



Happy Holidays!



This will be the last newsletter of 2023. The next newsletter will be on January 19, 2024.

State offices will be closed on both Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Have a healthy, happy, and peaceful holiday season!

Last Chance!

Share Your Feedback on Our Website and Newsletter

We are thinking about updating our newsletter and website, but we need your help! Please let us know what you like and dislike about our newsletter and website by completing these surveys: [Newsletter feedback survey](#) and [Website feedback survey](#). Our survey will close on December 31, 2023.



DD Community Forum

December 5, 2023



The last DD Community Forum was held on December 5, 2023. This meeting took place online. Many topics were presenting during this meeting, including an update on submitting new goods and services requests. You can watch the [community forum meeting recording on the Advocates in Action website](#).

RIPIN Self-Directed Support Program

The RIPIN Self-Directed Support Program (SDSP) provides resources and support for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, their families, and trusted allies utilizing the self-directed model for lifelong services through the Division of Developmental Disabilities. For more information and upcoming events, visit the [RIPIN SDSP web page](#).

You can learn more about the SDSP from the “Disability News You Can Use” Podcast episode of an interview with RIPIN’s Sue Donovan, Senior Program Director, and Sharon Kochan, Program Manager, about RIPIN’s self-directed support program. – [Listen to the podcast HERE](#).

Here are links to the recordings from the fall webinars.

[Presentation with the Sherlock Center](#)

[What is Self-Direction?](#)

[Employment Supports](#)

[Meet Support Brokers](#)

[Resources from Paul V. Sherlock Center](#)

[What is a SIS?](#)



The graphic is a calendar-style announcement for the RIPIN Self-Directed Support Program's virtual events in 2024. It features a dark green background with a light green header containing the RIPIN logo and the program name. A yellow calendar icon is in the top right. Below the header, a yellow bar indicates the year '2024'. The events are listed in a table with dates on the left and descriptions on the right. At the bottom, there are contact details including an email address and a website URL.

RIPIN SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORT PROGRAM	
VIRTUAL EVENTS 2024	
JAN 30	Community Information Session Benefits Planning and Work Incentives presented by the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities
FEB 27	Community Connections Online community of practice for consumers, family members/caregivers, and professionals
MAR 5	Fiscal Intermediary Panel Who are they? What do they do? How do you connect?
MAR 26	Community Information Session Advocates in Action: Why I chose Self-Direction
APR 30	Employment Success Meet some individuals self-directing and hear about their employment journey

selfdirectedsupport@ripin.org | ripin.org/selfdirectedsupport

**Virtual Open House for
Advocates in Action Leadership Series
Wednesday, January 10, 2024
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM on Zoom**

[Click Here to Register](http://www.tinyurl.com/LS24oh-Jan)

Advocates in Action is hosting a second virtual open house on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, at 1:00 pm on Zoom. Advocates in Action will share some information about the 2024 Leadership Series like how to fill out an application. The open house is great place to ask any questions you might have about the Leadership Series. The link to register for the Open House is: www.tinyurl.com/LS24oh-Jan.

The Leadership Series is an in-depth learning experience that's user-friendly, interactive, informative, and fun! The Series was created to empower Rhode Islanders aged 18 and older who have an intellectual/developmental disability (I/DD) to speak up for themselves, navigate the DD System, connect with the community, and live life on their own terms, just like everyone else does!



Applicants don't need to read or write to participate in the Series. The Series presents information in a variety of formats, including pictures, video, music, games, art, and more, to make the content engaging, inclusive, and accessible.

While the Series is designed primarily for individuals who have an I/DD, family members, staff, and friends who will be supporting a class member are also welcome to apply.

See the flyer at the end of this newsletter for more information.

