



# Annual Program Report 2024



6 Harrington Rd., Cranston, R.I. 02920

Phone: (401) 462-3421

ESPAÑOL: 401.462.3014

Website: [BHDDH.ri.gov](http://BHDDH.ri.gov)

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

# Table of Contents

**3** Director's Message

**4** About the Division

**5** About This Report

**6** Section 1: About Division Participants

**11** Section 2: About the Division's Key Accomplishments

**22** Section 3: About the Division's 2025 Goals

**24** Contact Us



# Director's Message

Letter from Kevin Savage

Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities, RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals

Dear Friends of the Division,

As Director of the Division of Developmental Disabilities, I am delighted to present our annual report for State Fiscal Year 2024.

This report gives an overview of the work the Division has done over the last year to implement new programs and services to address the diverse needs of our community. The Division made a major step forward this year when we were able to raise service rates and begin to add new services. We have also seen progress in areas of employment and community integration.

The Division is committed to exploring new opportunities for joint initiatives. We will continue working with the community, service providers, and other interested partners. By working together, we can create more comprehensive and effective support systems for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

Thank you for your continued dedication and support to serving our community. We look forward to continue working together to achieve our shared goals and commitment to enhancing the quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities across our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin W. Savage".

Kevin Savage

Director

Division of Developmental Disabilities

RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals



# About the Division

The Division of Developmental Disabilities plans, funds, and manages services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

We believe everyone in Rhode Island should be able to live happy, healthy, and fulfilling lives. We work to create more opportunities and ensure quality services to support Rhode Islanders with I/DD to live their lives the way they want. The Division's work includes the following.

- We oversee and fund services and supports for people in Rhode Island with I/DD. These services are available through community agencies.
- We encourage people and families to choose their own services.
- The Division supports opportunities for people with I/DD to have meaningful roles in the community, including jobs with equal pay.
- Our team of dedicated staff have been working hard to meet the goals of a 2014 Federal Consent Decree to provide integrated employment and community involvement for people with disabilities.
- We support and promote person-centered planning, which helps each person create a plan that addresses their interests and goals.
- We promote human rights and protect the health and safety of people with I/DD through quality improvement and oversight of service providers.

# About This Report



The purpose of this report is to share a summary about the Division's activities over the last year. The report will start by giving an overview about the adults that are getting services. The report will then share the Division's key accomplishments over the last year. The report will end by sharing a few of the Division's 2025 goals.

There are a few acronyms that are used in this report. **Acronyms** are shortened words that are made by taking the first letter of a string of other words. The acronyms used in this report are:

- **I/DD** which stands for Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities.
- **DD Services** which stands for Developmental Disability Services.
- **DD Participants** which means the people getting DD Services.

