



DD News and Updates

# Newsletter

Volume 21  
December 9,  
2024

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**Please note that all state offices are closed on  
Christmas day, Wednesday, December 25, 2024, and  
New Year's day, Wednesday, January 1, 2025**

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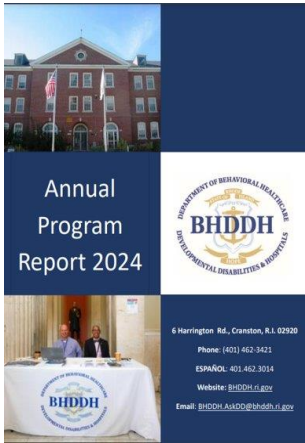
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# Community News

## Division Updates



The Division is committed to our mission to serve the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) community with transparency and excellence. We have published our first Annual Program Report to share key achievements and goals with the I/DD community. To learn about the work the Division has done, please review our [2024 Annual Program Report](#). If you have any questions or feedback about the report, please let us know by emailing [BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov](mailto:BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov). We hope this information is helpful for you.

## Latest Quarterly Report for the Consent Decree

The latest **Quarterly Report for the Consent Decree** from Rhode Island shows how well the state is meeting the goals agreed upon with the U.S. Department of Justice. The report covers the period ending September 2024 and includes updates on new programs, projects that are finished or still in progress, and feedback from people involved. You can locate the latest report by visiting the [Consent Decree webpage](#).

## BHDDH Your Life, Your Rights Program

The BHDDH Your Life, Your Rights Program is wrapping up for the year. This was the first year this program ran, with the goal of sharing helpful details about your rights. The program started in February 2024. Each month focused on a new topic, like March safety rights and October employment rights. For a recap of the program, check out the next page of this newsletter.

Even though the first year of the program is ending, we have big plans for the program in 2025. We will keep learning about human rights and sharing what we learn with you. That way, together we can all support each other and build a stronger community.



# Your Life, Your Rights



## DD Bill of Rights:

The rights you have when it comes to your DD Services.

## Disability Rights:

Laws that protect you as a person with a disability.



## Safety Rights:

Your rights to be treated well and feel safe.

## Housing Rights:

Your right to fair, safe housing if you rent or own.



## Antidiscrimination:

Laws that make sure you get treated fairly and can be happy.

## Voting Rights:

Laws to protect your right to vote.



## Healthcare Rights:

Your rights to physical and mental health care.

## Employment Rights:

Your right to feel safe and be treated well at work.



## Relationship Rights:

Your rights to start, end, and be treated well in relationships.

## Being Stopped by Police:

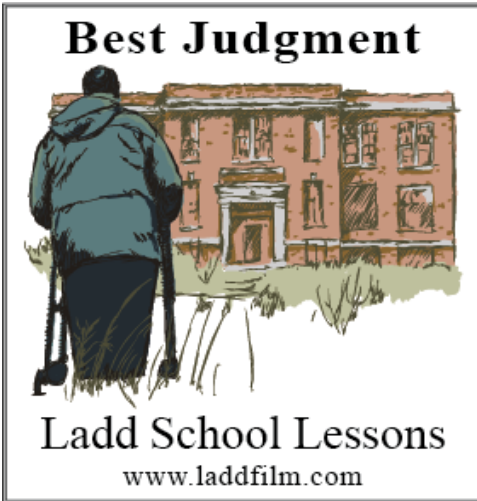
Laws that protect you when the police stop you.



Visit the [Your Life, Your Rights website](#) for program details.

# Community News

## Best Judgment: Ladd School Lessons



In the past few months, Advocates in Action RI worked with the University of RI, the Sherlock Center, and RI College to show two screenings of the documentary movie “Best Judgment: Ladd School Lessons” for the first time!

“Best Judgment: Ladd School Lessons” was made by [Advocates in Action](#) and directed by Jim Wolpaw and Robert Macaux. It took over 15 years to make and tells the history of the Joseph H. Ladd Center, which used to be a place for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in RI.

The movie isn't just a history lesson. It was created with help from former residents of the Ladd Center, people with disabilities, local musicians, and experienced media professionals. “Best Judgment” uses the story of the Ladd Center to look at how people with disabilities have been treated in the past and today, and it encourages us to think about how we should treat people with disabilities in the future.

Almost 1,000 people came to see both screenings of the movie! The team is working on more screenings and other ways to make the film available to more people.

## Advocates in Action is preparing for the 2025 Leadership Series!

Join this fun Zoom Series! It starts with a virtual retreat and then has weekly classes from mid-February to the end of June, every Wednesday from 1:00 to 2:30 pm.

Participants will learn to speak up for themselves, understand the DD system, connect with the community, and live their lives the way they want to!

The Series is mainly for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) who live in Rhode Island and are at least 18 years old. Family members, staff, and friends who will support a participant can also apply.

Applications will be available the **first week of December** and must be **submitted by January 17**.