Gift Giving and Holiday Resources from TechACCESS

The [December 2023 TechACCESS Newsletter](#) shared fun and interesting ways to prepare for the holidays. Some gift giving and holiday resources shared include:

- [Shop from certified Disability Owned Business Enterprises \(DOBEs\)](#)
- [2023 Holiday Gift Guide for All - Embrace the Spirit of Inclusion](#)
- [Top Gift Picks for Neurodivergent Individuals this Holiday](#)
- [Christmas Gifts for Adults with Disabilities](#)
- [Christmas Wreath Deep Breathing](#)
- [Holiday Ideas and Activities for 2023](#)
- [Visual Recipes for the Holidays](#)
- [Christmas Social Skills Activity](#)
- [An AAC Christmas](#)
- [PrAACtically Christmas: AAC-friendly Resources](#)



You can [sign up for TechACCESS Newsletter](#) by visiting their website.

Center for Transition to Adult Health Care for Youth with Disabilities

The [Center for Transitions to Adult Health Care for Youth with Disabilities has a new website](#). This website was made by and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The website has helpful information and tools you can use to become more independent by taking control over your healthcare.



Center for
Transition to Adult Health Care
for Youth with Disabilities

Save the Date
The Assistive Technology Conference of New England (ATCNE)
Registration Opens in January
Visit the [ATCNE Website for Conference Details](#)

The ATCNE will host a 3-day workshop in 2024. There is a different topic for each workshop day. The workshop agenda includes:

**Engaging Students with
Digital Tools and
Technology**

Crystal Rose Hill-Farrell
Friday, February 9, 2024
8:30am to 3:30pm
Location TBD

**Executive Functioning
Supports for Today's
Students**

Cassie Frost
Wednesday, March 6,
2024
8:30am to 3:30pm
Location TBD

**Person Driven
Innovative Low & High
Tech Accommodations**

Jennifer White
Friday, April 26, 2024
8:30am to 3:30pm
Location TBD

Free Virtual Coach: HealthMatters Program
Applications Due by Friday, January 12, 2024

The Virtual Coach: Health Matters Program is a 12-week program made by and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The goal of the program is to share information with providers and other staff on how they can better support people with I/DD to make healthier choices.

The program is available for free, but you must apply to get in. The deadline to apply for the program is Friday, January 12, 2024. You can [learn more about the program and find the application to apply by visiting the HealthMatters Program website.](#)



Human Rights Day

Sunday, December 10, 2023

Sunday, December 10 was Human Rights Day. Human Rights Day is an International Day of Awareness that happens every year on December 10. Human Rights Day started in 1948 to raise awareness about, and protect, human rights no matter where people are from, what they look like, or what they believe in.

This year, the United Nations celebrated Human Rights Day by honoring the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration is a document that many people from different countries worked on together. The Declaration lists the human rights that all people should have. You can visit the [United Nations website to learn more about Human Rights Day and the Declaration.](#)

All people have human rights and are entitled to the protection and benefits of the civil rights laws of their country. This includes people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD). They are entitled to exercise their rights and to have their human rights and civil rights respected.



Report Suspected Abuse

Mandated Reporting

Reporting suspected occurrences of abuse, neglect, and mistreatment of individuals with developmental disabilities

To report abuse and serious incidents call the QA hotline at **(401) 462-2629**

The Quality Assurance (QA) Unit at BHDDH operates a 24-hour hotline, seven days per week, 365 days per year. Staff respond to reported incidents of abuse, neglect, mistreatment, and financial exploitation.

For More Information on DD Initiatives

Consent Decree: see <https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmental-disabilities/consent-decree>

Conflict Free Case Management: see the [EOHHS CFCM website](#) or [DD Initiatives-CFCM](#)

RI DSP State Workforce Initiative: see <https://riswi.org/> or [DD Initiatives-SWI](#)

Sign Up for Our Email List

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

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

> SIGN UP FOR THE BHDDH NEWSLETTER

Contacting DD Staff

See the full Division Contact List attached to this newsletter.

Monday-Friday
8:30 AM - 4:00 PM
call **(401) 462-3421**

Para español, llame **(401) 462-3014**

Send general questions to the AskDD email address.
BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov

Please do not email critical issues.

BH Link is Here for You



BH Link's mission is to ensure all Rhode Islanders experiencing mental health and substance use crises receive the appropriate services they need as quickly as possible in an environment that supports their recovery. Visit the BH Link website at www.bhlink.org.