# Section 1

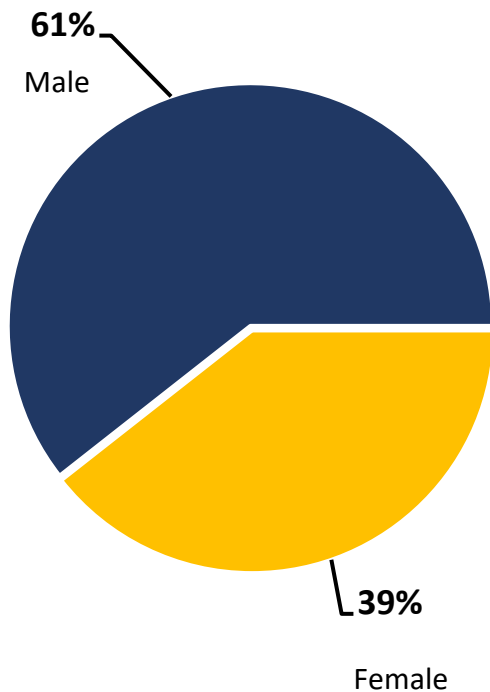
## About Division Participants



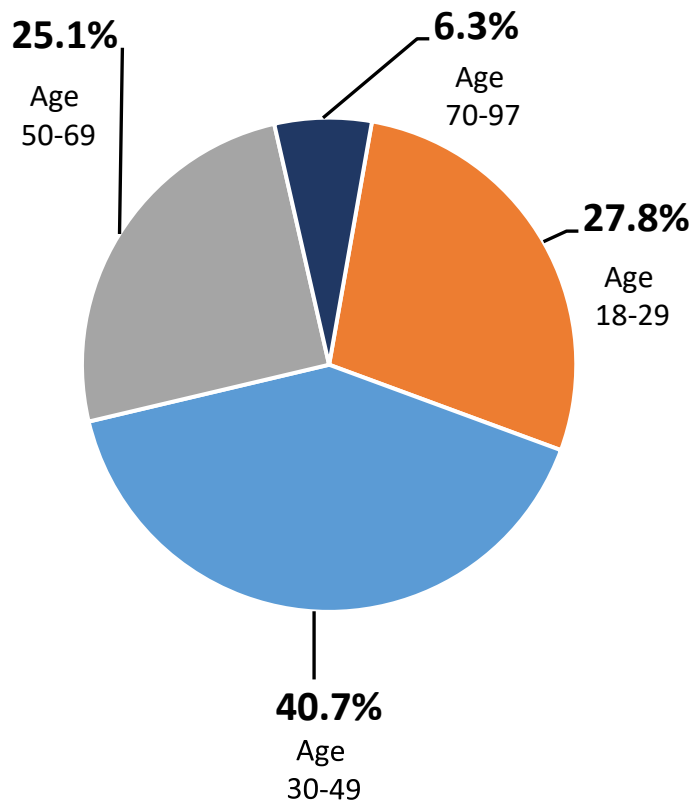
# About Division Participants

There are 4,159 adults getting Developmental Disability Services (DD Services). Most of the DD participants are males, which make up 61% of the population. Females make up 39% of the population. The biggest age group is age 30-49 years old, which makes up about 41% of the population. The next two age groups are close in size. Adults aged 18–29 years old make up 28% of the population and those aged 50-69 years old make up 25% of the population. The smallest age group is age 70+, making up only 6% of the population. The oldest person using DD supports is 97 years old. While most DD participants are under age 69, more DD participants are living longer.

### Percent of People Getting DD Services by Gender



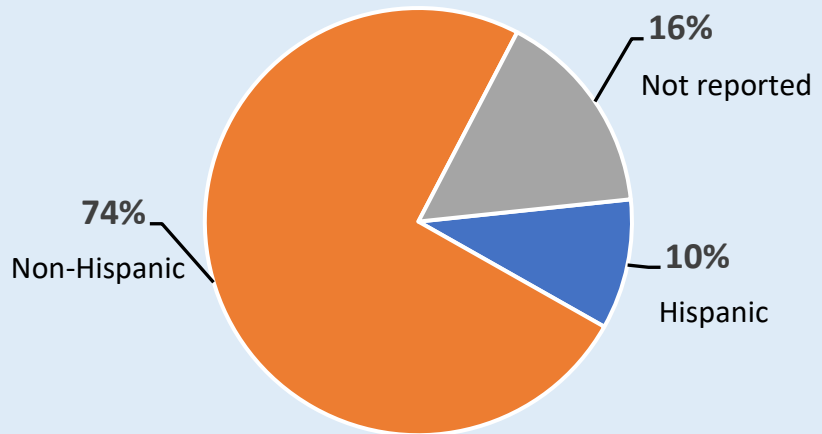
### Percent of People Getting DD Services by Age



