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NEWSLETTER | JULY 2024



Disability Information Hub

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



NJ Human Services and Office of Innovation Launch Disability Information Hub

Commissioner Sarah Adelman and State Chief Innovation Officer Dave Cole

launched a [Disability Information Hub](https://www.nj.gov/disabilities) website during a virtual event commemorating Disability Pride Month and the 34th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA Day). The Hub, located at [NJ.gov/Disabilities](https://www.nj.gov/disabilities), will serve as a one-stop shop to connect New Jerseyans with disabilities, their families, caregivers, and advocates with state services and resources in an accessible format. The Hub and related referral services are among Fiscal Year 2025 investments to support inclusion and services for New Jersey's diverse disability community.

"Across state government, our Administration has pursued equity and inclusion for individuals with disabilities, improved access to services, and strengthened supports for this community. For many individuals and families, New Jersey's Disability Information Hub will be a game-changer. Having streamlined, easy access to the State's comprehensive collection of services and supports will put needed tools and resources in reach for countless people," **said Governor Phil Murphy**. "Together, we are breaking down barriers and empowering all New Jerseyans to thrive in their communities. I commend the whole-of-government effort to uplift the State's disability community."

"The anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act marks significant progress in protecting civil rights and promoting the full inclusion and dignity of people with disabilities. Under the Murphy Administration, Human Services has made substantial investments to better serve and support individuals with disabilities and their families," **said Commissioner Sarah Adelman**. "The Disability Information Hub is a gateway to a wealth of resources available to this community. We are proud to launch this comprehensive and accessible resource, especially during Disability Pride Month, and could not have done so without the dedicated work of the Office of Innovation and Office of Information Technology, as well as the many individuals with disabilities and fellow state

agencies and offices who helped test and improve the website.”

“The Hub represents a whole-of-government approach centered on people with disabilities. From community surveys and focus groups to user testing with individuals with lived experience, this Hub was created with the input of those with disabilities at the forefront to better serve this community,”

said Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire. “It is imperative to plan for the success of all New Jerseyans, and that includes online spaces.”

“More than one million New Jerseyans have at least one disability, that’s nearly 20 percent of our state’s population. The creation of this Hub will ensure 1 in 5 of our loved ones, family members, or friends have access to key services and programs in a streamlined format to make informed decisions about one’s health and well-being,” **said Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Executive Director Elizabeth Hill.** “Everyone deserves the same access to essential information, and this Hub ensures that. For those who are deaf and hard of hearing, additional translation efforts are forthcoming and we urge these individuals to contact us at the numbers listed above if you are in need of additional information.”

“For individuals with disabilities, their families and those who care for them, it is not always easy to know where to start looking for resources. The Disability Information Hub offers a streamlined guide for New Jerseyans to find essential disability-related information,” **said Division of Disability Services Executive Director Peri Nearon.** “We look forward to seeing how this Hub will positively impact those it serves and urge users to leave feedback, so we can continue to properly serve the disability community as a whole.”

To read a quick start guide for caregivers, click [here](#).

