



DD News and Updates

# Newsletter

**Volume 37**

October 31, 2025

## Inside This Issue

- Division Updates
- Community News
- Community Resources
- Community Events
- Reporting Abuse
- Staff Contact List



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

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# Division Updates

## A Note from the Director, Kevin Savage

Dear I/DD Community Partners,

Fall is here, bringing cooler air and colorful leaves. It reminds us that change is always happening. Change can be exciting, but it can also feel uncertain. That's why it's important to be thankful for the people who support us—and to remember to support each other.

Some people in our community still face challenges. They may not have the support they need to find jobs, live in safe housing, or take part in community life. While we've made progress, we must keep working to improve our systems and stay committed to long-term change.

October marks the 80th Anniversary of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. This is a time to celebrate the success of people with disabilities who have found jobs or started their own businesses. It's also a time to thank Rhode Island businesses that have partnered with the I/DD community. These businesses see the value in hiring people with disabilities and recognize the strengths they bring to the workplace.

On behalf of BHDDH, I want to thank all employers and individuals with I/DD who are part of this journey. Your efforts help build a stronger Rhode Island and set a great example for others.

Sincerely,

Kevin W. Savage

Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities

BHDDH



# Community News

## Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month in Rhode Island

Hispanic Heritage Month is a time to celebrate the cultures and stories of people from Latin America. In Rhode Island, there are fun events with music, dancing, food, and art. Everyone is welcome—including people with disabilities—to join the fun and learn something new.

### Yummy Places to Eat:

- [Tuxpan Taquería in Central Falls](#): Tasty Mexican food.
- [Maíz in Pawtucket](#): Colombian street food.

### Cool Groups to Learn From:

- [Rhode Island Latino Arts](#): They host art shows, cooking nights, and storytelling events.
- [Rhode Island Historical Society](#): They teach about Hispanic history in Rhode Island through fun programs.



Image source: [www.rilatinoarts.org](http://www.rilatinoarts.org)



### Fun Events You Can Go To in Rhode Island in November 2025:

#### Providence Salsa Bachata Festival

- **Dates:** November 14–15
- **Location:** Envision Hotel, Providence
- **Details:** A weekend full of Latin dance workshops, performances, and social dancing.

### Sabor Latino: A Taste of Mexico

- **Date:** November 20, 6–7:30 PM
- **Location:** Taquería Lupita, Providence
- **Details:** Enjoy authentic Mexican food and hear stories from local chefs. Hosted by Rhode Island Latino Arts, this event is designed to be inclusive and community-focused. [Event details can be found on their website.](#)

# Community News

## Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month is a time to celebrate the cultures, stories, and history of people from Latin America. Here are some groups and websites where you can learn more and join in the fun!

### Local Groups in Rhode Island

- [Colombian American Cultural Society](#): Shares Colombian traditions like music, food, and holidays.
- [Guatemalan American Association of Rhode Island](#): Teaches about Guatemalan culture and helps families in the community.
- [Puerto Rican Institute for the Arts and Advocacy](#): Supports Puerto Rican artists and shares their stories.
- [Rhode Island Latino Arts](#): Offers art shows, cooking nights, and storytelling events for everyone.

### Websites to Explore

- [Library of Congress Hispanic Heritage Month Site](#): Learn about Hispanic history through pictures, videos, and stories from museums and parks.
- [National Museum of the American Latino](#): See how Hispanic and Latino people helped shape American history.
- [Gilder Lehrman Institute Resources](#): Teachers and students can find easy-to-read stories and history lessons.
- [PBS Hispanic Heritage Month Shows](#): Watch videos that show how Hispanic and Latino people have made America stronger.

### Special Projects in Rhode Island

- [Nuestras Raíces](#): A project that collects stories from Latino families in Rhode Island.
- [Timeline of Latinos in Rhode Island](#): Shows how Latino people have helped build Rhode Island from the 1920s to today.

# Community News

## Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. It's a time when people wear pink, share stories, and learn how to stay healthy. **Breast cancer** is a disease that affects many people, and this month helps us support those who are fighting it.

### ♥ What You Can Do

- Wear pink to show support.
- Learn about breast health and how to check for changes.
- Talk to a doctor if you have questions or worries.
- Support friends and family who may be going through treatment.



