



Upcoming Public Meetings on Statewide Paratransit Proposal

RIPTA is hosting two public meetings online this week to share findings on the [ADA paratransit expansion study](#).

The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) has been asked by the RI General Assembly to study paratransit service throughout the state and to design a statewide program addressing the needs of older adults and individuals with disabilities traveling outside the current paratransit service area. Based on public input received at two September meetings, RIPTA has evaluated the parameters and cost of statewide paratransit service and considered other alternatives to help better serve older adults and individuals with disabilities.

RIPTA is hosting two additional virtual meetings to share study findings and seek public input to incorporate into the report to the General Assembly.

Advance registration is required. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. If you need help registering, please call 401-784-9500 x1283.

Wednesday, November 16, 2022 at 5:00PM

[Please click HERE to register](#)

Thursday, November 17, 2022 at 10:00 AM

[Please click HERE to register](#)

Who should attend?

Individuals with disabilities, older adults, and other individuals that are unable to utilize RIPTA's fixed route bus system and who have transportation needs that are not served by RIPTA's Ride ADA paratransit service or other programs.

Closed captioning will be available through the Zoom platform at each meeting.

About the ADA Paratransit Expansion Study

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that RIPTA provide paratransit services to people with disabilities who cannot use fixed-route service. Qualified individuals who have both trip origins and destinations within a 3/4-mile radius of an operating RIPTA fixed-route bus can use the Ride Program – RIPTA's ADA paratransit service. In response to the RI General Assembly's request, RIPTA is now studying options to provide broader levels of accessible transportation, particularly to serve individuals whose travel does not fall within the existing Ride ADA paratransit service area. RIPTA will consider the costs and benefits of various options and report back to the General Assembly in early 2023. The \$75,000 study is funded through RIPTA's share of the RI state gas tax.

National Family Caregivers Month

Celebrated every November, National Family Caregivers Month (NFCM) is a time to recognize and honor family caregivers across the country. It offers an opportunity to raise awareness of caregiving issues, educate communities, and increase support for caregivers.

The national observance is led by [Caregiver Action Network \(CAN\)](#), a nonprofit that provides free education, peer support, and resources to family caregivers. CAN selected the 2022 theme, **#CaregivingHappens**, to acknowledge the reality that family caregiving is not always convenient or expected. CAN has a number of resources, including the following:

- If you need information or someone to talk to, visit the free [Caregiver Help Desk](#). You can reach out to caregiving experts by phone, e-mail, or live chat for help and support.
- Sometimes it helps to talk to someone who understands what you're going through. Join [Care Chat](#) for forums on specific conditions or general questions on caregiving.
- Are you looking for a go-to place for caregiving information? Visit CAN's [Family Caregiver Toolbox](#) for information on different types of caregiving, staying strong, and caregiving for a loved one with a specific condition.

On the Administration on Community Living (ACL) [NFCM webpage](#), you can find information about the [2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers](#), which was developed jointly by advisory councils created by the RAISE Family Caregiving Act and the Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act, with extensive input from the public, including family caregivers and the people they support.

Mental Health America has developed an online [Getting Started Guide for New Caregivers](#) to help new mental health caregivers navigate their role.

What Is A Caregiver?

When many people hear the word caregiver, they tend to think of someone who takes care of a disabled relative and acts almost like a home nurse while also taking care of finances, cooking, and cleaning. That's not wrong, but not all caregivers play such an involved role. Being a caregiver can mean a lot of things. A caregiver can do one or all of the following (or many other things not in the list below):

- Provide support and encouragement.
- Drive someone to appointments.
- Attend appointments and help someone make treatment decisions.
- Help someone to understand their rights.
- Listen when someone is struggling with symptoms or the recovery process.
- Make legal or financial decisions on someone's behalf.
- Help someone get accommodations at work or school.
- Run errands or help with household chores.
- Be there to manage crisis situations.

Caregivers can be parents, relatives, friends, partners, adult children, neighbors, or have some other kind of relationship to the person living with a health condition.

RI FORCE Speaker's Series Recording: Downtown Designs

RI FORCE has posted a video of a presentation by Melissa Seitz, Art Director of Downtown Designs/ Looking Upwards at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/858147561405593>.

