

An update about Office Operations and Annual Reporting

Lisa Montalbano, the Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities and Their Families, is engaging with Individuals and families about the immediate and ongoing needs of the IDD community throughout the state. Simultaneously she is collaborating with partnering agencies to positively impact the community and to include recommendations that will aid in good person-centered planning for the wellbeing of the individual.

For the first half of 2026, our Deputy Executive Director, Christine Bakter, provided operational leadership and continuity of services during the transition between Ombudsman appointments, while keeping a strong commitment to advocacy. She also gained insight into the systematic aspects of disability services. Christine maintained key strategic and legislatively required partnerships and initiatives during this period. The entire Ombudsman Office – Christine, Charles, Suhani and Amanda - worked diligently supporting many families and positively improved working relationships with state agencies, advocacy groups and the legislature.

We will be sharing data from 2025 this fall, so our constituents remain informed about our team's efforts and the needs of people with developmental disabilities throughout our state. The team worked hard to support people and their families through some significant challenges and had discussions with our colleagues about ways to improve the lives of those who we support.

Our new Ombudsman is working closely with families and State colleagues towards improving processes and services throughout New Jersey. Our team is excited about what's going to come!