

Eye on Advocacy

e-newsletter

AUGUST 29, 2025

AUGUST IS

DON'T BE

A BULLY

MONTH

NJCDD's Eye on Advocacy weekly e-newsletter is published every Tuesday, focusing on important news and events for the intellectual and/or developmental disabilities community. You are welcome to submit news items and feedback to njcdd@njcdd.org

Subscribe to NJCDD's Publications

AUGUST IS

DON'T BE A

BULLY

MONTH

Don't Be a Bully Month

Together We Are Stronger Than Bullying

'Don't be a Bully Month' is held every August to raise awareness about bullying and its effects on people with disabilities.

Whether at home, school, a place of worship, or the workplace, bullying can occur at any time, anywhere, and to anyone. It is everyone's right to live in a world free of harassment and abuse.

During this month, we are reminded to always be kind and compassionate to others, to promote acceptance, and to promote inclusivity in order to prevent bullying.

Learn More

NJCDD Five-Year State Plan: A guide to fill out the Public Input Survey

The New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities (NJCDD) is responsible for identifying the most pressing needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families in New Jersey and advancing public policy and systems change activities.

One of the Council's most important tasks is creating a five-year state plan. The five-year state plan is like a roadmap. It helps the NJCDD prioritize what issues to work on over the next five years.

If you or someone you know has a developmental disability, the NJCDD wants to hear from you.

El Consejo de Nueva Jersey sobre Discapacidades del Desarrollo (NJCDD) es responsable de identificar las necesidades más urgentes de las personas con discapacidades del desarrollo y sus familias en Nueva Jersey, así como de promover políticas públicas y actividades de cambio sistémico.

Una de las tareas más importantes del Consejo es crear un plan estatal a cinco años. El plan estatal a cinco años es como un mapa. Ayuda al NJCDD a priorizar qué problemas abordar durante los próximos cinco años.

Si usted o alguien que conoce tiene una discapacidad del desarrollo, el NJCDD quiere escucharle

Please share your input by attending the last in our series of virtual listening sessions on

Wednesday, September 3 @ 12pm

Register Now: Final Listening Session

You can provide input by taking a survey

before it closes on Friday, September 5, 2025

English

Chinese

Korean

Spanish

Gujarati

Portuguese

Survey Video Resources

Are you curious about the survey? Are you unsure about how or where to access it? If so, we created two short videos that will answer all of your questions about the five-year state plan survey. Watch them now.

NJCDD Five-Year State Plan: Introduction of Public Input Survey

NJCDD Five-Year State Plan: A guide to fill out the Public Input Survey

For accommodations or assistance with providing input, call (609) 292-3745 or email njcdd@njcdd.org

For more information about the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities, please visit www.njcdd.org.

Take Action

COMMUNITY VOICES & VISION

NEXT STEPS IN THE BLUEPRINT FOR SAFE, HIGH-QUALITY RESIDENCES

VOCES Y VISIÓN DE LA COMUNIDAD

PRÓXIMOS PASOS EN EL PLAN PARA RESIDENCIAS SEGURAS Y DE ALTA CALIDAD

Join us for a full day of dynamic, topic-specific conversations regarding "A DRAFT Community Blueprint for Safe, High-Quality Licensed Settings." Together, we aim to shape better and safer homes for individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD). We'll host five live virtual sessions; each focused on a key area of reform. Attend one, some, or all, based on your interests and availability.

Wednesday,
September 17, 2025

9:00AM -3:30PM

Three Steps to Participate:

Read the DRAFT Community Blueprint
<https://tinyurl.com/yu5bvwwb>

Share your input
<https://tinyurl.com/4rsfyub9>

Register Here

Download the Flyer [HERE](#)

Multi-lingual closed captioning will be available. For questions, please contact Kyoko Coco, Kyoko.Coco@njcdd.org, 609-341-3112.

