

## **Welcome from Lisa Montalbano, the Ombudsman for People with Intellectual Developmental Disabilities and their Families**

Thank you for visiting our office website. I am very grateful for the appointment of this position and am enthusiastic about the work we will do together.

As Ombudsman, my commitment is to ensure that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, and the people who support them, have a trusted place to turn when concerns arise. Equally important, I believe our office has a responsibility to listen, learn, and help identify opportunities for meaningful improvement across the systems that serve New Jersey residents.

One of my highest priorities is building trusting, collaborative, and mission-driven relationships with individuals with disabilities, family members, providers, advocacy organizations, state agencies, and other stakeholders. By working together, we can better identify where challenges exist, understand their root causes, and develop practical solutions that improve lives.

The issues we face today—whether transportation barriers that limit access to employment and medical care, shortages of residential and day program options for individuals with complex needs, or workforce challenges affecting the human services sector—are often symptoms of larger systemic issues. Addressing those issues requires partnership, innovation, accountability, and a shared commitment to the people we serve.

The people of New Jersey fund and rely upon these services. Individuals with disabilities and their families deserve a meaningful voice in the decisions that affect their lives. Our office is committed to fostering dialogue that brings together individuals with disabilities, families, providers, advocates, and government partners to ensure that diverse perspectives help shape both immediate solutions and long-term improvements.

I look forward to listening, learning, and working alongside all those who share a commitment to strengthening services, protecting rights, and improving opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout New Jersey. I believe that we can build a system that is more responsive, inclusive, and effective for everyone it serves.

In Partnership,

Lisa Montalbano