



DD News and Updates

Newsletter

Volume 40

February 16,
2026

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**BLACK HISTORY IS
AMERICAN HISTORY**

February 1- February 28

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

Website: www.bhddh.ri.gov

Email: BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov

Phone: 401.462.3421

ESPAÑOL: 401.462.3014

Division Updates

A Note from the Director, Kevin Savage

Dear I/DD Community Partners,

Hello everyone,

February is Black History Month. This is a special time to learn about Black leaders, artists, and community members who have helped make our country and our state a better place. Their stories remind us why fairness, respect, and kindness matter.

At BHDDH, we believe everyone deserves to be included and treated with dignity. Black History Month is a chance for all of us to celebrate diversity and to learn from the past so we can build a stronger, more welcoming community today.

I encourage you to take time this month to learn something new, listen to others, and celebrate the many ways people of all backgrounds make Rhode Island a great place to live.

Thank you for being an important part of our community.

Warmly,

Kevin,

Kevin W. Savage

Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities

BHDDH



Community News

Black History & Disability: What it Means

Why This Matters

Black History Month is a time to learn about fairness, respect, and inclusion. Black history and disability history are connected because both groups have faced unfair treatment in the past. Learning this helps us build a kinder, more welcoming community today.



1. Civil Rights and Disability Rights Are Connected

- The Civil Rights Movement helped stop unfair treatment based on race.
- The Disability Rights Movement used many of the same ideas to fight for equal rights for people with disabilities.
- Both movements worked for fairness, respect, and equal treatment.

2. Important Laws That Protect Rights

- **1964 – Civil Rights Act:** Stopped discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.
- **1990 – Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** Stopped discrimination based on disability.
 - The ADA was built on ideas from the Civil Rights Act.



Community News

Black History & Disability: What it Means

🚫 3. People Faced Unfair Treatment in the Past

- “**Ugly Laws**” (1800s): These laws said people with visible disabilities could not be seen in public.
- **Jim Crow Laws (1876–1965)**: Forced Black and white people to be separated
 - These rules also affected people with disabilities in hospitals and institutions.



👊 4. Black Leaders Supported Disability Rights

- In **1977**, disability activists held a 25-day sit-in to demand rights.
- The **Black Panther Party** brought food every day to help the protesters.
 - This support helped the protest succeed.

🌟 5. Harriet Tubman Was a Black Disability Advocate

- Harriet Tubman had a traumatic brain injury as a teen.
- She lived with seizures and narcolepsy for the rest of her life.
- Even with her disability, she helped more than **300 enslaved people** escape to freedom.
- She is an important example of strength and courage.

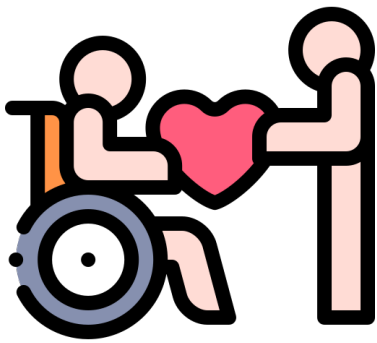


Community News

Black History & Disability

What Self-Advocates Say:

- “Everyone has rights.”
- “Try to understand other people’s experiences.”
- “We have more in common than we think.”



Why This Matters for People With I/DD

- Both Black Americans and people with disabilities have faced discrimination.
- Learning this history helps us speak up for fairness today.
- It reminds us that **everyone deserves to be included.**

Want to Learn More?

Visit the [Virtual Museum of disABILITY History timeline](#) to explore more stories about Black disability history.

Virtual Museum



Community News

New Rhode Island Employment Directory

Rhode Island now has a new [Caring Careers Employment Directory](#). A **directory** is a list of information all in one place. It helps you find what you need quickly, like job openings, phone numbers, or services. This directory helps people find jobs in healthcare and connects job seekers with organizations across the state. It also helps agencies reach people who want to work in caring careers.



