plan development and the individual agrees to the plan.

As a reminder, the COVID interim ISP can no longer be accepted to extend the prior ISP. A full ISP must be submitted.

We will let you know when these accommodations change, based on the status of COVID cases in the community and the federal and state executive orders regarding the pandemic emergency.

## **RFP Award for Rate and Payment Methodology Changes**

The Rate and Payment Methodology change project has been awarded to Health Management Associates (HMA). HMA is an independent, national research and consulting firm specializing in publicly funded healthcare and human services policy, programs, financing, and evaluation. They have more than 400 experts with vast experience in every facet of the healthcare system.

The award was made after a Request for Proposal was issued and the proposal responses were evaluated and scored following State of RI procurement rules. HMA was the highest scoring of the five proposers.

On September 1, 2020, Burns & Associates (B&A), became a division of Health Management Associates. Burns & Associates was the company who worked on the last rate model in 2011, though no one from that project will be part of this one. B&A is a leader nationally in the design, operation and evaluation of Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) programs. They have done work similar to this project in a number of other states, including Oregon, Maine, California, Georgia, and Hawaii.

This project will involve much stakeholder input, so watch for additional information and opportunities to get involved in the near future.

## **Consent Decree Status Hearing**

A status hearing on the Consent Decree will be held on Thursday, February 3, 2022 at 9:30 AM.

## At the Division



**Kelly Petersen**, a DD social caseworker since 2015, has become the social casework supervisor for the Providence/West Bay/Kent region.

**Lena Sousa** and **Tim Cronin** are two new social caseworkers who started with BHDDH in November. Both are working in the South County/West Bay/Kent region.

**Gail Reynolds**, a social caseworker for many years with the DD SIS Unit, retired in December 2021.



## At-Home, Rapid COVID-19 Tests are Available for Free

On Friday, January 14, 2022 the White House announced that free at-home, rapid COVID-19 tests are now available for order online. Those who do not have internet access or who need additional assistance with ordering can call **1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489)** to place their orders.

The [Eldercare Locator](#) and the [Disability Information and Assistance Line \(DIAL\)](#) can assist older adults and people with disabilities with placing orders, connect people to accessible instructions, and help with administering the tests.

- Older adults can call the Eldercare Locator at **800-677-1116** or [visit the website](#) to chat live or browse resources.
- People with disabilities can contact DIAL by calling **888-677-1199** or by emailing [DIAL@usaginganddisability.org](mailto:DIAL@usaginganddisability.org).
  - The DIAL information specialists are trained to work with people of various communications abilities, including spending as much time as needed to understand callers.
  - Deaf and hard-of-hearing people can reach DIAL using the 711/Video Relay Service (VRS). To use this free service, simply dial 711 to be connected via text with a communications assistant. (For people who do not communicate through speech, sign language or VRS, email is the best option to communicate with DIAL.)
- Both phone lines are staffed **Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m to 8:00 p.m. ET.**

Two important notes:

- There are enough kits to fill orders for every residential address in the country.
- Orders will begin shipping at the end of January, for both people who placed their orders via the online form in the days when only the online form was available and those who began ordering when the phone lines became available.

## **Pursuing Your Dreams** **Advocates in Action Conference Encore**

**Thursday, February 10**

**1:00-2:00 PM**

**Register here: [www.tinyurl.com/EncoreDreams](http://www.tinyurl.com/EncoreDreams)**



Come hear ideas about how to dream BIG and what you can do to make those dreams come true!

Everyone who attends this Conference Encore will be eligible to win a \$25 Amazon gift card!



Stay Tuned for more Conference Encores coming in March and April of 2022!

## **What Does It Mean To Be Person-Centered?**

Is it about language, community integration, or choice and responsibility?

The answer to all is yes. While Person-Centeredness is a significant shift in how to approach supports, it's not hard to understand. The goal is that the lives of people receiving supports look more like the lives of everyone else.

Let's think about language. Often, when people providing services talk about people with disabilities, they still use clinical language even when they aren't in clinical settings. They say or write things like, "Stacey has verbally aggressive behaviors, but she is high-functioning. She toilets independently, enjoys outings, needs partial physical support to do math, and requires verbal prompts for personal interaction."