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

VISIT the 24-HOUR/7-DAY Triage Center at:
975 Waterman Avenue, East Providence, RI

Call **911** if there is a risk of immediate danger.

If you or someone you know needs support now, call or text **988** or chat 988lifeline.org



Division of Developmental Disabilities - All Staff Contacts

Main Phone #: (401) 462-3421
Fax: (401) 462-2775

TDD: (401) 462-3226
Spanish Line: (401) 462-3014

Website: <https://bhddh.ri.gov/>
BH Link: (401) 414-5465

To report abuse/neglect:
(401) 462-2629

Name		Title	Phone	Email
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CASE MANAGEMENT UNITS

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SELF-EMPLOYMENT ONLINE Classes for People with Disabilities, Families and Community Agencies

NEXT CLASS STARTING January 9, 2024



Do you know a person with a disability or other individual who has a hobby or idea for a possible business or who needs more support for an existing small business? If so, our **FREE ONLINE ZOOM Business Classes** can help the person to learn all about self-employment and available resources for their business idea and financial future! Traditional employment in jobs may not be the best option for some people with disabilities. Small business ownership is another option and great choice to do work that has *real meaning* for the person. It is something people can control themselves and to sell a product or a service they really love. There are over 100 people with disabilities in RI and many others who have started their own businesses in the last few years.

Here's what Michael Coyne, business owner of "*Red, White and Brew Café*" in Warwick, RI has to say:

WHY CHOOSE SELF-EMPLOYMENT?

1. I love being my own "BOSS", meeting new people and spending my time working on something I really enjoy every day!
2. I decide my own flexible work schedule and hours.
3. The Business Classes helped me to learn skills for problem solving, communication, marketing, and self-advocacy. I met other great people with disabilities who also own their own businesses. I received a grant to buy the materials/supplies I needed for my business.
4. I have assistance through my personal support network, my Business Team and RIDDC who are there to help me with my business.
5. I am no longer "*volunteering*" my time at a job, but instead I have my own business making money and I now have a steady income!



The RI Developmental Disabilities Council (RIDDC) offers a **FREE Business Development Series of 8 Classes, ONLINE through ZOOM Meetings**. The first Class is **Tuesday, January 9, 2024 from 10:00 am-12:00 am** and others scheduled every week. The classes will assist people to learn the right business skills and access resources to become profitable RI small business owners! Mini-grants up to \$1000.00+ are available to people completing classes, homework and starting their businesses.

The Classes provide business advice, resources and ongoing peer and staff support to participants, families and staff and contact with experienced Business Advisors. They know how to work with people to develop good business plans, marketing ideas, and set goals the person can achieve in the industry he/she launches. The Series includes: 1. Is Entrepreneurship Right for You?, 2. Steps to Start a Small Business, 3. Identifying Your Target Market, 4. Creating an "*Elevator Pitch*" about Your Service/Product(s), 5. Writing a Good Business Plan, 6. Finances, Bookkeeping, & Community Resources, 7. Marketing, and 8. Using Social Media to Promote your Business.

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

This project is funded by DLT's and the Governor's Workforce Board's (GWB) "Real Jobs RI" initiative.



SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORTS NETWORK

A NETWORK OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILY MEMBERS USING SELF-DIRECTED
SUPPORTS IN RHODE ISLAND

ONLINE MEETING
Wednesday, January 24, 2024
7:00 – 8:30 PM

Q & A with The Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH):

Learn about Conflict Free Case Management (CFCM)

(Invite your Direct Support Professionals to join)

This meeting will take place online using Zoom. When you RSVP, you will receive an email with the directions and a password to join the meeting. You can connect by computer, mobile device, or listen using your telephone. You may be prompted to download an app depending on the device you plan to use.

The Self-Directed Supports Network is a resource for individuals and families using self-directed supports through the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Meetings provide an opportunity to share experiences and learn from others.

AGENDA

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 7:00 – 7:15 | Introductions & Updates |
| 7:15 – 8:15 | Q & A with BHDDH
Topic: Conflict-Free Case Management (CFCM)
Ask questions, get updates, and learn more about it |
| 8:15 – 8:30 | Questions and Closing Remarks |

This session will be recorded.