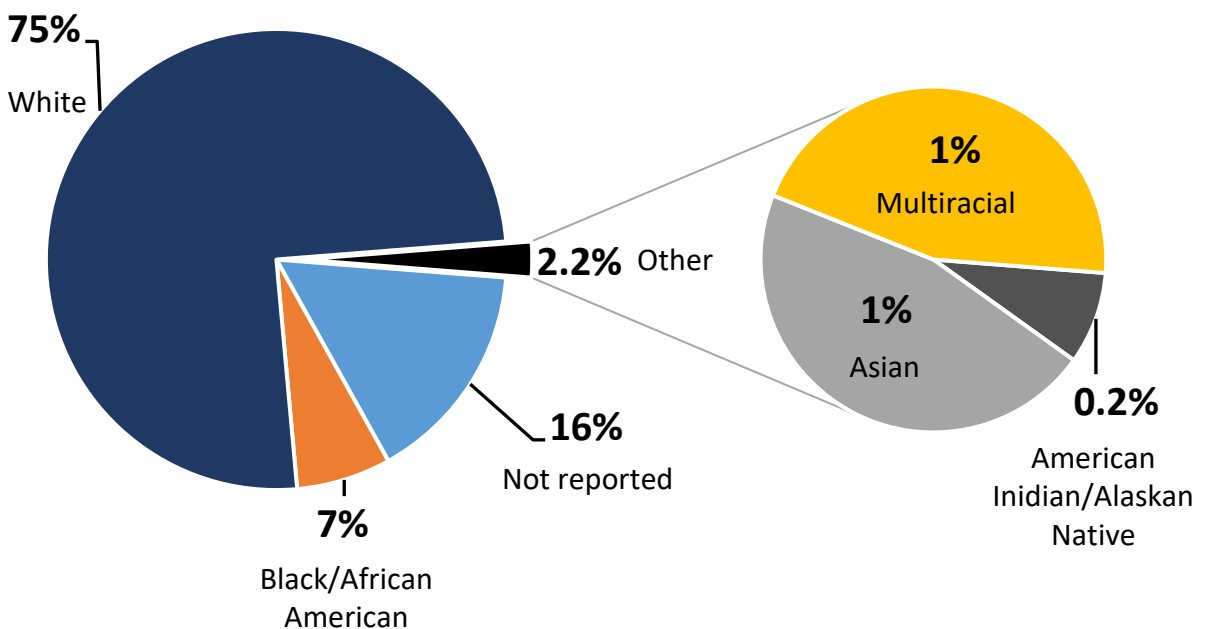
# Division Participants by Race/Ethnicity

DD participants come from different racial and ethnic groups. Around 10% of DD participants identify as Hispanic and 74% as non-Hispanic. About 16% did not report their ethnicity. Most of the DD participants are White (75%). DD participants have also identified as Black/African American (7%), Asian (1%), multiracial (1%), and Native American (<1%). About 16% of DD participants did not share their race.

