

Eye on Advocacy

Weekly E-Newsletter

January 13, 2026



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

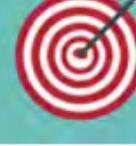
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2027-2031 Proposed Five-Year State Plan: Public Comment Phase

• FINAL REMINDER •
STATE PLAN PUBLIC INPUT
DUE JANUARY 15

5 YEAR PLANNING

2027 • 2031



Following a comprehensive review and analysis of issues affecting people with IDD and their families, including input from families, people with IDD, and other stakeholders; and in accordance with federal rules concerning the work of the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities, the NJCDD voted on November 12 to approve and publish for public comment the Goals and Objectives for the five-year State Plan for 2027–2031.

Individuals and organizations who wish to provide written comments may do so in one of the following ways.

- Completing a survey (available in multiple languages)
- Sending an email to njcdd@njcdd.org
- Sending a letter to the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities, PO Box 700, Trenton, NJ 08625-0700

All comments must be submitted by **January 15, 2026**. Please note that mailed comments must be postmarked by December 31, 2025 to be considered.

[Click here to read the following documents](#)

Proposed Plan

Plain
Language
Plan

Background
and Process

Survey Links

English

Arabic

Chinese

Gujarati

Korean

Portuguese

Spanish



COMMUNITY BLUEPRINT WORKGROUPS

Phase 1 Sign Ups

Phase 1 Workgroups

Abuse/Neglect: Investigations
(Process, Oversight, & Enforcement)

Individual/Family/Guardian
Partnership, Advocacy, & Rights

Over the past several months, the [New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities](#), the [Regional Family Support Planning Councils](#), and the [Office of the Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families](#) have gathered extensive community input to inform the [Community Blueprint for Safe, High-Quality Licensed Residences](#). Through listening sessions, a survey, and a memo to Governor-Elect Mikie Sherrill, we identified strengths, challenges, and opportunities in New Jersey's licensed residential services for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD).

Based on this input, we have created seven workgroups that reflect the stakeholder priorities. These will launch in phases over the next four month

Timeline of Workgroups

Sign-up periods and first meeting dates

Summary of Workgroups & Objectives

We strongly encourage you to review these resources before signing up for the workgroups:

Background Resources

Listening sessions ([YouTube](#)), [Community Blueprint](#), and [Memo to Governor-Elect Sherrill](#)

The first two workgroups available are:

(1) Abuse/Neglect: Investigations (Process, Oversight, & Enforcement)

(2) Individual/Family/Guardian Partnership, Advocacy, & Rights

Sign-Up Form

In order to reflect diverse representations, we are working to create a balanced group of stakeholders that includes individuals with disabilities, family members, guardians, state representatives, provider agency representatives, frontline staff, support coordinators, and others. Please share the Community Blueprint Workgroup sign-up information with your personal networks.

Before signing up, we strongly encourage you to review all seven workgroups and their objectives, reflect on your current time commitments, and register only for the workgroups for which you have the most interest and in which you will be able to meaningfully participate.

We ask all participants to bring a spirit of respect, openness, and collaboration to these workgroups. Each voice is vital, and the aim is to collectively advance systems change that leads to safer, stronger, and higher-quality licensed residences for individuals with IDD across our state.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Kerry McGrath at 609-984-4516 or Kerry.mcgrath@njcdd.org.

Upcoming Events



NJ Health New Jersey Department of Health 

SPECIAL CHILD HEALTH SERVICES

Free Care Coordination for Children and Youth Under 22 with Special Health Care Needs

OUR SPEAKER
KOURTNEY PULLIAM, MPH
Division of Family Health Services
New Jersey Department of Health

January 20, 2026
7pm - 8pm
Virtual

Are you a parent or caregiver of a child or youth under 22 with special health care needs?

[Register Here](#)

Join us for a virtual presentation on Special Child Health Services, a free program that supports children and youth under 22 with special healthcare needs across New Jersey. Learn how Special Child Health Services Care Management Units help families coordinate medical and specialty care, navigate complex service systems, and access community, financial, and family supports.

The presentation will be led by Kourtney Pulliam, MPH, Program Manager with the Division of Family Health Services, Special Child Health Services-FCCS in the New Jersey Department of Health.

Multi-lingual closed captioning is available for this event. Contact Kerry McGrath at kerry.mcgrath@njcdd.org or 609-984-4516 if you have any questions.



The NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities Advocacy. Information. Support. njcdd.org

New Jersey Legislative Disability Caucus

EMPLOYMENT FIRST IN NEW JERSEY

JAN 27 | WEBINAR @ 12PM

“Employment First” in New Jersey
Tuesday, January 27, 2026
12:00pm – 1:00pm (Zoom Webinar)

[Register Here](#)

"Employment First" is a national approach and policy framework that prioritizes competitive, integrated jobs with fair wages as the primary option for individuals with disabilities. Employment First shifts the focus from segregated settings to community employment, aiming to raise expectations and change systems, so that all individuals can engage in meaningful work.

Although New Jersey is one of 14 states with the Employment First designation, barriers persist, including low participation, a lack of confidence in the capabilities of individuals with I/DD, and siloed systems with insufficient cross-agency partnerships. During the webinar, we will examine a bill to create an Employment First commission in New Jersey and highlight other Employment First initiatives from across the country. Assemblyman Louis D. Greenwald, Caucus Co-Chair, will lead the webinar.