What if we talked about Stacey like we talk about a friend?

"Stacy speaks for herself. She is a lot of fun when going out but appreciates a kind reminder to respect others' space. When making purchases, her friends help her make sure everything is correct."

See the difference?

That same idea can guide supports for helping people with community integration or helping someone balance choice and risk. Paid staff should offer meaningful support where it's needed and not overstep.

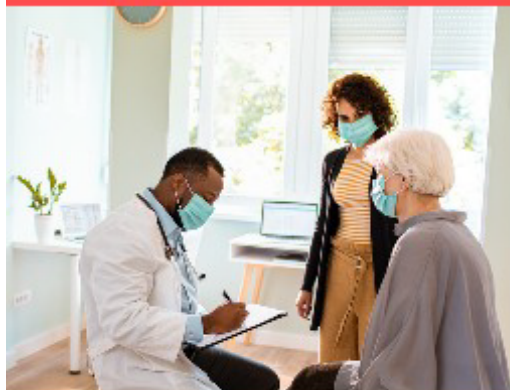
When supports are needed from others, Person-Centered Thinking skills and tools lead to confident and effective Person-Centered practices that help ensure the person stays in control of their life as much as possible.

*Adapted from an article by [IntellectAbility](http://IntellectAbility)*



## COVID Vaccination Help

**Do you need help getting information or scheduling an appointment for a COVID-19 vaccination or booster?**



We can help you get the information you need to decide when, how and where to get a vaccination or booster.

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

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



## Financial Planning Resources

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families must plan for the future, including having a plan for how a person with IDD will pay for the things they want and need.

To help you begin to understand some of the resources you may want to consider as you develop a financial plan, The Arc's Center for Future Planning has developed a series of new videos on the following topics:

- [An Overview of ABL Accounts](#)
- [An Overview of Special Needs Trusts](#)
- [Special Needs Trusts and ABL Accounts: How Are They Different?](#)
- [Pooled Special Needs Trusts](#)
- [How Death Affects the Money Left in ABL Accounts and Special Needs Trusts](#)

[These videos are also available in Spanish.](#)

Questions? Contact [futureplanning@thearc.org](mailto:futureplanning@thearc.org).



The Arc promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.

## **Increase in SSI Benefits, Changes in TCI/TDI/UI Programs & Increase in the Medicare Part B Premium**



The monthly benefits for the [SSI \(Supplemental Security Income\)](#) program for low-income seniors and people with disabilities have been increased effective January 1. The maximum monthly payments are \$880.92 for an individual and \$1,340.38 for a couple (if both spouses are eligible).

Rhode Islanders who want to take [TCI \(Temporary Caregiver Insurance\)](#) to take care of a loved one or bond with a new child are now eligible to take 5 weeks instead of the previous 4 weeks as of January 1, 2022.

The maximum weekly benefit rate for TCI and [TDI \(Temporary Disability Insurance\)](#) has increased to \$978, and the minimum benefit rate is increased to \$114. For [Unemployment Insurance \(UI\)](#), the maximum weekly payment is increased to \$661 and the minimum benefit is \$62. The actual benefit amounts depends on the worker's earnings.

The standard monthly premium for Medicare Part B is increased to \$170.10, an increase of \$21.60. The premium is generally automatically deducted from the person's Social Security check.

You can learn more about [SSI and Medicare Premium Payment program](#) and the other programs at the [Guide Pages](#) on the Institute for Economic Progress website.



The Economic Progress Institute  
600 Mount Pleasant Avenue, Bldg #9, Providence, RI 02908  
Telephone: (401) 456-8512 | Email: [info@economicprogressri.org](mailto:info@economicprogressri.org)  
[www.economicprogressri.org](http://www.economicprogressri.org)

## **Webinar: Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others During the Pandemic: Self-Care and Stress Inoculation**

**Tuesday, February 1, 2022**

**2:00 PM**

**[Register Here](#)**

The human stress response is important; it's designed to alert us of danger and keep us safe. But COVID-19 has kept many people in active stress response for nearly two years – far longer than our bodies and minds are meant to handle. Proactively taking care of yourself and managing stress are crucial aspects of staying healthy during this time. Join Karla Vermeulen, Ph.D., for a live webinar to learn more about stress and techniques to combat the effects of stress.

