

IFSP State Council Charter

Established: January 29, 2020

Revised: May 30, 2025

MISSION

The mission of the Individual and Family Support Program (IFSP) State Council is to provide guidance and perspective to the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) on the design, implementation, and improvement of the IFSP. Through collaboration with regional councils and community stakeholders, the State Council aims to enhance person-centered and family-centered supports, increase resources for individuals with developmental disabilities (DD), and promote individual and family engagement across the Commonwealth.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the IFSP State Council is to support DBHDS in the ongoing development, implementation, guidance, and enhancement of the IFSP, ensuring it effectively meets the needs of individuals with DD and their families. The State Council represents regional perspectives, fosters collaboration, and aligns local and statewide efforts. Additionally, the State Council contributes to the ongoing development and oversight of “Virginia’s Individual and Family Support Program State Plan” (hereinafter referred to as the “State Plan”).

AUTHORIZATION/SCOPE OF AUTHORITY

The IFSP State Council is a standing stakeholder workgroup consisting of volunteers who represent individuals with DD (self-advocates), their families, professionals in community services, and other DD community stakeholders. The State Council exists through promulgation of <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title12/agency35/chapter230/> with funding from the General Assembly. The IFSP State Council serves in an advisory capacity to DBHDS to provide consultation to the department on creating a family support program intended to increase the resources and supports for individuals and families and promote community engagement and coordination. The IFSP State Council does not have direct policymaking role or authority.

In coordination with the IFSP State Council, DBHDS will develop a strategic plan that is consistent with the purpose of the IFSP and that is updated as necessary.

DEFINITIONS

Term	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 Councils	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.
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.
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

The primary responsibilities of the State Council are:

- Collaborating with DBHDS to identify and address gaps in resources, services, and supports available for individuals with DD and their families
- Partnering with DHBDS to develop a State Plan that establishes Virginia’s priorities for a strong statewide Individual and Family Support Program,
- Providing oversight and monitoring of progress towards the State Plan’s goals and assisting DHBDS with establishing an annual work plan,
- Recommending enhancements to the IFSP Funding Program — including recipient eligibility, administrative processes, marketing, outreach, and engagement.

As needed, the State Council will establish ad hoc committees and/or subcommittees that will convene around special topics/issues that are needed to advance the State Plan.

MEMBERSHIP

Composition and Representation

- The State Council will strive to maintain significant representation from individuals with developmental disabilities on the DD Waiver Waitlist or their family members.

- Ideally, at least one representative from each regional council should have a direct connection to the DD Waiver Waitlist.
- If this is not feasible, the council will aim for the highest possible proportion of members connected to the Waitlist to ensure diverse perspectives and alignment with the council's mission.
- Each region will have a minimum of two representatives on the State Council, with at least one representative serving at all times. Additionally, each Regional Council may designate one Regional Council member to act as an alternate representative for their region if at any time the State Council composition requirement is not met.

Eligibility and Appointment

- State Council members must reside in Virginia within the region they represent. Localities are determined based on 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

- State Council members are appointed to a one-year term, with the opportunity to serve up to two additional consecutive terms, conditional on DBHDS approval. Members may serve a maximum of three terms.
- At the end of each term, State Council members in good standing are asked if they would like to continue to serve on the IFSP State Council. They do not need to reapply each year. If yes, they continue to serve the following year.
- If State Council members are at the end of their 3-year term limit, they may apply for Regional Council.

Council Membership Roles

- State Council members serve as ex-officio members of their respective Regional Councils and are actively involved in both regional and state activities and responsibilities.
- DBHDS representatives will prioritize filling Regional Council membership vacancies before making appointments to the State Council.

Vacancies and Alternates

- When a state council vacancy occurs in the region, a Regional Council member may serve as the alternate.
- The RNC, acting as an ex-officio member, will collaborate with the alternate to ensure they understand their responsibilities for the remaining term.
- Alternate selection will be guided by DBHDS representatives.

Member Conduct

- State 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 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.

Grounds for Dismissal

- State 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.

Council Structure

- The State Council shall have no officers.

RECRUITMENT, INTERVIEW AND ORIENTATION

Recruitment

- State Council members will aid IFSP representatives and RNCs in sharing information across Virginia to market for council recruitment and fill current vacancies.
- State 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 State Council and will select applicants to serve as volunteers based on their application and interview(s).
- State Council members may be asked to participate in interviews with new applicants along with RNCs and/or the IFSP staff.

Orientation

- Provisional nominees for appointment must complete orientation before receiving official appointment by the DBHDS administrator.
- Orientation is conducted by IFSP representatives prior to the Annual All Council meeting, which 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 Councils and the IFSP staff, offering support and resources to ensure the success of regional efforts. The

	Regional Network Coordinator shall serve as an ex-officio member and assist the alternate in fulfilling State Council responsibilities.
State Council Member	State Council members serve as vital connectors between the IFSP and the State and regional Councils, helping to ensure alignment between state-level goals and regional priorities. While members are not employees of the state, they act as ambassadors, liaisons, and representatives within their council roles, fostering collaboration and communication across all levels.

MEETINGS

Meeting Frequency, Duration, and Attendance Requirements	<p>The State Council will meet quarterly or at least 4 times per year. The State Council may choose to meet more frequently if needed.</p> <p>State Council Meetings (including the All-Council Annual Meeting)</p> <p>Meeting 1: All-Council Annual Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held in January • First meeting of the year with all Regional and State council members. • Duration: 4 hours <p>Meetings 2, 3, and 4: Quarterly State Council Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held quarterly after the January meeting • Duration: 2.5 hours <p>Attendance: State Council members are expected to attend all four meetings each year. Members may miss one meeting per year, if needed. Missing more than one meeting may affect eligibility for continued service.</p> <p>Coordinated Regional 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 <p>Attendance: Members may miss up to 2 Coordinated Council meetings.</p> <p>Regional Business Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Regional Council conducts monthly (12) business meetings. As State Council Members are also Regional
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	<p>Council Members, attendance at business meetings is expected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duration: 30 minutes to 1 hour <p>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> <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. • If a member exceeds the allowable number of absences for any council meetings, they will not be eligible for appointment to the IFSP State Council in the following year and may also be ineligible to serve on any IFSP Regional Council during the next term. <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 for the state council is defined as the presence of two-thirds of the council membership, with at least one member from each region represented. While decisions are made collaboratively and voting is only conducted when necessary, a quorum ensures that discussions and decisions reflect the perspectives of a diverse and representative group across all regions.</p>
<p>Voting</p>	<p>If needed, voting may be done either in-person or virtually. Two-thirds of the council membership and at least one member from each region must cast a vote for the vote to carry.</p>
<p>Agenda and Minutes</p>	<p>The IFSP will prepare and disseminate the State Council agenda to members prior to each State Council meeting.</p> <p>DBHDS will record minutes for each meeting. Copies will be disseminated to the Council membership after the meeting and</p>

	<p>shared publicly.</p> <p>The IFSP staff will post all State Council meetings on the Commonwealth Calendar at https://commonwealthcalendar.virginia.gov/ at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting date/time.</p>
Meeting Logistics	<p>The majority of meetings are held virtually. One in-person meeting may be scheduled as budget and resources allow.</p>

CONTACT

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