



The Intellectual
and Developmental
Disabilities Council
of Tarrant County

Welcome! Please Sign-in.



Work without Worry!

Understanding SSI, SSDI and Work Incentives

October 1, 2026

To transform the region into an inclusive community where individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) thrive.



The Intellectual
and Developmental
Disabilities Council
of Tarrant County

A Community Coalition Increasing Opportunities for People with IDD

meet & greet



Take this opportunity to introduce yourself!

- ❖ Who are you?
- ❖ How can you assist?
- ❖ What might you need assistance with?

Welcome

MEMBERS

- **Individual Members:**

- Monetta Smith
- Courtney Caraway
- Latoya Henson
- Joel Broker
- Sarah Stuckel
- Liliana Zumba-Acevedo
- Cynthia Rodriguez
- Theresa Moffitt
- Ranella Franklin
- Sandra Rodrigo
- Gwen Li
- Amber Luckey
- Don Gilley
- Richard Garrett
- Trelawny Jones
- Audra Ressel
- Joseph Barbarito
- Teresa Briscoe
- Susan Cole
- Kayla Glover
- Leah Whitworth
- Julia Chalker
- Iris Tule
- Shelly Lemman
- Carrie Tunson
- Erin Fogarty
- Whitney Dragon

- Meagan Bordelon
- Steve Brooks
- Brittany Rudd
- Deborah Norris
- Mihstiegh Boggs
- Maria Flores-Gonzales
- Cody Turner
- Renae Arledge
- Katrina Willie-Musoma
- Stephanie Morris
- Monetta Smith
- Stephanie Stone

- **Premier Partners:**

- Tarrant County, office of County Judge (Founding Partner)
- Fort Worth ISD (Founding Partner)
- My Health My Resources of Tarrant County (Founding Partner)
- Cook Children's Health Plan
- Cook Children's Medical Center