Karla Vermeulen, Ph.D., is the Deputy Director of the Institute for Disaster Mental Health and an Associate Professor of Psychology at SUNY New Paltz.

This webinar will be recorded and available to the public within one week.

## Study Seeks Young Adults With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to Validate a New Functional Outcome Measure

Researchers at the University of Florida are seeking young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to use a new web-based, self-reported outcome tool to report how they do everyday activities at home, school, work, and the community.

**The research team believes young people with developmental disabilities have a right to be involved in planning their future and evaluating the outcomes of educational programs and healthcare.**

The app, called PEDI-PRO, will provide teens and young adults with developmental disabilities the opportunity to identify the everyday activities and tasks they want and need to get better at doing. The PEDI-PRO will also provide teens and young adults the chance to self-evaluate the progress they make over time: either in school, after receiving specialized training or therapy, or after receiving healthcare services.

[Watch a video about PEDI-PRO here.](#)

For more information, contact Jessica Karmar at:

PHONE:  
(352) 273-9365

EMAIL:  
[yell@phhp.ufl.edu](mailto:yell@phhp.ufl.edu) or  
[Jessica.Kramer@phhp.ufl.edu](mailto:Jessica.Kramer@phhp.ufl.edu)

WEBSITE:  
<https://yell.ot.phhp.ufl.edu/>



**UF** Youth & Young Adult Empowerment, Leadership & Learning (YELL) Lab  
Department of Occupational Therapy  
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA  
Study ID: IRB201903395 Date Approved: 11/19/2021

**Try our new app for young adults with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities**

**Earn \$30 for participation**

### What will you do?

- Answer questions on the app
- Meet with us one time for 1-2 hours

### This study is for

- 14-22 years old
- Young Adults with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Down syndrome, and other disabilities

### Contact

352-273-9365  
[yell@phhp.ufl.edu](mailto:yell@phhp.ufl.edu)



SCAN ME

*Take a picture of this flyer*

Jr. Jessica Kramer, Principal Investigator IRB#201903395

## **Looking For Activities To Keep Busy This Winter?**

[Click here for a comprehensive list](#) of some great virtual tours, zoo cams, some doodling and celebrity readings, and other activities, and it's all free! There is even a NASA tour of Mars!

[The ARC's virtual program library](#) is a free hub of on-demand activities that can be done from home by people with disabilities, their families, and service providers. The library is expanding all the time and has activities in a wide variety of areas, such as arts, life skills, health and wellness, virtual clubs, and more. Browse listings to find activities like:

- Participating in dance, yoga, and other movement activities
- Learning about internet safety
- Virtually touring places like Disney World and museums
- Making your own Jeopardy templates
- Finding self-advocacy support

More Virtual Experiences available 24/7: [Webcams, online tours, exhibits, sneak peeks, activities, games, and lots more](#)

Learn about and visit [15 of the Best \(and Most Offbeat\) Attractions in Rhode Island!](#)

See [16 Creative Things To Do In Winter \(Even During A Pandemic\)](#).

## **Paint the snow!**

If you have snow on the ground, why not make the most of it? For the artist in all of us, you can snow paint. All you need to make safe snow paint is food coloring.

You Need:

- liquid food coloring
- tap water
- recycled plastic spray bottles, any size (ideally with adjustable squirt / spray nozzle)



What You Do:

1. Fill a spray bottle with about 2 cups of warm-ish tap water (not too warm or it will melt the snow)
2. Add about ten drops of food coloring--more for some if you want bold color. Screw on tops, shake to mix. TIP: spray a bit on a paper towel to check for intensity--if too faint, add more coloring.
3. Take the bottles outside to make snow art! Use the "Squirt" or "Stream" setting for fine detail, and mist settings for larger areas. Experiment with spraying close-up or farther away for effect. TIP: You'll get nicer results if you can pack and smooth down an area about four feet square.

## **Contacting DD Staff**

See the full Division Contact List attached to this newsletter.

Monday-Friday 8:30-4:00  
for questions or support

**(401) 462-3421**

Para español, llame

**(401) 462-3014**

Send general questions to the  
AskDD email address.

[BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov](mailto:BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov)

Please do not email critical issues.

