

2022

December

### FY2023 Wage Increase for Direct Support Professionals and Supervisors

Included in New Jersey's FY2023 Appropriations Act, the wage increase for direct support professionals (DSPs) and supervisors will be implemented January 1<sup>st</sup> via increases to the fee-for-service reimbursement rates for the following services: Career Planning, Community Based Supports, Community Inclusion Services, Day Habilitation, Individual Supports, Prevocational Training (Individual and Group), Respite, and Supported Employment (Individual and Group). For information, please see:

- [Public Notice](#)
- [Quick Guide to FY2023 FFS Rate Increases Effective 1/1/23](#)
- [Quick Guide to Updated Waiver Program Budgets Effective 1/1/23](#)
- [FAQs: FY2023 DSP & Supervisor Wage Increase](#)

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### NJ Minimum Wage Law

In February 2019, Governor Murphy signed [New Jersey's Minimum Wage Law](#) which requires a minimum hourly wage of \$15 to be implemented statewide by 2024. The next incremental increase of \$1.13 takes effect on January 1, 2023.

EFFECTIVE DATE:	NJ MINIMUM WAGE INCREASES TO:
Jan. 1, 2023	\$14.13 per hour
Jan. 1, 2024	\$15 per hour

This law may impact some DDD-funded provider agencies and individuals who receive DDD-funded services from self-directed employees:

- Provider agencies should familiarize themselves with the law and make whatever wage adjustments are needed to be in compliance.

Individuals who receive DDD-funded services from a self-directed employee (SDE) will need to make sure they comply with the new law by ensuring their employee's hourly wage for any service provided is at least \$14.13 by January 1, 2023. To increase a self-

directed employee's hourly wage, individuals must contact their Support Coordinator, and the fiscal intermediary that issues payments to their employee. *Please note that fiscal intermediaries are prohibited by law from compensating self-directed employees for any amount less than \$14.13 per hour beginning January 1, 2023.*

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## November

### Frequently Asked Questions: FY2023 DSP & Supervisor Rate Increases

Effective January 1, 2023, certain fee-for-service Medicaid rates will receive an upward adjustment to increase Direct Support Professional (DSP) and Supervisor wages. At that time, all individuals enrolled in a fee-for-service program (Supports Program and Community Care Program under Fee-for-Service) will see an increase in their budget to accommodate this.

The Division is releasing [Frequently Asked Questions: FY2023 DSP & Supervisor Rate Increases](#) in advance of January 1, 2023 in order to address questions around when these rates will be increased and how these increases will be reflected in DSP and Supervisor wages. The FY2023 Rates will be posted shortly.

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### Mealtime Safety and Documentation

The Division of Developmental Disabilities is pleased to offer individuals, families, support coordinators, service providers and other interested stakeholders training opportunities on *Mealtime Safety and Documentation*. This training will be offered twice in December 2022. Interested persons can register using one of the below links:

- [Mealtime Safety and Documentation – December 12, 2022 10am to 11:30am](#)
  - [Mealtime Safety and Documentation – December 20, 2022 10am to 11:30am](#)
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### New Support Coordinator Monitoring Tools

The Division of Developmental Disabilities is pleased to announce that the current *Support Coordinator Monthly Monitoring Tool (MMT)* has been revised. The previous MMT is being replaced by two documents:

- A [Support Coordinator Monitoring Tool – Monthly](#) used for Monthly Visits; and
- A [Support Coordinator Monitoring Tool - Quarterly and Annual](#) used for Quarterly/Annual Visits.

Now through December 31, 2022, use of the new Support Coordinator Monitoring Tools is optional, but use is strongly recommended and encouraged by the Division. **Effective January 1, 2023** - Use of the new Support Coordinator Monitoring Tools will be required.

[Support Coordinator Monitoring Tool – Work Instructions](#) have been created to provide instruction and guidance on the use of the new tools. Links to the new Support Coordinator Monitoring Tools and Work Instructions are included in this announcement and are available on the [Support Coordinator Information](#) Webpage.