Todas las partes interesadas en la comunidad de personas con discapacidad son bienvenidas. Únase a nosotros para un día completo de discusiones sobre las reformas necesarias en el "Versión preliminar de plan comunitario para entornos con licencia seguros y de alta calidad". Al trabajar juntos, nuestro objetivo es dar forma a hogares mejores y más seguros para las personas con discapacidades intelectuales o del desarrollo (I/DD). Organizaremos cinco sesiones virtuales a lo largo del día. Cada uno se centró en un área clave de reforma. Asista a uno, algunos o todos, según sus intereses y disponibilidad.

Miércoles
17 de Septiembre de 2025

9:00AM -3:30PM

Tres pasos para participar:

Lee el borrador del Plano Comunitario
<https://tinyurl.com/yu5bvwwb>

Comparte tu opinión
<https://tinyurl.com/4rsfyub9>

Regístrate Aquí

Descarga el Folleto [AQUÍ](#)

Los subtítulos multilingües estarán disponibles usando Wordly. Si tiene preguntas, comuníquese con Kyoko Coco, Kyoko.Coco@njcdd.org, 609-341-3112.

A COMMUNITY BLUEPRINT FOR SAFE, HIGH-QUALITY LICENSED RESIDENCES

As of July 2025



Access the Recording

Virtual conversation: Ensuring Safety & Thriving Lives in Licensed Settings

In light of the "Hidden at Home" investigative news series, which exposed critical flaws in New Jersey's licensed residential settings for adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD). All stakeholders are welcome, particularly parents and other family members, to share their experiences. What's working? What's not working? How can we ensure our loved ones are safe, supported, and thriving?

This conversation aims to elevate the voices of families and drive meaningful change. Specifically, we want to learn your thoughts about how we – as a community – should move forward.

A Community Blueprint for Safe, High-quality Licensed Residences

Download the Blueprint

On June 30, 2025, the Regional Family Support Planning Councils' Health and Safety Subcommittee, the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities' Health and Wellness Subcommittee, and the Office of the New Jersey Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families co-hosted a listening session to hear directly from stakeholders about the successes, challenges, and ideas for improving safety and high-quality care in licensed residential settings.

As a result of the conversation, a draft Community Blueprint for Safe, High-Quality Licensed Residences was developed. This blueprint outlines key roles and responsibilities, as well as necessary reforms, across four stakeholder groups—State Government, Provider Agencies, Frontline Staff, and Family Members/Guardians—and includes broader areas like the use of technology and additional advocacy areas.

We invite you to review the draft Community Blueprint and share your feedback to help shape the path forward:

Share Your Feedback

Fiscal Intermediary (FI) Transition Update

The transition of the Division of Developmental Disabilities' (DDD) Vendor Fiscal/Employer Agent (VF/EA) Self-Directed Services Model from Public Partnerships LLC (PPL), the current fiscal intermediary, to Acumen Fiscal Agent (Acumen), is underway. For information, visit

[Acumen-NJ](#)
[DDD | 2025 Fiscal Intermediary Transition \(PPL to Acumen\)](#)

If you have not started your Acumen enrollment yet, you can help completing it, you can [book an appointment with Acumen](#) (phone, virtual, or in-person at their Hamilton office).

Updated SC Plan Revision Guidance

Please see the [SC Plan Revision Guidance for All Cohorts](#), updated August 22, 2025, which replaces all previous guidance and is available on the DDD FI Transition web page above.

Guidance Highlights

- For Cohort 1 – 4a plans: Support Coordinators must revise and get them approved as soon as possible.
- For Cohort 2 plans:
 - August 22 is the last day support coordinators will receive Billable Rate Notifications with an August 29 Plan Revision Approval Deadline and a September 14 Acumen Service Start Date.
 - Beginning August 23, Billable Rate Notifications will identify a new Plan Revision Approval Deadline and a new Acumen Service Start Date.
 - For Cohort 5 plans, **support coordinators must not enter any Acumen service start date other than the date identified on the Billable Rate Notification**. Doing so risks a disruption to services, a gap in SDE payments, or both.

NEW! Update for Acumen Transition Individuals and Families

Please see the [August 22 Fiscal Intermediary \(FI\) Transition](#) Update for Individuals and Families.

