

Eye on Advocacy

Weekly E-Newsletter

October 28, 2025

NATIONAL
Down Syndrome
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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NATIONAL Down Syndrome Awareness MONTH

National Down Syndrome Awareness Month

One of the most common types of intellectual disabilities is Down syndrome. Every year in October, we recognize National Down Syndrome Awareness Month to raise public awareness about the condition, and to advocate for its acceptance and inclusion.

Despite stereotypes and myths, Down syndrome people have shown time and again that their condition is just one part of who they are and does not define them or limit them. This is why it is so important to spread the love, acceptance, inclusion, and respect message during National Down Syndrome Awareness Month and throughout the year.

[Learn More](#)

Upcoming Events

For more details on the events listed in this issue, scroll down

- NJ Legislative Caucus Webinar: Oct. 28: [Register Here](#)
- Building Collaborative Teams Across the Lifespan: Nov. 1: [Register Here](#)
- NJCDD Hybrid Public Meeting: Nov. 13: [Register Here](#)
- Justice, Abuse, and Neglect: Inside the Investigative Process: [Register Here](#)
- Virtual Town Hall: All-State Housing Meeting and the Road Ahead: [Join Here](#)
- Assistive Technology Webinar Series: [Register Here](#)
- The Boggs Center Training: [Register Here](#)
- The Boggs Center Lecture Series: [Learn More](#)
- Fiscal Intermediary (FI) Transition Update: Oct. 30: [Learn More](#)
- Navigating the Medical Insurance Maze for Adults with I/DD: Nov. 6: [Register Here](#)



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

Seven Years Later: Lessons from New Jersey's First Ombudsman for Individuals with Disabilities October 28, 2025 12:00pm - 1:00pm (Zoom)



Paul Aronsohn
New Jersey's inaugural Ombudsman for
Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental
Disabilities and Their Families

**Tuesday, October 28, 2025
12:00pm - 1:00pm (Zoom Webinar)**

Join us for an insightful discussion with Paul Aronsohn, New Jersey's inaugural Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families. As he prepares to conclude his historic tenure at the end of Governor Murphy's administration, Paul will share candid reflections on his seven-year journey advocating for New Jersey's disability community. **Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Ruiz, Caucus Co-Chair**, championed the legislation that created this groundbreaking office and will lead the meeting.

[Register Here](#)

Paul, along with advocates, will discuss the victories that transformed lives, the systemic challenges that persist, and a vision for strengthening advocacy efforts under future leadership. From navigating bureaucratic barriers to ensuring people with disabilities and their families receive essential services, hear firsthand about the real-world impact of having a dedicated state Ombudsman and what lies ahead.

This is a unique opportunity to learn from the experiences of the person who helped define this crucial role and to understand how legislative advocacy can create lasting change for our most vulnerable residents.

BUILDING COLLABORATIVE TEAMS ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Saturday, November 1, 2025
10:00am to 12:00pm



Building Collaborative Teams Across the Lifespan [virtual meeting]

Saturday, November 1, 2025, from 10AM to 12PM

Connect. Collaborate. Empower.

Join family advocates and professionals for an interactive virtual session focused on improving communication and collaboration to support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Hear stories and expert tips, then join breakout rooms focused on children or adults. Together we will explore strategies for building trust and forming unified support teams.

If you need language support or other accommodations, please contact Kyoko Coco, Kyoko.Coco@njcdd.org, 609-341-3112.

[Register Here](#)

Download the flyer [HERE](#)

Construyendo equipos colaborativos a lo largo de la vida

Fecha/hora: Sábado 1 de noviembre de 2025, de 10AM a 12PM

Conecta. Colabora. Empodera.

Únase a defensores de familias y profesionales en una sesión virtual interactiva enfocada en mejorar la comunicación y la colaboración para apoyar a personas con discapacidades intelectuales y del desarrollo. Escuche historias y consejos de expertos, y luego únase a las salas de trabajo para niños o adultos. Juntos, exploraremos estrategias para generar confianza y formar equipos de apoyo unificados

Habrà subtítulos traducidos con IA disponibles durante este foro virtual. Si necesita apoyo con el idioma u otras adaptaciones, comuníquese con Kyoko Coco, Kyoko.Coco@njcdd.org, 609-341-3112.

[Regístrate Aquí](#)

Descarga el folleto [aquí](#)



NJCDD Hybrid Public Meeting

November 13, 2025
9:30 AM - 1:30 PM

[Register Here](#)

The New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities (NJCDD) Hybrid Public Meeting will be held on Thursday, November 13, 2025, from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm at the Hilton Garden Inn, located at 800 US Route 130 in Hamilton, NJ. To attend in person or make a public comment, please send your in-person RSVP or written public comments to Jacinta.Williams@njcdd.org by Wednesday, November 12, 2025.