The first of several training opportunities on the new Support Coordinator Monitoring Tools is being offered on November 22, 2022, from 1pm-2:30 pm. You may register for this training through the following link: [New Support Coordinator Monitoring Tools Training](#)

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### Survey Opportunity for Frontline Staff

The Institute for Families at the Rutgers School of Social Work is conducting a Needs Assessment with the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Office of New Americans (DHS-ONA) to determine how people who live in New Jersey who speak limited to no English are accessing social services delivered by the department. The goal of this assessment is to learn how to best provide information to people regardless of their ability to speak, understand, read, or write English fluently to increase access to services.

The purpose of this survey is to better understand the current Department of Human Services, the divisions, county and community agencies', communication and outreach strategies with people with limited English proficiency. This survey should be completed by local, state, or county-based frontline staff providing services to those seeking DHS services and programs, outreach workers, and/or their supervisors. Please click [here](#) to complete the survey. Survey will close on November 18, 2022.

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### Residential and Day Program Screening Policy

The Division has updated its [Residential and Day Program Screening Policy](#). This policy further eases masking, social distancing, and quarantine requirements. While the policy is released today, the effective date is November 16, 2022 to allow time for implementation. Please review the full policy below (Remember to hit *Refresh* on your browser so you see the updated version):

- [Residential and Day Program Screening Policy](#)

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October

## Prevention Handouts

The Division of Developmental Disabilities has updated the Prevention Handouts it has available! They are available in English and Spanish and found on the Division's [Health and Safety Website](#). Please see the direct links below for more information.

### English

- [Aspiration](#)
- [Choking](#)
- [Communication](#)
- [Constipation](#)
- [Dehydration](#)
- [Diet Textures](#)
- [Fall Prevention](#)
- [GERD](#)
- [Oral Health](#)
- [PICA](#)
- [Pressure Ulcers](#)
- [Seizure](#)
- [Sepsis/Infection](#)
- [Thickeners](#)

### Español

- [Aspiración](#)
- [Atragantamiento](#)
- [Comunicación](#)
- [Estreñimiento](#)
- [Deshidratación](#)
- [Texture De La Dieta](#)
- [Prevenir Caídas](#)
- [Reflujo Gastresofágico \(GERD\)](#)
- [Cuidado Bucal](#)
- [PICA](#)
- [Úlceras Por Presión](#)
- [Covulsiones](#)
- [Sepsis/Infección](#)
- [Espesantes](#)

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## Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services Releases the Statewide Transition Plan for Public Comment

In January 2014, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a final rule to ensure that Medicaid's home and community-based services (HCBS) programs provide beneficiaries full access to the benefits of integrated community living and person-centered care. Known as the [HCBS Settings Rule](#), the rule was established to support the delivery of high quality HCBS in state Medicaid programs and to provide certain protections to participants. In describing the rule's intent, CMS emphasized individuals having full access to the benefits of community living and the opportunity to receive services in the most integrated setting.

The Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services (DMAHS) has released the updated Statewide Transition Plan for public comment. The Statewide Transition Plan, including Addendums, describes how New Jersey will comply with the HCBS Settings Rule and can be found on the [DMAHS Statewide Transition Plan Website](#). Alternatively the link to the public notice and current Statewide Transition Plan can be found [here](#).

Other helpful links:

- [The DDD HCBS Website](#)
  - Contains HCBS Webinars, Resources for Individuals and Families, Corrective Action Plan and Survey Templates for Providers.
  - Also contains [DDD's NJ Statewide Transition Plan "At a Glance"](#)
- [The DMAHS Statewide Transition Plan Website](#)
  - Contains Statewide Transition Plan Addendums, Crosswalks, etc.

Public comment can be submitted to [DMAHS.HCBS-Settings-Rule@dhs.nj.gov](mailto:DMAHS.HCBS-Settings-Rule@dhs.nj.gov) through November 7, 2022.

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## September

### Updated Participant Rights and Responsibilities Form

The Division of Developmental Disabilities has updated the *Participant Rights and Responsibilities* Form. The updated form is to be used in place of the older version at all future Annual ISP Meetings. Please be sure to overwrite/replace any older versions of the form your organization may be using.