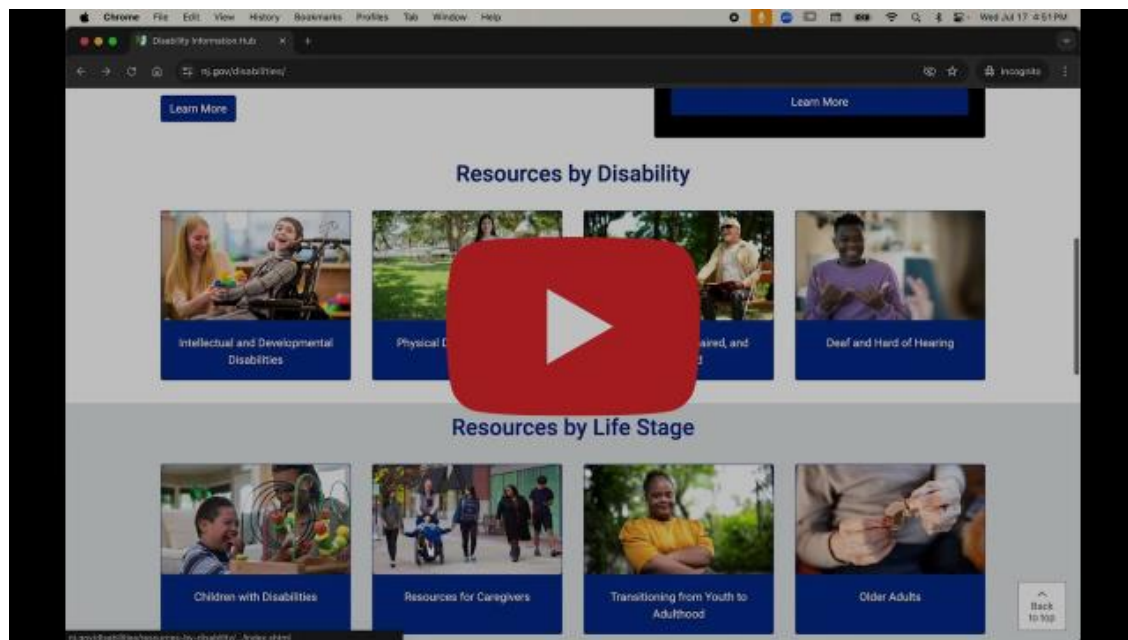
For a PDF version of key services and supports profiled in the Hub, visit the [NJ Resource Guide](#) available from the Department of Human Services' Division of Disability Services.

Learn more [HERE](#).

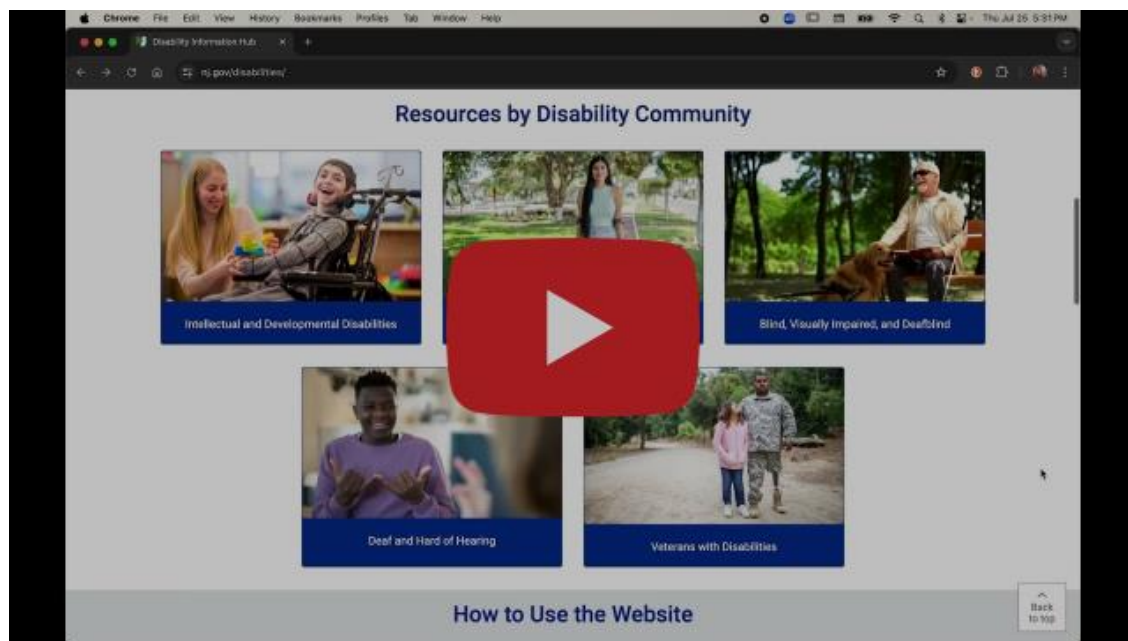
Watch the New Jersey Disability Information Hub launch livestream.



Learn about the New Jersey Disability Information Hub.



**With audio description and transcript:
Learn about the New Jersey
Disability Information Hub.**





Human Services Awards ‘Senior Save Navigator’ Grants to Promote NJSave Application, Enroll More Eligible Residents in Cost-Saving Programs

Commissioner Sarah Adelman announced \$5.1 million in grants have been awarded to several organizations to serve as “Senior Save Navigators” to raise public awareness about the [NJSave application](#), provide application assistance, and enroll more eligible residents in cost-saving programs available through NJSave.