Update Highlights

- What to expect in terms of your Acumen Go-Live Date
- Mandatory Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) for SDEs.
- Mandatory Service Documentation for SDEs
- Restoration of Rollover Units Request Process

Acumen Transition Update and Q&A Webinars

Acumen and DDD are hosting weekly transition update webinars, with Q&A, for individuals and families, support coordinators, supports brokers, and vendors, every Thursday from 1 – 2 p.m. *unless otherwise noted.*

August 28

Thursday from 1 – 2 pm

[Register for August 28 Acumen Transition Webinar](#)

September 4

11 am – 12 pm

[Webinar For Support Coordinators and Supports Brokers](#)

1 – 2 pm

[Webinar for Individuals/Families, Authorized Representatives, Employers of Record, and Self-Directed Employees](#)

3 – 4 pm

[Webinar for Community Vendors and Individuals/Families who use Vendor Services](#)

September 11

11:30 am – 12:30 pm

[Webinar for Support Coordinators and Supports Brokers](#)

1 – 2 pm

[Webinar for Individuals/Families, Authorized Representatives, Employers of Record, and Self-Directed Employees](#)

3 – 4 pm

[Webinar for Community Vendors and Individuals/Families who use Vendor Services](#)

September 18

11 am – 12 pm

[Webinar for Support Coordinators and Supports Brokers](#)

1 – 2 pm

[Webinar for Individuals/Families, Authorized Representatives, Employers of Record, and Self-Directed Employees](#)

3 – 4 pm

[Webinar for Community Vendors and Individuals/Families who use Vendor Services](#)

September 25

11:30 am – 12:30 pm

[Webinar for Support Coordinators and Supports Brokers](#)

1 – 2 pm

[Webinar for Individuals/Families, Authorized Representatives, Employers of Record, and Self-Directed Employees](#)

3 – 4 pm

[Webinar for Community Vendors and Individuals/Families who use Vendor Services](#)

Upcoming Events



Training Tuesday

These trainings will explore ways to stay in shape at home for students and adults with IDD. A personal fitness trainer from IHT (In-Home Training LLC) will lead virtual trainings sessions showing how to stretch, perform body weight exercises, and practice self-care.

Dates & Times

Sep 2, 2025, at 11:00am

Sep 9, 2025, at 11:00am

Sep 16, 2025, at 11:00am

Sep 23, 2025, at 11:00am

[Register Here](#)



Division of
Developmental
Disabilities

DDD Update Webinar

REMINDER! Next DDD Update Webinar is Thursday, August 28, 2025

The next DDD Update Webinar is Thursday, August 28, 2025 at 10:30 a.m. Open to ALL.

[Register Here](#)



[Register Here](#)

Virtual Office Hours

The Arc of New Jersey's Healthcare Advocacy Program offers virtual office hours on Mondays from 1:00pm to 3:00pm.

Meet with the Director of Health Care Advocacy to discuss healthcare questions or concerns, for example, regarding Medicaid, Medicare, or Social Security, as they affect your family member or loved one with IDD.

Appointment slots are offered on a first-come, first-served basis and may be limited to 20 minutes, as needed, to accommodate more people.



TCNJ Career & Community Studies Fall Open House

CCS is a 4-year inclusive, college-based certificate program for young adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

