

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

## **State Council Member Description**

### **What is the IFSP State Council?**

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) established the Individual and Family Support Program (IFSP) State Council to advise the Department on the administration of the IFSP-Funding Program and to develop and maintain [Virginia's Individual and Family Support State Plan](#). This Council provides general recommendations to the Department on its plan to increase family supports throughout the Commonwealth.

### **What do State Councilmembers do?**

State 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.

State Councilmembers also must be active participants in their Regional Council. This includes regional events and Regional Council meetings. They also hold monthly business meetings.

Councilmembers participate in and attend the following Council meetings:

- State Council meetings (four times per year), generally held during afternoon hours;
- 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 State 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 State Councilmembers?**

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

More than 50 percent of State Council positions must be filled by self-advocates who are on Virginia's Developmental Disability Waivers Waiting List (the Waitlist), or family members of a person who is on the Waitlist. Therefore, priority will be given to self-advocates and family members.

### **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 State 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 State Councilmembers are one calendar year. State Councilmember terms may be renewed up to two times to serve no more than three consecutive terms.

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

If you have questions about the State Council, please attend a Regional Council meeting in your 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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