



Newsletter

Volume 5
April 5, 2024

Diversity Month 2024



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BHDDH Technology Training

BHDDH is holding training for anyone who got technology like an iPad or laptop from the Technology Fund. The training is also open to anyone thinking about applying for new technology. See the attachment at the end of this newsletter for more information.



We want to learn from you!

We want to continue to learn from the community. Share your feedback about our newsletter by completing our [online newsletter survey](#). We will keep the survey open to make sure we keep getting your feedback.

DDD Updates

Consent Decree Quarterly Report Update

Published February 2024

The Consent Decree is a court order to make sure that individuals who receive DD services have a choice on what their services are and what kind of services they want to receive. It also makes sure that individuals who receive services funded by the State get the chance to be part of the community through activities and employment opportunities if they want to. The Consent Decree applies to the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), the Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS), the Department of Education (RIDE), and the Department of Labor & Training (DLT).

Each quarter, the State of Rhode Island submits a report to the Court to show the progress the State has made on the tasks assigned in a December 6, 2022, court order. The court order required DDD to begin work on new initiatives for things such as Employment, Community Integrated Activities, Outreach and Education among the 9 listed topics.

The [Quarterly Report](#) for the quarter ending December 31, 2023, is now posted on the [DDD website](#).

Some of items that were created for the Consent Decree fall under the topics of:

- Employment
- Community Integrated Activities
- Administrative Barriers
- Process
- Funding
- Transition
- Capacity
- Communication and Support
- Outreach and Education

To access the 9 listed topics easily, the report is broken down into the topics or **exhibits**. Exhibits are materials added to a report that give examples or more detail about a topic.

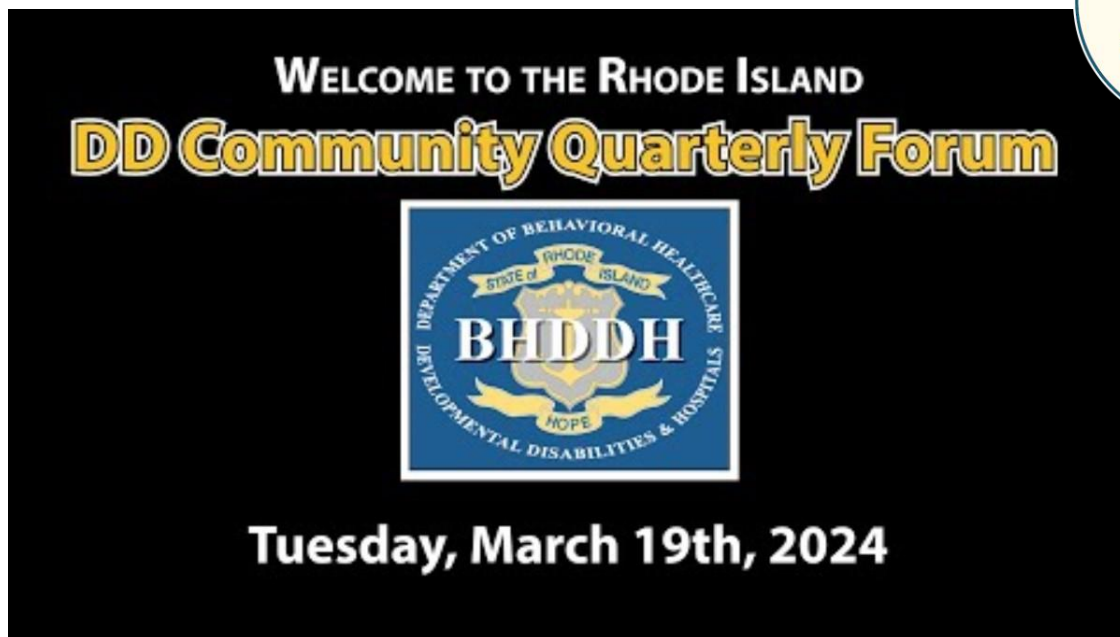
The last status hearing was on **April 27, 2023**

DDD Updates

DD Community Forum Recording posted!