## **Sign Up for Our Email List**

If you aren't receiving email updates  
and newsletters from BHDDH, you can  
[sign up here](#) or on our website. Go to

<https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmentaldisabilities/events/newsandupdates/> to sign up or to see  
past quarterly newsletters and issues of DD News.



**SIGN UP FOR THE BHDDH NEWSLETTER**

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

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

**CALL (401) 414-LINK (5465)     If under 18 CALL: (855) KID(543)-LINK(5465)**

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

## **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](mailto:RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov)

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

### **Center for Disease Control COVID-19 Information**

Website [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)

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

*Includes a link to ASL videos*

### **RI Parent Information Network (RIPIN)**

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

Call Center (401) 270-0101 or email [callcenter@ripin.org](mailto:callcenter@ripin.org)

### **Advocates in Action – for videos and easy to read materials**

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

*Website offers BrowseAloud, which will read the website to you*

## Division of Developmental Disabilities - All Staff Contacts

Name		Title	Phone	Email
Kevin	Savage	Director	462-0581	<a href="mailto:Kevin.Savage@bhddh.ri.gov">Kevin.Savage@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Heather	Mincey	Assistant Director	462-1218	<a href="mailto:Heather.Mincey@bhddh.ri.gov">Heather.Mincey@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Christine	Botts	Deputy Administrator	462-2766	<a href="mailto:Christine.Botts@bhddh.ri.gov">Christine.Botts@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Tracey	Cunningham	Associate Director, Employment	462-3857	<a href="mailto:Tracey.Cunningham@bhddh.ri.gov">Tracey.Cunningham@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Brenda	DuHamel	Associate Director, Admin Services	462-3010	<a href="mailto:Brenda.DuHamel@bhddh.ri.gov">Brenda.DuHamel@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Cindy	Fusco	Chief Implementation Aide	462-3016	<a href="mailto:Cynthia.Fusco@bhddh.ri.gov">Cynthia.Fusco@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Melissa	Greenlief	Administrator, Comm Services	462-2459	<a href="mailto:Melissa.Greenlief@bhddh.ri.gov">Melissa.Greenlief@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Susan	Hayward	Administrator, YIT	462-2519	<a href="mailto:Susan.Hayward@bhddh.ri.gov">Susan.Hayward@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Anne	LeClerc	Associate Director, Prgm Perf	462-0192	<a href="mailto:Anne.LeClerc@bhddh.ri.gov">Anne.LeClerc@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Tracy	Levesque	Clinical Administrator	462-0209	<a href="mailto:Tracy.Levesque@bhddh.ri.gov">Tracy.Levesque@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Gerard (Jay)	MacKay	Administrator, Comm Services	462-5279	<a href="mailto:Gerard.Mackay@bhddh.ri.gov">Gerard.Mackay@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Jacqueline	Reilly	Programming Services Officer	462-0126	<a href="mailto:Jacqueline.Reilly@bhddh.ri.gov">Jacqueline.Reilly@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
<b>Case Management Units</b>				
East Providence/Pawtucket/Central Falls region				
Marguerite	Belisle	Casework Supervisor	462-0714	<a href="mailto:Marguerite.Belisle@bhddh.ri.gov">Marguerite.Belisle@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Amie	Adams	Social Caseworker II	462-2480	<a href="mailto:Amie.Adams@bhddh.ri.gov">Amie.Adams@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Carl	Desjarlais	Social Caseworker II	462-1555	<a href="mailto:Carl.Desjarlais@bhddh.ri.gov">Carl.Desjarlais@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Stacey	Perry	Social Caseworker II	462-2418	<a href="mailto:Stacey.Perry@bhddh.ri.gov">Stacey.Perry@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Suzanne	Porter	Social Caseworker II	462-1972	<a href="mailto:Suzanne.Porter@bhddh.ri.gov">Suzanne.Porter@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Mary Beth	Silveria	Social Caseworker II	462-2438	<a href="mailto:Marybeth.Silveria@bhddh.ri.gov">Marybeth.Silveria@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Heather	Soares	Social Caseworker II	462-6097	<a href="mailto:Heather.Soares@bhddh.ri.gov">Heather.Soares@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Northern RI/West Bay/Kent Region				