ACCOMMODATION:

For in-person accommodations, language interpretation, and/or other accommodations, please contact Jacinta Williams at Jacinta.Williams@njcdd.org with your specific accommodation request at least two weeks in advance or by Wednesday, October 30, 2025.

Reunión Pública Híbrida de NJCDD

13 de Noviembre de 2025
9:30 AM - 1:30 PM

[Regístrate Aquí](#)

La Reunión Pública Híbrida del Consejo de Discapacidades del Desarrollo de Nueva Jersey (NJCDD) se llevará a cabo el Jueves 13 de Noviembre de 2025, de 9:30 a.m. a 1:30 p.m., en el Hilton Garden Inn, 800 US Route 130, Hamilton, NJ. Para asistir en persona o hacer un comentario público, envíe su confirmación de asistencia en persona o comentarios públicos por escrito a Jacinta.Williams@njcdd.org antes del Miércoles 12 de Noviembre de 2025.

ALOJAMIENTO:

Para alojamientos en persona, interpretación de idiomas y/o otros ajustes, comuníquese con Jacinta Williams en Jacinta.Williams@njcdd.org con su solicitud específica de alojamiento al menos con dos semanas de anticipación o antes del Miércoles 30 de Octubre de 2025.



Justice, Abuse, and Neglect: Inside the Investigative Process

October 29, 2025 - 1:00 PM

Autism New Jersey invites you to an important webinar on October 29 exploring how abuse and neglect in group homes is investigated and addressed through the criminal justice system. Deborah Robinson, Director of the New Jersey Department of Human Services' Office of Program Integrity and Accountability, will provide an overview of the state's safeguarding efforts and investigative process.

[Register Here](#)

Virtual Town Hall: All-State Housing Meeting and the Road Ahead

October 30, 2025 |12:30pm - 1:45pm
Microsoft Teams

This session will provide an overview and discussion on the current and anticipated landscape of housing and homelessness programs across NJ. The goal of the Town Hall is to ensure an understanding of evolving federal and state dynamics, highlight ongoing interagency coordination and opportunities, and outline the current planning work to sustain critical housing supports statewide. Representatives from DCA and other State partner agencies will offer updates, data, and other critical information.

[Join Now](#)



**Family Networking Sessions: Fall 2025 (October - November)**

The Office of Education on Self-Directed Services hosts networking sessions for people and families who are self-directing services or interested in self-direction.

- All sessions are held in person unless otherwise noted.
- Advance registration is required.

Wed., Oct. 29 | 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Burlington County Burlington County Library[Register for October 29 Session](#)

Wed., Nov. 5 | 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Bergen County Special Services School District[Register for November 5 Session](#)

RUTGERS HEALTH

**The Boggs Center
on Disability and Human Development**

Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

The Boggs Center offers training and consultation on topics relevant to addressing the needs of and supporting people with developmental disabilities and families across the lifecycle.

You may view and register for many of these trainings using [The Boggs Center Online Registration System](#).

Learn more about Boggs Center training and consultation opportunities:

Aging & Grief
Behavior & Mental Health
Community Supports & Quality
Community-Based Instruction
Employment
Meaningful Days
PCAST - Person-Centered Approaches in Schools and Transition
People With DD And Families
Supports Brokerage
Support Coordination
Transition
Workforce Development & Frontline Supervisors

[Learn More](#)

Developmental Disabilities Lecture Series

**FALL 2025 WEBINARS****Registration is open for the Fall 2025 Developmental Disabilities Lecture Series.**[View Fall 2025 Developmental Disabilities Lecture Series Brochure](#)[Learn More](#)

All sessions will be held online using The Zoom Webinar platform.



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.

October 30**[Webinar for Support Coordinators and Supports Brokers](#)**

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

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

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

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

3:00 PM - 3:30 PM

[Learn More on Upcoming Transition Webinars](#)

Navigating the Medical Insurance Maze for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

**November 6th, 2025
9:30am - 1:15pm EST****2025 Beverly Roberts Memorial Healthcare Symposium****2025 Beverly Roberts Memorial Healthcare Symposium**

November 6, 2025 | 9:30 AM - 1:15 PM

[Register Here](#)Download the flyer [HERE](#)

A half day virtual conference for parents, caregivers, family members, direct support staff, and professionals who support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Questions? Email
healthcareadvocacy@arcnj.org

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY WEBINAR SERIES

Disability Rights New Jersey will be hosting a three-part Lunch and Learn webinar series focusing on assistive technology solutions for individuals living with paralysis, family members and professionals who support them. Beyond the tools, the sessions will offer opportunities to brainstorm implementation ideas to ensure success and promote independence.