- **Elite Members:**

- Berry Family Services

- **Organizational Members:**

- *United Healthcare*

- **Sponsor Members:**

- Green Oaks Education and Support

- **Professional Members:**

- Community Options, Inc.
- Center for ASD
- 3-in-1 Advocacy

Your Name/Organization Belongs Here

www.IDDCouncil.org/join-us

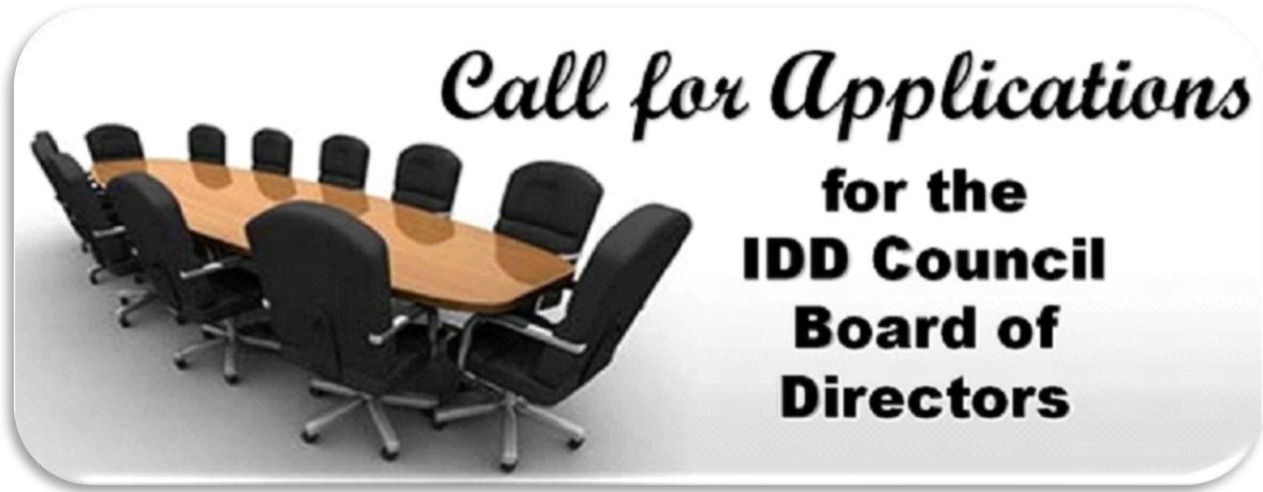


JOIN A COMMITTEE

- ❖ **COMMUNICATIONS & PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE:** Identifies and schedules topics of interest for Council events and helps create and distribute information important to members of the Council and community through written and electronic media. Meets hybrid as needed.
- ❖ **SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE:** Calling all party planners, entertainers and creative thinkers! Let's plan programs that add value to the community, advocates and creates awareness of IDD. The committee is looking for parents, providers, community leaders and event planners to join us in finding and creating new opportunities. Meets hybrid as needed.
- ❖ **TRANSITION COMMITTEE:** Provides educators the opportunity to collaborate and discover resources to share with families in the path to adulthood. The committee consists of school counselors, transition specialists, parents and advocates interested in establishing or advancing opportunities for people with disabilities after high school. Help develop strategies that support families and students in schools and secondary education. Meets the 2nd Friday of the month from 9-10:30 a.m.



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The IDD Council is accepting Board member applications from dedicated self-advocates, caregivers, and community leaders.

Join us as we grow our reach, strengthen our mission, and make a difference together.

Information: <https://www.iddcouncil.org/board-member-info>.



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UPCOMING MEETINGS



MONTHLY MEETINGS

1ST THURSDAY EACH MONTH 9-10:30 a.m.

3136 W. 4th Street, Fort Worth

November 5 – Chiropractic care for people with neuromuscular disorders, sensory sensitivity, Autism & other IDD diagnoses

TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETINGS

2ND FRIDAY EACH MONTH 9-10:30 a.m.

(location varies)

October 9 – When behavior is a question, A.S.S.U.M.E a sensory reason

BOARD OF DIRECTOR MEETINGS

3RD FRIDAY EACH MONTH 1:30 – 3 p.m.

(location varies)



The Intellectual
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Caregiver Education Webinar

Belonging, Mental Health, and Self-Worth in Educational Settings Beyond High School



Tuesday, October 6, 2026
12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.



Webinar Registration:
www.IDDCouncil.org

Who Should Attend?

- Parents & Caregivers
- Students & Self-Advocates
- Educators
- Transition Professionals
- Counselors & Support Professionals
- Community Partners

Education after high school should offer opportunities for connection, growth, independence and purpose. Yet bullying, social exclusion, pressure to navigate social expectations, and misunderstood differences can create barriers to belonging.

This webinar explores disguised ridicule, the effort of navigating social expectations, emotional distress and other challenges that may go unnoticed. Students, educators, families, and support professionals will explore practical ways to recognize harm, respond with empathy, and create environments where people feel valued and included. The presentation includes direct discussion of suicide, help-seeking, recovery, and rebuilding self-worth.

Drawing on his lived experience with intellectual and developmental disabilities, sensory processing differences, and mental health challenges, Jordan Smelley explores these issues in college, vocational training, and other postsecondary educational settings.



Presented by
Jordan Smelley, MHPS

Jordan Smelley, MHPS, is an internationally recognized, award-winning speaker and disability advocate who draws on his lived experience with intellectual and developmental disabilities, sensory processing differences, and mental health challenges. He is a Certified Mental Health Peer Specialist, Certified People Planning Together Lead Trainer, and developer of ASSUME a Sensory Reason™. Jordan serves as the first IDD Peer Support Specialist on Integral Care's Transition Support Team and as the Disability Advocate Representative on the Rehabilitation Council of Texas. His advocacy has been featured in the Wall Street Times, and he was recognized among MSN's Top 10 Leading Men in 2026. His work centers on belonging, accessibility, recovery, and the belief that disability does not define potential—support does.

