

The IFSP Regional Council Charter

Established: January 29, 2020

Revised: May 30, 2025

MISSION

The mission of the Individual and Family Support Program (IFSP) Regional Councils is to work in partnership with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) at the local level to advance the goals of Virginia’s “Virginia’s Individual and Family Support Program State Plan” (hereinafter referred to as the “State Plan”). Through coordination with the IFSP State Council, the Regional Councils aim to implement local activities designed to increase the number and types of community-based, person-centered, and family-centered services across Virginia.

PURPOSE

The IFSP Regional Councils are volunteer groups that work to support individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) and their families by improving access to information, resources, supports and services within their region. Councils help identify gaps in services for individuals who are new to the system, those on the DD Waivers Waiting List (“the Waitlist”), and those already connected to DD services. They work to identify and address unmet needs and community resource gaps that may be systemic or unique to the region’s geographic area.

The key roles of the Regional Council include:

- Collaborating with DBHDS to support the work of the IFSP State Council and implement activities outlined in the State Plan
- Supporting DBHDS efforts to increase the variety and availability of resources for individuals on the DD Waivers Waitlist
- Coordinating with other council members to identify and address regional gaps in services and resources for individuals at all stages—new to the system, on the DD Waivers Waitlist, and already connected to services.
- Serving as ambassadors for the IFSP and DBHDS, representing the interests of individuals with DD and their families in their region, promoting awareness, and supporting efforts to address community needs and service gaps.

AUTHORIZATION/SCOPE OF AUTHORITY

The IFSP Regional Councils are voluntary, grassroots coalitions comprised of individuals with DD, family members, and other DD community stakeholders. These councils are responsible for supporting and helping implement activities that address the needs of individuals with DD and their families within their respective regions.

While the regional councils play an important role in identifying local needs and sharing information, they do not have a decision-making or policy-setting authority. Their activities

are guided by the IFSP State Council and the overall IFSP State Plan. All regional councils report to the IFSP State Council, which sets the direction and priorities for the work of the regional councils. Each of DBHDS's five regions has its own IFSP Regional Council, which is accountable for coordinating local efforts and aligning with state-level goals.

Regions are defined in [this map](#).

DEFINITIONS

Terms	Definitions
Individual and Family Support Program (IFSP)	A program administered by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to support individuals with developmental disabilities and their families by promoting access to resources, funding, and services that enhance independence and community inclusion.
IFSP State Council	A statewide council composed of members from IFSP Regional Councils who provide input, share expertise, and collaborate on initiatives to guide and support the broader mission of the Individual and Family Support Program.
IFSP Regional Council Members	Volunteers who represent their regions and support the goals of the IFSP State Plan.
Regional Network Coordinators (RNCs)	Responsible for supporting the IFSP Regional Council by facilitating communication, coordinating activities and providing guidance to council members. They assist in the implementation of program initiatives and help identify regional needs and ensure alignment with the IFSP's goals and objectives. RNCs serve as a liaison between the Councils and the IFSP staff, offering support and resources to ensure the success of regional efforts.
Regional Business Meeting	A meeting of Regional Council Members focused on administrative updates, sharing regional information, and addressing regional work plan goals.
Coordinated Regional Council Meeting	A quarterly meeting designed to facilitate regional collaboration, education, and discussion on key topics. These meetings are open to the public to include community members, stakeholders, and regional leaders. The focus is on sharing valuable information and engaging in meaningful dialogue on topics relevant to individuals with DD and their families.

Terms	Definitions
All Council Annual Meeting	A yearly meeting bringing together members from all Regional Councils and the State Council to discuss statewide initiatives, review progress on goals, provide updates from partners, and foster collaboration across regions.

RESPONSIBILITIES, DUTIES, ACTIVITIES

Council Meetings and Participation

- Attend and participate in the Annual IFSP All-Council meeting, Regional Coordinated Council meetings/events, and monthly business meetings.
- Engage in at least two community events annually, such as trainings, webinars, fairs, or informational sessions. At least one council member from each region should attend each event with the RNC to share relevant insights with the council and community.
- Assist RNCs with regular reports on local activities for submission to the State Council and other reports requested by DBHDS.
- Review State Council meeting minutes quarterly to remain informed and aligned with statewide initiatives.

Work Plan Development & Collaboration

- Collaborate with the RNC and the IFSP staff to develop and update regional workplans, identifying regional needs and addressing barriers impacting access to information, services, and resources.
- Support the implementation of the activities outlined in the workplan.

Leadership and Community Engagement

- Identify relevant topics for presentation during IFSP State Council meetings or community training sessions that represent the interests of the DD community.

MEMBERSHIP

Composition and Representation

- Regional Councils shall consist of at least four (4) members from the region, including a minimum of one (1) member with a developmental disability (self-advocate).
- Regional Councils shall represent a diverse membership, including individuals with developmental disabilities (self-advocates), family members, DD professionals, and other community representatives from urban, suburban, and rural areas.
- Membership shall reflect the geographical and demographic diversity of the region served.
- Efforts shall be made to recruit self-advocates in collaboration with organizations supporting individuals with developmental disabilities across Virginia.

Eligibility and Appointment

- Members must reside in the Commonwealth of Virginia within the region they

represent, as defined by the DBHDS regional map.

- Applications for membership shall be open to the public, and all appointments are subject to approval by the designated DBHDS administrator.
- IFSP representatives shall prioritize the filling of Regional Council vacancies prior to making appointments to the State Council.