BHDDH holds virtual DD Community Forums every three months. The last forum was on Tuesday, March 19th from 3:00-4:30 PM. You can watch the recording for this, and other past forums, at the [Advocates in Action website](#).

The [recording from March 19th forum is on Advocates in Action website](#). You can also find a list of questions and answers and resources that came up in the forum.



The next DD Community Forum will be on Tuesday, June 18th from 3:00 to 4:30 pm. To attend the forum, you must sign-up before the scheduled Forum date. Please [sign-up online by filling out the June DD Community Forum registration form](#). After you complete your form, you will get an email with information about joining the forum.

If you need help registering, call Advocates in Action toll-free: 1-877-532-5543, or email aina@AdvocatesinAction.org.

Advocates in Action is hosting the forum on Zoom. You can join online or call into the meeting. The forum will be recorded. An American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter will be at this event.

DDD Updates

Diversity Month April 2024

April is Diversity Month. **Diversity** means variety or having a range of differences. Diversity can apply to many different things, including groups of people. For a group of people to be diverse it must have people with differences included in it. These differences may be by race, ethnicity, gender, disability, and more.

Diversity is important because it helps join people together. Diversity celebrates and values people for their differences.

Here are some events you can attend to celebrate diversity month:

1. [Melodies of Africa](#) on Saturday, April 13, 2024 at 6pm
2. [Melodies of Ukraine](#) on Saturday, April 13, 2024 at 7pm
3. [Arts and Health: Mix and Mingle](#) on Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 5pm
4. [United in Diversity: The Untold Stories of BIPOC's Migration to Woonsocket and Northern RI](#) on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 6pm

BHDDH Your Life, Your Rights Program



BHDDH is celebrating Diversity Month this April with the Your Life, Your Rights Program. This month's focus is on antidiscrimination.

Antidiscrimination is treating all people fairly no matter what they look like, where they are from, or what they believe in. Learn more about your rights to antidiscrimination by exploring the flyer on the next page.

The Your Life, Your Rights Program information is available on the [BHDDH website](#). To share your feedback on this program, including other topics you are interested in learning about, please complete the [Rights Program Online Survey](#).



Your Life, Your Rights

Antidiscrimination

Words to Know



Discrimination:

Treating people different because of who they are. The different treatment is often bad. Discrimination is against the law.



Antidiscrimination:

Treating all people fairly no matter who they are. This is equal treatment no matter what.

Your Rights to Fair Treatment

It is against the law for people to discriminate against you based on your:



Race:

The color of your skin and your facial features.



Religion:

What you believe in, worship, and practice.



National Origin:

The country you were born in or your accent and looks.



Age:

If you are age 40 or older.



Disability:

Your physical health, mental health, or both.



Sex:

Your gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or if you are pregnant.

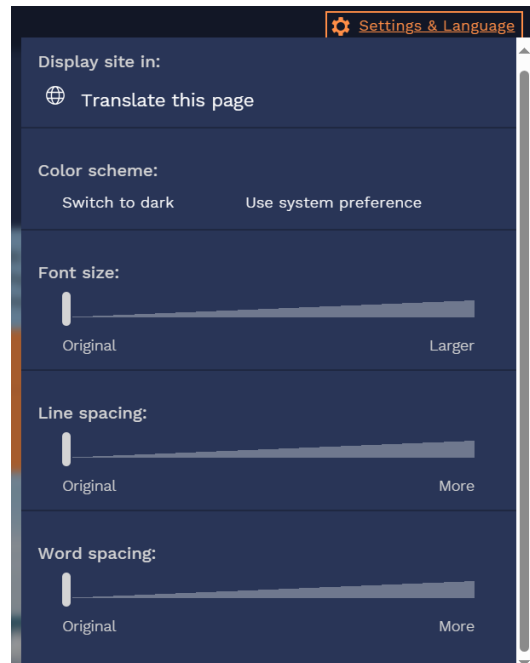
To report discrimination, contact the Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights by phone at (401) 222-2661 or by visiting their website at www.richr.ri.gov.