To get more information and apply, visit the Leadership Series page on Advocates in Action’s website: [Leadership Series](#)

# Community News

## RIPIN hosted its First Annual Self-Directed Support Conference

On Friday, November 8th, RIPIN hosted its First Annual Self-Directed Support Conference at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick, RI. This big event brought together a lively group of participants, families, professionals, and RIPIN staff. The day was full of positive energy, a sense of purpose, and lots of gratitude from everyone who came.

With 300 attendees, the conference had 12 interesting breakout sessions covering important topics like:

- Employment Supports
- Self-Direction 101
- BHDDH State Panel
- Goods & Services
- Natural Supports
- Link With Your Community
- Supported Decision-Making
- Hiring & Training Staff
- Blending Services



At lunchtime, there was a special session with a Peer Advocates panel, where people shared their personal experiences.

The exhibitor hall was busy with 15 exhibitors talking to consumers, families, professionals, and potential consumers for almost six hours. These conversations helped attendees find new resources and opportunities to support their self-directed journey.

RIPIN is very thankful for the feedback from the conference, which will help them continue to empower individuals through self-direction.

The team is already planning their programs for January to June, focusing on the needs of consumers and improving the services available in Rhode Island.

RIPIN is excited about the positive response to the conference and is looking forward to an even better event next year. Stay tuned for more updates as they continue to support self-direction!

# Community News

## Direct Support Workforce release the Front-Line Supervisor Competencies

The draft of the Front-Line Supervisor Competencies Document made by the Training and Professional Development Workgroup is now available for public comment. You can find it here: [Direct Support Workforce](#).

This page has the best practices, evidence-based strategies, tools, and resources for people looking for jobs or already working in the direct support workforce, like direct support professionals and frontline supervisors. It's also helpful for employers who want to recruit, train, and keep their staff.

## Participant Highlight: SLA



[Living Innovations](#) has shared a new story about Shared Living Arrangements (SLA). These stories are being shared to give people an idea about SLA and how it can work for them. This story is about a long-lasting Shared Living Arrangement between a couple, Cathy and Dennis, and a man named Ed. The story shows the strong bond and positive impact of their shared living experience. Find the full story at the end of this newsletter.

## Accessibility Tip

Accessibility is all about giving more people access. That can be access to space, opportunities, info, and more. Here are two accessibility tools that may help you get what you need and/or help others get what they need:

1. [Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center](#). This website focuses on communication. There are articles about using alternative communication tools and how to say what you want. There are also articles about making info more accessible.
2. [Accessible Transportation Resource Center](#). This website shares ways transportation can be made more accessible. It shares tips for designing safe streets, using assistive technology for transportation, and more.

# Community Events

## Calendar of Free Event(s)

Date	Time	Location	Event
Every Wednesday	8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.	DHS Regional Offices	<a href="#">RI DHS Launches Technology Adoption Days for Mobile App and Customer Portal Support</a>
Wednesday, January 22, 2025	6:00 p.m. to 7 p.m.	Zoom	<a href="#">Upcoming Webinar on Shared Living Arrangements in Rhode Island</a> You must register to attend

## Community Resources

With so much info added to the internet everyday, it can be hard to find resources. Here is a list of a few resources you may find helpful:

- [United Way Rhode Island](#). Visit their website or call 211 for help with housing, food, and more.
- [Rhode Island Community Food Bank](#). Visit their website for help finding food.
- [Genesis Center](#). Visit their website for help with education, job training, and more.
- [Nutrition and Aging Resource Center](#). Visit their website for info on nutrition and more.

## Sue Babin Wins Award for Leading Self-Employment



Sue Babin, shown on the left, leads the Self Employment Project at [Rhode Island Developmental Disabilities Council \(RIDDC\)](#) and helps people with developmental disabilities. She recently won the Dave Hammis Employment Innovation Award.

Doug Crandell from Griffin Hammis Associates nominated her. Molly Sullivan praised Sue for her creativity, and Doug highlighted her leadership in promoting self-employment in Rhode Island and beyond.

For several years, RIDDC has been helping people with disabilities become independent business owners. They've partnered with the RI Department of Labor and Training through the "Real Pathways RI" initiative.

To read the full article, please visit the [Warwick Post](#).

# 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](http://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](http://988lifeline.org)



### For More Information on DD Initiatives

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

[Consent Decree webpage](#)

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

Please do not email critical issues.

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<b>TDD:</b> (401) 462-3226	

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# 2 Paths to Employment and How They Differ

If you are an adult with an intellectual and/or developmental disability (I/DD), you can get help finding a job. There are two paths to employment you can explore. The paths are:

1. **Customized Employment (CE)**, where you get help creating a job just for you.
2. **Supported Employment (SE)**, where you get help finding a job you have interest in.

Here are ways CE and SE differ from each other:

## Customized Employment (CE)

- Good choice if you:
  - Want to work but don't know what you want to do.
  - Have not worked before, or
  - Have had trouble working in the past because of barriers.
- You work with a certified CE specialist who will:
  - Get to know your skills, interests, and goals by talking to you and people close to you.
  - Find 3 things you are interested in and learn about the options you have in the community.
  - Work with possible employers to create a new job.
- In the end, you will have a job that didn't exist before. This job will fit your skills and interests as well as the employer's needs.