- [Participant Rights and Responsibilities – English](#)
  - [Participant Rights and Responsibilities – Spanish](#)
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### Community Care Program and Supports Program Manuals

The Division has updated program manuals for its Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waivers: The Community Care Program and Supports Program. A summary of changes can be found on page two of each respective manual. An overview of changes will also be provided during the [September 22, 2022 10:30am DDD Update Webinar](#). Below are direct links to each manual (*Please be sure to REFRESH your web browser to ensure you see the new version!*):

- [Community Care Program Policies and Procedures Manual](#) (Updated 9/2022)
  - [Supports Program Policies and Procedures Manual](#) (Updated 9/2022)
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**!!TRAINING OPPORTUNITY!!** Mealtime Safety and Documentation

The Division of Developmental Disabilities is pleased to offer individuals, families, support coordinators, service providers and other interested stakeholders a training on Mealtime Safety and Documentation. It will be held on September 30, 2022 from 10am to 11:30am. Interested persons can register using the link below:

- [Mealtime Safety and Documentation – September 30, 2022 10am to 11:30am](#)
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Save the Date! Home and Community Based Services and the Statewide Transition Plan

Please Join Us On September 30<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM For A Webinar Regarding New Jersey’s Statewide Transition Plan (STP) to Meet Federally Mandated Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) requirements.

This webinar is designed to provide Individuals and their Family Members/Caregivers, Providers, Support Coordinators and other interested stakeholders with an overview of the HCBS federal mandate. Topics will include information on our State’s STP, what you can expect, next steps, and frequently asked questions.

[Please register for the September 30, 2022 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM webinar here.](#)

In advance of the webinar, here are some helpful links:

- [Division of Developmental Disabilities HCBS-STP Website](#)
- [Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services STP Website](#)
- [Provider’s Guide to the Home and Community Based Services Final Settings Rule](#)
- [General HCBS Information](#)
- [Federal Mandates](#)

Please help us by e-mailing any questions you may have about the STP to our HCBS helpdesk at [DDD.HCBSHelpdesk@DHS.NJ.GOV](mailto:DDD.HCBSHelpdesk@DHS.NJ.GOV). This will help us make sure we cover areas of interest and help guide the general discussion.

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Office Of Licensing Information Bulletin

The DHS Office of Program Integrity and Accountability’s Office of Licensing has released an update to its Information Bulletin on Privacy in Residential Living Spaces. This update provides a compliance date of December 1, 2022 for Residential Service Providers and Community Care Residence Providers. Please review the September 20, 2022 updated [Privacy in Residential Living Spaces Information Bulletin](#) for more information.

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In accordance with Executive Order 294, which continues to direct that COVID-19 vaccination is required for staff working in specific covered settings, the New Jersey Department of Health released [Executive Directive No. 21-011 \(2nd Revised\)](#) on September 2, 2022.

This Directive clarifies that the testing frequency for staff granted an exemption from vaccination is based on the [CDC Community Transmission Levels](#) (which are different from the [CDC COVID-19 Community Levels](#)). The transmission level information is also included in the Department of Health's [COVID-19 Weekly Surveillance Report](#) under *Community Transmission Levels used for Healthcare Settings* (Typically found on page four).

Please review [Executive Directive No. 21-011 \(2nd Revised\)](#) for complete information.

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## COVID-19 Vaccination for Residents and Staff of Congregate Residential Settings

The Division of Developmental Disabilities continues its partnership with Walmart for COVID-19 Vaccination. This is open to eligible individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD) and/or traumatic brain injury (TBI) living in congregate residential settings, as well as their staff. All approved COVID-19 vaccines (i.e. all manufacturers – primary series and boosters) are available. Please note that eligible residents and staff are not limited to only using Walmart for vaccination.

Please see [COVID-19 Vaccination for Residents and Staff of Congregate Residential Settings](#) for more information.

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## August

Administrative Order 2:05 “Incident Reporting and Management”

The Department of Human Services’ Office of Program Integrity and Accountability (OPIA) is pleased to announce the release of the updated [Administrative Order 2:05 - Incident Reporting and Management](#) and the revised [Incident Reporting Levels and Categories Grid](#). OPIA will be providing two webinar opportunities for interested

stakeholders where an overview of these documents will be provided. This will include detail on updated incident reporting codes, categories, and definitions.

