



DD News and Updates

Newsletter

Volume 29

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**PRIDE
MONTH**
CELEBRATION



You can sign-up to get your own copy of this
newsletter for free online.

Website: www.bhddh.ri.gov

Phone: 401.462.3421

Email: BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov

ESPAÑOL: 401.462.3014

Division Updates

Sign-up for the next DD Community Forum

The next DD Community Forum is Tuesday, June 17th, from 3-4:30pm. This is a free, online event. During the event, you will learn updates from the Division and its partners. This includes [Advocates in Action](#), [RIPIN](#), and [Sherlock Center](#). This is also a great chance for us to learn from you, members of the community!

If you want to join, [sign-up for the June 17th DD Community Forum online](#). You must sign-up if you want to join.

We hope to connect with you there!



Your Life, Your Rights Program

Missed the Spring Your Life, Your Rights Program? No worries! You can now find a copy of the first three training slides online. Visit our [Your Life, Your Rights Program website for a copy of the training materials](#).

We will be back in the Fall for the second half of the series, covering topics like:

- **Disability Rights:** Understanding the laws that protect you as a person with a disability.
- **Housing Rights:** Your right to fair, safe housing, whether you rent or own.
- **Voting Rights:** Laws designed to safeguard your right to vote.
- **Employment Rights:** Ensuring you feel safe and are treated well at work
- **Being Stopped by Police:** Knowing the laws that protect you in interactions with law enforcement.

Stay tuned for details about the Fall series!



Community News

Know Your Rights Tip

In the last few newsletters, we shared tips on how you can get more active in protecting your rights. One of the tips was about talking to your lawmakers, including your Senators and House of Representatives. In this Know Your Rights Tip, we will share details on how to find your lawmakers and what they can help you with.

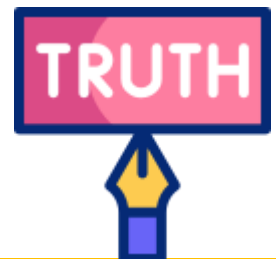
You have local and State lawmakers. Your local lawmakers depend on which city or town you live in. Their work focuses on making your local community better. For example, they can help make your local streets safer by fixing potholes or adding sidewalks. They also help make laws that impact your local schools, hospitals, and more. Visit the State of Rhode Island General Assembly website to find your local [Sentator](#) or [House of Representative](#).

Your State lawmakers are the same for everyone living in Rhode Island. Their work focuses on the entire state or country. For example, they can help make sure programs like Medicaid and Social Security are available. They also help make laws that impact our country. State lawmakers are also known as U.S. Congress members. Visit [Congress.gov](#) for a list of our State lawmakers.

Fact Checking Websites

Many news companies have moved their information online. This has led to thousands of news stories being posted online every day. Not every news story is based on facts. Some may not tell the whole story about an event, while others may just lie. With so much information out there, it can be hard to find the truth. There are many things you can do to try to find the truth. To start, try visiting these two fact checking websites for truthful news updates:

1. [Factcheck.org](#)
2. [Politifact.com](#)



Community News

Ana Victoria Espino de Santiago: Making History



Ana Victoria Espino de Santiago, a 25-year-old woman from Mexico, has become the world's first lawyer with Down Syndrome. She studied law at Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas because she wanted to help people with disabilities.

Her journey wasn't easy. The education system wasn't designed for students like her, but with determination and support, she completed her studies and earned her degree.

In Mexico, graduates don't need to pass a bar exam to become lawyers, so she is officially recognized in her field. Ana Victoria also dreams of being a politician. She has spoken at government events to push for more inclusion and rights for people with disabilities. In addition to her work, she is an artist and has displayed her paintings in important places.

Her story proves that with perseverance, dreams can come true. She is inspiring many to believe in themselves and work toward a more inclusive world.

You can [read the original story on The Latin Times](#).

Community News

Community Resources

Our local libraries are powerful community resources. From the library you can rent books, movies, CDs, and more. You can also take free classes or workshops. Every town or city library has their own programs and events. For example:

- [Cranston Public Library](#) offers adult craft groups and tech training.
- [Pawtucket Public Library](#) offers monthly Spanish and yoga classes for adults.
- [Providence Public Library](#) offers adult English classes, digital training, and small business workshops.

Each library will offer different things. You can go to any library in the state. For a list of public libraries, visit the [Ocean State Libraries website](#). On this website, you will also find a list of [free online resources](#), like [Ask RI](#).

Ask RI is the state's online resource center. Two interesting resources to explore are:

1. [Flipster](#). This resource offers digital magazine access.
2. [Consumer Health](#). This is an online library of health-related books, journals, and more. One resource posted on this site is a [Depression Toolkit](#) which offers ways to improve your mental health.

Stay Informed with Rhode Island's Medicaid Updates!

Need information on Medicaid eligibility, renewals, health plans, and services? Visit [StayCovered.ri.gov](#). This website has everything you need in one place! The updated website makes finding answers simple.

Have thoughts on the new website? You can share your feedback through the [community partner feedback form](#).

Community Resources

Accessibility Tip

June is National Safety Month which is about helping people stay safe at work and in their community. Here are some tips to help you stay safe at work in Rhode Island.

Workplace Safety Tips for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)

- **Know your rights:** Rhode Island has laws to protect workers, including fair pay, safe work conditions, and handling dangerous materials.
- **Ask for help:** Employers must provide support and accommodations for workers under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- **Stay safe at work:** The Work Safer Program offers free safety checkups to help businesses fix hazards and keep workers safe.
- **Be ready for emergencies:** Learn your workplace's exit routes and who to call in an emergency.