RSVP LINK: <https://bit.ly/2YUamqz>

Please RSVP using the link above. Click the link or cut and paste it into your browser. If you need a reasonable accommodation (e.g., ASL Interpreter, large print) or information in a language other than English, please make your needs known when you RSVP.



For questions, call or email Crystal Cerullo, Sherlock Center on Disabilities:
Email: ccerullo@ric.edu Voice: 401-456-8915 TTY: 711

THE LEADERSHIP SERIES

Advocates in Action is now accepting applications for the Leadership Series Class of 2024! **The deadline to apply is Friday, January 19th, 2024.**

About the Leadership Series

The Leadership Series is an in-depth learning experience that's user-friendly, interactive, informative, and fun! We created the Series with a team of Self-Advocates and other allies to empower Rhode Islanders aged 18 and older who have an intellectual/developmental disability (I/DD) to speak up for themselves, navigate the DD System, connect with the community, and live life on their own terms, just like everyone else does!

While the Series is designed primarily for individuals who have an I/DD, family members, staff, and friends who will be supporting a class member are also welcome to apply.

Applicants don't need to read or write to participate in the Series. We present information in a variety of formats, including pictures, video, music, games, art, and more, to make the content engaging, inclusive, and accessible. We also have a team of Leadership Series graduates who work for our organization as Peer Mentors who will be available to answer questions, assist with homework, and support class members throughout our time together.

The Series begins with a virtual retreat on **Wednesday, February 7th, from 10:30 am - 2:30pm**, followed by weekly classes that meet over Zoom. **Classes meet every Wednesday from 1:00-2:30 pm**, beginning **February 7th** and ending **June 24th, 2024**.

Each class focuses on different topics about Self-Awareness, Self-Determination, and Self-Advocacy. Some of the things you'll learn about include:

- About the RI Developmental Disabilities Service System
- Qualities of an Effective Leader
- Community Integration
- Disability Rights
- How Government Works and How to Vote
- Making Informed Decisions
- Person-Centered Thinking & Individualized Service Plans
- Personal Introduction and Communication Skills
- Public Speaking and Presentation Skills
- Technology Tips
- And More!

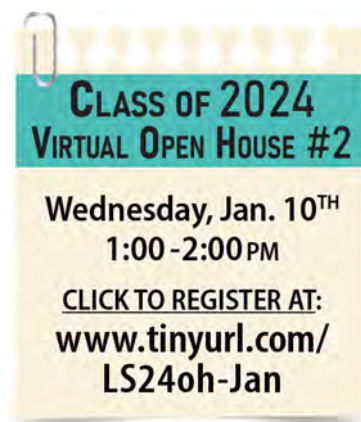
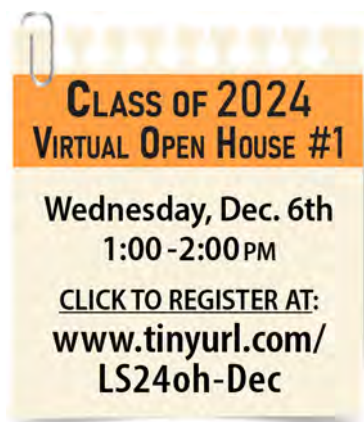


Requirements

There's no cost to apply, but you must be a Rhode Island resident with a developmental disability, age 18 or older, or celebrating your 18th birthday in 2024, to participate. Those who will be supporting a fellow class member who meets these qualifications are also welcome to apply.

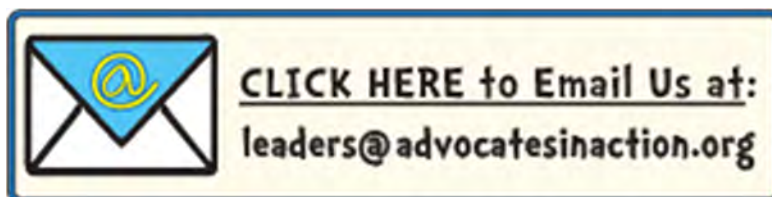
Want to Learn More?

Click the links below to register for an informational open house:



Any Questions?