Available webinar opportunities:

- Tuesday, September 6, 2022 from 9:30 to 11:30am.
  - [Register here for the September 6<sup>th</sup> webinar at 9:30am.](#)
- Wednesday, September 7, 2022 from 1pm to 3pm.
  - [Register here for the September 7<sup>th</sup> webinar at 1pm.](#)

For more information, please visit the OPIA [Critical Incident Management Unit webpage](#).

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## Family and Provider Relations

In an effort to ensure communication and obtain feedback, the Division interacts regularly with various stakeholders (E.g. Individuals, Guardians/Families, Advocacy Groups, Service Providers, etc.) to exchange information. Through this interaction, various subject areas are discussed. One topic communicated to the Division by some families is their experience or fear of retaliation by the service provider of their loved one if they lodge a complaint about care. The Division convened a small group of families and service providers to discuss this topic. Please see [Family and Provider Relations](#) for more information.

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## Information Sessions on DDD Self-Directed Employee (SDE) Models Available

DDD is pleased to offer webinars on the two available SDE Models it offers. These are the Vendor Fiscal/Employer Agent Model administered by Public Partnerships Limited and the Agency with Choice administered by Easterseals NJ. Anyone interested in learning about these SDE Models is welcome to participate. Please register in advance for these opportunities. Additional information on these models can also be found [here](#).

- Easterseals' Agency with Choice SDE Model Information Session
  - When: Aug 10, 2022 at 7:00 PM
  - [Register in advance for this Information Session](#)
- Public Partnerships' Vendor Fiscal/Employer Agent SDE Model Information Session



- When: Sept 21, 2022 at 5:30 PM
  - [Register in advance for this Information Session](#)
- 

## Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Settings Rule

The Department of Human Services is pleased to release two new resources for service providers to assist in compliance with the HCBS Settings Rule.

- [A Provider's Guide to the Home and Community Based Services Final Settings Rule](#)
  - This guide will assist service providers with information, best practices, and examples to assist in HCBS compliance.
- [Office of Licensing Bulletin – Privacy in Residential Living Spaces](#)
  - This Information Bulletin outlines requirements for licensed community residences. Service Providers must ensure that individuals who reside in provider owned or controlled settings have the means to lock/unlock their homes and bedroom doors so that they have privacy in their residential living spaces.

Additional information on the HCBS Settings Rule can be found at:

- [Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services Website](#)
  - [Division of Developmental Disabilities HCBS Website](#)
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## July

### DSP Support Professional Competency Survey

Earlier this year the Division of Developmental Disabilities (Division), in partnership with The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, launched the Money Follows the Person Direct Support Professional (DSP) Competency and Capacity Building Steering Committee. This committee has been formed to establish a competency-based Career Pathway for DSPs employed by Division Service Providers across the state. In support of the Steering Committee's work and to help inform their recommendations, interested stakeholders are asked to complete this anonymous [survey](#) on DSP competency. It is open through August 17, 2022.

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### NJ Heightened Scrutiny Review - Request for Public Comment



## 988 Suicide and Crisis Line Number Available July 16, 2022

Starting July 16, 2022, New Jerseyans will be able to use 988 to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. 988 will be available for call, text, or chat to those experiencing a mental health-related or suicidal crisis, or those looking to help a loved one through a crisis. The existing Lifeline number, 1-800-273-8255, will continue to be available.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available to persons of all abilities, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI). The Division of Developmental Disabilities, and other governmental Departments, have worked with 988 to provide disability specific service information and other available resources. This will equip 988 to meet the presenting need of the caller and, as appropriate, connect them with other appropriate resources depending on their unique needs.

Providers rendering services to persons with IDD and/or TBI are reminded that 988 is distinct from 911. Under [Danielle's Law P.L. 2003, c.191](#), 911 must continue to be called in any situation where a prudent person could reasonably believe a life threatening emergency exists. More information on Danielle's Law can be found [here](#).

For more information about 988, please visit the [Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline website](#). Additionally, a helpful *Frequently Asked Questions* document for persons with IDD can be found [here](#).