If your organization has job listings or contact information that needs to be added or updated, you can email changes to dleclair@riilsr.org. Keeping this directory up to date helps everyone.

The directory was created by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and the Healthcare Education Workforce Center. Their goal is to make it easier for Rhode Islanders to find meaningful jobs that help others.

Your Voice Matters—A Quick Reminder About the NCI Survey!

Every year, Rhode Island takes part in the National Core Indicators (NCI) Survey. It asks people who get services from BHDDH about their experiences so we can learn what's working and what needs improvement.

The Sherlock Center will be calling about 600 adults to invite them to take the survey. If you're selected, someone will call to explain how it works and answer your questions. You can take the survey right then or choose a time that's better for you.

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

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

Community News

Join RI SIBS!

Are you a sibling of a person with a disability in Rhode Island? RI SIBS is here for you. Our mission is to support and empower siblings with the tools, connections, and opportunities to speak up, work together, and stay involved with our brothers and sisters. We focus on the issues that matter most to our families. Let's connect and support one another.

Scan the QR code to request to join the RI SIBS Facebook group:



Supported Decision-Making in Rhode Island

Supported decision-making (SDM) helps adults with disabilities make their own choices. They get support from people they trust and choose. These supporters help explain options so the person can decide what is best for them.

The Supported Decision-Making Coalition works to help Rhode Islanders learn about SDM and use it in their lives. The group meets four times a year, usually on **the fourth Wednesday of the month from 3–4 p.m.** You can join the meeting in person or online.

We offer trainings and presentations. We also answer questions and help people start and complete an SDM agreement. Everyone is welcome, and we are always happy to have new members.

If you want to join, ask for a training, or have questions, contact Kate Sherlock at kates@sargentcenter.org.

Community News

Department of Human Services (DHS) ASL Walk-In Customer Support

DHS ASL Walk-In Customer Support

American Sign Language Interpreting Services

January 2026 - June 2026



No Appointments Required



WHERE

DHS Pawtucket Office
249 Roosevelt Avenue
Pawtucket, RI



WHEN

9:00 AM–12:00 PM

- February 12
- March 12
- April 9
- May 14
- June 11



WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Bring questions
- Get help completing applications
- Receive updates
- Learn about programs
- Navigate DHS systems and processes



Community News

Apoyo sin cita previa en ASL del Departamento de Servicios Humanos (DHS)

Servicio de atención al cliente ASL sin cita previa de DHS

Servicios de interpretación de lenguaje de señas americano
Enero de 2026 - junio de 2026



No es necesario concertar cita



DÓNDE

Oficina de DHS en
Pawtucket
249 Roosevelt Avenue
Pawtucket, RI



CUANDO

9:00 a. m. a 12:00 p. m.

- 12 de febrero
- 12 de marzo
- 9 de abril
- 14 de mayo
- 11 de junio



QUÉ PUEDE HACER

- Traer preguntas.
- Obtener ayuda para completar solicitudes.
- Recibir actualizaciones.
- Obtener información sobre los programas.
- Navegar por los sistemas y procesos de DHS.



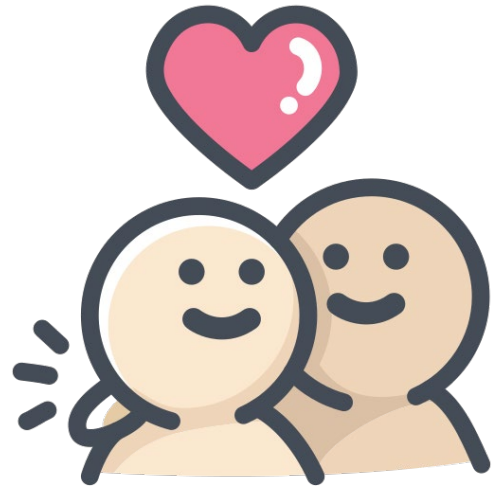
Community News

Rights Tip

Healthy relationships matter. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect, make their own choices, and feel safe with the people in their lives. The [Rhode Island DD Bill of Rights](#) helps remind us that people with disabilities have the same rights as anyone else when it comes to friendships, dating, and personal boundaries.