Image source: [www.varnett.org](http://www.varnett.org)

### 🏠 Places in Rhode Island That Help

- Gloria Gemma Breast Cancer Resource Foundation Offers free programs, support groups, and events for people with breast cancer. [Visit their website](#)
- Women's Cancer Program at Lifespan Helps with screenings and care for women in Rhode Island. [Learn more on their website](#)

### ♥ Ways to Help After Breast Cancer Awareness Month

- Keep Wearing Pink. Wearing pink shows you care. You can wear pink clothes, bracelets, or pins all year long.
- Talk About It. Share what you learned with friends and family. Talking helps people understand and feel supported.
- Help Local Groups. You can donate money, volunteer your time, or help spread the word about these Rhode Island groups:
  - [Gloria Gemma Foundation](#): Offers free help and events for people with breast cancer.
  - [Lifespan Women's Cancer Program](#): Helps women get care and screenings.

# Community News

## Rights Tip

We've talked about how laws are made and who makes them. But there are other rules that affect our rights too—these are called **policies** and **procedures**.

A **policy** is a rule or plan made by a group, like a school, workplace, or government. It helps people know what is allowed and what is expected. They can affect things like:

- How you get services
- What support you can ask for
- What happens if something goes wrong

A **procedure** is a step-by-step way to follow a policy. It tells you what to do and how to do it.

### Example of how this works for you:

Let's say you're part of a day program or supported employment through **BHDDH** (Rhode Island's Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals).

They have a **policy** that says every person has the right to make choices about their daily activities.

The **procedure** might say:

- You meet with your support team once a year to make a plan.
- You choose what kind of work or activities you want to do.
- Staff help you follow your plan and speak up if something isn't working.

Knowing this policy means you can ask questions like:

- "Can I try a new job?"
- "Can I change my schedule?"
- "Who do I talk to if I want something different?"

Policies and procedures help you know your rights, ask for support, and handle problems when they happen.



# Community News

## Your Voice Matters—Take the NCI Survey!

Every year, Rhode Island takes part in a national survey called the **National Core Indicators (NCI) Survey**. It runs from **November to June** and asks people who get services from **BHDDH** about their experiences.

This is your chance to share what's going well and what could be better. Your answers help improve services and show where more support or funding is needed.





**The Sherlock Center** will invite about **600 adults** to take a survey about their services. If you're chosen, someone will call you to explain the survey and answer your questions. You can take the survey during the call or pick a time that works for you.

You can have a family member or friend with you. If you need help, we'll make sure you get it. Your answers are private and won't change your services.

By sharing your thoughts, you help make Rhode Island's services better—for you and others.

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-  Learn more: [Sherlock Center NCI Adult In-Person Survey](#)
-  NCI-IDD Info: [National Core Indicators – People Driven Data](#)

## Stay Safe and Know Your Rights

If you're worried about **immigration officers (ICE)**, it's important to know your rights.



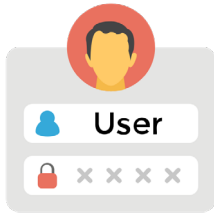
- You do not have to open your door unless they show a paper signed by a judge.
- You have the right to stay silent and ask for a lawyer.
- You can have someone you trust with you.

For help and more information, contact **Progreso Latino in Rhode Island**. They support families and offer legal help.  Call: (401) 728-5920  Visit: [progresolatino.org](http://progresolatino.org)

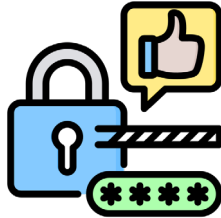
# Community Resource

## Cyber Security Awareness Month

**Cybersecurity Awareness Month** happens every October. It's a time to learn how to stay safe online. That means protecting your personal information, like your passwords, Social Security number, and bank info.



Create passwords that are long and hard to guess. Use a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols. Avoid using your name or birthday.



Use a different password for each account. If one gets stolen, the others stay safe.



Always update your phone, tablet, or computer when it asks. Updates help protect you from new threats.



If an email or message looks strange or asks for personal info, don't click on it. Ask someone you trust before opening links or attachments.



Delete old documents you don't need—especially ones with personal information like your Social Security number or address.



Save important files to a USB drive or cloud storage. That way, you won't lose them if your device breaks.