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## June

### NCI Staff Stability Survey 2021

In April 2022, provider agencies who employ direct support professionals received an invitation along with instructions from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (Division) to participate in the [National Core Indicators \(NCI\) Staff Stability Survey - 2021](#). Invitations were sent to the provider email address associated with the iRecord.

The opportunity to complete the NCI Staff Stability Survey has been extended through July 31, 2022.

It is critical that all eligible provider agencies complete this survey as it provides critical data on Direct Support Professional wages in New Jersey. If your organization has not received an invitation to participate or needs assistance please contact [DDD.NCI@dhs.nj.gov](mailto:DDD.NCI@dhs.nj.gov).

Please see the Division's [NCI Staff Stability Overview](#) for more information.

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## Office of Program Integrity and Accountability Releases Update on Employee Onboarding

Effective June 29, 2022, the Department of Human Services (DHS) will provide expedited approval of emergency hiring requests for direct support professionals and self-directed employees through September 30, 2022. Please see the below document for details.

- [Employee Onboarding](#) UPDATED
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### Day Services Rate Increase

On October 1, 2021, Day Services Rates (i.e. Career Planning, Community Inclusion Services, Day Habilitation, Prevocational Training - Group and Individual, and Supported Employment - Group and Individual) were increased due to one-time funding. The amount of the increase was calculated using projections that did not meet actual utilization of services. To correct this moving forward the Division will increase day service rates by an additional 3% effective July 1, 2022. Notice of rate increase has been published on the [Public Notices](#) section of the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services website. A direct link to the notice can be found [here](#).

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### Temporary Service Modifications

The [Temporary Service Modifications](#) document has been updated. The policy contents are unchanged from the November 2021 release outside of updating dates. This document describes how referenced service modifications, including virtual services, will continue to be in place until six months after the Federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) ends. Presently, the Federal PHE is scheduled to end on July 15, 2022, but may extend further. Please be advised that policy adjustments are under review related to the long term continuation of Virtual Goods and Services.

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### NCI Staff Stability Survey 2021

In April 2022, provider agencies who employ direct support professionals received an invitation along with instructions from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (Division) to participate in the [National Core Indicators \(NCI\) Staff Stability Survey - 2021](#). Invitations were sent to the provider email address associated with the iRecord. The NCI Staff Stability Survey is open until June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. It is critical that all eligible provider agencies complete this survey as it provides critical data on Direct Support Professional wages in New Jersey.

If your organization has not received an invitation to participate or needs assistance please contact [DDD.NCI@dhs.nj.gov](mailto:DDD.NCI@dhs.nj.gov).

Please see the Division's [NCI Staff Stability Overview](#) for more information.

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## The NJ Department of Community Affairs Announces Open Enrollment for State Rental Assistance Program Waiting Lists

The State of New Jersey Rental Assistance Program (SRAP) is a state funded program that provides housing subsidies on behalf of very low-income New Jersey residents, for decent, safe and sanitary housing. Persons applying must meet all applicable SRAP income and eligibility requirements. A total of 4,000 households will be selected through a lottery system to be added to the waiting lists. Eligible populations are elderly, family, homeless and disabled households. The enrollment period is Monday, July 11, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. until Friday, July 22, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.

Please visit DCAs [SRAP webpage](#) for more information on eligibility and how to apply.

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## Proposed Amendments to Licensing Regulations for Residential Settings

The Department of Human Services has published proposed amendments to the three regulations governing different licensed settings. These are:

- N.J.A.C. 10:44A – [Community Residences for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities](#). This is the regulation that impacts persons living in group homes and supervised apartments funded by the Division of Developmental Disabilities;
- N.J.A.C. 10:44B – [Manual of Standards for Community Care Residences](#). This is the regulation that impacts persons living in Community Care Residences funded by the Division of Developmental Disabilities;
- N.J.A.C. 10:44C – [Standards for Community Residences for Persons with Head Injuries](#). This is the regulation that impacts persons living in settings for persons with Traumatic Brain Injury.