## Percent of People Getting DD Services by Ethnicity



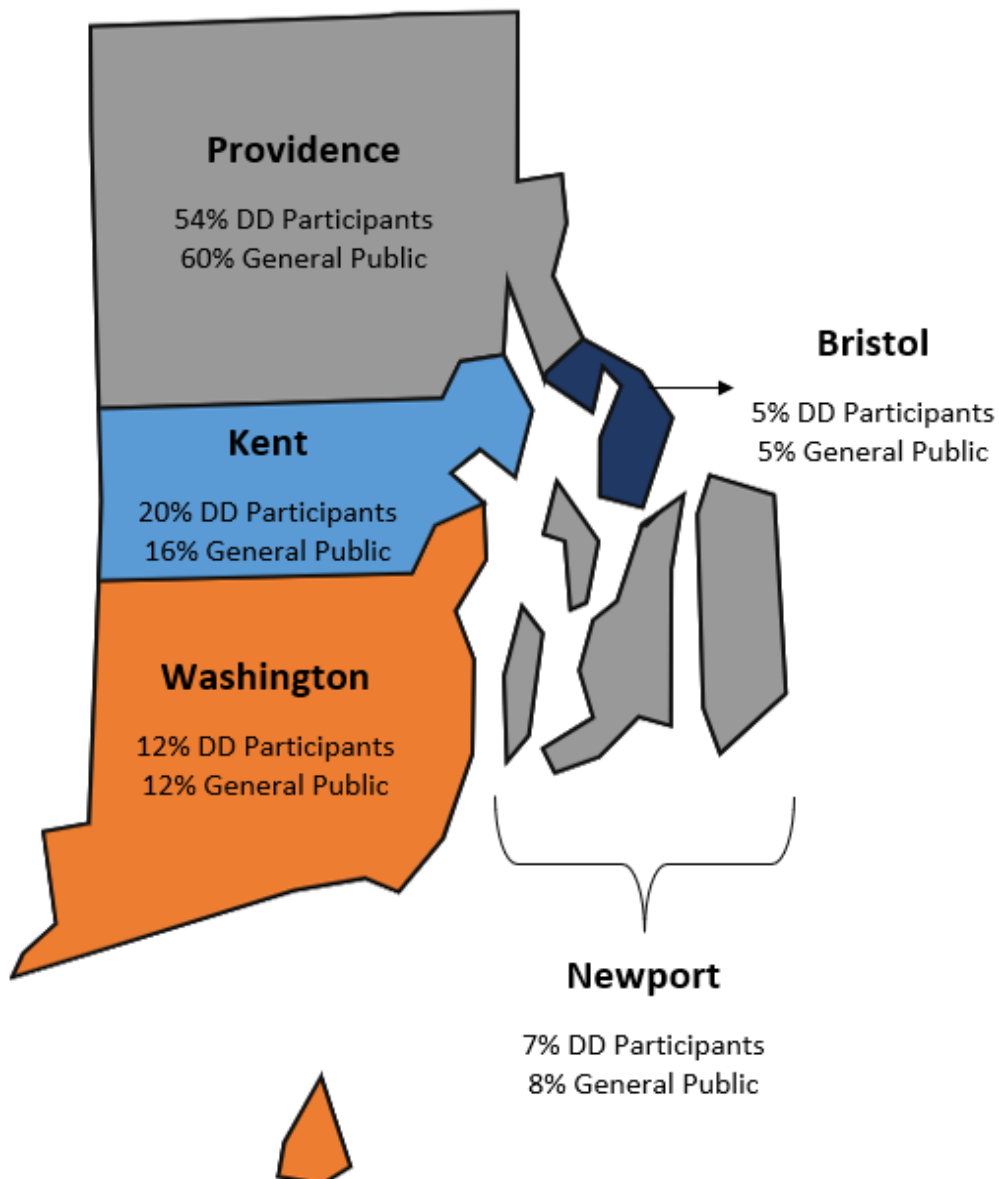
## Percent of People Getting DD Services by Race