Because Everybody Belongs



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MAKING CONNECTIONS COMMUNITY RESOURCES FAIRS

- **October 3** – McLean Middle School
www.IDDCouncil.org/makingconnectionsfw
- **February 21, 2027** – Northwest ISD
- **March 7, 2027** – First Methodist Mansfield



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FREE

MAKING CONNECTIONS CENTRAL TARRANT

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR ALL AGES

*The IDD Council is proud to partner with Fort Worth ISD
to host **MAKING CONNECTIONS CENTRAL TARRANT***



SATURDAY, OCT. 3, 2026 • 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

McLean Middle School • 3816 Stadium Dr., Ft. Worth, 76109

Resources for:

- Medicaid Waivers/Social Security
- Guardianship/Supported Decision-Making
- Behavioral Health
- Transition & Employment Services
- College Programs
- Assistive & Adaptive Technology
- Special Needs Trusts / Wills
- Homelessness
- Assisted Living / Housing
- Financial Planning
- Recreation & Leisure
- Therapy & Camp Providers
- Respite/Day Habilitation
- and more!



Resources & Exhibitors



Free Childcare
(advance registration required)



Breakout Sessions

Schedule, Session Details, Childcare Registration, Exhibitor and Sponsor
Registration: www.iddcouncil.org/makingconnectionsfw



*The IDD Council's **Making Connections Disability Resource Fairs** bring together the disability resources in our community to one, easily accessed location for families and caregivers to collect information and learn about benefits and services each provide. **Making Connections Disability Resource Fairs** are held throughout the year in various Tarrant County locations.*



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Preston Kolb Disability Rights Texas

ABOUT OUR PRESENTER

Preston Kolb brings more than three years of experience supporting individuals with disabilities through the Ticket to Work (TTW) program. He currently serves as a Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) Advocate at Disability Rights Texas, where he helps individuals secure reasonable accommodations in the workplace and in post-secondary education, empowering them to achieve their employment and educational goals. Prior to this role, he worked with Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Services, further strengthening his expertise in employment supports and disability services.



Understanding the Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security Program (PABSS)

Presented by: Preston Kolb, Advocate

DRTx Priorities

- Accessibility
- Alternative to Guardianship
- Community Integration
- Disaster Preparedness and Recovery
- Early Childhood Intervention
- Education (K-12, College)
- Employment
- Healthcare
- Institutional Rights and Civil Liberties
- Housing
- Transportation
- Voting

Terminology

- Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)
- Social Security Administration (SSA)
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE)
- Trial Work Period (TWP) – only SSDI
- Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE) – only SSDI
- Expedited Reinstatement (EXR) – only SSDI
- Standard Gainful Activity (SGA) – only SSDI

What is PABSS?

- **P**rotection and **A**dvocacy for **B**eneficiaries of **S**ocial Security.
- PABSS is funded by the Social Security Administration (SSA) to assist SSI/SSDI beneficiaries address barriers to employment.
- PABSS helps beneficiaries with disabilities obtain the services they need to secure, gain, or return to gainful employment.

Am I PABSS Eligible?

- Individual must *receive* Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits ***due to disability***
- Thus former recipients are not PABSS eligible*
- Seeking to secure, retain, or regain gainful employment or begin self-employment
- Individuals receiving retirement benefits or SSI over age 65, and non-disabled survivors are **not PABSS eligible**

*Individuals on extended period of eligibility are considered PABSS eligible, as is anyone on 1619 (b)

ARE YOU
ELIGIBLE?

PABSS Services and Employment

- Provides overview of SSI/SSDI programs and related health benefits.
- Provides basic information on how work can impact benefits.
- Assists in explaining applicable work incentives to people who have chosen to try or return to work.
- Provides information on the types of services and assistance that may be available in securing or returning to gainful employment.
- Addresses barriers to employment.