Here is a friendly reminder of some of the **relationship rights** in time for Valentine's Day:

- **Have different types of relationships**
- **Start new relationships**
- **End relationships at any time**
- **Be treated with dignity and respect**
- **Not be abused or hurt in relationships**
- **Have privacy when you want it**
- **Say “no” to things you don't want to do**



For the full list of [Relationship Rights](#), the [Easy-Read Guide](#), and [training slides](#), please visit the DD Rights page on the BHDDH website: [Your Life, Your Rights Program | Dept. of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals](#)



Helpful Resources in Rhode Island

BHDDH – Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD)

For questions about services, rights, or your plan.

Phone: (401) 462-3421

Website: bhddh.ri.gov

Love is Respect

Visit this website to learn about relationships. The website shares information about dating, staying safe, and more.

Website: <https://www.loveisrespect.org>

Community Resource

Six Easy Ways to Be an Ally During Black History Month

Black History Month is a time to learn, celebrate, and support our Black community. Everyone can be an ally. Small actions can make a big difference. Here are simple ways to show kindness, respect, and inclusion this month and all year long.



Learn Something New

Read or watch something about Black history.

Learning helps us understand each other.



Support Black Voices and Stories.

People share their experiences in many ways.

Show that you care and that their stories matter.



Celebrate Black Leaders

Talk about Black artists, inventors, and heroes.

Share one cool fact with someone.



Be Fair and Kind.

If you see someone being treated unfairly, tell a trusted adult.



Include Everyone.

Invite people of all backgrounds to join in.

Everyone should feel welcome.



Support Black Businesses.

Try food, art or products from Black-owned businesses in your community.

Black History Month is a time to learn, include, and support everyone. Many Black leaders throughout history also had disabilities, including people with I/DD. To learn more about Black disability history and how to be an ally, visit the National Black Disability Coalition at blackdisability.org.

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
Art Exhibition at the Atrium Gallery: See artwork by local Rhode Island artists, including paintings, drawings, and mixed-media pieces.	Started on Friday, January 23 – Wednesday, March 18, 2026	Atrium Gallery One Capitol Hill Providence, RI 02908	Open to the Public
Self-Direction Connection	February 21, 2026, 10:00–11:30 a.m.	In-Person & Zoom	Register Online
Person Driven Low-Hi Tech Overview Training	February 27, 2026, 9:00-4:00pm	In-person	Register Online
Work Pays! An Introduction to Youth SSI Work Incentives	Wednesday, March 11, 2026, 12:00–1:00 p.m.	Zoom	Register Online
Self-Directed Support Conference (RIPIN)	Friday, Mar 20, 2026, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM	DoubleTree by Hilton, Warwick, RI	Register Online
BHDDH Housing Office Hours with Michelle Brophy. An open space for the community to touch base on Housing topics.	First Friday of every month starting, Friday, February 6, 2026. 9:00 AM	Teams (online)	Join Here

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): 988
Spanish Phone: (401) 462-3014	Report Abuse: (401) 462-2629
TDD: (401) 462-3226	

Administrative Team

Name	Job Title	Phone	Email
Kevin Savage	Director	462-0581	Kevin.Savage@bhddh.ri.gov
Heather Mincey	Assistant Director	462-1218	Heather.Mincey@bhddh.ri.gov
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Melissa Greenlief	Administrator, Comm Services	462-2459	Melissa.Greenlief@bhddh.ri.gov
Susan Hayward	Administrator, Transition	462-2519	Susan.Hayward@bhddh.ri.gov
Vacant	Associate Director, Prgm Perf		
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Eligibility Unit

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SIS Unit

Name	Job Title	Phone	Email
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Transition Unit

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Transition Unit Team A

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Residential

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Communications and Training

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