

# **The Virginia Individual and Family Support Program**

## **Regional Council Member Description**

### **What are the IFSP Regional Councils?**

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services(DBHDS)established the Individual and Family Support Program(IFSP) Regional Council to support the local implementation of [Virginia's Individual and Family Support State Plan](#) and to work in collaboration with the IFSP State Council to provide general recommendations to the Department on its plan to increase family supports throughout the Commonwealth.

Each region has a Regional Council appointed by DBHDS to serve as local leads for each IFSP Regional Council. Regional Council will be responsible for leading Regional Councils in coordinating local activities and initiatives to increase the knowledge and capacity of local communities to serve the needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families.

### **What do Regional Councilmembers do?**

Regional Councilmembers represent the perspective of families and individuals with a developmental disability and/or share their knowledge as experts in the fields of developmental disabilities. They lead the Regional Council they serve by planning meetings and events that needs of their community.

Regional Councilmembers are responsible for building local networks to increase the variety and availability of supports for individuals on Virginia's Developmental Disability Waivers Waiting List (the Waitlist). They also serve as liaisons between their local communities and the State Council, providing regular updates on local activities.

Councilmembers participate in and attend the following Council meetings:

- Coordinated Regional Council meetings (four times per year), generally held in the evening hours; and
- Regional Council business meetings (monthly); each Regional Council decides when these meetings are held.

### **What are some of the characteristics DBHDS is looking for in a Regional Councilmember?**

- Local leadership experience around developmental disabilities and an interest in promoting IFSP at a local level;
- A willingness to share insights and opinions and to actively participate in meetings, primarily virtually and, at times, in person;
- The capability to reflect on personal experiences while also understanding the views of others and develop recommendations that are for the greater good;
- Experience using technology for virtual meetings and experience using meeting platforms such as Teams or Zoom. Familiarity with email communications and software applications such as Microsoft and Adobe; and
- The capability to attend meetings quarterly primarily using a virtual platform, noting there may be opportunities for an in-person meeting, as determined by the IFSP and the Council.

### **Are there any required qualifications for Regional Councilmembers?**

Yes. Regional Councilmembers must be residents of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Regional Councilmembers include people with developmental disabilities and/or self-advocates, family members and caregivers of people with developmental disabilities, and professionals who provide direct support to people with developmental disabilities. At least 1 self-advocate should serve on a Regional Council.

Applicants do not need to be on the Waitlist.

### **How can I apply?**

IFSP advertises the new Council application every fall. Please [subscribe to our email list](#) and [follow us on Facebook](#) for updates.

### **Who will review and approve my application?**

All self-nomination applications will be submitted to DBHDS for initial review. DBHDS will review the self-nomination applications and recommend applicants to the Regional Council. Selected applicants will be asked to participate in a virtual, in-person, or phone interview with a Regional Network Coordinator and any current Councilmembers in that region who are available. Based on the results of the interview and recommendations to the IFSP, a determination will be made for appointment consideration.

### **How long is the term of service?**

Terms for Regional Councilmembers are one calendar year. Regional Councilmember terms may be renewed as determined by the IFSP.

### **What if I have more questions?**

If you have questions about the Regional Councils, please attend a Regional Council meeting community! You can also visit our My Life, My Community website to [find and connect with your Regional Council](#). Or email us at [IFSPCommunity@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:IFSPCommunity@dbhds.virginia.gov)!

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