DDD Updates

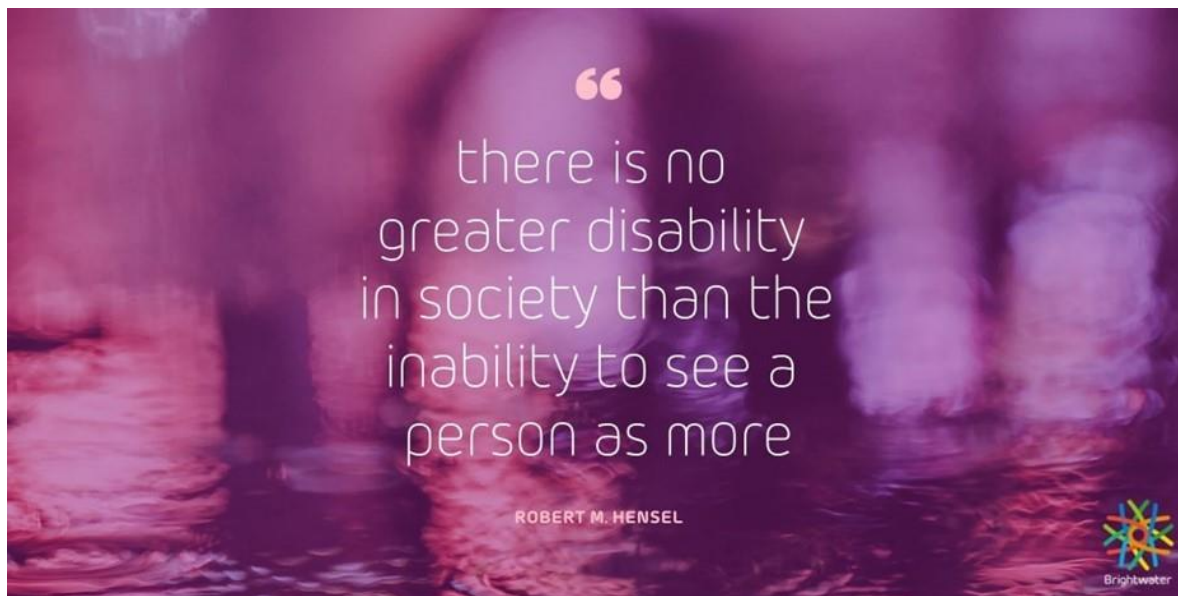
Accessibility Tip

Did you know you can customize the [BHDDH website](https://www.bhddh.ri.gov)? On the top right of the website is a Settings and Language button. You can use your mouse or keyboard to select this button. Once you select this button a new menu list will appear. In this menu you can change:

- The language of the website from English to another language
- Switch from light to dark mode
- The size of the words on the page
- The spacing between words and paragraphs on the page



Inspiration: We See You!



Curated contribution by **Jacqueline Reily**, Programming Services Officer with the RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH), Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

Community News

Administration of Disabilities (AoD) Disability Employment TA Center



The AoD Disability Employment TA Center's National Community (CoP) will be hosting a webinar on the importance of Financial literacy, capacity and independence for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD).

This webinar will focus on how the state of Illinois' Council for Developmental Disabilities funded a three-year initiative called Financial Wellness for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD). This initiative provided guidance and training to individuals with I/DD and their families on how to manage "manage money, reduce debt, and use credit wisely."

This webinar is going to focus on "the important role that employment plays in recovery and how interventions such as IPS can make a difference for people living with mental health conditions." money, reduce debt, and use credit wisely. The training was customized based on individualized needs ranging from a short class to a 10-module curriculum. "If this is a topic you and your family are interested in learning more about, this webinar is a great way to dive into the a tried and tested "roadmap on the importance of making good financial decisions to further increased independence."