Click the button below to email Advocates in Action at leaders@advocatesinaction.org.



Ready to Apply?

Click the button below to visit the Advocates in Action website to learn how to complete an online application at www.advocatesinaction.org/leaders24-apply.





Rhode Island
Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental
Disabilities & Hospitals (BHDDH)

Self-Directed Supports: A Guide to Goods and Services

Requesting Goods & Services

If you self-direct, you can use your funding to buy goods and services. Goods and services are services, equipment, and supplies that will be helpful to you but are not offered from other Medicaid sources.

You and your support team must talk about the goods and services you are interested in during your Individual Support Plan (ISP) meetings. The goods and services must be connected to your ISP goals and meet the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) rules.

Your ISP must include information about the goods and services you are interested in. Requests for goods and services must explain:

- How your safety will be protected, and your goals met
- How the need for other Medicaid services will decrease
- How there are no other funds available for the good or service

Adding Goods and Services During My Plan Year

You can request goods and services during your plan year. Requests will:

- Require your ISP be updated to explain how you will be supported
- Have a fee to update your plan and purchase order
- Not be accepted within the last 90 days of your plan year
- Be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for emergency situations that happen within the last 90 days of your plan year

Requirements for Approval

The requirements to purchase a good or service are:

- It helps you meet an ISP need or goal
- It decreases the need for other Medicaid services
- It is only for your benefit
- There are no other funds (personal or through another program) to make the purchase

The purpose of the good or service is for one of the following:

- Increases independence and decreases the need for staff
- Helps you stay independent and safe at home
- Supports opportunities for you to live and be included in the community

Activities must meet the following guidelines:

- Result in active participation in an integrated community
- Have published fees and be open to the public
- Be seen as cost effective to CMS
- Not be restricted to people with disabilities
- Not duplicate Medicaid services or be from a Medicaid provider

Allowable Goods and Services

You can spend up to \$5,000 in any plan year. Examples of allowable requests are below. Some need a doctor note.

Fees for program activities that support your health, independence, and friendships	Fees for educational activities, except for tutoring, classes for credit, and certificate programs	Technology devices or applications that do not include assistive technology
Non-Medicaid covered therapy services, like hippotherapy, art therapy, music therapy, massages, and personal training	Enrollment and membership fees to health clubs and other organizations that support community participation	Items that support your safety and independence at home, like a microwave or home security system

Some goods and services will not count against the \$5,000 limit, including:

Transportation for service-related activities	Employee payments (service fees, health insurance, taxes)	Trainings related to your overall health, safety, or community participation
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Non-Allowable Goods and Services

Some goods and services will not be allowed. Examples of non-allowable goods and services are:

Purely entertainment or recreation (sport tickets, concert tickets, amusement parks, etc.)	General food or beverages, food delivery service	Hotel, motel, bed and breakfast, and anything related to vacations
Political in nature or lobbying	Room and board, utility bills, internet, streaming subscriptions	Goods to grow or support a business
Personal items/services not related to your disability	Car insurance	Cash, gambling alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, weapons, firearms
Classes taken for credit or certificate, tutoring	Experimental or prohibited treatment	Medical procedures, doctor's visits, prescriptions, copays
Home gym, hot tub, pool, sauna	Gift cards, clothing, gaming devices	Warranties or service contracts

Contact Us

Please contact your BHDDH Social Caseworker for questions about specific goods and services requests. If you have general questions, please call or email us at:

Phone: (401) 462-3421

Spanish Phone: (401) 462-3014

Email: BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov



Individual Goods & Services Request Form

Please use this form to submit requests for goods and services. You can spend up to \$5000 of your flexible budget on Goods & Services.

Requests to add goods and services during the plan year will require a new and documented need related to a change in situation. Requests are subject to a \$325.00 fee to adjust the plan and purchase order. This fee will be paid using your DD service funds.

Please note, requests for Goods & Services will not be accepted 90 days prior to the expiration of your current budget year. Emergency situations within the last 90 days will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Only completed applications will be reviewed.