# Division Participants by County

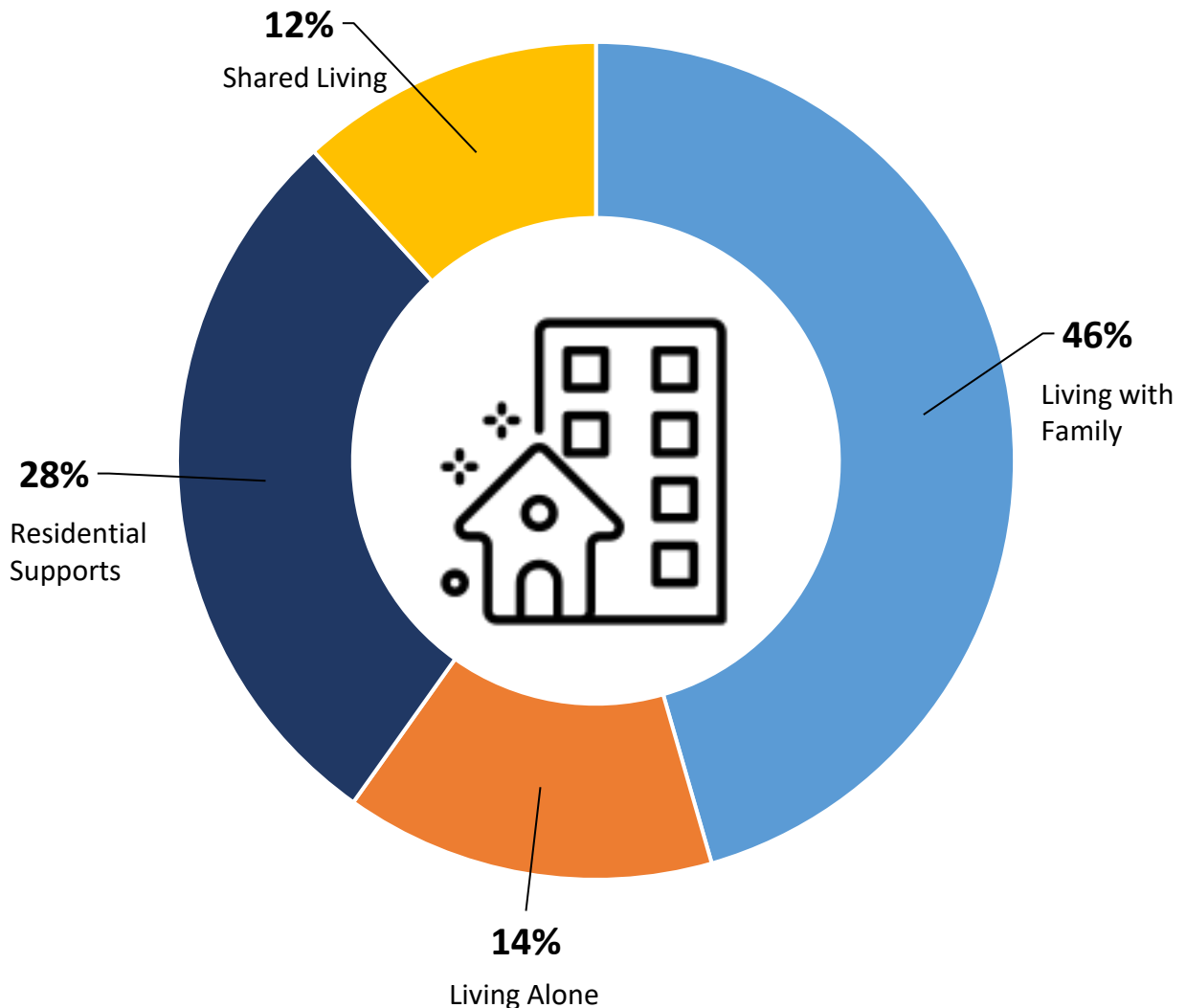
DD participants live all over the state. Most live in Providence County (54%) and Kent County (20%). Smaller groups live in Washington County (12%), Newport County (7%), and Bristol County (5%). The amount of DD participants from each county matches the general population. Most Rhode Islanders live in Providence County (60%) and Kent County (16%). Less live in Washington County (12%), Newport County (8%), and Bristol County (5%).



# Division Participants by Living Situation

Division participants have different living situations. Most live with their family (46%) or in residential supports (28%). There are also participants that live alone (14%) or in a Shared Living Arrangement (SLA) (12%). Participants not only have options on where to live. They can, and are, choosing the best option for themselves.

