

## OVERVIEW: National Core Indicators (NCI) Surveys

New Jersey is one of 49 states including the District of Columbia that participate in a national project called the National Core Indicators or NCI. The purpose of this initiative is to develop standard performance measures for state systems that provide services and supports to adults with developmental disabilities.

### What is the National Core Indicators?

National Core Indicators (NCI) is a collaborative effort between the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS) and the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI). NCI offers valid, reliable, person-centered measures that states use to demonstrate how publicly funded supports are affecting people's lives and to determine where they can improve the quality of those supports. The NCI are standard measures used across states to assess the outcomes of services provided to individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families. Data is collected through a series of voluntary surveys. This year, New Jersey will be using the In-Person Survey, Adult Family Survey, Family Guardian Survey, and the State of the Workforce Survey.

### What do the NCI Surveys Measure?

The NCI measures how well the public system assists adults with developmental disabilities and their families to exercise choice and control in their decision-making, participate in their communities, and maintain family relationships; how satisfied families are with services they receive; and how services have affected their lives. The NCI surveys cover key areas such as employment, respect/rights, service planning, community inclusion, choice, and health and safety.

### How is the data used?

The data that results from NCI surveys are often used to inform strategic planning, produce legislative reports, and prioritize quality improvement initiatives. Many states also share the data with stakeholder groups such as Quality Councils and use the stakeholder feedback to help set priorities and establish policy direction. **Please note that all information collected is kept confidential.**

### How do the surveys work?

The **In-Person Survey** (IPS) is a voluntary, face-to-face conversation completed with a minimum of 400 randomly chosen individuals who are 21 years of age or older and receiving at least one paid service, in addition to support coordination, from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). The IPS is administered either in-person or virtually by DDD staff who have received specialized training in administering the survey. Before the survey, background information is gathered from administrative records, often with additional information collected from the individual, guardian, service providers, and/or support coordinators. Background information includes data such as demographics, personal characteristics, health information, and employment status and wages.

The face-to-face portion of the IPS is conducted with the person receiving services and has two sections. Section I can only be answered by the individual – no proxy responses are permitted. Section II may be completed by a proxy if the interviewer determines the individual receiving services cannot answer on their own behalf. Participation in the survey is voluntary and participants may stop the survey at any time.

Beginning in October, individuals will be contacted via telephone and/or email to request participation in the In-Person Survey. Email confirmations with virtual meeting link and instructions will be sent to all IPS participants that agree to meet virtually.

The NCI **Adult Family Survey (AFS)** is a voluntary online survey which is to be completed by family members who have an adult (21 years or older) with an intellectual/developmental disability who lives in the family home and receives at least one additional DDD service other than support coordination.

The NCI **Family/Guardian Survey (FGS)** is a voluntary online survey which is to be completed by family members/guardian who have an adult (21 years or older) with an intellectual/developmental disability who lives outside of the family home and receives at least one additional DDD service other than support coordination.

Both the AFS and FGS have three sections; Demographics, Services and Supports Received, and Questions Regarding Services and Supports. There is also an opportunity for families/guardians to write open-ended comments concerning their participation in the DDD service system. It is through this effort that NCI is able to measure “family indicators.”

Invitations to participate in the AFS and FGS will be mailed to all primary caregivers and guardians by early Spring. The invitation will include a unique web-link to complete the survey. Participation is voluntary; you do not need to complete the survey if you do not want to. Questions about the NCI Family Surveys or requests to obtain an online invitation or hard copy of the survey in English or other languages can be submitted to [DDD.NCI@dhs.nj.gov](mailto:DDD.NCI@dhs.nj.gov).

Visit the [National Core Indicators](#) website to learn more about NCI and the surveys.

## Technology Resources

- **Lifeline (Free Smartphone Program)** – Lifeline is a federal program that provides eligible low-income individuals with a free smartphone and free wireless phone service (free data, free monthly minutes, and unlimited texting). (This Lifeline program is operated by the federal government and should not be confused with the New Jersey’s Lifeline utility assistance program.) If you participate in certain assistance programs like Medicaid, NJ SNAP or SSI, you automatically qualify for the Lifeline smartphone program. Visit the DHS [Lifeline \(Free Smartphone Program\)](#) webpage for more information.
- **Free Public Wi-Fi Hotspot Locations** – Many cable providers have Wi-Fi hotspots in restaurants, coffee shops, public libraries, and outdoor locations available free to anyone. Visit [How to Find Free Public W-Fi Hotspots](#) to find a hotspot near you.
- **Access to Assistive Technology** – The Assistive Technology Center, an initiative of Advancing Opportunities Inc., maintains the [Assistive Technology Lending Center](#), a free service for New Jersey residents. Anyone, including a person with a disability, family members, and education, employment, and community living staff who would like to trial assistive technology can contact the TLC, sign up for free, and begin borrowing right away.

**Support Coordinators, Service Providers, Division staff, and other community partners:** we ask for your support and assistance to:

- **NOTIFY and REMIND** the individuals and families in your networks to expect a mailing on *bright colored paper* with a link to one of the two surveys, and possibly a phone call to schedule an interview.
- **EDUCATE** the individuals and families in your networks about the importance of the survey.
- **ENCOURAGE** the individuals and families in your networks to participate in the survey!