The Department is proposing amendments to update the rules governing these Community Residences to be consistent with best practices and to include provisions for the Fee-for-Service Initiative; the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' guidelines for funding; the Central Registry of Offenders against Individuals with Developmental Disabilities (N.J.S.A. 30:4D-77); P.L. 2017, c. 328 (an act concerning background checks and licensing of certain entities); Stephen Komninos' Law (P.L. 2017, c. 238); and updated organizational changes. To that end, the Department is proposing substantive amendments to these chapters.

The rule proposals are available online on the Department of Human Services' [Proposed Rules and Amendments website](#), or can be found in the [New Jersey Register's June 20, 2022 edition](#), 54 NJR 1117(a); 54 NJR 1137(a); and 54 NJR 1146(a).

Interested stakeholders are encouraged submit comments during the public comment period which is open through August 20, 2022. Comments are to be submitted in writing during that time period and be directed to:

Douglas Office of Program Integrity and Swan  
Department of Human Services  
PO Box Jersey  
Trenton, New Jersey  
[Doug.Swan@dhs.nj.gov](mailto:Doug.Swan@dhs.nj.gov) 700  
08625-0700

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### Enhanced Funding for Day Services Reconciliation

On October 1, 2021, Day Services Rates (i.e. Career Planning, Community Inclusion Services, Day Habilitation, Prevocational Training - Group and Individual, and Supported Employment - Group and Individual) were increased due to one-time funding appropriated to the Division's FY22 budget, as outlined in [Payments for Day Services](#). As part of the rate increases, a portion was delivered as an *Enhanced Rate* requiring a monthly reconciliation. Further, due to the nature of the increase and one-time legislative language, all underspent funds must be distributed by the Division to service providers rendering the aforementioned services. To address, the Division will administer a proportional one-time lump sum payment to providers of the projected underspent funds.

The below referenced document describes the manner in which final reconciliations will occur and the one-time lump sum payment will be calculated and released.

- [Enhanced Funding for Day Services Reconciliation](#)
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### DDD Prevention Bulletins

The New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of Developmental Disabilities (Division) is sending this important reminder to caregivers of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). There are certain medical conditions that can quickly lead to deterioration in health, or even death, in persons with IDD if left untreated. Ensuring that caregivers are aware of them, know the signs that they are occurring, and what to do is paramount in ensuring quality care for persons with IDD.

The Division, for several years, has had a *DDD Prevention Bulletin Series* available to educate caregivers on these conditions. All caregivers, especially service providers, are directed to these bulletins so that their staff are educated in these important areas. Below are direct links to each bulletin:

- [Aspiration](#)
  - [Choking](#)
  - [Constipation](#)
  - [Dehydration](#)
  - [Pressure Ulcers](#)
  - [Seizures](#)
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### NCI Staff Stability Survey 2021

In April 2022, provider agencies who employ direct support professionals received an invitation along with instructions from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (Division) to participate in the [National Core Indicators \(NCI\) Staff Stability Survey - 2021](#). Invitations were sent to the provider email address associated with the iRecord. The NCI Staff Stability Survey is open until June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. It is critical that all eligible provider agencies complete this survey as it provides critical data on Direct Support Professional wages in New Jersey.

If your organization has not received an invitation to participate please contact [DDD.NCI@dhs.nj.gov](mailto:DDD.NCI@dhs.nj.gov).

Please see the Division's [NCI Staff Stability Overview](#) for more information.

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### DDD is currently conducting the 2021-2022 NCI In-Person Survey

The Division is once again virtually conducting the NCI In-Person Survey (IPS), for individuals 21 and older who are receiving at least one Division-funded service in addition to Support Coordination. The 2021-2022 NCI IPS will be administered through June 30, 2022.

Please see the Division's [NCI In-Person Survey Overview](#) for more information.

Questions regarding the NCI Staff Stability Survey or NCI In-Person Survey can be directed to [DDD.NCI@dhs.nj.gov](mailto:DDD.NCI@dhs.nj.gov).

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## Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for Licensed Providers of Services to Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

On May 25, 2022 and in accordance with P.L. 2021, [Chapter 292](#), the NJ Department of Human Services (DHS) published an [Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for Licensed Providers of Services to Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities \(EPRP\)](#) on its [website](#). This document is available to each unique Licensed Service Provider (LSP) to assist them in developing an [EPRP](#) that will address the specific needs, geographic area and population they serve. An LSP is any entity licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized by DHS to provide services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

A webinar for impacted LSPs was held on June 2, 2022 at 10am. The EPRP, webinar recording, and webinar slide deck can be found [here](#).