The Department awarded \$466,000 grants each to the following 11 entities: Alliance Center for Independence, Bergen County Division of Senior Services, Catholic Charities Diocese of Trenton, Community Health Law Project, Family and Children’s Services of Monmouth County, Kennedy Health Care Foundation, New Jersey Citizen Action Education Fund, Norwescap,

Resources for Independent Living, Save Latin America Inc. and United Way of Hunterdon-Mercer County.

“Through the Senior Save Navigator Program, we are offering another way to connect older New Jerseyans with affordable prescription drugs and other benefits,” **said Governor Phil Murphy.** “The NJSave application serves as a one-stop shop that enables applicants to save time and to sign up for more than a dozen savings and discount programs – but this tool is only valuable if our seniors know it’s available. Raising awareness of NJSave is crucial as it will ensure we reach more eligible community members.”

“We are eager to continue spreading the word about NJSave through this new partnership with trusted community partners and to enrolling even more people in programs that help save on common living expenses. Awareness and enrollment assistance are critical to helping consumers take advantage of important savings programs,” **said Commissioner Adelman.** “The NJSave application screens for eligibility to more than a dozen cost-saving programs available to low-income older adults and those with disabilities. Navigators will walk people through the application from start to finish at no cost. We encourage anyone who believes they are eligible to visit [NJSave.org](https://njsave.org) and take advantage of this assistance.”

“While the NJSave application conveniently screens for a wide range of programs, we understand the application process and gathering the necessary documentation can be daunting for some. The last thing we want is for people who are eligible to forgo these savings. Our new navigators will not only help people apply, but will also provide education and outreach to raise awareness and connect more people to these benefits,” **said Kaylee McGuire, Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services.**

Learn more [HERE](#).



NJ Human Services Honors Blind and Visually Impaired Individuals at Trenton Thunder Game

Celebrating the accomplishments of individuals who are blind, deafblind, and visually impaired, Human Services' Commission for the Blind and Visually

Impaired (CBVI) today announced college scholarships to four blind, deafblind, or visually impaired students and recognized other blind and visually impaired students for their academic achievements during a recent Trenton Thunder game.

“We are honored to celebrate these amazing individuals for their outstanding accomplishments and provide financial support through these scholarships,” **Commissioner Sarah Adelman said**. “We look forward to seeing these trailblazers continue to reach their dreams and to explore their infinite potential as they pursue higher education.”

“These students represent the importance of full inclusion in our communities, which fosters diversity, equity, and a sense of belonging for all,” **Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire said**. “We congratulate these individuals on their success and look forward to celebrating what they will accomplish in years to come.”

“It is of utmost importance to spotlight the achievements of exemplary students who also happen to be blind, deafblind and visually impaired and we are proud to do so in front of their family, friends and loved ones,” **said [Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#) Executive Director Dr. Bernice Davis**. “We are thrilled to award these scholarships again and welcome these individuals to the 2024 cohort of scholarship winners.”

Scholarship awards ranged from \$1,000 to \$5,000. This year’s awardees are:

- **Ava Bullis of Manahwakin**, who is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Business at St. Joseph’s University. Ava received the Cathy and Herb

Bodensiek Scholarship for Students Majoring in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (STEM) or in Business Administration.

- **Madeline Mau of West Windsor**, who is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Music Technology at New York University. Madeline received the Nathan & Sally Rogoff Scholarship for Academic Excellence.
- **Reydina Lawrence of Union**, who is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Biology at Seton Hall University. Reydina received the Caroline Rose Foster Scholarship for Independence and Self-Determination.
- **Patrick Lant of Sewell**, who is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Kinesiology at the University of Delaware. Patrick received the Mary Louise Buckley Scholarship for Students Majoring in Health Services or Communications.
- **Adamarie Tait of Forked River, Alex Kahan of Monroe, Henry Johnson Jr. of Vineland, Nora Cumisky of Cranford, and Timothy Palermo of Ocean View** also received \$200 each for being finalists in the college scholarship program.

Learn more [HERE](#).



