



## Welcome to the Individual and Family Support Program's July 2024 Coordinated Regional Council Meeting!



# Understanding and Preparing for Independent Living

Featuring a presentation from Marie Fraticelli of DBHDS

*If you need closed captioning, please check the chat box for the link!*





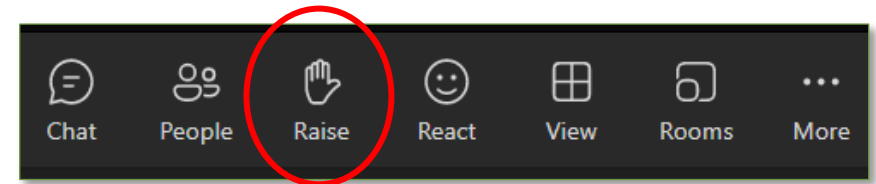
- **Welcome & Ground Rules**
- **What is the IFSP?**
- **Understanding and Preparing for Independent Living** – Marie Fraticelli, Western Housing Coordinator, DBHDS
- **IFSP Councilmember Panel: My Journey to Independent Living** – Thea Blech-Caulder, Shawn Kirk, and William O'Connell
- **Council Business and Adjourn**

\*\* If you need closed captioning, please check the chat box for the link! \*\*

\*\* If you need technical assistance, email [IFSPCommunity@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:IFSPCommunity@dbhds.virginia.gov)! \*\*