For more information about allowable and non-allowable goods and services, please visit the DDD Self-Directed Services webpage (<https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmental-disabilities/services-adults/self-directed-services>).

General Information

Name of Individual:

MID #:

Plan Year:

Date of Birth:

Tier Level:

Fiscal Intermediary:

**BHDDH Social
Caseworker:**

Support Broker:

Relationship to individual receiving services:

- ☐ Self
- ☐ Parent or family member
- ☐ Plan Writer
- ☐ Support Broker
- ☐ Direct Support Professional-Employee
- ☐ Designated Representative
- ☐ Other (*Please include your relationship to Individual*):

Goods & Services Request

Please list all requested goods and services individually. If you need more space, please use the last page.

Please use this answer key for the “Purpose of Request” section below:

A. Helps meet an ISP need or goal	B. Decreases the need for Medicaid funds	C. Supports independence	D. Promotes community inclusion
E. No other funds are available	F. CMS considers it cost effective	G. Is only for the person’s benefit	H. Helps ensure health and safety

Good & Service	Cost	Type of request (Annual or amendment)	Purpose of Request (List all that apply)	Explanation of Need (Anticipated outcomes and benefits)
1.		<input type="checkbox"/> New Request <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Amendment		
2.		<input type="checkbox"/> New Request <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Amendment		
3.		<input type="checkbox"/> New Request <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Amendment		
4.		<input type="checkbox"/> New Request <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Amendment		
5.		<input type="checkbox"/> New Request <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Amendment		

Request Submission

Please submit this completed application and all other supporting documentation to your Fiscal Intermediary.

Supporting documentation may include:

- A note from a physician, therapist or other healthcare professional explaining the need for the request.
- An article, on-line service description, or picture
- Medicaid and/or private insurance denial letters,
- Any other information about the item(s)/service(s) that could be used during the approval process.

Signature of Person Completing Form**Date**

By signing my name above, I attest that the Participant/legal guardian/designated representative has made an informed decision. Note: Completing this form before the participant/legal guardian/designated representative has made an informed choice is considered falsification of the document.

Signature of Self Direction Participant**Date**

By signing my name above, I certify that the information on this form and any attached documentation that I have provided has been reviewed and signed by me, and is true, accurate, and complete, to the best of my knowledge.

BHDDH Personnel Only

Request Review

Approved Request(s)	Denied Request(s)	More Information Needed

Reviewer Name and Signature**Date**

Additional Goods & Services Request

Please use this answer key for the “Purpose of Request” section below:

A. Helps meet an ISP need or goal	B. Decreases the need for Medicaid funds	C. Supports independence	D. Promotes community inclusion
E. No other funds are available	F. CMS considers it cost effective	G. Is only for the person’s benefit	H. Helps ensure the health and safety

Good & Service	Cost	Type of request (Annual or amendment)	Purpose of Request (List all that apply)	Explanation of Need (Anticipated outcomes and benefits)
6.		<input type="checkbox"/> New Request <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Amendment		
7.		<input type="checkbox"/> New Request <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Amendment		
8.		<input type="checkbox"/> New Request <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Amendment		
9.		<input type="checkbox"/> New Request <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Amendment		
10.		<input type="checkbox"/> New Request <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Amendment		

Letter to All Participants

A version of the following letter was mailed out earlier this month to all participants to let them know about what's happening at the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

The BHDDH Division of Development Disabilities (DDD) made a lot of changes over the last few months. BHDDH has sent you letters in the mail letting you know about these changes. BHDDH is sharing this letter with you to sum up the changes and let you know where you can go to learn more.

DD Community Forums

BHDDH holds virtual DD Community Forums every three months. The last forum was on Tuesday, December 5th from 3:00-4:30 PM. You can watch the recording for this, and other past forums, at the Advocates in Action website: <https://www.advocatesinaction.org/DDCommunityForums.php>.

Consent Decree Update

The goal of the Consent Decree is to make sure you have more control. You should make choices about your life, like the services you want, getting a job, and joining community activities.

The Court updated the Consent Decree on October 2, 2023. The update is called the “Addendum to the Rhode Island Consent Decree (USA v RI)”. An **addendum** is new information that is added to an original document. The Consent Decree Addendum explains that the Court will continue to work with BHDDH through June 2026.