A Bridge Between Generations: NJ Human Services Opens Mentorship Program for Blind and Visually Impaired Individuals

Commissioner Sarah Adelman announced the Department has opened for a second year a mentorship program to bring together younger and older residents who are visually impaired, blind, and deafblind. This Fellowship Program is designed to address their needs through peer mentoring opportunities.

“The Fellowship Program is designed to foster community and mutual mentorship by building meaningful connections between individuals 18-21 years of age and individuals 55 years of age and older who are visually impaired,” **said Commissioner Adelman.** “We are proud to once again make this program available to New Jerseyans with a visual impairment and look forward to partnering with Vision Loss Alliance of New Jersey on this initiative.”

The Department awarded \$34,077 to [Vision Loss Alliance of New Jersey](#) (VLANJ) to operate this program in partnership with the

Department's [Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#) (CBVI). The program will be paid for through federal funding. Services are expected to start this July and will run through December 31st.

Through the Fellowship Program, adults who are 55+ and younger individuals, between the ages of 18-21 years, will be provided with the opportunity to meet and share knowledge and life experiences through a series of educational and skill-based activities.

Services include hosting virtual meetings through Zoom twice a month and hosting in-person meetings twice a year. The meetings will serve up to 24 participants consisting of both large and small group activities, as well as facilitated discussions related to living life with a visual impairment. The participants will include up to 12 young adults and up to 12 older adults.

“Through these virtual and in-person meetings, individuals from two different age groups will have shared space to discuss the emotional aspects of vision loss, participate in self-advocacy training, learn how to build healthy relationships, and much more,” **said Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire.** “We look forward to the continuation of this program and seeing the bonds created.”

“Connecting with those from a different generation holds the power to enrich personal growth, deepen your understanding of yourself, and provide invaluable insights that contribute to your well-being,” **said Executive Director of the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired Dr. Bernice Davis.** “We look forward to seeing the positive impact this program will have for our blind and visually impaired residents.”

Learn more [HERE](#).



Human Services and Community Affairs Commissioners Announce Developers Can Apply for \$95M to Build 'Healthy Homes' for NJ FamilyCare Members

Commissioner Sarah Adelman and Community Affairs Commissioner Jacquelyn A. Suárez announced developers can apply for funding to provide affordable housing for NJ FamilyCare members.

Under the Healthy Homes partnership, the \$95 million available will be used to produce up to 200 low-rent housing units for NJ FamilyCare members who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or living in an institution. [NJ FamilyCare](#) is New Jersey's Medicaid program.

“Access to safe, stable, and affordable housing is a necessity that New Jerseyans deserve to see fulfilled, and it directly impacts an individual's overall health and wellness,” **Governor Phil Murphy said.** “By making \$95 million available through the Healthy Homes Initiative, we are building on the life-changing benefits made available to New Jersey families through NJ FamilyCare and taking decisive steps to bolster health and housing equity. I commend Commissioners Adelman and Suárez for their leadership on this issue and look forward to seeing the impact of this program.”

“Housing is one of the primary social determinants of health, and research has shown that inadequate housing is often a critical barrier to wellness that can also raise health care costs,” **Commissioner Sarah Adelman said.** “New Jersey's Healthy Homes program aims to provide affordable, community-based housing to NJ FamilyCare members in need, which ensures long-term housing stability for tenants and, importantly, advances health equity. We believe investing these one-time funds in safe and affordable housing for the Medicaid population will help us serve people the best way possible.”

Learn more [HERE](#).



Governor Murphy Signs Bill to Establish Menstrual Hygiene and Diaper Benefit Programs

Governor Phil Murphy signed A2027/S2330 to establish the State Work First New Jersey Menstrual Hygiene Benefit Program and the State Work First New Jersey Diaper Benefit Program. The bill also appropriates \$2.5 million from the General Fund to the [Division of Family Development](#) to administer these programs.