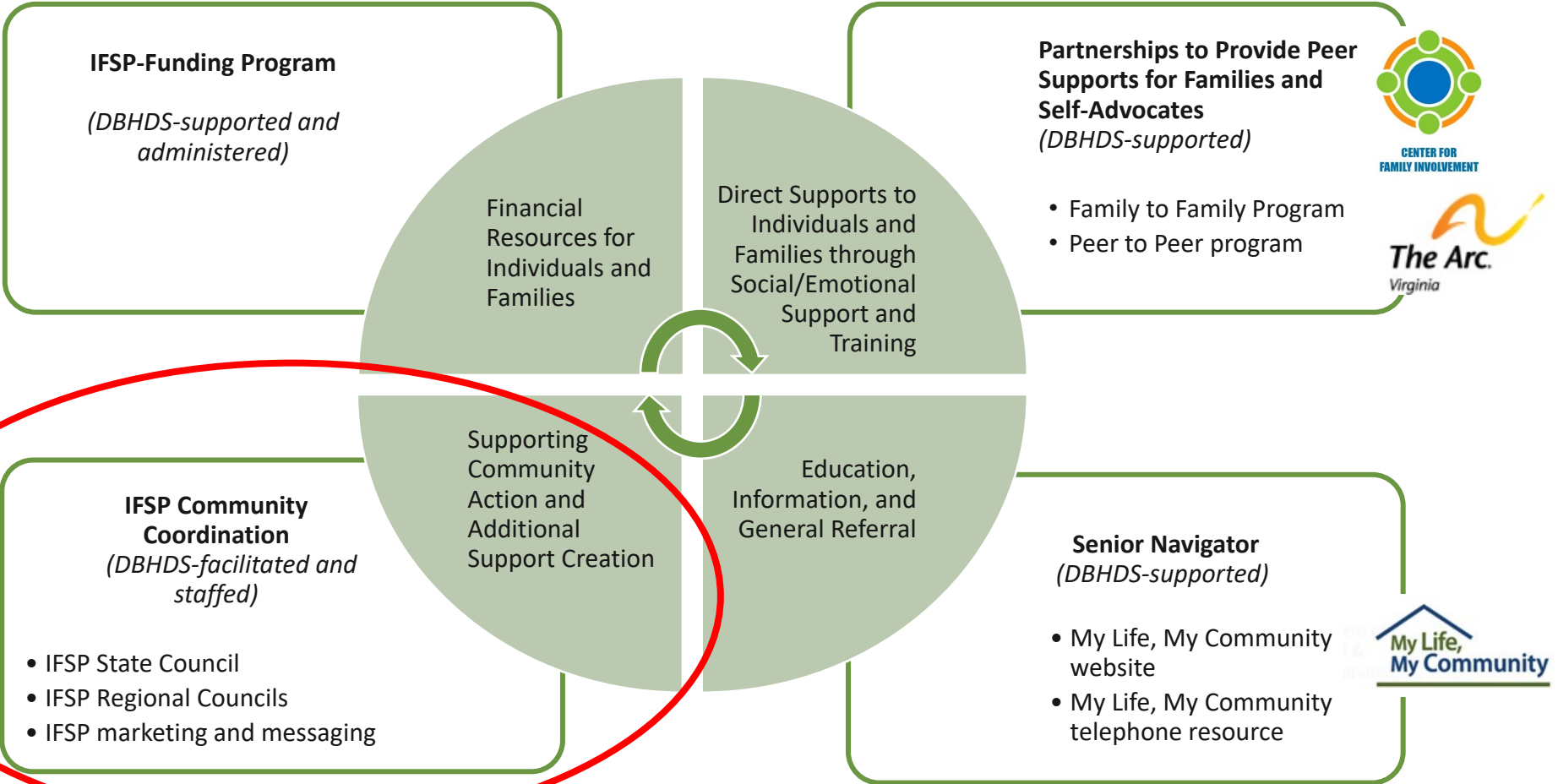
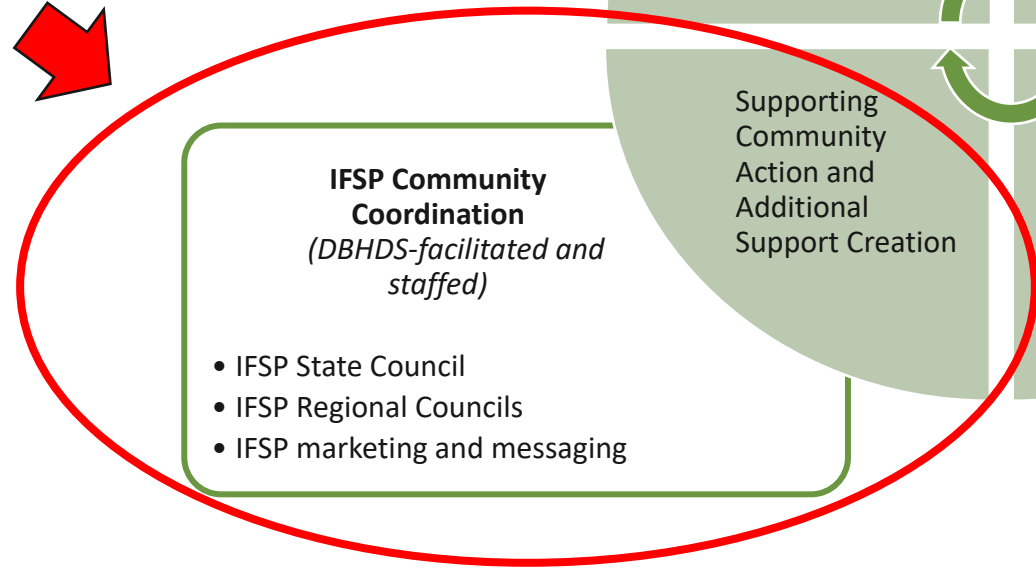
- Tonight's main session is being recorded and will be posted to YouTube.
- Please be respectful of our presenter, panelists, and other attendees.
- Please place your questions in the chat!
  - The chat is not private.
  - Please identify your region when you are asking your question.
  - If you cannot use the chat box, use the "Raise Hand" feature at the top of your Teams panel.
  - If you have a question that is not related to this topic, you can email [IFSPSupport@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:IFSPSupport@dbhds.virginia.gov).
- **This meeting is hosted by the IFSP's Regional Councils.** If you have questions about IFSP-Funding, please visit the My Life, My Community website's Funding page: <https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/ifsp-funding>
- **Remember that tonight's meeting is public, so please refrain from sharing personal information.**



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You are  
here!



## Tonight's speaker: **Marie Fraticelli**

Most of Marie's history working with adults with developmental disabilities started with her working in Group Homes in 1987 as an untrained, inexperienced Direct Support Staff. Marie's only other exposure to working in this field was as a volunteer for the Special Olympics, and some established friendships with the sheltered workshop cleaning crew in the office building, where she worked.

Marie eventually became a case manager with the local Community Services Board and worked there for 14 years. Three of those years she was a liaison between the CSB and Central Virginia Training Center, where she helped people transition from their institutional care to their choice of community-based living. That was also when she completed her bachelor's degree in health care administration and her master's degree in human services.