The goal of the addendum is to make sure BHDDH meets all the Consent Decree court orders. **Court orders** are instructions made by the Court that must be followed. The Consent Decree court orders include steps BHDDH must take to make sure people getting DD services continue to have control and make choices. BHDDH must complete these steps by July 2024, and continue to make improvements through June 2026. You can find the Consent Decree Addendum on the BHDDH website at www.bhddh.ri.gov under **Initiatives - Consent Decree – Consent Decree Court Orders**.

BHDDH submitted a plan to the Court that explains how and when the different court orders will be met. This plan is called the “DD Implementation Plan 2023.” You can find the plan on the BHDDH website at www.bhddh.ri.gov under **Consent Decree Status Reports**.

What's New with SIS

BHDDH changed the way it learns about your strengths and needs. When you meet with a SIS social case worker you will be asked two sets of questions:

1. The Supports Intensity Scale-Adult Version (SIS-A, 2nd edition).
2. A new questionnaire called the Additional Needs and Support Questionnaire (ANSQ).

One week after you complete the SIS-A and ANSQ, you will be invited to a second meeting with the SIS social case worker. This meeting is called the Individual Follow-up. The individual follow-up is a meeting between you, your supports, and the SIS social worker. The purpose of this meeting is to give you the chance to share more details about yourself and to talk about other support needs you have. Our goal is

to make sure your voice is heard. When we have more information about you, then we will be better able to decide your individual funding level.

DDD is still rolling out the new SIS-A, 2nd edition, assessment form. Since the SIS-A, 2nd edition is new, we need 500 assessments to be completed before we can finish the new tier scoring. If you had a SIS in the last few months or have one coming up soon, then your tier may be affected when the new scoring is complete. You can find more information about the new SIS on the BHDDH website at www.bhddh.ri.gov on the **SIS** page.

A New Part of ISP Meetings: Facilitating Success Conversations

BHDDH Social Caseworkers (SCW) are starting something new this year. During your Individual Support Plan (ISP) meeting, a SCW will share information with you about any new Division resources, processes, and supports. The SCW will also ask you questions about your services, like:

1. Did you get the services and supports that were in your ISP?
2. How happy are you with the time you spent in the community doing activities?
3. Are you working now or want to work soon?

The SCW will continue to check-in with you each month to see how you are doing. The SCW's goal is to make sure you are getting the supports you want. The SCW will also encourage and support you as you get more active in your community and think about getting a job.

Submitting the Individual Support Plan (ISP)

You must sign all new Individual Support Plans (ISP) and Purchase Orders (PO). If you have a guardian, then your guardian must sign the ISP and PO. Your signature may be written on the ISP and PO, or it may be a digital signature done on a computer or tablet. The date of your signature must be written on the ISP and PO. BHDDH will return any ISP or PO without your signature. A returned ISP or PO may cause a delay or loss of DD services. By signing the ISP and PO, you are saying that you agree with and want what is in your plan.

Please note: ISP or PO changes need 45 days to be processed. BHDDH needs the 45 days to review changes to make sure everything is okay and to enter your changes into the computer system. Since it takes 45 days to make changes, you cannot make changes to your ISP or PO if there are only 90 days left in your plan year. The only exception is if you have an emergency situation and there are only 90 days left in your plan year. In this case, your social caseworker will work with you to make changes you need.

Most people begin talking about their new plan when there are about 90 days left in the plan year. If you have new things you want to add to your ISP or PO at the end of your plan year, you should add those things to your new plan.

Technology Fund Update

We're still accepting requests for the Technology Fund. You can find the online form and more information about the Technology Fund on the BHDDH website at www.bhddh.ri.gov under **Initiatives – Technology Fund**. Remember, **the Technology Fund can only be used once**. If you have received funding through the Technology Fund, you can't apply a second time.

New Rates and Services

New Rates

The new rates started on July 1, 2023. These rates increase how much providers are paid for services they provide to you. With the new rates, Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) must be paid at least \$20 per hour.