## Percent of People by Living Situation



# Section 2

## About the Division's Key Accomplishments



# Key Accomplishments

Over the past year, the Division has made many changes. The changes have been to try to make the service system easier to access and move around. This section reviews the Division's **key accomplishments**, or areas of success. The key accomplishments are in the following areas:

1. Rolled out new services and hired new staff to better support the community.
2. Entered a Consent Decree Addendum, which is an update to the original consent decree. This happened because the Division made great progress over the last few years.
3. Started to roll out Conflict-Free Case Management (CFCM) with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and other State agencies to improve coordination of all Medicaid long-term services.
4. Created a new Training Team to work on training and education programs for staff, providers, and the I/DD community.
5. Increased the Division's outreach efforts.
6. Created a new Communications Team to improve and expand the information we provide.
7. Started using two new assessment processes. These processes will help the Division improve supports and funding for DD participants.
8. More DD participants started working and earning more money.
9. The rate of pay for providers increased, allowing the DD network to remain strong and competitive.

The next few pages share more details about each key accomplishment.

# New Staff and Services

The State invested more money in the Division. This money was to hire more staff to improve how the Division supports the community. As a result, the Division has created:



- A new Training and Communications Team. This team focuses on giving information to the community, including participants and staff. The team consists of seven staff. Five of the seven staff were new positions.
- Two new positions to give targeted support. One position focuses on self-directed supports. The other position focuses on community integration.
- Sixteen new case manager positions to provide Conflict Free Case Management (CFCM) and two supervisors.

The Division increased the service options people have. The Division also rolled out three new services and will roll out more services in 2025. The services include:



Whole Life Shared Living Arrangement (WLSLA)



Job Exploration



Peer-to-Peer Supports (2025)



Job Discovery



Family-to-Family Supports (2025)

# Consent Decree Addendum

The Division entered the Consent Decree with the Department of Justice in 2014. The **Consent Decree** is a court order that lists things the Division must carry out or change. The changes are to make the DD service system stronger.

The Division made progress towards the Consent Decree in the last year. The Division's key success areas since the start of the Consent Decree include:



More students were able to access community and employment supports while in school.



More adults with I/DD joined in integrated community activities. These are activities open to people with and without I/DD.



More adults with I/DD started working in integrated settings. These are workplaces where people with and without I/DD work.

The court issued an Addendum to the Consent Decree in 2023. The **Addendum** is an update to the consent decree. In this update, the court decided to keep working with the Division through June 2026. The court and Division will work together to keep improving the DD service system and ensure people with I/DD are treated fairly.

# Conflict-Free Case Management (CFCM)

Conflict-Free Case Management (CFCM) is a Medicaid rule. The rule says people getting Medicaid long-term services and supports must have help identifying the services they want and need from an agency that doesn't provide services. CFCM helps people access services, supports, and resources to meet their goals.

The Division made a lot of progress towards this rule. Success areas include:



Four community agencies began the certification process to provide Conflict-Free Case Management, with more expressing interest. The agencies are certified by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS).



The State began rolling out a new case management system called WellSky. The system will help coordinate services for all Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS), which serve over 10,000 Rhode Islanders including those with I/DD.



New Division staff were hired to help meet the Division's CFCM service needs. The new hires include 2 Case Management Supervisors and 16 Case Managers.



A new training program was built for CFCM agencies. Another training called Upskilling was rolled out in June 2024 open to Independent Plan Writers who want to be Independent Facilitators (IF). IFs will help meet Consent Decree requirements until CFCM is fully rolled out.

# Staff and Provider Training

The Division created a new Training Team this year. This team makes and gives trainings to Division staff and community providers. They help their partners create trainings, and they attend events in the community.

The Training Team led many trainings for staff and partners in the community. In their first year, the team did about 75 training and educational sessions. The sessions were open to Division staff and community providers. The trainings helped people learn about new DD services and processes.



The team also began developing relationships in the community. They offered quarterly training to first responders and the state Department of Child, Youth, and Families (DCYF). They also worked with the Sherlock Center at Rhode Island College to train Independent Plan Writers.

This training is important. By teaching staff, adults getting service are better supported. Training topics included:

- Requesting Goods and Services
- Supported Employment
- Employment as a Direct Support Professional (DSP) in Self-Direction
- Three Step Assessment Process
- Independent Facilitation
- Sexuality and People with I/DD
- Safety Care
- CPR and First Aid
- Everything DiSC
- Division new hire orientation



# Community Outreach

Many people may go without services because they don't know they exist or how to get them. To help the community learn about DD services, the Division took part in outreach activities. **Outreach activities** are events and other efforts to reach out to people.