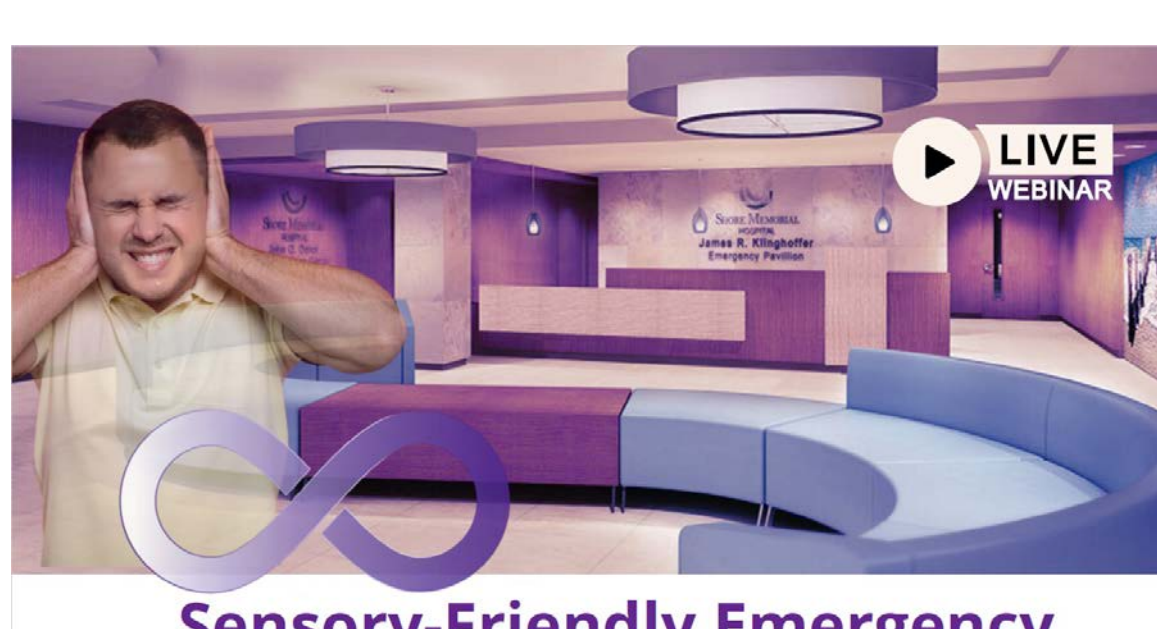
The program is designed to prepare students for adult life through academic rigor, career discovery/readiness, and peer socialization as part of a diverse community of learners at The College of New Jersey. CCS is granted CTP status (Comprehensive Training Program) by the U.S. Department of Education.

Sunday, September 14, 2025, from 9:30 am - 12:30 pm

The College of New Jersey, Ewing, NJ

Applications open August 1st for Fall 2026!

[Register Here](#)



Sensory-Friendly Emergency Care and Lab Services:

Enhancing Care for Patients with Disabilities

Tuesday, September 16, 2025 12:00 PM EST

Emergency medical care can be overwhelming for anyone —but for individuals with autism, sensory sensitivities, or other developmental disabilities, it can be especially distressing.

In this webinar, staff from Shore Medical Center will share how they've transformed their emergency department and lab to be more inclusive and accessible emergency care and lab services.

[Download the flyer here](#)

[Register Here](#)

Whether you're an individual, family member, or healthcare professional, join us to explore how small, meaningful changes can lead to more compassionate and accessible emergency care and lab services.

Questions about CLEP or need help registering?
Call 732-235-3277 or visit our website at clep.rutgers.edu



[Register Here](#)

Each year, the New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project (NJSAP) and the New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network (NJSSAN) work together to host the annual Fall Conference. This event is an opportunity for disability advocates to network, learn about current advocacy issues, and attend professional development workshops.

The theme of our 2025 in-person conference will be "Play Your Part." The Advisory Board members of the NJSSAN picked this topic to bring awareness that every person is a vital part of advocacy as a whole. Advocacy is stronger when we all speak up together and everyone 'plays their part'!

During our opening session, we will hear from some amazing speakers, including Patrice Jetter. There will also be an exhibitor hall, a keynote speaker, and a panel led by members of our NJSSAN. The Conference will end with a dance party/networking session. DJ Redline will be the DJ for our dance party/networking session. Exhibitors will also be available throughout the conference.

Facing the Future 2025

Uncharted Waters: Navigation Strategies for Competitive Integrated Employment

Friday, October 10, 2025 | 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Hyatt Regency New Brunswick



Sponsored by [The Boggs Center on Disability and Human Development](#) and [NJ APSE](#), the Facing the Future annual conference highlights best practices in supporting people with disabilities in career planning, supported and customized employment, and transition from school to work.

The 2025 conference features **12 workshops** on transition, support strategies, job coaching, and job development, and a **keynote presentation** by **Duncan Winburn**.