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### May

Extension deadline is fast approaching for Applicable Self-Directed Employees (SDEs) with PPL to Complete All Mandated Trainings

As communicated through a DDD Communication on April 27, 2022, the Division of Developmental Disabilities has permitted a one-time extension for SDEs with PPL who have exceeded the six-month timeframe to complete all mandated trainings. Specifically, all SDEs who have been employed six (6) months or longer as of May 31, 2022 must complete all mandated trainings by that date. All other SDEs have six (6) months from date of working/providing services to complete all mandated trainings.

The deadline for compliance continues to be May 31, 2022. Any impacted SDE not in compliance with the above requirements will be unable to process timesheets after May 31, 2022. Employers of Record (EORs) who have SDEs and use PPL should ensure that their SDEs are up to date with trainings, with proper documentation having been submitted to PPL, to avoid any issues with timesheet processing.

If you are an EOR and are unsure if this has been completed, please reach out to PPL's Customer Service; Monday - Friday 8am - 6pm EST, by phone: 1-844-842-5891 (English) / 1-844-842-5892 (Spanish), or E-mail: [njddd-cs@pcgus.com](mailto:njddd-cs@pcgus.com).

Please see the below documents for additional details:

- [PPL SDE Mandated Training Extension](#)
- [Quick Reference Guide to Mandated Trainings for SDEs](#)



## April

### Extension for Applicable Self-Directed Employees (SDEs) with PPL to Complete All Mandated Trainings

The Division of Developmental Disabilities has permitted a one-time extension for SDEs with PPL who have exceeded the six-month timeframe to complete all mandated trainings. Specifically, all SDEs who have been employed six (6) months or longer as of May 31, 2022 must complete all mandated trainings by that date. All other SDEs have six (6) months from date of working/providing services to complete all mandated trainings. Please see the below documents for details.

- [PPL SDE Mandated Training Extension](#)
  - [Quick Reference Guide to Mandated Trainings for SDEs](#)
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### Office of Program Integrity and Accountability Releases Update on Employee Onboarding

Effective April 20, 2022, the Department of Human Services (DHS) will provide expedited approval of emergency hiring requests for direct support professionals and self-directed employees through July 1, 2022. Please see the below document for details.

- [Employee Onboarding](#) UPDATED
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## March

### The NCI Staff Stability Survey 2021 is almost here

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, provider agencies who employ direct support professionals will receive an invite along with instructions from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) to participate in the [National Core Indicators](#) (NCI) Staff Stability Survey- 2021. Invitations will be sent to the provider email address associated with the iRecord. Provider agencies can take part in the NCI Stability Survey through June 30, 2022. It is critical that we hear from as many members of the DDD Provider Community as possible to ensure valid results. We are counting on your participation!

Please see the Division's [NCI Staff Stability Overview](#) for more information.

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Reminder...DDD is currently conducting the 2021-2022 NCI In-Person Survey

The Division is once again virtually conducting the NCI In-Person Survey (IPS), for individuals 21 and older who are receiving at least one Division-funded service in addition to Support Coordination. The 2021-2022 NCI IPS will be administered through June 30, 2022.

Please see the Division's [NCI In-Person Survey Overview](#) for more information.

Questions regarding the NCI Staff Stability Survey or NCI In-Person Survey can be directed to [DDD.NCI@dhs.nj.gov](mailto:DDD.NCI@dhs.nj.gov).