More on PABSS Services

Assist eligible PABSS clients to secure, retain, or regain gainful employment or begin self employment

- ✓ Obtain, retain and maintain employment
- ✓ Advance or be promoted on the job
- ✓ Access Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services
- ✓ Access the services of an Employment Network(EN) or other employment provider
- ✓ Improve employability
- ✓ Challenge discrimination
- ✓ Receive information and gain knowledge about employment rights

Social Security Disability Benefits Programs

SSI – Supplemental Security Income with Medicaid

Earned Income Exclusion

- First \$65 of earnings plus half the remainder are excluded from countable income.
- Reduces the amount of your SSI payment that is reduced as you work.

Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)

- For students under 22, earning income while regularly attending school.
- Excludes up to \$2,410/month (max \$9,730/year in 2026).



Social Security Disability Benefits Programs

SSI – Supplemental Security Income (continued)

Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS)

- Allow you set aside income or resources for work goals (e.g., education, equipment).
- SSI won't count these savings, keeping benefits higher.



Social Security Disability Benefits Programs

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) with Medicare

Trial Work Period (TWP)

- Allow you to test working for at least 9 months without losing benefits.
- Any month you earn over the TWP amount (\$1,210/month in 2026) counts as a TWP month.
- After 9 months, your disability benefits continue as long as earnings stay below SGA (\$1,690/month in 2026, (non-blind), \$2,830 (blind only))..



Social Security Disability Benefits Programs

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) with Medicare

Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE)

- Lasts 36 months after TWP ends.
- Benefits stop only if earnings go over SGA in a month.
- Automatic reinstatement in months under SGA.

Expedited Reinstatement (EXR)

- If benefits stop due to work, but you later can't work again, you can get payments restarted quickly within 5 years without a new application.



For Both SSDI and SSI

***IMPORTANT – report work income to SSA monthly by mail, online or fax, please make a copy for yourself ***

Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE)

- Costs you pay out of pocket for disability-related work needs (e.g., equipment, transportation).
- Deducted from earnings when deciding if you're over SGA (SSDI) or how much income reduces SSI.

Blind Work Expenses (BWE)

- For legally blind individuals.
- All work expenses can be deducted from earnings.

IRWE

IMPAIRMENT RELATED WORK EXPENSES

If you pay out of pocket for things you need because of your disability so you can work — like transportation, medications, *special equipment*, or personal assistance— Social Security can *deduct* those costs from your gross wages when deciding if you're working over the limit.

Example:

You earn \$1,700 a month, but you pay 200 for medication related to your disability. SSA counts \$1,500 instead.

BWIE

BLIND WORK EXPENSES

If you're blind. SSA lets you deduct ANY expense related to earning income — not just disability-related ones, That includes transportation, taxes, or even your lunch on workdays.

Example:

If you spend \$300 on transportation and other job costs, SSA reduces your countable earnings by \$300 — helping you keep your SSDI or SSI longer!

Working while on SSI

- Work earning = \$685 a month
 - - \$20 (credit)
 - - \$65 (income not counted)
 - = 600 2 = 300
 - \$300 (countable income)
- \$994 (SSI rate)
 - - \$300 (countable income)
 - = \$694 (new SSI benefit)
- \$994 = SSI only
- SSI + work = \$1379
- (694 + 685)
- You earn more working than on benefits alone!