Membership Terms

- Members shall serve a one-year term, renewable for up to three consecutive terms, contingent upon IFSP recommendation.
- Members in good standing, after one year of service, may submit a self-nomination application for State Council consideration.
- Regional Councils shall have no officers.

Collaboration with the State Council

- Regional Councils shall appoint one member to serve as the State Council alternate when a vacancy exists, guided by IFSP representatives.
- The Regional Network Coordinator (RNC) shall serve as an ex-officio member and assist the alternate in fulfilling State Council responsibilities.

Member Conduct

- Regional Council Members are expected to demonstrate respect, integrity, and accountability in all council activities. Members should contribute positively to discussions, collaborate effectively with others, and uphold the council's commitment to supporting individuals and families with developmental disabilities.
- Members act as ambassadors of DBHDS, representing its mission and values in interactions with the community, partners, and stakeholders. They should strive to promote awareness and understanding of the council's goals and initiatives while fostering trust and collaboration.
- Members must disclose any potential conflicts of interest that could affect their ability to serve effectively and ethically and collaborate with the IFSP staff or RNCs to address such concerns as they arise.
- Members shall not report opinions expressed in meetings, nor shall they report independently on Council actions.

Grounds for Dismissal

- Regional Council Members are expected to uphold the responsibilities outlined in this charter and act in alignment with the council's mission. Grounds for dismissal may include consistent failure to fulfill responsibilities, unethical behavior such as undisclosed conflicts of interest, or actions that compromise the council's integrity, mission, or reputation. Any dismissal action will follow a fair and transparent process, ensuring members have the opportunity to address concerns raised by IFSP representatives or RNCs.

RECRUITMENT, INTERVIEW and ORIENTATION

Recruitment

- Regional Council Members will aid IFSP representatives and RNCs in sharing information across Virginia to publicize council recruitment and fill current

vacancies.

- Regional Council Members will promote recruitment materials via social media, professional affiliations, personal connections, email exchanges, in-person interactions, or by mention.

Interview

- DBHDS will facilitate the application process for Regional Council membership and will select volunteers based on their application and interview(s).
- Regional Council Members may be asked to participate in interviews with new applicants along with RNCs and/or the IFSP staff.

Orientation

- Provisional nominees must complete orientation before receiving official appointment by the DBHDS administrator.
- Orientation is conducted by IFSP representatives prior to the State Council Annual Conference meeting. This meeting marks the first official council duty of the year.
- Orientation may be scheduled in person or virtually.

MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role and Title	Responsibility
Regional Network Coordinator (RNC)	Responsible for supporting the IFSP Regional Council by facilitating communication, coordinating activities and providing guidance to council members. They assist in the implementation of program initiatives and help identify regional needs and ensure alignment with the IFSP’s goals and objectives. RNCs serve as a liaison between the Regional Councils and the IFSP staff, offering support and resources to ensure the success of regional efforts. The Regional Network Coordinator (RNC) shall serve as an ex-officio member and assist the alternate in fulfilling State Council responsibilities.
Regional Council Member	IFSP Regional Council Members are volunteers who collaborate with the Individual and Family Support Program (IFSP) to represent their region, share insights about local needs, and assist in promoting services and opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Regional Council Members serve as liaisons between their communities and the IFSP, contributing to outreach, recruitment, and program initiatives. They provide valuable input, foster connections, and support the mission of improving services and resources across Virginia.

MEETINGS

<p>Meeting Frequency, Duration, and Attendance Requirements</p>	<p>Annual All-Council Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held in January • First meeting of the year with all council members. • Duration: 4 hours. • Attendance: Mandatory for all council members. <p>Regional Coordinated Council Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 quarterly meetings open to the public to include educational topics. • Duration: 2.5 hours or less • Attendance: Members may miss up to 2 Coordinated Council meetings. Members who exceed 2 absences will not be eligible to return for the next council term and will not be eligible to apply for state council membership the next council term. <p>Regional Business Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Regional Council conducts monthly (12) business meetings. • Duration: 30 minutes to 1 hour • Attendance: 5 absences allowed per year. If a council member exceeds five absences, they will not be eligible to return the next council term and will not be eligible to apply for other council membership the next term. <p>Notification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members will notify the RNC or the IFSP staff of any planned or unexpected absence from meetings. <p>Expense Reimbursement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Council Members may request reimbursement for eligible expenses, such as travel, meals, and lodging, and other council-related costs, in accordance with DBHDS budget guidelines. All requests must be submitted in advance for approval.
<p>Quorum</p>	<p>A quorum is defined as the presence of a majority of council members. While decisions are made collaboratively and not through formal voting procedures, a quorum ensures that discussions reflect the perspectives of a diverse and representative group.</p>
<p>Voting</p>	<p>Council decisions are made collaboratively without formal voting procedures.</p>

<p>Agenda and Meeting Documentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members will be notified by email of the All-Council Meeting date/time by the IFSP staff. • Members will be notified by email of the Regional Coordinated Council meeting dates/times by the IFSP staff. A link to Regional Coordinated Council meetings will be posted on the Commonwealth Calendar at https://commonwealthcalendar.virginia.gov/ at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting date/time. • Regional Coordinated Council meetings will be recorded and shared on the My Life, My Community website for council members and public viewing. • Monthly Regional business meetings will be coordinated and scheduled by the RNC for each region. • Regional Council updates will be documented as part of the quarterly State Council meeting minutes.
<p>Meeting Logistics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings are held virtually via Microsoft Teams. • In-person meetings may be scheduled as budget and resources allow.

CONTACT

Division, Office, or Program	Role Title
Individual and Family Support Program	Individual and Family Support Program Manager