Marie transitioned and has now been with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, Office of Community Housing for the past six years. That was when the Virginia State Rental Assistance Subsidy was created as a way to help people with limited incomes have an opportunity to live in the way you and I live in our communities.





**Thea Blech-Caulder**

**Regional Council**  
Western (Region 1)



**Shawn Kirk**

**State Council**  
Central (Region 4)



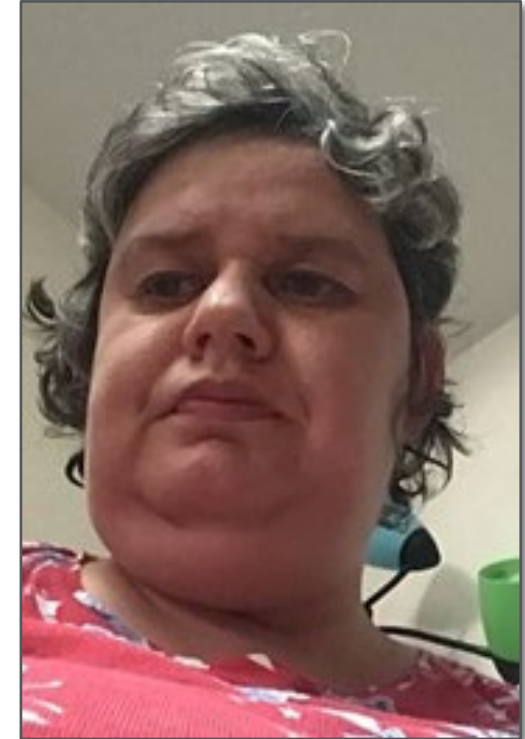
**William O'Connell**

**State Council**  
Eastern (Region 5)

## Meet our panelist: **Thea Blech-Caulder**

Thea is a young woman living on her own town home and has been a member of the IFSP Regional Council for two years. She is diagnosed with cerebral palsy but does not let the disability define her or her potential. Thea participates in Zumba classes and expresses herself through various forms of arts and crafts. She loves helping others stay informed and is a strong advocate for herself, not afraid to offer her opinion.

Thea has a cat at home, and they get along quite well. Thea currently works at TJ Maxx and has a beautiful family who supports her. She often consults with her mother when making major decisions. Thea's mom also supports her by keeping her on track with the completion of routine activities to manage her home. Thea says that she feels comfortable and safe where she lives.



## Meet our panelist: **Shawn Kirk**

Shawn is a member of the IFSP State Council and has volunteered for 3 years. Shawn loves all types of music and indulges in his favorite hobby, DJing. He is working on a business plan to start a mobile disc jockey venture in order to do the work that he really enjoys ... playing music.

Shawn is employed by The Arc of Virginia as a Logistics Lead and pretty much takes care of all the behind-the-scenes production for marketing concept and design, social media promotions, newsletter development, and technical supports during virtual meetings. Shawn's motto: *"People with disabilities have many talents and abilities. Give us a chance and we will show you all that we can do!"*

Shawn's family has been instrumental in helping him make decisions that increased his independence. Shawn's initial experience living away from home was in an adult home with 4 other people, but the environment was very structured. This option was made available by use of an auxiliary grant through DSS. For Shawn, the adult home was too restrictive in terms of the rules and lack of flexibility to fully exercise independence. Upon reflection, Shawn appreciates the time at the adult home, as it motivated and allowed him time to focus on employment goals to open better housing options. He later secured a roommate and they moved into a condominium together. But after some time, sharing a space was not optimal as they were too different in their lifestyle and routines. Shawn was encouraged by his mother to look into available condominiums in his building that were for sale. With the support and guidance from his family, Shawn became a homeowner.





## Meet our panelist: **William O'Connell**

For almost a year, William has served as a volunteer on the IFSP State Council. William identifies as transgender lesbian, diagnosed with Down Syndrome. She lives on her own in an apartment through Hope House. William receives periodic supports from the Hope House staff to help increase independent living skills with cooking, cleaning, budgeting and prioritizing errands. William says her favorite meal to prepare is Multi-Grains lentils with sausage. William stated she in high school she attended independent living classes and decided 3-4 years after graduation that she wanted to live away from her family just like her siblings. It was time to venture out.