Share with Care. Think before posting online. Don't share private info like your address, phone number, or where you are right now. For more tips, visit:

<https://www.aboundhealth.com/news/internet-safety-for-individuals-with-idd>

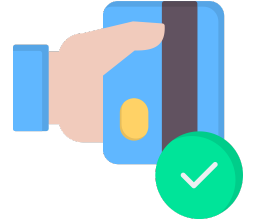
# Community Resources

## Federal Benefits Are Going Electronic

As of September 30, most federal benefits were sent by **direct deposit** or **prepaid debit card**. Paper checks will be used less often.

**Direct deposit** sends your money safely and quickly to your bank account—no paper check needed.

A **prepaid debit card** is a card with money you put on it that you can use to shop, pay bills, or get cash—even if you don't have a bank account.



If you still get paper checks, you should switch to electronic payments soon to avoid delays. You can:

- Use direct deposit to a bank account
- Use a Direct Express® debit card if you don't have a bank account

These options are faster, safer, and easier than waiting for a check in the mail.

If you need help switching or have questions, you can:

- Call **1-800-772-1213** for Social Security help
- Call **1-800-333-1795** to sign up for Direct Express®
- Ask someone you trust to help you



If you want to keep getting paper checks, you must call the U.S. Treasury at 1-877-874-6347 to ask for a waiver.

Please share this with others so everyone can keep getting their benefits on time.

This information comes from the [Social Security](https://www.ssa.gov) website.

# Community Resources

## Important SNAP Program Update

The **RI Department of Human Services** wants to share an important update about **SNAP (food assistance)**. Starting **November 1**, some changes from the federal government may affect how SNAP works for some households. More changes may happen later.

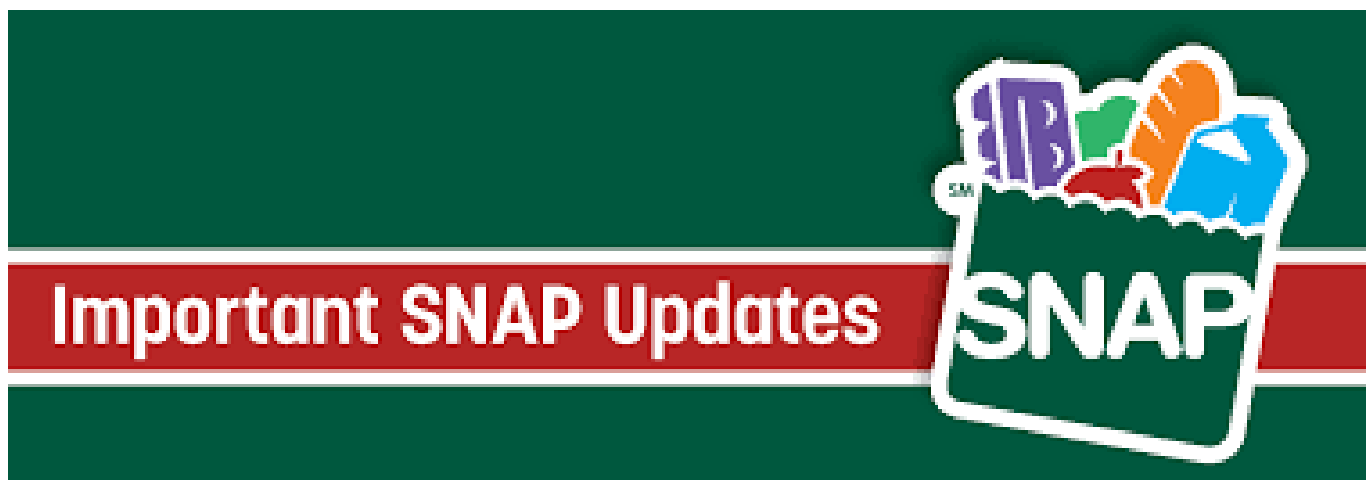
Here's what's changing:

- How utility costs are counted
- New work rules
- Changes to who qualifies based on legal status

To help answer questions, there's a helpful website with all the latest info: [staycovered.ri.gov/SNAP-updates](https://staycovered.ri.gov/SNAP-updates). It includes:

- [A general notice](#)
- [SNAP changes: A one-page summary](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [Local and state resources](#)

This page will be updated regularly, so check back often. Please share this with anyone who may be affected.