WEDNESDAY

SEPT. 24
OCT. 22
NOV. 19

12:00 NOON

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER

These events are co-sponsored by the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation

DISABILITYRIGHTSNJ.ORG

ATAC

DISABILITY RIGHTS NEW JERSEY

Sept 24 - It's in There - Built in Accessibility

Join us as we explore features you might already have access to and didn't know it. Discover how to leverage the resources you currently have at your disposal and the built-in features of your devices to avoid spending money on apps or new hardware that can accomplish what your existing device can.

Oct. 22 - Alternate Access for People with Paralysis

Join us as we explore customizable input methods to hands-free controls, and discover how these advancements enable people to interact with devices, environments, and tools in innovative ways.

Nov. 19 - Smart Home Technology

Join us as we explore how to use smart home technology to access audiobooks, improve personal security, turn on lights, appliances, access music, podcasts and much more.

You can attend one session or all three!

Assistive Technology Webinar: Smart Home Technology for People with Paralysis

Disability Rights New Jersey will be hosting a Lunch and Learn webinar focusing on assistive technology solutions for individuals living with paralysis, family members and professionals who support them.

Beyond the tools, the sessions will offer opportunities to brainstorm implementation ideas to ensure success and promote independence. Attend any or all sessions.

Nov. 19 - Smart Home Technology

Join us as we explore how to use smart home technology to access audiobooks, improve personal security, turn on lights, appliances, access music, podcasts and much more.

Register for This Event

Download Flyer

In the News



Filling a gap in comprehensive care for adults with disabilities

Program looks to aid those with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental health disorders

Bobby Brier, NJ Spotlight

In 2021, Heather Margiotta started taking her adult daughter, Nicole, to the Rowan-Virtua Regional Integrated Special Needs Center in Sewell. Margiotta said she felt that a primary care doctor in Voorhees was not providing the proper care for her daughter, who is on the autism spectrum and also has schizoaffective disorder.

"I don't have to take her to see a psychologist here and a psychiatrist there and nobody's communicating with each other — where here, everything's under one roof," the Camden County resident said of the center in Sewell. "The doctors communicate with each other. It's just a fantastic setup that they have, especially for special needs."

Read More

Resources

Division of Family Development

The Division of Family Development (DFD) is the state agency that supervises four programs that support New Jersey Families. Use the links below to navigate to the service you are looking for.

The Child Care Assistance Program can help lower-income families who are working, in training or in school, or a combination of these activities to pay a portion of their child care.

Get help paying for, or finding, childcare in NJ

The New Jersey Child Support Program helps establish and enforce child support orders, locate parents, establish paternity, and provide options for paying support.

Learn more about Child Support

NJ SNAP is the food assistance program that helps low-income individuals and families buy the groceries needed to eat healthy.

Learn more, and apply, for food assistance

WFNJ provides temporary cash assistance and many other support services through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program for families and General Assistance (GA) for single adults and couples without children.

Learn more about WFNJ cash assistance

VOTING: IT'S YOUR RIGHT

Voting: It's Your Right

Voting: It's Your Right is a guide about voting rights and the voting process in New Jersey written in clear language for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The 7th Edition, available electronically in English and Spanish, provides readers with information on:

- Registering and preparing to vote
- Options for voting by mail and in-person
- Voting rights and accessibility
- Contacting election officials with questions

Download guide – English

Download guide – Spanish

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

Access the Order Form Here

Voting: It's Your Right is also available as an **E-Learning course**



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

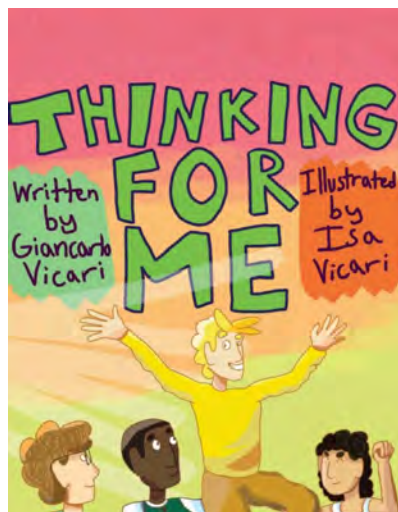
People receiving support through New Jersey's Division of Developmental Disabilities can choose the service provider that best meets their needs. This guide offers people with disabilities and their families ideas that can help them select a provider that will support them to live the lives they want.

[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

Looking for employees?

Learn how to find employees in your area.

[LEARN MORE](#)

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](#)



20 West State Street, Trenton, NJ, 08608 | [Preference Manager](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

Telephone: 1-800-792-8858 | Email: njcdd@njcdd.org

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