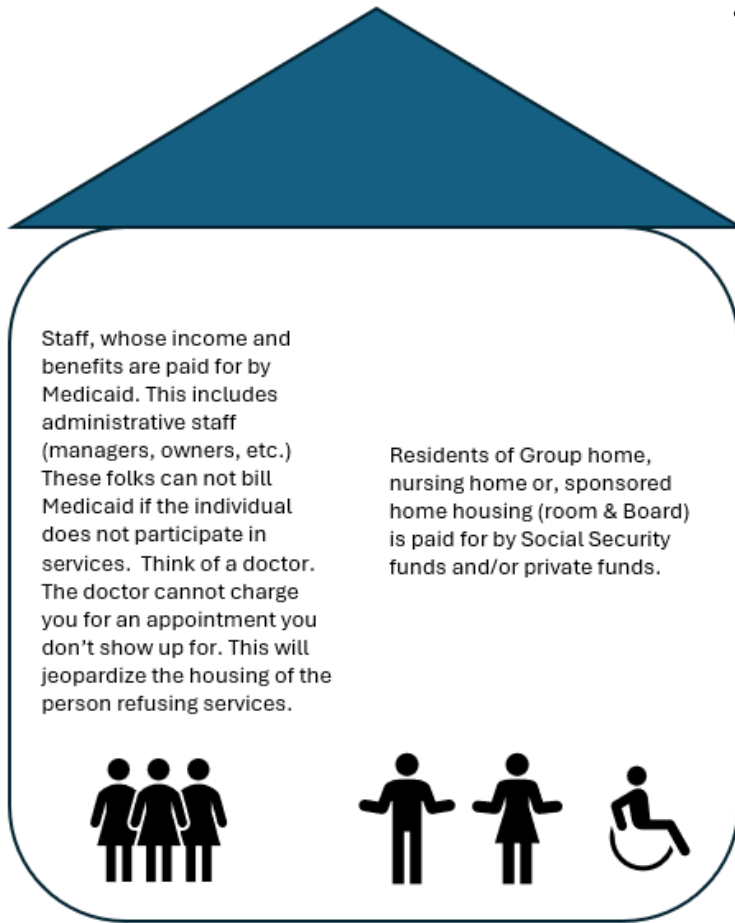
William currently works at One Life Fitness Place but would love a job related to advocacy to directly help others. She has demonstrated advanced skills in taekwondo, and participates in soccer, basketball, tennis and power lifting through Special Olympics. William's family supports her when needed and she has a special friend who is here tonight to offer support, Ms. Donna Robel.



1. **What single piece of advice would you provide to help someone interested in living more independently and securing stable housing?**
  - **Marie:** Make sure you have a sustainable budget.
  
2. **In your experience, what are the green flags that you should move forward to pursue independent living options?**
  - **Marie:** Knowing that you want to live independently!
  
3. **In your experience, what are the red flags that you may not be ready to pursue independent living options?**
  - **Marie:** Having expenses or liking to make purchases that impact your sustainable budget.
  
4. **Does the DBHDS Housing Team offer 1:1 meetings to discuss the details about housing service options?**
  - **Marie:** Case managers are required to take a training to understand independent housing. We are working to shore up their training and understanding of the process. We are also working towards encouraging more providers to become Community Housing Guides and/or provide Tenancy Supports through Flexible Funds. There are a number of resources available, including local housing authorities and Virginia Housing. Our team is small, and offering 1:1 meetings would prevent us from being able to manage and secure more resources, which is our focus. However, we are always available to answer questions as they come up it would be helpful to have the case managers ask those questions so they can have the knowledge base to help more people in the future.

5. When someone lives in a congregate setting or a group home, what kinds of services would they be required to participate in?

- Marie:** The Medicaid Waiver reimburses providers to do what would otherwise be done in a larger institutional setting. It is literally an agreement to “waive” the institutional setting (like a nursing home, or intermediate care facility) to receive the same services in a group home, a family home, or your own home. Therefore, if you live in a setting that is being reimbursed by providing required services as well as receiving room and board and you refuse the services, then they cannot sustain their business model solely on room and board. To understand how this works, please refer to the graphic below!



In Home staff, Independent Living Staff, or in home health aides Staff, whose income and benefits are paid for by Medicaid. This includes administrative staff (managers, owners, etc.). If the individual living in their own home refuses services they can be discharged by the service provider, but they WILL NOT jeopardize their housing.