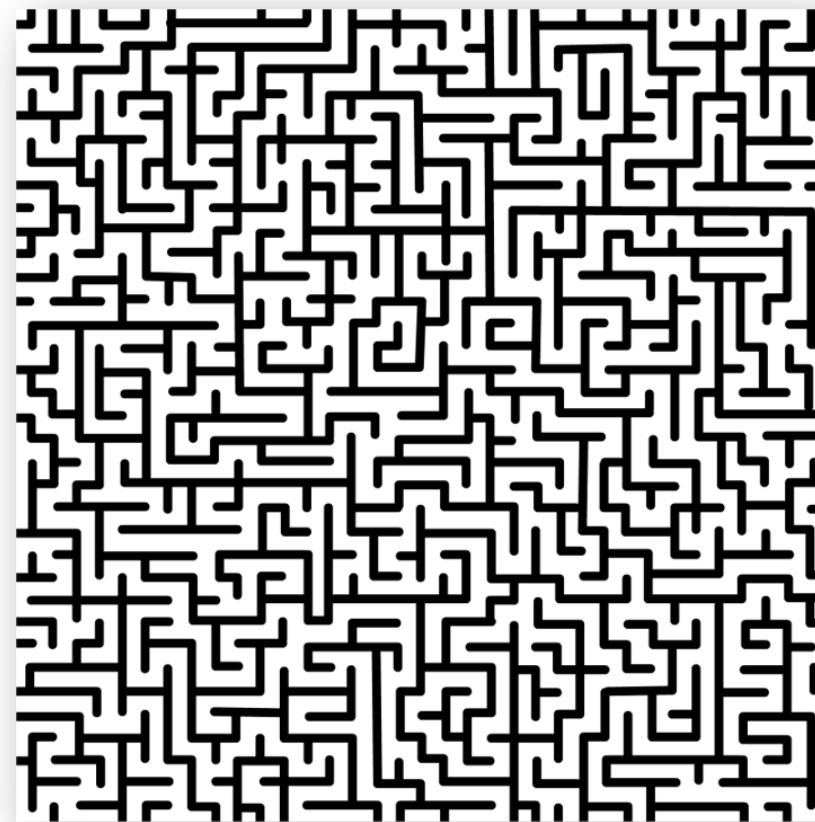
Working while on SSDI

SSDI

9 Trial Work Months, during 60-month period (2026 is \$1210)

36 Month Extended Period of Eligibility

Substantial Gainful Activity (2026 is \$1690)



SSI or SSDI and Working

- Avoid Overpayments report earnings to SSA monthly!
- Certified mail
- Hand deliver, get receipt
- Fax, keep fax confirmation
- MySSA.gov



Ticket to Work

- Some people choose to go to work.
- Free, voluntary SS program.
- Many free services and supports are available through Employment Networks and Vocational Rehabilitation.
- Offers career development for people ages 18-64 who received SS benefits and want to work.
- 866-968-7842



DRTX Role in Vocational Rehabilitation

- Client Assistance Program (CAP) – Advocates with VR expertise
- Helps clients access, apply for services or resolve issues with their current case
- Issue-based/time-limited – when VR services have been delayed, denied, reduced or an impasse exists
- Works to resolve issues at the lowest level in a positive, collaborative manner
- Provides resources or comparable benefits to clients
- Distinguishes and report systemic issues to improve program delivery



Contacting Us or Apply for DRTx Services

- Statewide Intake Lines:
 - 1-800-252-9108
 - 1-866-362-2851 (Sign Language Video Phone)
 - 512-271-9391 (Purple 2 Video Phone)
- Online Intake: Intake.DRTx.org
- Self-advocacy resources, information about our services: www.DRTx.org
- Preston Kolb | E: pkolb@drtx.org | P: (214) 845-4058



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SHOUT OUT TO LAST MONTH'S AMAZING DONORS!

thanks
FOR YOUR
Support

- Thomas Davis
- Nelia Cardenas
- Barbara Freeborn
- Bryan Cotton (monthly donor)
- Mike Anderson (monthly donor)

PAYMENTS MADE EASY WITH **ZELLE**, **PayPal**, OR ON OUR **WEBSITE!**



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<https://paypal.me/IDDCouncil>



<https://myqrcode.mobi/d2648a48>
(www.IDDCouncil.org/gift)



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SHOP, EAT AND SUPPORT THE IDD COUNCIL



amazon
wishlist

Kroger Shopper Card Community Rewards: <https://bit.ly/2Sw9WX1>

Rosa's Cards \$20 value / \$20 each: Email request with Qty: Rita@IDDCouncil.org

More info and ways to support our mission: <https://www.iddcouncil.org/partners>

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