

NJCDD

NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities

the Council

A publication of the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities

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More NJ Homeowners Will Get Property-Tax Refunds

About 70,000 more New Jersey homeowners who are elderly or who have disabilities will soon qualify for property-tax refunds. Gov. Jon Corzine has signed a bill raising the income threshold to qualify for the Senior Freeze program. The bill raises the household income level to \$80,000 from \$53,000 during the next three years. Eligible residents will get a \$1,000 property tax refund check. About 132,000 people now qualify.

The bill is part of Corzine's economic assistance and recovery package. The governor signed a series of bills last month aimed at providing assistance and spurring the economy during the recession.



Waiting List Letters Reach Thousands

In mid November, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) notified more than 4,600 families with sons and daughters on the division's Priority Waiting List for community-based housing supports and services of their placement number on that list.

According to DDD, the letters were sent in an effort to increase transparency in the process, and keep families more informed so that they can more effectively plan ahead. Similar letters will be sent each year.

The division's residential waiting list is divided into three categories: Priority, Priority Deferred, and General. Individuals in the Priority category are considered to have the greatest need for a placement.

In general, individuals are assigned to the Priority category when one of the following situations exists:

- The individual is in need of placement because he or she is determined to be at significant risk; or,
- Both parents are 55 years or older.

The letters confirm the date individuals were added to the Priority category of the waiting list, in addition to noting their number on the list. It was accompanied by a fact sheet describing the eligibility criteria for receiving DDD-funded services, a description of the division's services and contact information for the division and its regional offices.

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Waiting List Letters Reach Thousands

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Each year, there are nearly 300 emergency placements, which take place when a caregiver gets sick or dies, or the individual's needs are such that they can no longer be maintained at home. In such circumstances, placement is often in one of the state's seven developmental centers.

Non-emergency placements, made with dedicated state funds, have declined since 2002. Last year, the state dedicated \$2.8 million, enough to move about 28 people from the list.

Regardless of an individual's number on the list, it is difficult to predict how long the wait will be because service expansion is limited to the funds appropriated by the state legislature at levels that change from year to year.

One of the people who received the letter was Council on Developmental Disabilities' chairperson, Elaine Buchsbaum, whose 34-year-old son Matthew has been on the waiting list for more than seven years.

"It's a little overwhelming and pretty depressing," said Buchsbaum. "Movement on this list is slow. Letting us know is a good start, but families are still left with nothing. At 24 people a year, Matt would be 72 years old when he is placed."

Buchsbaum sees the current financial crisis adding to the problem.

"Without money, it is increasingly clear that the department really has no way of dealing with it over time. There are people who have been waiting and waiting for years and will have to continue to wait."

Buchsbaum says that even with programs like Real Life Choices and supports in the home, there comes a time when aging parents simply cannot be expected to care for an adult child with disabilities. "Clearly more needs to be done to develop alternatives."

"It's a little overwhelming and pretty depressing – movement on this list is slow. At 24 people a year, Matt would be 72 years old when he is placed."

- Elaine Buchsbaum, NJCDD Chairperson

Advocacy groups, such as the Arc of New Jersey, hope that the notification letters will help families redouble their lobbying efforts in Trenton for more funding.

"There was a strong sense of desperation among many of the families we spoke with," said Tom Baffuto, Executive Director of the Arc of New Jersey. "Even in these tough economic times, we have to keep pressing for more resources to address the waiting list. There has to be funding every year."

The Arc has asked families to send a holiday card to the Governor's office to introduce him to those who are waiting, and has written to Legislators to urge more funding.

The division has encouraged families further down the list to call their case managers at the division to talk about programs like respite and physical therapy that might be available while they wait.

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The Council is a compilation of news from various sources, organized to inform people with disabilities about policies, programs, laws, trainings, and events. This publication and others published by NJCDD are available in alternate accessible formats. Please call the Council for more information.

La lista de espera

A mediados de noviembre, la División de Discapacidades de Desarrollo notificó a más de 4,600 familias con hijos e hijas en la lista de espera sobre su número de colocación en la lista prioritaria de espera de la división para recibir apoyo y servicios para viviendas basadas en la comunidad.

