



The NJ Council on
Developmental Disabilities
Advocate • Collaborate • Educate
njcdd.org



Eye on
Advocacy
e-newsletter
September 2, 2025



Deaf
awareness
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

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Celebrate Deaf Awareness Month in September

The American Society for Deaf Children invites you to join in celebrating and advocating on behalf of the deaf and hard-of-hearing community!

Their mission is to raise awareness and understanding of the unique communication needs and vibrant identities of people who are deaf or hard of hearing. The goal of our organization is to foster empathy and support so that everyone receives the recognition and resources they deserve.

Interested in making a difference?
Visit www.deafchildren.org to register for an ASL class or workshop, learn more about our organization, or donate. Together, let's create a world where every voice is heard and valued!

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/yu5bvwub>
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/yu5bvwub>
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

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

OFFICIAL SITE OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

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Governor Phil Murphy • Lt. Governor Tahesha Way

Department of Human Services

Division of Developmental Disabilities

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Home / For Individuals and Families / Home and Community Based Services / Self-Directed Services/Self-Direction

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 or you need help completing it, you can [book an appointment with Acumen](#) (phone, virtual, or in-person at their Hamilton office).

Acumen Transition Updates 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.*

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 Service
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



LIVE WEBINAR

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 sensory-friendly for pediatric and adult patients.

[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.



Webinar Series for Educators & Transition Specialists



Webinar One: Launch Pad for Success

September 25, 2025 | 2:30 PM - 3:15 PM Zoom

[Register Here](#)

Webinar Two: Adult Life 101 - A Beginner's Guide to Adult Services

October 23, 2025 | 2:30 PM - 3:15 PM | Zoom

[Register Here](#)

Webinar Three: The Changing Landscape of Post-Secondary Options

November 20, 2025 | 2:30 PM - 3:15 PM | Zoom

[Register Here](#)

Webinar Four: Roadblocks in Family Partnerships: Repairing Communication in Challenging Situations

January 15, 2026 | 2:30 PM - 3:15 PM | Zoom

[Register Here](#)

Webinar Five: Understanding Social Security Benefits: Setting Your Graduates Up for Employment Success

February 26, 2026 | 2:30 PM - 3:15 PM | Zoom

[Register Here](#)

Webinar Six: Long-Term Planning

March 19, 2026 | 2:30 PM - 3:15 PM | Zoom

[Register Here](#)

In the News



A new court settlement will affect how disputes between New Jersey schools and families of students receiving special education services are handled.

Parents of N.J. kids in special ed classes just won a major battle to fix 'broken' system

On August 14, 2025, families of children in special education won an important victory when Judge Edward S. Kiel approved a settlement that requires the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) to follow the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and other federal rules to protect students with disabilities. The settlement requires the NJDOE and OAL to honor the 'Stay Put' rule, adhere to the rules that protect the rights of parents and their children with disabilities. Also, all mediators and Administrative Law Judges must complete training before addressing special education cases.

Visit <https://njspecialsettlement.info>, where you can find important information and resources in plain language, including the settlement agreement and consent order, due process guide, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

Resources



Selecting a Service Provider: Making Choices, Becoming Empowered

A Guide for People with Disabilities and Their Families

People receiving services through New Jersey's Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) 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.

RUTGERS HEALTH
The Boggs Center
on Disability and Human Development
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Selecting a Service Provider: Making Choices, Becoming Empowered

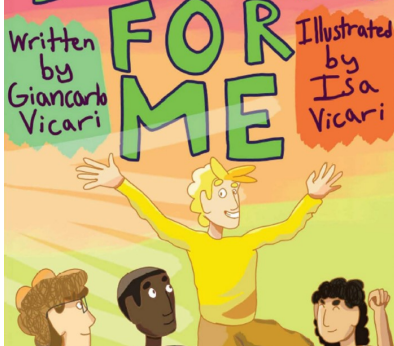
People receiving support through New Jersey's Division of Developmental Disabilities can choose the service provider that best meets their needs. This guide offers people with disabilities and their families ideas that can help them select a provider that will support them to live the lives they want.

[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](#)



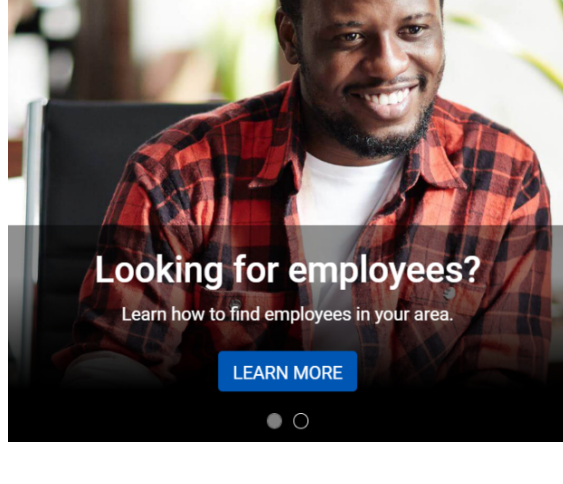
Office of the Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families

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!

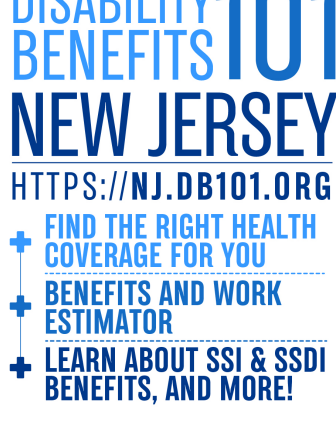
Now, along with information about Employment First in New Jersey, the page features plain language information and links related to:

→ [Seeking Employment](#)

→ [Benefit Resources](#) as they relate to work

→ [Transitioning to employment](#) from high school

[Learn More](#)



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](#)



20 West State Street, Trenton, NJ, 08608 | [Preference Manager](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)
Telephone: 1-800-792-8858 | Email: njcdd@njcdd.org

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