## Supported Employment (SE)

- Good choice if you:
  - Have an idea about what you want to do for work.
  - Have not worked before, or
  - Have worked before but want to change jobs.
- You work with an employment specialist who will:
  - Learn about the type of job you want by talking to you.
  - Help you find job openings and apply to jobs.
  - Help you ask for job accommodations.
- In the end, you will get hired in a job you applied to.

Have questions? Please visit our website at [www.bhddh.ri.gov](http://www.bhddh.ri.gov) to learn more.



# Steps to Employment



There are many steps you can take to find the best job for you. It may be hard to figure out where you should start. This page lists the range of supports you can choose from. Read more to help you decide where you should start.



## Step 1: Job Discovery

Learn about yourself, what you are good at, and the work you want to do. Then learn what your community has to offer so you get a job that best matches your skills.



## Step 2: Job Exploration

Get started with your employment journey if you never worked before. Make choices about work and figure out your path to employment.



## Step 3: Job Development

Look for jobs you are interested in. Write a resume and submit job applications. Go to job interviews and get hired.



## Step 4: Job Coaching

Learn how to do your new job tasks. Learn how to talk to your boss, coworkers, and customers. Use natural supports to grow your skills and become more independent. Also use assistive technology.



## Step 5: Job Retention

Get help keeping and growing in your job. Talk about things you think are going well and things you are having trouble with.



## Step 6: Personal Supports in the Workplace

Get help with personal needs at work. This can be help with medical and/or behavioral needs.

# A Shared Living Story

## Ed-Shared Living, The Beginning of a Beautiful Relationship



Keeping a promise made long ago has led to a successful Shared Living Arrangement that's been thriving for over 18 years—longer than most marriages!

The story began with Cathy and her husband Dennis, who both worked for the state in different Rhode Island Community Living and Supports (RICLAS) residential programs. They knew a gentleman named Ed, who lived in a state group home where Dennis worked. Dennis often brought Ed home to visit his mother. Recognizing the strong bond between Dennis and Ed, Ed's mother asked Dennis to always look after her son. Dennis gladly promised and ensured Ed received the care he needed.

Dennis invited Ed to his home several times for weekends and holidays. When Ed moved into a state-run apartment program where Cathy worked, he continued to visit Dennis and Cathy for holidays and family gatherings.

Cathy and Dennis often said to each other that when they retired, they would like Ed to live with them in a Shared Living Arrangement (SLA). One day, they all looked at each other and said, "Why wait?" And so began their Shared Living journey in 2006.

Because Ed fit so well with the family, their relationship has remained strong for 18 years. When his first Christmas in their home was approaching, Ed was asked what he wanted for Christmas. Without hesitation, he replied, "I have everything I want for Christmas. I have a nice home and a good family. That is all I need." Some family dynamics have changed over the years, and Ed is slowing down a bit, but they are still a beautiful family. If you're lucky enough to meet him, Ed will greet you with his award-winning smile and tell you that life is going great.



Join us for a networking opportunity with Self-Directed Supports Network members and Sherlock Sentinels.



# Jingle mingle

**Wednesday, Dec. 18**

4 to 6 p.m.

Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities  
Rhode Island College

- Facilitated conversations
- Opportunities to share and learn from one another
- Light fare and refreshments

**Register online: [bit.ly/SC\\_Jingle](https://bit.ly/SC_Jingle)**

# RIPIN SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORT PROGRAM

2025

**28**

JAN

## Work Pays! An Introduction to Youth SSI Work Incentives

On ZOOM

*An information session to introduce you to disability-related work incentives for youth receiving SSI benefits. Presented by Certified Work Incentives Counselors from the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities.*

**25**

FEB

## Self-Direction Connection

On ZOOM

*A RIPIN Self-Directed Support Program returning favorite! Come together online and meet with others who are navigating self-directed support services as we foster a supportive network of peers.*

**25**

MAR

## Meet the Communications Team

On ZOOM

*Hear from the communications team from the Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH) about how they connect with consumers and their families.*

**26**

APR

## Self-Directed Toolkit

On ZOOM

*Come listen as our panel shares their tools and tips for organizing self-direction. Daily schedules, sample DSP job postings, and more!*

**20**

MAY

## Mental Health Support for Consumers with I/DD

On ZOOM

*May is Mental Health Month, and to recognize this important topic, we will address questions like "Who can help?" "Where can I go?" "How can I connect?"*

**TBD**


JUN

## Self Direction Connection

In person!

*RIPIN will host a gathering for self-directed participants, their families, staff, and other allies in a fun, relaxed environment designed to build greater connections, support, and networking opportunities.*

 [ripin.org/selfdirectedsupport](https://ripin.org/selfdirectedsupport)

 [selfdirectedsupport@ripin.org](mailto:selfdirectedsupport@ripin.org)