Webinar Series – Personal Care Assistance: From Application to Approvals (Part Two)

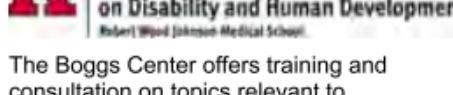
Please join the staff of Disability Rights New Jersey for an informative two-part webinar series about Personal Care Assistance (PCA) on Friday, January 23 at 2pm.

This webinar is for individuals with disabilities, their family and caregivers, as well as professionals serving the disability community. The webinar series will cover everything from eligibility criteria to beneficiary's rights through the application and appeals process.

Why does PCA matter?

PCA provides critical support to enable people with disabilities to have the assistance needed to perform daily tasks such as bathing, dressing, and eating, as well as enhance independence and dignity, ensure safety, and improve quality of life for people with disabilities.

[Register Here](#)



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 lifecourse.

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](#)

In the News



The new issue of People & Families, Volume 2025 | No. 3, is now available.

[Read it Now](#)

Human Services Opens \$4 Million Grant Opportunity to Address Social Isolation Among Older Adults & Individuals with Disabilities

(TRENTON) – Human Services today announced that local government and nonprofit entities can apply for grants totaling \$4 million to administer the Senior Wellness Pilot Program, designed to strengthen social connections and support for older adults and people with disabilities at risk of social isolation in their communities.

"Older residents and people with disabilities can face a variety of barriers creating and maintaining the social lives and connections they desire. The Senior Wellness Pilot Program will help create opportunities to bolster social inclusion and engagement, so these individuals can avoid isolation, stay connected, and ultimately live more fulfilling lives in their communities," said Commissioner Sarah Adelman.

[Learn More](#)

Resources

Supports Brokers

Assisting and Empowering You to Self-Direct



Getting Started

- Information, resources and/or some of your choices are Community-Based Services, made available through the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) Supports Program or Community Care Program. Self-directed services are available to anyone you hire, based on a self-directed interview (SDI), as a service is provided by a family/friend, friend, professional, or government, paid and paid through out-of-pocket, independently. Your Supports Broker will work with you to identify your strengths, needs, and interests, and what you want and don't want in your life.
- Registering you to direct the care you receive.
- Identifying a range of supports you can hire to help you achieve your goals, including those you can receive from your family members, friends, neighbors, community resources, technology, and other areas and assistive service systems.
- Explaining how self-directed services are different from provider-managed services, and what DDD services are self-directed and funded differently.
- Describing the role of the fiscal intermediary and the differences between the two options – Agency or Direct or Direct and Fiscal Intermediary Agent.
- Showing information about the resources you can use when you self-direct care or interpret your services.

What you choose to self-direct is your choice. If you have any questions, contact your Supports Broker.

Supports Brokerage is a service that is available in the DDD Supports Program and Community Care Program. Contact your Supports Broker to learn more about the Supports Broker agency. A Supports Broker can help you coordinate and prioritize your self-directed services. They will work with you to take control of your self-directed services, plan connecting connections, and allow you to have greater control over your life.



Supports Brokers: Assisting and Empowering You to Self-Direct

In New Jersey, people can self-direct all or some of the Home and Community Based Services, made available through the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) Supports Program or Community Care Program. Supports Brokers can help people who choose to self-direct to coordinate and maintain their self-directed services. The Boggs Center is excited to share **Supports Brokers: Assisting and Empowering You to Self-Direct**, a new one-page fact sheet to help people with disabilities and families better understand self-direction and the roles and responsibilities of Supports Brokers.

[Download Fact Sheet](#)



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 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

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](#)

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[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](#)

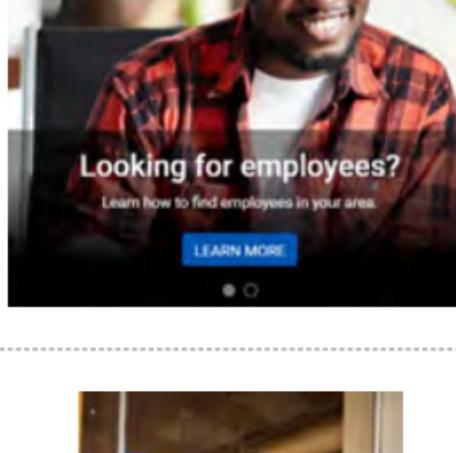
Thinking for Me Comic

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](#)

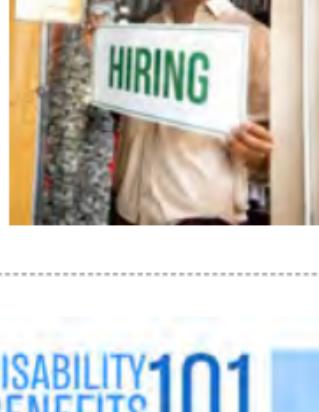
Jobs that Care New Jersey



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:

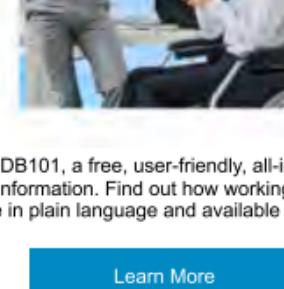
- [Seeking Employment](#)
- [Benefit Resources](#) as they relate to work
- [Transitioning to employment](#) from high school

[Learn More](#)

DISABILITY BENEFITS 101 NEW JERSEY

[HTTPS://NJ.DB101.ORG](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](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](#)