La división envió las cartas en un esfuerzo para aumentar la transparencia del proceso y mantener a las familias mejor informadas a fin de que pudieran hacer planes para el futuro en forma más efectiva.

Según la División de Discapacidades de Desarrollo (DDD), estas cartas se enviarán cada año actualizando a las familias sobre la posición en la lista de su hijo o hija.

La lista de espera residencial de la división está dividida en tres categorías: Prioridad, Prioridad diferida y General. Las personas en la categoría de Prioridad son las que se considera tener mayor necesidad potencial para una colocación. El criterio usado para determinar estas categorías se indica en la Circular #8 de la División y en NJAC 10: 46C.

En general, se asigna a las personas a la categoría de Prioridad cuando existe una de las siguientes situaciones:

- La persona necesita la colocación debido a que se ha determinado que él o ella se encuentra bajo riesgo significativo.
- Tanto los padres naturales como adoptivos tienen 55 años o más.

La carta que se envió por correo la semana del 17 de noviembre de 2008 confirma la fecha en que las personas fueron agregadas a la categoría de Prioridad de la lista de espera e indica su número en la lista. Esta carta tendrá adjunta una hoja de hechos con la descripción del criterio de elegibilidad para recibir servicios con financiación de DDD, una descripción de los servicios de la división e información de contacto para la división y sus oficinas regionales.

Cada año, hay cerca de 300 colocaciones de emergencia, que toman lugar cuando un prestador de cuidados se enferma o muere o las necesidades de la persona son tales que ya no pueden mantener a la persona en el

hogar. En tales circunstancias, la colocación se realiza con frecuencia en uno de los siete centros estatales de desarrollo.

Las colocaciones que no son de emergencia, realizadas con fondos dedicados del estado, han disminuido desde el año 2002. El año pasado, el estado dedicó \$2.8 millones, suficiente para movilizar aproximadamente 28 personas de la lista.

Sin tomar en cuenta el número de la persona en la lista, es difícil predecir cuánto tiempo puede durar la espera, debido a que la expansión del servicio se limita a los fondos asignados por la asamblea estatal y dichos niveles varían cada año.

Una de dichas personas que recibió la carta fue un miembro del Consejo de Discapacidades de Desarrollo, Elaine Buchsbaum, cuyo hijo Matthew de 34 años había estado en la lista por más de siete años.

“Es un poco abrumador y muy deprimente – el avance en la lista es lento. El hecho de que nos lo hagan saber es un buen comienzo, – sin embargo las familias aún permanecen sin nada. Considerando 24 personas por año, Matt tendría 72 años cuando su colocación se haga efectiva”.

Buchsbaum considera que la crisis financiera actual agravará de manera exponencial este problema. “Sin dinero, es aún más claro que el departamento no tiene realmente cómo manejar esto con el paso del tiempo. Hay personal que han estado esperando por años y tendrán que seguir esperando.” Ella dice que aún con

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Community Building Awards

The New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities announces a new series of awards – The Community Building Awards – to honor those who donate their resources, time, and talent to local organizations and activities to help build inclusive communities.

In cultivating a culture of community inclusion it is important to provide incentive, support, and recognition to those furthering inclusive values. The New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities has established a series of annual awards to encourage individuals to address and personalize issues of inclusive communities and to show appreciation to those exhibiting exceptional

There are several awards, each with a different focus:

- **The Colleen Fraser Advocacy Award** honors a self-advocate who has shown outstanding efforts in advocating on behalf of themselves and other individuals.

- **The Elizabeth Boggs Advocacy Award** honors a family member of an individual with a developmental disability who has shown outstanding advocacy efforts in the area of developmental disabilities.
- **The Lifetime Achievement Advocacy Award** recognizes an individual for a lifetime commitment and contribution to inclusive communities.
- **The Distinguished DD Systems Change Award** honors an individual or organization that has made outstanding contributions over the past year toward real systems change and positive outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

Nominations are now being accepted for the Inaugural 2009 Awards. The entry deadline is February 1, 2009. Nomination entry forms can be found on line at www.njcdd.org. For more information, please contact Jane Dunham at 609-984-3379.