[Work First New Jersey \(WFNJ\)](#) is the State's cash assistance program, which provides monthly cash, child care, job search and readiness, and short-term housing support for eligible New Jersey residents. Under the Menstrual Hygiene Benefit Program, certain eligible adults ages 18 through 50 who are participating in WFNJ may purchase menstrual hygiene products using a dedicated \$14 monthly State benefit through their electronic benefits card. Menstrual hygiene products include tampons, menstrual cups, and sanitary napkins. Similarly, under the Diaper Benefit Program, individuals with a

dependent under 36 months of age and who participate in WFNJ will receive a \$30 monthly State benefit through their electronic benefits card. The funds shall be for the benefit of the dependent child and shall be dedicated to purchase of diaper products. The monetary benefit shall be carried over to the next month for use by the participants for the same respective purchases. These additional funds will be distributed on the same issuance date as the participant's standard WFNJ benefits.

“Work First New Jersey provides essential assistance to residents facing financial hardship and I am proud to extend this financial relief to cover costs of menstrual products and diapers. This bill provides residents across our state a necessary resource to purchase some of the most essential products for their health and the health of their babies,” **said Governor Murphy**. “My Administration will continue to prioritize affordability at every level, ensuring that every resident has access to the vital health services and supplies that support their well-being, dignity, and quality of life.”

“Menstrual and baby products are not luxuries—they are necessities,” **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. “The benefit included in this bill is a necessary step to ensuring cost is never a barrier to accessing these products. This bill brings us closer to a stronger, fairer, more equitable reality for the women and families of our state.”

This legislation builds upon the Murphy Administration’s commitment to reproductive, maternal, and child health in New Jersey. For example, under P.L. 2023, c. 147 and supported by \$3.5 million in Fiscal Year 2025 (FY2025), school districts are required to provide menstrual products free of charge in every public school teaching students in one or more of grades six through twelve.

“Menstrual care products and diapers are a basic need and a significant recurring expense that strains tight budgets, yet traditionally have not been covered by assistance programs. This law provides additional benefits for eligible households to help individuals afford these essential products. I am grateful to Governor Murphy, Senate Majority Leader Ruiz and the Legislature for recognizing this inequity and advancing this important new benefit,” **said Commissioner Sarah Adelman.**

Learn more [HERE](#).



Did you know that your child who is deaf or hard of hearing
can receive language acquisition services through an
ASL Deaf Language Associate?

Check out our video from NJ Human Services' [Division of the Deaf
and Hard of Hearing](#) for more information.

To learn more visit [HERE](#).



Commissioner Sarah Adelman and Deputy Commissioner for Health Services Valerie Mielke held a Family Roundtable with members of the Opioid Recovery & Remediation Advisory Council along with leaders of four organizations that provide support for people in recovery or current use. The group discussed strategies for addressing the opioid crisis and how to support family who are affected.

To learn more, visit [HERE](#).



Commissioner Sarah Adelman and NJ Human Services officials joined the [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services](#) to discuss the needs of immigrants and refugees in the region. They met with Office of Citizenship, Partnership, and Engagement Chief Eva Millona and senior staff to discuss naturalization, resources and hear updates.



The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired Assistant Division Director Charles "Pat" McKenna was thrilled to participate in the 40th Annual Special Olympics Torch Run with Edison PBA.

Learn about the torch run [HERE](#).

Learn about CBVI's programs and services [HERE](#).



Elizabeth Hill, Executive Director of the [Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#) met with Mariana Diaz-Nagore, [Consul of Mexico in New Brunswick NJ](#) as they begin collaboration talking to the Mexican community about programs and services and sharing materials in Spanish.



New Jersey was awarded an Administration for Community Living (ACL) grant for “Bridging the Gap” between aging and disability networks. Staff from the [Division of Aging Services](#), [Division of Developmental Disabilities](#) & [New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities](#) attended the annual meeting for grant recipients to learn more about emerging best practices.



Governor's Proclamations



Disability Pride
Month



Americans with Disabilities
34th Anniversary

WORLD HEPATITIS DAY

NJ FamilyCare covers **#HepC**
drug treatment once someone
is diagnosed with the virus.

#NOHep



NJ FamilyCare covers Hepatitis C curative drug treatment.

To apply, visit our website [HERE](#).



July is the 34th Anniversary of the [Americans With Disabilities Act](#)! This law protects friends, family and neighbors with disabilities from discrimination.

NJ Human Services remains committed to upholding the ADA and creating a state inclusive of all people.

[NJ SNAP](#) | [NJ FAMILYCARE](#) | [NJHELPS](#)

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