# 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
Supporting Meaningful Employment: Job Retention and Coaching	Thursday, October 2 - Thursday, November 20, 2025, Various times	Zoom	<a href="#">Register now</a>
Celebrating disability inclusion and workforce impact through UCEDD partnerships nationwide.	Tuesday, October 28, 2025, 2-3pm	Online	<a href="#">Register now</a>
Workplace Diversity and Disability Inclusion: A Talk with Leen & Simms	Tuesday, October 28th, 2025, 1:00 pm	Zoom	<a href="#">Register for the event</a>
“Accessible Cooking Starts with the Right Tools” hosted by ATIA Learning Center	Tuesday, October 28, 2025, from 3-4:30 pm	Live stream presentation	<a href="#">Sign up for the course</a> Cost of course is \$55.00
“Advancing an Inclusive Workforce in 2025: A Conversation with AARP and Disability Belongs”	Wednesday, October 29th, 2025 Time: 1:00 pm	Zoom	<a href="#">Register for the event</a>
Live Webinar: What is the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS-A) and How Do You Prepare? Hosted by RIPIN	Tuesday, November 4 at 6:00 PM	Zoom	<a href="#">Register now</a>
“Family Employment Awareness Training for Adults (FEAT-A)” Hosted by RIPIN	Tuesday, November 4 - Tuesday, November 18, 2025 Schedule 12 - 2:00pm	On Zoom and at RIPIN, 300 Jefferson Blvd., Suite 300, Warwick	<a href="#">Register for the event</a>

# Community Events

## Calendar of Events

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Event	Date & Time	Location	Sign-up
<p>“Working With Benefits - Yes, You Can! ” Learn how work impacts SSI/SSDI benefits—hosted by Sherlock Center.</p>	<p>Wednesday, November 12, 2025, 12- 1:00pm</p>	<p>Zoom</p>	<p><a href="#">Register for the event!</a></p>
<p>“Dementia and IDD Resources: Free Webinar and New Course”</p>	<p>Monday, November 17, 2025, 7 - 8:00 pm</p>	<p>Zoom</p>	<p><a href="#">Register for the event</a></p>
<p>“Virtual Job Fair” Connect with employers in HCBS and LTSS at virtual job fair.</p>	<p>Tuesday, November 18, 2025, Registration due by Friday, November 14, 2025</p>	<p>Online</p>	<p><a href="#">Registration is free for both jobseekers and employers.</a></p>
<p>“Assistive Technology Conference of New England”</p>	<p>Thursday, November 20, 2025 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM</p>	<p>Crowne Plaza Warwick, 801 Greenwich Ave, RI 02886</p>	<p><a href="#">Register for the event.</a> Early Bird Attendee Ticket – \$165</p>
<p>2nd Annual Statewide RIPIN Self-Directed Support Conference</p> 	<p>Friday, March 20, 2026</p>	<p>DoubleTree Warwick, 2081 Post Rd, RI 02886</p>	<p>Tell RIPIN what topics you want to learn more about at: Self Directed Support Program <a href="mailto:selfdirectedsupport@ripin.org">selfdirectedsupport@ripin.org</a></p>

# 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 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](mailto: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

<b>Main Phone:</b> (401) 462-3421	<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://bhddh.ri.gov/">https://bhddh.ri.gov/</a>
<b>Fax Phone:</b> (401) 462-2775	<b>Behavioral Health Link (BH Link):</b> 988
<b>Spanish Phone:</b> (401) 462-3014	<b>Report Abuse:</b> (401) 462-2629
<b>TDD:</b> (401) 462-3226	

## Administrative Team

Name	Job Title	Phone	Email
<b>Kevin Savage</b>	<b>Director</b>	<b>462-0581</b>	<a href="mailto:Kevin.Savage@bhddh.ri.gov">Kevin.Savage@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
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Susan Hayward	Administrator, Transition	462-2519	<a href="mailto:Susan.Hayward@bhddh.ri.gov">Susan.Hayward@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Tracy Levesque	Associate Director, Clinical and RICLAS	462-0209	<a href="mailto:Tracy.Levesque@bhddh.ri.gov">Tracy.Levesque@bhddh.ri.gov</a>

## Social Caseworker Units

### Unit 1

Name	Job Title	Phone	Email
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### Unit 2

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### Unit 3

Name	Job Title	Phone	Email
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## Eligibility Unit

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Kim Wright	Information Aide	462-2584	<a href="mailto:Kimberly.Wright@bhddh.ri.gov">Kimberly.Wright@bhddh.ri.gov</a>

## SIS Unit

Name	Job Title	Phone	Email
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## Transition Unit

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## Case Management Units

### Unit 1

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### Unit 2

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