Resource Desk: Affordable Housing Information Available Online

The Council on Affordable Housing (COAH), an affiliate of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, facilitates the production of court-mandated affordable housing for low and moderate-income households. Affordable housing is housing that is available to people of moderate income at a reasonable price. It is often built as townhomes or apartments but might also be a modest, well-kept single-family home.

Approximately 300 municipalities are currently participating in the COAH process. COAH has granted credit for approximately 70,000 affordable units, 36,000 of which have been completed, 14,000 of which were rehabilitated, and 10,000 that were transferred through Regional Contribution Agreements (RCAs) that allow for the transfer of obligations between municipalities.

COAH hosts a webpage containing information and various reports related to compliance with Affordable Housing regulations and statutes. Visit <http://www.state.nj.us/dca/affiliates/coah/reports/> for a fact sheet on COAH, municipal participation, current municipal obligations, local housing contacts, and more.

New Interagency Agreement to Improve Employment Services for Adults with Developmental Disabilities

The departments of Human Services (DHS) and Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) have agreed on a plan to better serve individuals with developmental disabilities who want to work. Under the agreement, individuals eligible for services from the state Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) who want to work will be referred first to the state Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) for an assessment. That assessment will be used to help the individual with vocational rehabilitation, supported employment services and job referrals. Once this process is completed, DDD will work to provide individuals with additional day services and supports up to a total of about 35 hours per week.

The plan, outlined in a memorandum of understanding, was developed through the efforts of DDD, the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired and DVRS. The memorandum is another step by both departments to help increase employment opportunities

Under the agreement, individuals eligible for services from the state Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) who want to work will be referred first to the state Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) for an assessment.

for people with disabilities, including developmental disabilities.

Human Services and Labor and Workforce Development also renewed an agreement regarding supported employment services. Supported employment provides participants with the assistance they need to secure and maintain a job. It may include an on-site job coach; crew work, in which an individual works as part of a peer group; arrangements in which a participant can sample different jobs to find a good employment match; and follow-along services that help a person hold a job.

La lista de espera *continued from page 3*

programas como Real Life Choices y apoyo en el hogar, llega un momento en que no se puede esperar que un padre mayor cuide a un niño adulto con impedimentos. “Es muy evidente que se tiene que hacer más para desarrollar alternativas”.

Grupos de defensoría, tales como The Arc of New Jersey, esperan que las cartas de notificación ayuden a las familias a redoblar sus esfuerzos de lobby en Trenton para percibir más financiamiento.

“Hay una fuerte sensación de desesperación entre muchas de las familias con las que conversamos”, dijo Tom Baffuto, Director Ejecutivo de The Arc of New Jersey. Aún en estos duros momentos económicos,

debemos seguir insistiendo para percibir mayores recursos que nos ayuden a encarar la lista de espera. Tiene que existir financiamiento cada año.

The Arc ha solicitado a las familias que envíen una tarjeta por las fiestas a la oficina del Gobernador para presentarle aquellos que están esperando y le ha escrito a los Legisladores para pedir más financiamiento.

La división ha alentado a las familias que se encuentran aún más abajo de la lista para que se comuniquen con sus administradores de caso en la división para conversar sobre los programas como los de descanso (respite) y terapia física que pueden estar disponibles mientras esperan.



A Message from the Social Security Administration: Representative Payees Can Report Online

People who serve as representative payees for individuals receiving Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits now have more options for their annual reporting of how the funds are used.

Representative Payees, who in the past had to complete a paper Representative Payee Reporting Form each year, can now report online using a secure website.

A representative payee receives Social Security or SSI payments on behalf of a person who is not capable of managing the funds on their own.

Representative payees must use the funds for the benefit of the person entitled to benefits. For example, a payee must use the funds to provide the beneficiary with food, clothing, and shelter.

If you receive a representative payee accounting form to complete, you can take your form to your computer instead of the SSI office. Log on to www.socialsecurity.gov/payee.