The Division went to about 20 events in the community this year. These events were free and open to the public. The events included:

- Health and mental health fairs
- Cultural wellness fairs
- Youth transition and other school fairs
- Job and resource fairs



The Division made other efforts to reach out to people in the community. Some of the activities included:



- Speeches at community centers about Division and DD service updates.
- Technical Bulletins to share steps about accessing certain DD services.
- Guest speaking on the [Disability News You Can Use Podcast](#).
- Phone calls to people getting DD services to talk about their goals and other services that may help.

The Division will continue to increase its outreach activities. We hope to help connect more people to services and supports and get more feedback about what we can do better.

# Communications Plan

The Division formed a new Communications Team this year. One of the Team's key responsibilities is to make sure information is accessible. **Accessible information** is information others can find, understand, and use. This can be information from books, videos, websites, and more. The Division's Communications Team has worked hard to improve access to information. Ways the Division has made progress includes:



Website and  
newsletter updates



Plain language  
handouts



Forum  
presentations



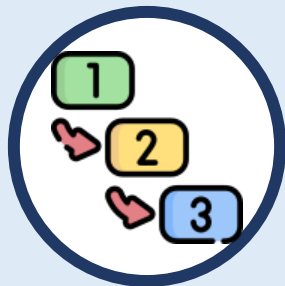
Community  
focus groups

Let's learn a little more about these changes:

- 1. Website and newsletter updates** are about the ways the Division shares news. The website is like a library to Division information. The newsletter is like a Division newspaper.
- 2. Plain language handouts** are handouts written in ways that are easier to read. They can be things like flyers, letters, guides, and more.
- 3. Forum Presentations** are lessons about certain topics. The Division gave two presentations in the [Advocates in Action Self-Advocacy Conference](#). The Division also held four [DD Community Forums](#) in 2024.
- 4. Community focus groups** are small groups created to give feedback about a topic. The Division worked with a community focus group of adults with I/DD. The focus group reviewed Division information to make sure it was clear.

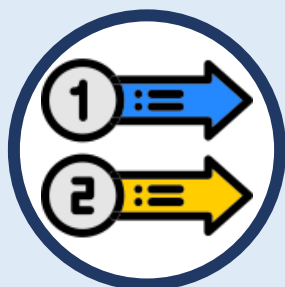
# Assessment Process

The Division rolled out two new assessment processes. The goal of the processes were to better learn people's strengths and needs. This would in turn help make sure people got the service budget that best met their needs.



## 1. **3-Step Assessment Process:** done every 5-years

- Supports Intensity Scale-Adult Version (SIS-A)
- Additional Needs and Support Questionnaire (ANSQ)
- Individual Follow-Up



## 2. **2-Step Assessment Process:** done every year

- Additional Needs and Support Questionnaire (ANSQ)
- Individual Follow-Up

Though new, key findings for both processes are positive. So far, key findings are:



People have more opportunity to share their support needs



People get more accurate budgets to fit their needs



People get more support from Social Caseworkers

# Employment

The Division worked hard to improve employment outcomes for adults with I/DD. Progress areas include:



Employment was moved to an add-on budget. This budget is extra funding for employment supports so people don't have to choose between a job and community supports.



174 people were hired in new jobs, and the average number of hours worked increased.

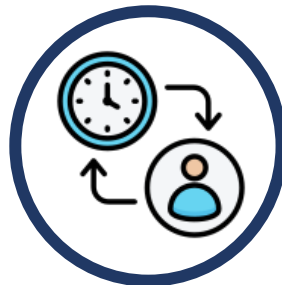


Staff went to 28 events to talk to people about employment services. This is new outreach to promote employment opportunities, make connections with businesses, and educate employers about the potential of people with I/DD.