Event Date and Time: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 at 3:00 PM

Event Location: Remote Webinar using Zoom

Event Registration: [Engaging Diverse Communities through Financial Education and Empowerment](#)



Kimberly Mercer-Schleider
Director,
Illinois Council on
Developmental
Disabilities



Michael Roush
Director,
National Disability
Institute



Tyson Bedford
Council Member,
Illinois Council on
Developmental
Disabilities



Curtis Harris
Council Member,
Illinois Council on
Developmental
Disabilities

Community News

National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI)

[NAMI](#) is hosting an informative webinar on how employment can help give people with mental health conditions a sense of purpose. According to the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#) Mental Health, "includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act and helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices." (SAMHSA, 2024)

There will be 3 expert speakers:

Peggy Swarbrick, Ph.D., FOATA,

Wellness Institute Director · [Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey \(CSPNJ\)](#)

- Her focus is on wellness model to help with recovery from mental health and substance abuse.

George H. Brice, Jr.

Program Development Specialist · [Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey \(CSPNJ\)](#)

- He has worked for many years roles such as wellness education coach, wellness trainer and supported education and employment specialist.

Robert Drake, MD, Ph.D.

Professor of Clinical Psychiatry · [Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons](#)

- Has over 50 years of psychiatric rehabilitation experience along with co-developing the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment.

This webinar is going to focus on the important role that employment plays in recovery and how interventions such as IPS can make a difference for people living with mental health conditions.

Event Date: Thursday, April 18, 2024

Event Time: 4:00-5:30 PM Eastern Time

Event Location: Remote Webinar using Zoom

Event Registration: [NAMI Ask the Expert: How Employment Supports Mental Health Recovery](#)



Community News

The Rhode Island State Workforce Initiative

[The Rhode Island State Workforce Initiative \(RISWI; website\)](#) is a partnership of government, provider, and community stakeholders working together to advance and sustain the Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce.

RISWI public comment period is open now through Tuesday, April 23, 2024

A public comment period is open now through Tuesday, April 23, 2024, on a Direct Support Professional (DSP) Training and Onboarding Template. The template and instructions for public comment are provided below:

- [Direct Support Professional Training and Onboarding Template \(PDF\)](#)
- [Instructions for Public Comment \(PDF\)](#)

You can also visit the [RISWI Public Feedback Requested webpage](#) to learn more and to submit feedback.

2024 NADSP Advocacy Symposium: Building A Grassroots Movement

Are you a DSP? Do you want to help make life better for DSPs?

Join the [National Association of Direct Support Professionals \(NADSP\)](#) in its online Advocacy Symposium! The Symposium will last only one afternoon. You'll learn about ways to make the DSP career better. You'll also learn how to voice your concerns and ideas to U.S. government officials.

The day after the Symposium, you will join an online meeting with U.S. Congressional leaders! They need to hear your voice. When the DSP career is better, the lives of the people you serve will be better, too.

Event: Advocacy Symposium

Event: Congressional leaders

Event Date: Tuesday, April 30, 2024

Event Date: Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Event Time: 2:00 – 4:45 pm

Event Time: TBD

Event Location: [Registration form \(website\)](#)

Event Registration: [Registration form \(website\)](#)

Community News

Social Engagement Innovations Hub



Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) sometimes need support to make friends and join communities where they feel they belong.

The Innovations Hub is a collective of curated resources centrally located for practitioners, implementers, researchers or anyone supporting Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) locate, identify and learn from others in the global community to mirror similar tips/programs. It is a great place to look for ways to provide the kind of support of human connection and community often needed in the I/DD community.

It's a website where you can search for and read about programs across the country that help people with disabilities connect with other people. You can even learn how to start the same kind of program where you work or live.

To get to the Innovations Hub, go to their website: [Innovations Hub – Commit to Connect](#)

Free Person-Centered Thinking Facilitator Training Spring 2024

Event Date: Monday, April 1 - Tuesday, June 4, 2024

Event Time: Various times

Event Location: Remote learning and group sessions using Zoom

Event Registration: [Person-Centered Thinking Facilitator Training registration webpage](#)



This course teaches the knowledge and skills the facilitator needs to get ready for the person-centered planning process, including creating the plan and putting the plan into action with a participant.

This course takes place over three months and requires approximately 40 hours of online learning including readings, quizzes and assignments. Learners will participate in four instructor-led group sessions using Zoom.