Rhode Island Families Organized for Reform, Change, and Empowerment (RI FORCE) is a network of families who have the real life experience of having a person with a disability as a family member. Their collective knowledge provides unmatched expertise in navigating the tasks, triumphs, and challenges of supporting people with disabilities and their families. They focus on connecting families, providing information and training, and seeking ways for family voices to be heard.

Disability Community Remembers Pioneering Advocate Lois Curtis

Announcement from the Administration on Community Living

The Administration for Community Living, Office for Civil Rights, Office of General Counsel, and HHS leadership and staff join the disability community in mourning the loss of one of our nation's greatest advocates, Lois Curtis, who passed away on November 3rd. Her impact on our nation's effort to achieve justice for all cannot be overstated. Because of her advocacy, millions of people with disabilities can live in their own homes and fully participate in their communities, with the services and supports they need.



Photo by John Poole/NPR

Lois Curtis is remembered as "L.C." in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, the Supreme Court decision often regarded as the *Brown v. Board of Education* of the disability rights movement. *Olmstead* recognized that the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act protect the right of people with disabilities to live in their own homes and receive services in their own communities. Lois was a child when she was institutionalized for the first time and fought for almost two decades to be allowed to return home. She and Elaine Wilson, the other named plaintiff in the *Olmstead* case, worked with attorney Sue Jamieson of the Atlanta Legal Aid Society to convince the Supreme Court that their civil rights were being violated by being unnecessarily segregated in an institution when they could and wanted to live in the community.

An entire generation has grown up since the *Olmstead* decision – a generation that has always had the right to live, work and participate in their communities. Yet there are still far too many people who could – and want to – live in the community, but who are instead living in institutional settings because of a lack of access to the home and community based services they need. Disability advocates and federal agencies, including HHS, remain committed to enforcing the promise of *Olmstead* for people across the country who continue to be unjustifiably segregated, as Lois Curtis was decades ago.

“Lois Curtis and her steadfast advocacy has profoundly shaped the disability rights movement. Our community has lost one of our heroes,” said ACL Acting Administrator and Assistant Secretary for Aging Alison Barkoff. “I was lucky to have personally seen what a vital part of her community Lois became, as an advocate, artist, and beloved friend. Let us all carry on her work to ensure the right to community living for all.”

“Lois Curtis truly changed history,” said HHS General Counsel Samuel Bagenstos. “By fighting for her right to live in her own home, she established a precedent that has improved the lives of thousands of other people with all types of disabilities—and that precedent continues to underpin the fundamental principle that disabled people have a right to the services they need to live flourishing lives alongside their fellow members of the community.”

“Lois Curtis’ tireless advocacy and vision transformed the long standing right to live in the community into a reality for millions of Americans,” said OCR Director Melanie Fontes Rainer. “The Office for Civil Rights had the honor of working with Lois on some of our *Olmstead* cases over the years and is grateful for her work and partnership. Her work lives on here at HHS and across the country in advocacy.”

Although Lois never forgot her difficult years in institutions, she emerged as an empowered advocate who walked up the Supreme Court steps to hear her case argued as she was surrounded by supporters. After winning her struggle for independence, she lived a fulfilling life as a beloved community member in Atlanta and as a successful and renowned artist. She has been honored personally in the White House, by a host of disability and legal organizations, during Black History Month, and by the National Women’s History Museum. The Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) created the Lois Curtis Award in her honor. The award recognizes an individual’s personal achievement in advocating for inclusive, individualized, community-based employment and/or independent living.

ACL recognizes that the agency is part of the legacy of Lois Curtis. Her willingness to call out the injustice of segregating people with disabilities led first to the *Olmstead* decision, which then led the Obama Administration to create ACL, an agency devoted to fostering community living for all people with disabilities and older adults. In fact, ACL was given a mandate to serve within the federal government as an advocate for people with disabilities, and owes that privilege in part to Lois Curtis.



The [Administration for Community Living](#) (ACL) is an operating division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). ACL was created around the fundamental principle that older adults and people of all ages with disabilities should be able to live where they choose, with the people they choose, and with the ability to participate fully in their communities. By funding services and supports provided primarily by networks of community-based organizations, and with investments in research, education, and innovation, ACL helps make this principle a reality for millions of Americans.