If it's your first time using this service, you'll need to take a few minutes to register. Keep your identification and password in a secure place. You can use it to submit reports in future years.

If you receive a representative payee accounting form to complete, you can take your form to your computer instead of the SSI office.

Log on to www.socialsecurity.gov/payee.

Online features make completing the report easier than doing it on paper.

When you're ready to complete the report online, you'll need to key in the unique code that appears on the paper form mailed to you. Then you'll be able to key in the information. Online features make completing the report easier than doing it on paper. Once you submit the report, you'll receive a confirmation number as proof that your report was received by Social Security.

If you have questions about registering for this new service, call 1-800-775-7802. If you are an organizational payee, call 1-800-772-6270. For all other questions, call 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

Interested in Becoming a Council Member?

The Council is in need of more self-advocate members. Persons interested in becoming a Council member should contact the Council at 609-292-3745. Only individuals with a developmental disability, or parents, family members, or guardians may apply.



School Facility Design for Inclusion: The Role of the Building Environment in Making Schools More Inclusive

Under a grant from the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities, researchers from the New Jersey Institute of Technology's Center for Architecture and Building Science are studying effective strategies to plan and modify school facilities for universal design to support the inclusion of students with a wide range of disabilities.

They are identifying building features that support or undermine goals of inclusion, and are looking

at the relationship of the physical environment of neighborhood schools to the least restrictive environment for students with intellectual, physical, learning, mobility, and behavioral disabilities.

Their work is based, in part, from advice gathered from in-depth interviews and focus groups with more than 150 people, including school administrators, child study team members, inclusion specialists, therapists, parents, and students.

En español, por favor

Proyecto del consejo

Diseño de instalación escolar para inclusión: El rol del entorno de la edificación para hacer que las escuelas sean más inclusivas



Bajo un subsidio del Consejo de Discapacidades del desarrollo de New Jersey, investigadores del Centro de Arquitectura y Construcción del Instituto Tecnológico de New Jersey están estudiando estrategias efectivas a fin de planificar y modificar las instalaciones escolares para que el diseño universal apoye la inclusión de estudiantes con una amplia gama de discapacidades.

Estos investigadores están identificando las características de edificación que apoyan o debilitan las metas de inclusión y observando la relación del entorno

físico de las escuelas del vecindario en cuanto al entorno menos restrictivo para estudiantes con discapacidades intelectuales, físicas, de aprendizaje, movilidad y de comportamiento.

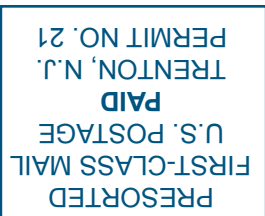
Su trabajo se basa, en parte, en el asesoramiento recopilado proveniente de entrevistas en profundidad y grupos de enfoque con más de 150 personas, incluyendo administradores escolares, miembros del equipo de estudio infantil, especialistas en inclusión, terapeutas, padres y estudiantes.



Community Calendar

- January 29 Public Meeting of the Council on Developmental Disabilities. 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Trenton, NJ. For information, call 609-292-3754 or log on to www.njcdd.org
- January 31 Winter Leadership Institute, sponsored by the Governing Institute of New Jersey. Willingboro, NJ. Training runs 6 sessions through April 4. For more information, call 973-715-0734 or log on to <http://www.ginj.org>
- February 19 Public Meeting of the State Special Education Advisory Council. 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM. East Windsor, NJ. For more information, call 609-292-4469 or log on to <http://www.nj.gov/education/sseac/>
- February 27 Professional Training Workshops (for teachers and others). 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM. Iselin, NJ. Sponsored by Autism New Jersey/COSAC. For information, call 1-800-4AUTISM or log on to <http://www.autismnj.org>.
- March 26 & 27 Facing the Future XVII – Aim for Employment. Sponsored by The Boggs Center and NJ APSE. Somerset, NJ. For information, call Robin Carroll at 732-235-9310 or log on to <http://rwjms.umdj.edu/boggscenter>.

Return Service Requested



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