The required group sessions take place from 10 to 11:30 a.m. on:

Tuesday, April 9
Tuesday, April 23

Tuesday, May 14
Tuesday, June 4

Report Suspected Abuse

QA Hotline 401-462-2629

Mandated Reporting

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

To report abuse and serious incidents call the BHDDH Quality Assurance (QA) Unit hotline at (401) 462-2629. The hotline is open 24-hour hotline, seven days per week, 365 days per year. Staff respond to reported incidents of abuse, neglect, mistreatment, and financial exploitation.

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



For More Information on DD Initiatives

Newsletters: sign up and view old newsletters on our [News and Updates webpage](#)

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

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

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

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday

8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Contacting DDD Staff

See the full Division Contact List attached to this newsletter.

Send general questions to BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov.

Please do not email critical issues.

Website: www.bhddh.ri.gov

Email: BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov

Phone: 401.462.3421

ESPAÑOL: 401.462.3014

Division of Developmental Disabilities - All Staff Contacts 2/16/2024

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

Name	Title	Phone	Email
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Steven Seay	Coordinator, Integrated Comm Svcs	462-6609	Steven.Seay@bhddh.ri.gov

CASE MANAGEMENT UNITS

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GinaMarie Debartolo	Social Caseworker II	462-3402	GinaMarie.Debartolo@bhddh.ri.gov
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Megan Gilbert	Social Caseworker II	462-2524	Megan.Gilbert@bhddh.ri.gov
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Vacant			

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Vacant				
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SIS UNIT				
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Vacant				
TRANSITION UNIT				
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Laurie	Rossi	Implementation Aide	462-2563	Laurie.Rossi@bhddh.ri.gov



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

BHDDH Technology Training Schedule

Who should attend the BHDDH Technology Training?

This training is for anyone who got technology like an iPad or laptop from the Technology Fund. The training is also open to anyone thinking about applying for new technology.

What are the training topics?

In this training you will learn many topics, including how to use:

- Cameras to make visual schedules, recipes, and more
- Touch screen tablets
- Film apps to make videos
- Community maps and drawing apps to chart a route
- Smart home apps like ring doorbells
- Other useful apps

What will I learn from the training sessions?

You will learn how to use your device.

You will get step by step tutorials to practice using your device.

You will be given handouts to help you when you are home using your device.



Online Training Schedule

This training will take place online using Zoom. The training sessions will be held two times a month. See the full training schedule below. Remember, bring any questions you have about using your technology device to the training.

Monday Training Dates

Monday, April 8, 2024 5:00-6:00 PM

Monday, May 13, 2024 5:00-6:00 PM

Monday, June 10, 2024 5:00-6:00 PM

Zoom link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84951987847pwd=dUtpZ2NCQkloRUMrNFc0QTNPQmdTUT09>

Meeting ID: 849 5198 7847

Passcode: 916586

Tuesday Training Dates

Tuesday, April 16, 2024 3:00-4:00 PM

Tuesday, May 21, 2024 3:00-4:00 PM

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 3:00-4:00 PM

Zoom link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84431183635pwd=VXBoV29kazl5UGIzSjE0ZWprdWt4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 844 3118 3635

Passcode: 278510

In Person Question and Answer (Q&A) Training Schedule

Please bring your mobile smart device, Laptops and questions to any of the sessions listed below:

Tuesday, April 30th	1:00 – 3:00 PM	Central Library James T Giles Community Room 140 Sockanosset Cross Rd Cranston, RI 02920 https://www.cranstonlibrary.org/locations/
Tuesday, April 30th	5:00 – 7:00 PM	William Hall Library 1825 Broad Street Cranston, RI 02905 https://www.cranstonlibrary.org/locations/
Thursday, May 2, 2024	9:00 – 11:00 AM	Central Library James T Giles Community Room 140 Sockanosset Cross Rd Cranston, RI 02920 https://www.cranstonlibrary.org/locations/
Thursday, May 2, 2024	1:00 – 3:00 PM	Louttit Library 274 Victory Highway West Greenwich, RI 02817 https://www.louttitlibrary.org
Friday, May 3, 2024	10:00 – 12:00 PM	Kingston Free Library 2605 Kingstown Road Kingston RI 02881 https://www.southcountyrri.com/listing/kingston-free-library/263/
Thursday, May 9, 2024	5:00 – 7:00 PM	Woonsocket Library 12 Parkway Manville, RI 02895 https://woonsocketlibrary.org
Friday, May 10, 2024	9:00 – 11:00 AM	Rogers Free Library 525 Hope Street Bristol, RI 02809 https://rogersfreelibrary.org/
Friday, May 10, 2024	1:00 – 3:00 PM	Middletown Library 700 W. Main Road, Middletown, R.I. 02842 https://middletownpubliclibraryri.org/

Contact Us

For any questions or to submit the requested follow up information, please email Jennifer L. White
jennifer@ableopps.com or BHDDH.DDTechRequest@bhddh.ri.gov



SEARCH FOR PROJECTS FOR ADULTS

LOCATION: BALLY'S LINCOLN

Project SEARCH is a transition to work program that lasts for 9 months. The program serves adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who need an intensive year of professional development, internship experience, and support to reach their goals. The program also encompasses interns who have other disabilities and challenges

To apply, you must be:

- 18-30 years old
- Not be enrolled in high school
- Eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services
- Eligible for long-term support services (BHDDH funding)
- Able to pass a criminal background check and a RI gambling license.
- Have not had previous employment
- Able to work independently with check-ins, assistive technology, and employer natural support
- Have not participated in a previous Project Search.

If you have any questions, please contact melanie.sbardella@ors.ri.gov

Work Incentives Sessions for SSI and SSDI Beneficiaries

Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities provides Work Incentive Information and Benefits Counseling services to SSI and SSDI beneficiaries and those that support them (family, guardian, rep payee, professionals).

These sessions will be of value to anyone looking for a basic introduction to disability-related work incentives and/or has related questions. "Working with Benefits – Yes, You Can!" is for those starting to think about working and have general questions.

The SSI or SSDI sessions provide details about the specific work incentives and other related information. All sessions provide an opportunity for you to ask questions about the following topics:

- Ticket to Work
- SSI or SSDI Work Incentives
- Resources about Work Incentive Information
- Access to Benefits Counseling
- Working and Impact on Health Insurance Medicaid/Medicare
- Other questions related to benefits and working

When you register, please share your questions.

NOTE: These sessions will not address how to apply for SSI or SSDI benefits.

Free tax assistance for individuals with low to moderate incomes

Individuals who need assistance with filing tax returns may request help from a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site in Rhode Island. If you qualify, a trained volunteer can help you prepare and e-file your taxes and apply for certain tax credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit.

To find a site near you, you can call United Way at 211 or you can use the VITA (and TCE) locator found at <https://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep>. Enter your ZIP code and the number of miles you are willing to travel. You should call the agency for an appointment and ask them to provide a list of documents that you will need to bring.



Upcoming sessions

All sessions are offered from noon to 1 p.m. on Zoom with subtitles in English and presented by the Sherlock Center's Certified Work Incentives Benefits Counselors.

Work Pays! An Introduction to YOUTH SSI Work Incentives

April 3, 2024

SSI Overview

April 24, 2024

Registration

Advance registration is required. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the session.

You can access the session by computer, mobile device or listen using a cell or landline phone.

Register online now at: <https://bit.ly/2KkUCVQ>

Questions or accommodations

Accommodations: Contact Vanessa Hollands at vhollands@ric.edu, 401-456-8072.