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

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 or for confidential support and to get connected to care:

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

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

For Information on the Consent Decree

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

COVID-19 Information

Rhode Island Department of Health COVID-19 Resources

Hotline (401) 222-8022 or 211 after hours;
Email RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov
Website <https://health.ri.gov/covid/>
Includes a link to ASL videos

RI Parent Information Network (RIPIN)

Website <https://ripin.org/covid-19-resources/>
Call Center (401) 270-0101 or email callcenter@ripin.org

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

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

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Vacant	Administrator, Employment	462-3857	

Case Management Units

East Providence/Pawtucket/Central Falls region

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Erin Simonelli	Social Caseworker II	462-2502	Erin.Simonelli@bhddh.ri.gov

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Eligibility Unit

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Transition Unit

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Support Staff

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RI's Division of Developmental Disabilities Needs YOU!

The DDD is currently seeking members for three new advisory groups:

DSP Advisory Group

Self-Directed Advisory Group

Agency-Directed Advisory Group

This will be a voluntary position that meets several times a year on Zoom to help with the Statewide Workforce Initiative.

Although this is a voluntary position, volunteers who are selected and participate in an advisory group will receive Gift Cards to thank them for their time.



If you are...

- A Direct Support Professional
OR
- An Individual Who Self-Directs Their Services
OR
- An Individual Who Has Their Services Agency-Directed

...then you are eligible to be in one of the Advisory Groups!

**[To Request to Be On An Advisory Group,
go to www.tinyurl.com/AdvisoryGroupInvitation](http://www.tinyurl.com/AdvisoryGroupInvitation)**

If you're interested in serving in one of these groups to help our State support and expand its DSP workforce, and make a difference in the lives of Rhode Islanders who have an I/DD, please go to

<https://tinyurl.com/AdvisoryGroupInvitation>

to complete a short form and someone will contact you soon.



Membership for each Advisory Group is limited to 6 members who have real-life experience.

As a member of one of these groups, you'll be responsible for offering experience-based advice that will help RI develop, strengthen, and maintain a well-trained and diverse statewide DSP workforce to serve individuals who receive services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities, and their families.

For the **DSP Advisory Group**, the members must be Direct Support Professionals, working either through a provider agency, or for an individual who self-directs the services they receive through the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

DSPs must be recommended by at least one of the individuals or families they've worked for, or the Provider Agency they worked for



For the **Self-Directed Advisory Group**, the members must be individuals who self-direct services through the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

For the **Agency-Directed Advisory Group**, members must be individuals who use an agency to direct services through the Division of Developmental Disabilities.



Please send any questions to ri.workforce@sagesquirrel.com

Staying Safe at Work

Free Virtual Training

Join the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability for a free virtual training that teaches the skills of job safety for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The training is interactive, accessible, and fun.

Safety Topics Include

Finding & Fixing Hazards

What to do in an Emergency

Knowing your Rights


Trainings

First Training Option

One Five-Hour Training

Second Training Option

One Three-Hour Training
and One Two-Hour Training



“The trainer was very well prepared and knowledgeable on content. The activities were fun and reinforced the information appropriately.” ~Staying Safe at Work participant

Who Should Attend

This training is designed for:

- **Under-served workers**, including workers with low literacy skills or limited English proficiency, and workers with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- **Young workers**, to teach them the skills to be safe while working
- **Employers** to help their employees with disabilities be safer
- **Special Education Teachers / Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors** to assist young adults as they transition into employment
- **Supported Employment Providers and Adult Employment Services**

Information

For More Information

Contact: Caitlyn Fulton

Email: Caitlyn.Fulton@unh.edu

Phone Number: (603) 862-1867

Visit Our Website

<https://iod.unh.edu/raising-awareness-increase-safety-employment-raise>

Registration

Accommodations

Requests for accommodations can be submitted through the registration process.

To Register

<https://iod.unh.edu/raising-awareness-increase-safety-employment-raise/upcoming-trainings>

Institute on Disability/UCED



University of
New Hampshire

This is an OSHA approved training. Funding for OSHA Susan Harwood Training Program Capacity Building Developmental grant has been made possible by the US Department of Labor, grant number 13450465, and was awarded to the UNH Institute on Disability.