Continuing Education Credits are offered for Social Work, Rehabilitation Counseling, Education, and APSE Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP).

Registration includes all conference sessions, Continuing Education fees, continental breakfast, awards luncheon buffet, and dessert buffet.

[Register Here](#)

[View Brochure](#)

In the News



Disability Information Hub

Resources for New Jersey residents with disabilities, caregivers, parents, and advocates.



NJ Disability Information Hub

The **New Jersey Disability Information Hub** is proud to announce the addition of American Sign Language videos to its web pages.

To view a full playlist, visit [American Sign Language Videos](#).

For more resources, visit the

[New Jersey Disability Information Hub](#)



Women's Health & Down Syndrome

The National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) created a new [Women's Health & Down Syndrome](#) webpage covering topics such as preparing for gynecological visits, menopause, and additional feminine considerations. Click the link below for helpful resources, printable PDFs, and more information covering various topics regarding a woman's overall health. To learn more about NDSS visit [National Down Syndrome Society \(NDSS\)](#).

Women's Health & Down Syndrome



Explore an Accessible NJ Park near You

Fall is around the corner and the leaves are already starting to change colors, but this is also one of the best times of the year to still get outside and explore nature. Thanks to [Nature: Accessible For All](#), a statewide initiative to help promote outdoor activities regardless of ability, you can find an accessible park in your "neck of the woods." Click the link below to explore various parks throughout the state, and select the one you're interested in to see what's offered. Each park profile highlights important details like Trail Info, Scenic Spot Areas, Picnic Areas, Parking, Restrooms, Other Facilities, and Additional Barriers so that you can plan ahead for your day exploring and enjoying the fresh air and beautiful views. You can also filter the site by location name, county, or desired amenities.

Happy Trails!

Find an Accessible Park



Students and community members gather at a makeshift memorial outside of Apalachee High School on Sept. 5, 2024, in Winder, Ga. Two students and two teachers were shot and killed at the school the day before. Jessica McGowan

K-12 Dive | Kara Arundel

How to protect students' mental health during active shooter drills

Researchers suggest using trauma-informed practices and banning hyper-realistic simulations. Active shooter drills — while intended to make schools safer for students and staff — can cause mental, emotional and behavioral harm for the very populations they seek to protect.

A 234-page report released this month by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine made several recommendations to reduce those negative impacts, including trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate practices, as well as policies that prohibit high-intensity or hyper-realistic simulations.

Read More

Resources



Selecting a Service Provider: Making Choices, Becoming Empowered

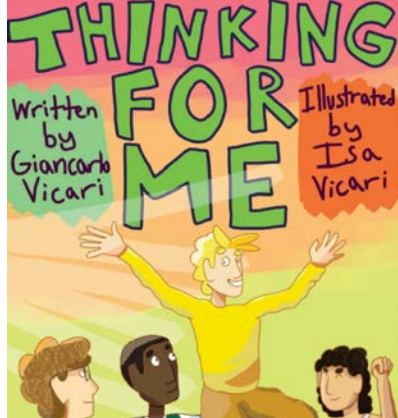
People receiving support through New Jersey's Division of Developmental Disabilities can choose the service provider that best meets their needs. This guide offers people with disabilities and their families ideas that can help them select a provider that will support them to live the lives they want.

Download guide – English

Download guide – Spanish

Limited quantities are available in hard copy format through the Publications Order Form.

Access the Order Form Here



Thinking for Me Comic

Learn More

Giancarlo Vicari, Youth Ambassador from New Jersey, created a comic called "Thinking for Me" about turning 18 and talking to your parents about alternatives to guardianship. We helped make Giancarlo's comic into a 5-minute audio story narrated by Giancarlo and his friends. This audio story is a great resource to share with anyone interested in learning more about supported decision-making and alternatives to guardianship!