Session questions: Contact Joshua Hughes, jhughes@ric.edu, 401-456-4734 or Vicki Ferrara, vferrara@ric.edu, 401-456-8092.

presents the first in its 30th anniversary series

Inclusive Communities: The Foundation of a Self-Determined Life

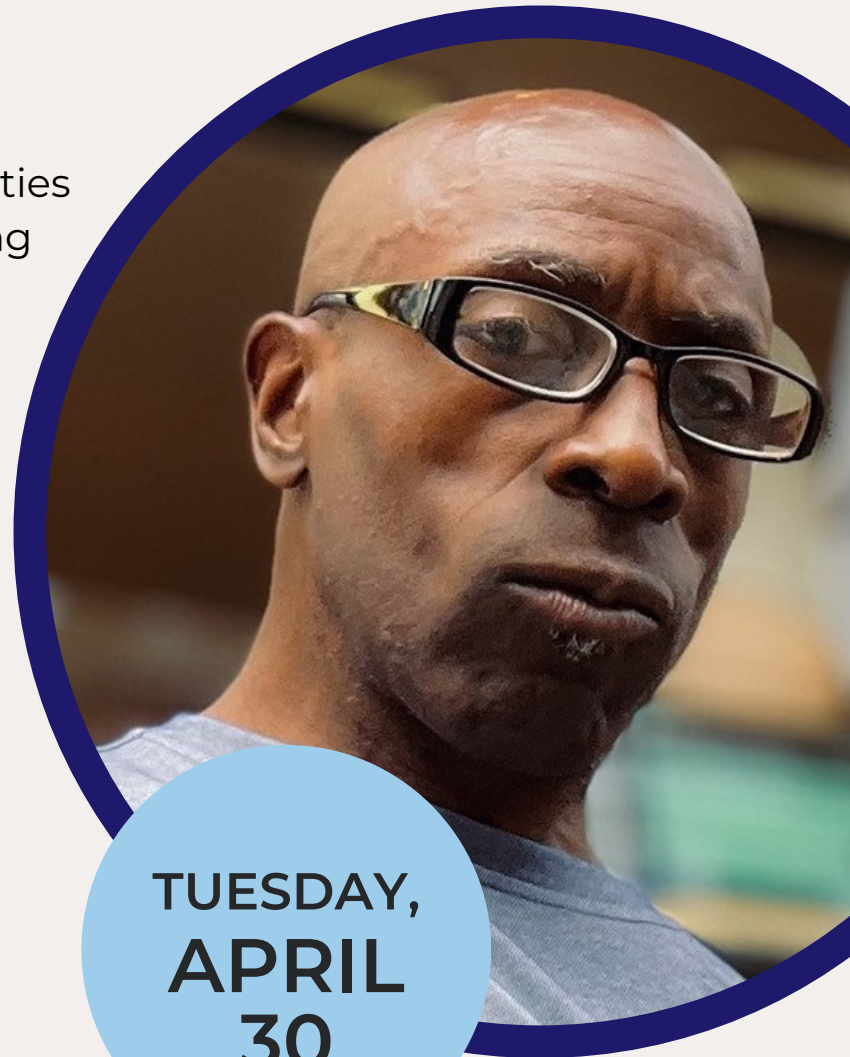
with special guest Keith Jones

In our quest for a truly inclusive community, individuals with disabilities still face significant hurdles, including socioeconomic disparities that limit access to resources and attitudinal barriers that create social exclusion.

This **free** presentation explores how a collaborative approach can empower individuals with disabilities to make decisions about their lives. Keith Jones will explore the pivotal roles families, educators, communities, policymakers, health care providers, social service professionals, community organizations and employers play in creating a support network that fosters self-determination throughout a person's life.

Keith Jones is president and CEO of SoulTouchin' Experiences LLC, an organization aimed at bringing perspective to issues of access inclusion and empowerment that affect him and others who are persons with and without disabilities.

Paralleling with his policy and social justice work, Mr. Jones is a multi-talented artist who, along with Leroy Moore and Rob Temple, founded the Emmy Award-winning Krip Hop Nation, an international collection of artists with disabilities.



**TUESDAY,
APRIL
30**

Gaige Hall Auditorium, Rhode Island College

Check-in and refreshments: 5:30 p.m.

Presentation: 6 to 8 p.m.

A reception will follow.

Registration is required by Tuesday, April 23:

[bit.ly/SC Jones](https://bit.ly/SC_Jones)