## Key Employment Outcomes for DD Participants as of June 30, 2024



930 were currently employed.



On average, people work about 11.4 hours/week. 17% work 20+ hours/week. Less than 2% work full-time.



People earn about \$14.82 per hour, with the highest hourly wage over \$30/hr.

# Rate & Payment Review

The Division began to implement the recommendations of its 2023 rate and payment review on July 1, 2023, the start of State Fiscal Year 2024. The rate and payment review was a study of DD services and costs. The study reviewed service definitions and rates of pay for services. It also looked at national comparisons. After the study, the Division made changes to service definitions and rates of pay.

Some of the main outcomes in FY2024 from the rate and payment review are:



The rate review resulted in a significant increase in rates to support services for people with I/DD.



The General Assembly gave about \$75M in extra funding for the DD system



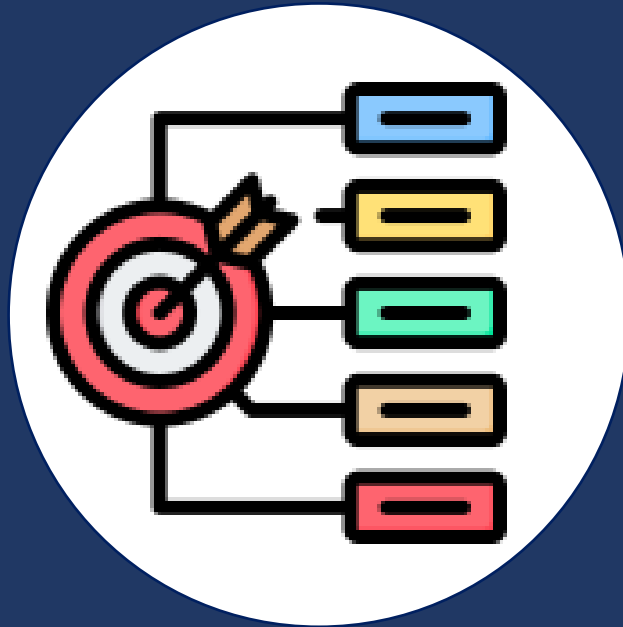
Every adult getting DD services now has an individual budget. With the individual budget, people have more control over their services.



The rate of pay for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) increased. The starting wage for DSPs is now \$20 an hour.

# Section 3

## About the Division's 2025 Goals



# 2025 Goals

The Division commits to keep working to support the I/DD community. The Division's goals in 2025 are:



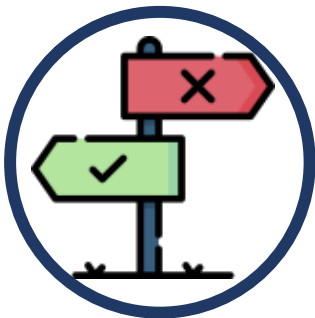
## 1. Continue to meet Medicaid and Consent Decree orders:

- Meet consent decree rules.
- Connect all DD Participants with CFCM.



## 2. Continue to strengthen quality of support provided to adults with I/DD:

- Train, coach, and mentor providers to improve outcomes for people with disabilities.
- Share information in ways more people can access, including video and other languages.
- Work with adults with I/DD to create tools for adults with I/DD.



## 3. Continue to build and support opportunities for adults with I/DD to make informed choices:

- Share information about options for services and individual budgets.
- Work with employers to create more access to job opportunities for adults with I/DD.
- Improve access and options for adults with I/DD to make use of community resources.

# Contact Us

If you would like to learn more about the Division at BHDDH, or you would like to partner up with us on future events or programs, please contact us.



## Phone:

(401) 462-3421 Main phone

(401) 462-3014 Spanish phone

(401) 462-3226 TDD



## Address:

6 Harrington Rd.,  
Cranston, RI 02920



## Email:

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