Janice	Bijesse	Casework Supervisor	462-4290	<a href="mailto:Janice.Bijesse@bhddh.ri.gov">Janice.Bijesse@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Mary	Cameron	Social Caseworker II	462-1307	<a href="mailto:Mary.Cameron@bhddh.ri.gov">Mary.Cameron@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Jackie	Camilloni	Social Caseworker II	462-3022	<a href="mailto:Jackie.Camilloni@bhddh.ri.gov">Jackie.Camilloni@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Megan	Gilbert	Social Caseworker II	462-2524	<a href="mailto:Megan.Gilbert@bhddh.ri.gov">Megan.Gilbert@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Dayna	Hansen	Social Caseworker II	462-2505	<a href="mailto:Dayna.Hansen@bhddh.ri.gov">Dayna.Hansen@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Natalie	Sam	Social Caseworker II	462-2529	<a href="mailto:Natalie.Sam@bhddh.ri.gov">Natalie.Sam@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Erin	Simonelli	Social Caseworker II	462-2502	<a href="mailto:Erin.Simonelli@bhddh.ri.gov">Erin.Simonelli@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
South County/West Bay/Kent Region				
Meredith	MacDonald	Casework Supervisor	462-1329	<a href="mailto:Meredith.Macdonald@bhddh.ri.gov">Meredith.Macdonald@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Lauree	Champagne	Social Caseworker II	462-2728	<a href="mailto:Lauree.Champagne@bhddh.ri.gov">Lauree.Champagne@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Timothy	Cronin	Social Caseworker II	462-1721	<a href="mailto:Timothy.Cronin@bhddh.ri.gov">Timothy.Cronin@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Jennifer	Gouveia	Social Caseworker II	462-0098	<a href="mailto:Jennifer.Gouveia@bhddh.ri.gov">Jennifer.Gouveia@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Jill	Murphy	Social Caseworker II	462-2409	<a href="mailto:Jill.Murphy@bhddh.ri.gov">Jill.Murphy@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Lena	Sousa	Social Caseworker II	462-1834	<a href="mailto:Lena.Sousa@bhddh.ri.gov">Lena.Sousa@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Joseph	Tevyaw	Social Caseworker II	462-2474	<a href="mailto:Joseph.Tevyaw@bhddh.ri.gov">Joseph.Tevyaw@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Providence/West Bay/Kent Region				
Kelly	Petersen	Casework Supervisor	462-3402	<a href="mailto:Kelly.Petersen@bhddh.ri.gov">Kelly.Petersen@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
JoAnn	DiMuccio	Social Caseworker II	462-2523	<a href="mailto:JoAnn.DiMuccio@bhddh.ri.gov">JoAnn.DiMuccio@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Meaghan	Jencks	Social Caseworker II	462-2113	<a href="mailto:Meaghan.Jencks@bhddh.ri.gov">Meaghan.Jencks@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Souphalak	Muriel	Social Caseworker II	462-2512	<a href="mailto:Souphalak.Muriel@bhddh.ri.gov">Souphalak.Muriel@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Yolande	Ramos	Social Caseworker II	462-1059	<a href="mailto:Yolande.Ramos@bhddh.ri.gov">Yolande.Ramos@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Judy	Smith	Social Caseworker II	462-1327	<a href="mailto:Judith.Smith@bhddh.ri.gov">Judith.Smith@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Vacancy		Social Caseworker II	462-2563	
<b>Eligibility Unit</b>				
Karen	Lowell	Eligibility Supervisor	462-2209	<a href="mailto:Karen.Lowell@bhddh.ri.gov">Karen.Lowell@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Marisa	Abbruzzi	Social Caseworker II (RICLAS)	462-6099	<a href="mailto:Marisa.Abbuzzi@bhddh.ri.gov">Marisa.Abbuzzi@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Christine	Harding	Eligibility Caseworker	462-3233	<a href="mailto:Christine.Harding@bhddh.ri.gov">Christine.Harding@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Lori	Lombardi, RN	PASRR	462-0089	<a href="mailto:Lori.Lombardiburns@bhddh.ri.gov">Lori.Lombardiburns@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Kim	Wright	Information Aide	462-2584	<a href="mailto:Kimberly.Wright@bhddh.ri.gov">Kimberly.Wright@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
<b>SIS Unit</b>				
Donna	Standish	SIS Supervisor	462-2628	<a href="mailto:Donna.Standish@bhddh.ri.gov">Donna.Standish@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Wendy	Cormier	SIS Caseworker	462-1302	<a href="mailto:Wendy.Cormier@bhddh.ri.gov">Wendy.Cormier@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Kristen	Miga	SIS Caseworker	462-0449	<a href="mailto:Kristen.Miga@bhddh.ri.gov">Kristen.Miga@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Vacancy		SIS Caseworker	462-2510	
<b>Transition Unit</b>				
Susan	Hayward	Administrator, YIT	462-2519	<a href="mailto:Susan.Hayward@bhddh.ri.gov">Susan.Hayward@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Carolee	Leach	Prof. Services Coordinator	462-1723	<a href="mailto:Carolee.Leach@bhddh.ri.gov">Carolee.Leach@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
<b>Support Staff</b>				
Stephanie	Andreozzi	Implementation Aide	462-1859	<a href="mailto:Stephanie.Andreozzi@bhddh.ri.gov">Stephanie.Andreozzi@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Lori	Vandall	Clerk Typist	462-6086	<a href="mailto:Lori.Vandall@bhddh.ri.gov">Lori.Vandall@bhddh.ri.gov</a>