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## Residential and Day Program Screening Policy

In response to the easing of COVID-19 related requirements, the Division has updated its [Residential and Day Program Screening Policy](#). This policy eases masking and social distancing requirements in certain circumstances and can be used by Residential and Day Providers serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and/or traumatic brain injury. This updated policy supersedes and replaces the previous stand-alone documents entitled *Guidance for Residential Providers on Visits with Family and Friends* and *Congregate Day Program COVID-19 Operating Requirements*. Please review the full policy here:

- [Residential and Day Program Screening Policy](#)
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## Executive Order 290 Updates Timelines of COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements for Staff in High Risk Congregate Settings for People with I/DD and TBI

On March 2, 2022, Governor Phil Murphy signed [Executive Order No. 290](#), which updates and clarifies timeframes for requiring covered workers at health care facilities and high-risk congregated settings to be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations, including having received a booster shot. This impacts many settings, including but not limited to: licensed community residences for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) (e.g., group homes and supervised apartments); certified day programs for individuals with I/DD and TBI; and Support Coordination Agencies.

All covered workers employed in high risk congregated settings must now submit proof that they are up to date with their vaccination by May 11, 2022, including any booster for which they are eligible. Workers who become newly eligible for a booster shot after the May 11, 2022 deadline will be required to submit proof of their booster shot within three weeks of becoming eligible. The previous date was March 30, 2022.

[Executive Order No. 290](#) also requires a covered setting to take the first step toward bringing a noncompliant covered worker into compliance as part of the disciplinary policy required by Executive Order No. 283 (2022) within two weeks of the May 11, 2022 deadline.

Please review [Executive Order No. 290](#) for full detail.

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## February

### DDD Launches Office of Education on Self-Directed Services

The Office of Education on Self-Directed Services provides a centralized place for the delivery of education and training for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities receiving services, their families, advocates, support coordinators, interested community partners and other internal and external stakeholders. The Office serves as an additional support to help people understand how self-directed services can work if chosen by the individual. Please visit the [Office of Education on Self-Directed Services](#) website or email them at [DDD.OESDS@dhs.nj.gov](mailto:DDD.OESDS@dhs.nj.gov) for more information.

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## January

### Agency with Choice Self-Directed Employee (SDE) Model Available to All Eligible Individuals February 1, 2022

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (Division) is pleased to announce that, starting February 1, 2022, the current Agency with Choice (AWC) SDE Model will be available for all eligible individuals to choose from! The Division has offered the Vendor Fiscal/Employer Agent (VF/EA) model with Public Partnerships LLC (PPL) as the fiscal intermediary for several years while the AWC model with Easterseals NJ as the fiscal intermediary was primarily available to those transitioning to Fee-For-Service. Now that this process is complete, enrollment into the AWC SDE Model will be open to all eligible individuals. Please note that there are no changes to the VF/EA model and those using it do not need to take any action.

Individuals are encouraged to discuss all service options with their support coordinator and choose what is right for them. These include more traditional provider managed services, as well as SDE models. There are differences between the two SDE models available. These include, but are not limited to: who is identified as the employer of record; the availability of employer-sponsored health benefits and associated contribution; etc. The below links contain more detail on this as well as other helpful information.

- [FAQs: Self-Directed Employee Models in Fee-for-Service](#)

- [Side-by-Side Comparison of Self-Directed Employee Models](#)
- [Agency with Choice Per-Member, Per-Month Cost Table](#)

If an SDE model is selected by the individual, their support coordinator can select either VF/EA or AWC within the iRecord and electronically transmit the appropriate referral. Please note that any goods and services (e.g., classes, gym memberships, etc.) an individual uses will run through the fiscal intermediary used for their SDE services. If an individual only uses goods and services and does not utilize SDEs, the VF/EA model will continue to be used.

Enrollment into the AWC model is completely voluntary and the option is available to provide expanded choice and support for those who use SDEs, or are considering doing so.

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### Community Care Program and Supports Program Manuals

The Division has updated program manuals for its Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waivers, the Community Care Program and Supports Program. A summary of changes can be found on page two of each respective manual. Below are direct links to each manual:

- [Community Care Program Policies and Procedures Manual](#) (Updated 1/2022)
- [Supports Program Policies and Procedures Manual](#) (Updated 1/2022)

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### Conflict-Free Policy for Support Coordination Agencies

The Conflict-Free Policy governing Support Coordination Agencies has been updated. This evolution of the policy clarifies that Support Coordinators are able to participate in the NJCAT Re-Assessment Process. The full policy can be found here:

- [Conflict-Free Policy for Support Coordination Agencies](#) (Revised 1/2022)