New Services

BHDDH made changes to the list of services we offer. Service changes include:

- **Community-Based Supports** now includes services that used to be called community-based day, prevocational, and overnight supports. The new Community-Based Supports can be used at any time of day or day of the week.
- **Whole Life Shared Living Arrangement (WLSLA)** lets you choose if you want to get all community-based supports, including traditional day services, from your SLA home provider. The home provider will be paid more for the extra services they provide to you.

New Funding Packages

BHDDH has changed how DD funding information is shown. This used to be called “Tier Packages”. The new name for your DD funding is “Total Budget.” BHDDH will decide what your total budget is by looking at your SIS tier, ANSQ results, and notes from your Individual Follow-up. Your total budget is made of two parts, the Flexible Individual Budget and the Fixed Budget.

1. **Flexible Individual Budget:** This is the part of the budget that you can control based on your plan. You will choose how much of your funding you want to use for the DD services you want. You will make these choices if you self-direct or if you use an agency for services. The services you will make choices about are:
 - Community-based supports
 - Center-based day supports
 - Transportation
 - Respite
 - Assistive technology
 - Professional services
 - Self-directed goods and services
2. **Fixed Budget:** This is the part of the budget that you cannot change. This includes residential (group home, SLA) and fiscal Intermediary (FI) fees that must be paid. If you self-direct your services, your fixed budget also includes fees for the support brokerage service. You can add funding for more support brokerage, but you cannot remove the service.

There is also a new third option called the “**Add On Budget**”. BHDDH will provide funding above your total budget for certain services that aren’t covered by the Flexible and Fixed Budgets. This includes employment, home modifications, and some new services that haven’t rolled out yet, such as vehicle modifications, and peer-to-peer and family-to-family supports.

New Add-On Budget for Employment

Employment supports are no longer included in the Total Budget. Instead, employment supports will be paid for from an **add-on budget**. With the add-on budget, you will not have to take away from your community supports in order to get help finding and keeping a job. There are 5 employment services you can add to your add-on budget:

1. **Job Development** is for help finding a job. You will work with a certified employment specialist to find a job and get hired. Job development is short-term. This means it is not a service that will take many months or years. Instead, job development is limited to 200 hours per year. Job development is limited so you can reach your employment goals sooner.
2. **Job Coaching** is for help learning how to do a new job. It can also be used to learn new job skills if your job tasks change. You will work with a certified employment specialist while you are at work. Job coaching is temporary, which means it will go away once you learn your job tasks. Job coaching does not include transportation to or from your job.
3. **Job Retention** is for help keeping a job. You can get job retention after you finish with job coaching. You will work with a certified employment specialist to keep and grow in your job. The employment specialist will check in with you and your boss to make sure everything is going well. They will talk about any changes to your job or problems you may be having.
4. **Group Supported Employment** can include help finding a job, learning your job tasks, keeping your job, and growing in your job. You will work with a certified employment specialist. You will work in a group with two or more people receiving DD services.
5. **Personal Supports in the Workplace** is for help with self-care activities at work. You will get help with your personal care needs, like hygiene and eating, during your normal work hours. A provider will also help support your medical or behavioral needs.

You can find more information on employment services by visiting the BHDDH website at www.bhddh.ri.gov under **Services for Adults – Employment**.

Another helpful tool is the **Guide to Employment Add-On Budget Requests**. You find this guide on our website at <https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmental-disabilities/forms-policies-and-brochures/brochures>.

Sign Up for the DD News and Updates Newsletter

BHDDH has a DD News and Updates newsletter. The newsletter has information about things that are changing at BHDDH and other helpful tips. If you would like to sign-up for the newsletter, or read past newsletters, visit <https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmentaldisabilities/events/newsandupdates/>.

The Rhode Island Special Needs Emergency Registry

The Special Needs Emergency Registry helps first responders get ready for emergencies, like hurricanes, storms, and other emergencies. By signing up for the registry, you will let police, fire, and other first responders in your community know how they can best help you in an emergency. To learn more about the registry and to sign-up, visit the Rhode Island Department of Health website at <https://health.ri.gov/emergency/about/specialneedsregistry/>