Community Safety Tips

- **Stay safe in public:** Look for accessible paths and safe places when out in the community.
- **Know your rights with police:** Learn the laws that protect people with disabilities when talking to law enforcement.
- **Safe housing:** Understand your right to fair and secure housing that meets accessibility needs.

Helpful Resources in Rhode Island

- [Workforce Regulation and Safety](#): Protects workers' rights, fair wages, and safe conditions.
- [Work Safer Program](#): Helps Rhode Island businesses create safe workspaces.
- [National Safety Council](#): Shares safety tips and training to prevent accidents.

Community Resources

World Environment Day



World Environment Day was on June 5th, but you can still help!

World Environment Day is all about protecting nature and keeping our communities clean. This year's focus is ending plastic pollution. Here are some ways you can help:

- **Join an accessible cleanup.** Find parks or beaches with easy paths and help pick up trash in a safe way.
- **Use less plastic.** Bring your own bags, bottles, and containers to reduce waste.
- **Grow and care for plants.** Help in a garden or plant flowers to make green spaces better for everyone.
- [Learn about recycling on the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation \(RIRRC\) website.](#)
- [Visit Save The Bay](#) to get involved in coastal cleanups and environmental education programs.
- [Visit GrowSmart Rhode Island](#) to support green spaces and safe, accessible outdoor areas.

Let's work together to take care of our planet!

Community Resources

Self-Care and Mental Health

Men's Health Week is June 10–16, 2025. This is a great time to focus on feeling strong and healthy. Here are some easy ways to take care of yourself:

- **Visit the doctor.** Regular checkups help catch health problems early.
- **Eat healthy foods.** Choose fruits, veggies, and proteins for energy and strength.
- **Move your body.** Walking, swimming, or fun activities can help you stay active.
- **Take care of your mind.** Talk to someone if you feel stressed or need support.

Helpful Resources in Rhode Island:

- [Rhode Island Department of Health](#): Offers disability-friendly health programs.
- [The Arc Rhode Island](#): Supports people with I/DD and their families.
- [Men's Health Network](#): Shares tips and checkup reminders for staying healthy.

Taking small actions can make a big difference in your health!



Community Resources

Pride Month

Pride Month is a time to celebrate who you are, support others, and stand up for LGBTQIA+ rights. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) are an important part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Here are some ways to get involved and helpful resources in Rhode Island:

- Go to a Pride event. Rhode Island has fun and welcoming Pride festivals and parades.
- Learn About LGBTQIA+ Rights. Everyone deserves respect and equality, no matter their identity. [ACLU of Rhode Island](#) helps people understand LGBTQIA+ rights and fights against unfair treatment.
- Find a safe space. Connect with groups that support people with I/DD and LGBTQIA+ identities.
- Show your pride. Wear bright colors, create art, or share your story in a way that feels good to you.

Helpful Resources in Rhode Island:

- [Rhode Island Pride](#) hosts events and supports LGBTQIA+ advocacy.
- [The Arc Rhode Island](#) helps people with I/DD find support and community.
- [GLAD \(GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders\)](#) shares legal resources for LGBTQIA+ individuals.



Everyone deserves to feel included and celebrated!

Community Events

Calendar of Events

Explore upcoming events in your community. Unless noted, these events are free and open to the public. You may have to sign-up a few days before the event to go.

Event	Date & Time	Location	Sign-up
“Work Pays! An Introduction to Youth SSI Work Incentives” by Sherlock Center	Wednesday, June 11, 2025, 12- 1pm	Zoom	Work Pays online sign-up.
“Introduction to Person-Centered Thinking” by Sherlock Center	Mondays and Wednesdays June 16, 18, 23 and 25 4-5:30pm	Zoom	Person-Centered Thinking event page.
“Family Leadership Project 2.0” by Best Life RI and Starfire	Monday, June 16, 2025, from 6-7pm	Online	Visit the Best Life RI website to sign-up.
“DD Community Forum” by the Division	Tuesday, June 17 th , 2025, 3- 4:30pm	Zoom	DD Community Forum sign-up webpage.
"Scoop, Snack, Chat: A Sweet Social Gathering" by RIPIN	Wednesday, June 26, 2025, 4pm- 6:30pm	imPOSSIBLE Dream, Warwick	Sign-up on the Scoop, Snack, Chat webpage.
Supporting Families Best Practice Series “Bridging Aging and Disability” by National Collaborative for Supporting Families	Wednesday, June 26, 2025, 2pm	Zoom	Supporting Families Best Practice Series online sign-up.

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 about the Division

Want to find out more about the Division? Visit the [Division's webpage](#). You will find information on services, resources, and more.

To contact Division staff, review the Contact List attached to this newsletter. You can also find a full list of staff on the [Division's Contact Us webpage](#).

You are always welcome to send general questions to BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov. Please do not email critical issues.

The Division is open Monday to Friday from 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM.



Division of Developmental Disabilities Staff Contacts

Main Phone: (401) 462-3421	Website: https://bhddh.ri.gov/
Fax Phone: (401) 462-2775	Behavioral Health Link (BH Link): (401) 414-5465
Spanish Phone: (401) 462-3014	Report Abuse: (401) 462-2629
TDD: (401) 462-3226	

Administrative Team

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Eligibility Unit

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Transition Unit

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Residential

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