**6. My child is on the Waitlist and might be ready for housing when they turn 22 in three years. Please explain the timeline to apply for the State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP)!**

- **Marie:** At this time, we don't recommend that you apply for SRAP until you are within 0 to 120 days of moving. If there is not a waitlist in your area, the process should not take longer than that. As for other options (the ones described earlier in this presentation), Housing Choice Vouchers offered through housing authorities, they can give you an idea of how long someone might be on their waitlist. If that waitlist is longer than 3 years, then you will want to get on it as soon as it is open.

**7. Is a tenant required to have a full-time job to be eligible for subsidies?**

- **Marie:** No!

**8. Can someone buy a home and apply for the BI Waiver?**

- **Marie:** Yes, as long as the home is in their name and not the asset of a parent, grandparent, or guardian. They could not use a housing subsidy. They would be solely responsible for paying the mortgage, insurance, and taxes on that property, as well as maintenance. This is a wonderful option, but lots of planning and contingency planning should be put in place!



**9. Is it possible for someone to own a home while still having access to Medicaid or SSI? Can they use a trust or LLC?**

- **Marie:** Yes, but check with the Department of Social Services or Virginia Medicaid (<https://dmas.virginia.gov>) regarding the criteria. For example, how much land? What other restrictions

**10. If you don't have income except for minimum SSI, does the 30% apply? Would it be less?**

- **Marie:** When you apply for a subsidy at DBHDS, you could have zero income and you could have unlimited income. If you have a really high income, you will be less likely to get the subsidy. SSI is considered very low income, so 30% of that income is what would be used to calculate your portion of the rent. 30% of 0 is 0, so that would be no portion of the rent. If you don't have SSI or you have no income at all, you can still apply for that rental subsidy. However, you would need to have a consistent resource for food and utilities that is sustainable.





**Before we wrap up ...**

**Don't forget to let us know what you think!**

- Please scan the QR code to fill out the Satisfaction Survey!
- You can also click the link that is being shared in the chat.

**THANK YOU!**





- The recording and PowerPoint slides will be shared on the My Life, My Community website and on the IFSPCommunity Facebook page:
  - <https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org>
  - <https://www.facebook.com/IFSPCommunity>
- Save the date!
  - **The next IFSP State Council meeting:** August 23, 2024
  - **In-person Coordinated Regional Council meeting:** Sept. 26, 2024 at Blue Ridge Community College in Weyers Cave, VA
- To receive the latest updates from the IFSP, please make sure you are subscribed to our email list at <https://tinyurl.com/IFSP-List>





To our IFSP Council cohost:

**Monica Mann**

To our main session speaker and panelists:

**Marie Fraticelli**

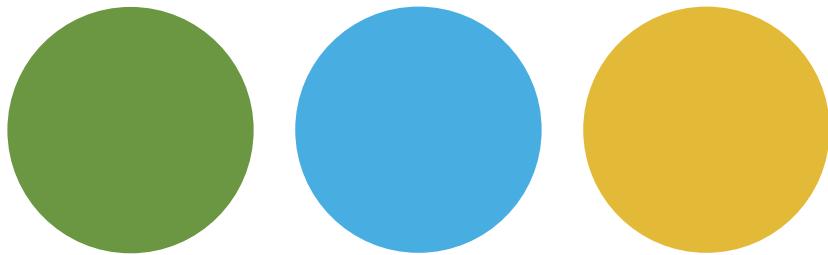
To our Hamilton Relay captioner:

**Leora Grasl**

**Thea Blech-Caulder**

**Shawn Kirk**

**William O'Connell**





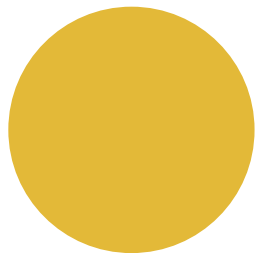
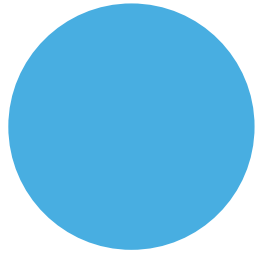
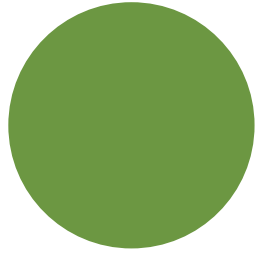


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# Thank you!

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