## **Access to Integrated Employment Specialist**

**Closing Date: February 17, 2022**

### **The Sherlock Center is seeking a full-time team member to support our Work Incentives and Benefits Counseling Initiative!**

Responsibilities of this position include providing in-person and remote **benefits counseling to educate SSI and SSDI beneficiaries, individually or in groups, about how employment will affect their benefits.** Candidates must possess or be eligible for Community Work Incentives Counselor Certification (CWIC) from an approved SSA program. Responsibilities also include helping to develop projects that promote access to integrated employment for adolescents and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

In 2021, the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities, RI College, was awarded a regional **Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA)** grant from the [Social Security Administration \[r20.rs6.net\]](#) to provide benefits counseling to beneficiaries living in Rhode Island and Connecticut. To meet the expanded service area, the Sherlock Center is seeking to hire a full-time **Access to Integrated Employment Specialists.**

The base of employment is Rhode Island College, Providence, RI. Individuals hired for this position will provide in-person and remote services to beneficiaries residing in RI and CT. Interested applicants must currently reside in Rhode Island, Connecticut, or Massachusetts or be willing to relocate.

**Bachelor's degree required. Applicants must obtain SSA Suitability Clearance upon hire. Bilingual in English/Spanish encouraged to apply.**

[View Posting \[r20.rs6.net\]](#)

[Apply via RI College \[r20.rs6.net\]](#)



**Stay Connected!**

[www.sherlockcenter.org](http://www.sherlockcenter.org) [\[r20.rs6.net\]](#)



[\[r20.rs6.net\]](#)



[\[r20.rs6.net\]](#)

**TOPIC: Customized Employment**

# **Defining Customized Employment**

## **EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES FOR POSITIVE OUTCOMES**

To better understand customized employment practices, researchers conducted five focus group with 28 professionals, including national experts and people who implement customized employment for people with disabilities. The research revealed the best practices for employment specialists to follow while assisting individuals with disabilities in obtaining employment, include:

- Build rapport and get to know the individual; mindfully listen to them
- Identify the individual's interests, skills, and abilities; along with conducting in-depth interviews with family and friends,
- Observe the individual during daily activities in different community settings and doing job-related tasks,
- Arrange for the job seeker to observe local businesses that potentially match the job seeker's interests, skills, and abilities and conduct informational interviews with those employers, and
- Collaborate with the job seeker, family, and friends to develop and negotiate a customized job description.



Inge, Katherine J.; Graham, Carolyn W.; Brooks-Lane, Nancy; Wehman, Paul; Griffin, Cary (2018). Defining customized employment as an evidence-based practice: The results of a focus group study. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 48 (2), 155-166.

**For more on this topic and article, Read the Plain Language Summary at:**

**<https://idd.vcurrtec.org/resources/content.cfm/1392>**

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