Download the Comic



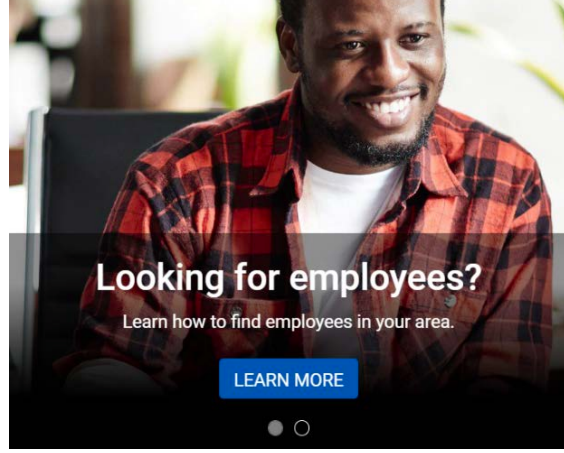
Office of the Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families

Transition Resources New Jersey State Resources

One challenge common to every individual with an intellectual or developmental disability and their families is the transition from childhood to adulthood. Known as the proverbial "cliff" — the point at which there seems to be a sudden drop in services and supports as children age out of the school system and into adult life. Below are resources to help with this transition.

Learn More

Jobs that Care New Jersey



The Direct Care and Service Workforce is critical to the lives of people with disabilities and those who are aging. The demand for these jobs is growing fast and will continue to increase in years to come. This workforce is essential to providing the supports individuals need to live healthy, active, and engaged lives in the community. From helping with personal, health, and home care to providing support with community activities, workers in these roles make a difference!

If you are interested pursuing a rewarding career, please check out the information on this site to learn more and to find jobs in your area.

Learn More



Employment First

The Employment First page on the NJCDD website has been updated with information intended for individuals living with disabilities who are interested in working!

Now, along with information about Employment First in New Jersey, the page features plain language information and links related to:

- [Seeking Employment](#)
- [Benefit Resources](#) as they relate to work
- [Transitioning to employment](#) from high school

Learn More

DISABILITY BENEFITS 101
NEW JERSEY
HTTPS://NJ.DB101.ORG
+ FIND THE RIGHT HEALTH COVERAGE FOR YOU
+ BENEFITS AND WORK ESTIMATOR
+ LEARN ABOUT SSI & SSDI BENEFITS, AND MORE!



BENEFICIOS POR DISCAPACIDAD 101
NUEVA JERSEY
HTTPS://NJ.DB101.ORG

- + ENCUENTRE EL SEGURO MÉDICO A SU MEDIDA
- + ESTIMADOR DE BENEFICIOS Y TRABAJO
- + CONOZCA LOS BENEFICIOS DE SSI Y SSDI, Y MÁS!

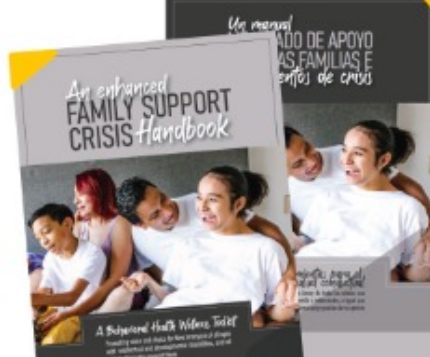
The NJCDD is proud to support NJ DB101, a free, user-friendly, all-in-one place, resource guide for employment and benefit questions/information. Find out how working impacts benefits like SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, and more! Resources are in plain language and available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Learn More

An Enhanced Family Support Crisis Handbook

4th Edition

Available in English and Spanish



Enhanced Family Crisis Handbook

The purpose of this expanded version of the Toolkit is to empower individuals with disabilities and their family and professional caregivers by providing information to more effectively advocate for persons with complex severe behavioral health conditions (which we formerly referred to as "dual diagnosis") for treatments, supports, services and the conditions that promote mental wellness.

Learn More

Manual Mejorado de Crisis Familiares

El propósito de esta versión ampliada del kit de herramientas es facilitarles a las personas que tienen discapacidades y a sus cuidadores familiares y profesionales herramientas que los empoderen, al proveer información que permita abogar de una forma más efectiva por las personas que tienen condiciones graves y complejas de salud conductual (a las que antes se denominaban con "diagnóstico dual") para conseguir los tratamientos, apoyos, servicios y las condiciones que fomentan el bienestar mental.

Aprende Más