



IHC Grantee Spotlight

Supportive Housing Association of New Jersey



As an IHC grant recipient ([Cohorts 1 & 4](#)), the statewide mission of the [Supportive Housing Association of New Jersey \(SHA\)](#) seeks to enhance lives and accessibility to enable independent living within our communities. This includes being fully integrated in their communities. At the heart of their work is a vision of a future where people with special needs can thrive in inclusive communities and live independently and with dignity — made possible by a strong, well-supported network of member organizations that they empower through resources, innovation, collaboration, and advocacy for systems change. Through dedication and hard work, combined with the support of the IHC Grant Program, they have made a mighty large

impact, and the work continues.

SHA's current initiative, the [Strengthening Inclusive Leadership Initiative \(SILI\)](#), builds directly on the foundation laid by their first IHC-funded work. The SILI addresses the underrepresentation of people with disabilities on boards of directors and advisory boards of nonprofits and other corporations across New Jersey. Centering the lived experience of individuals with disabilities — particularly those further marginalized by race, age, socioeconomic status, immigration status, gender, or sexual orientation — the initiative aims to incorporate these voices into community decision-making and promotes a cultural shift toward inclusive leadership. Their strategic approach involves the establishment of the Inclusive Community Advocacy Council (ICAC) to guide and support the initiative. This Council meets monthly and is powered by the voices of people with lived experience. After two years, the goal is to place at least six to eight disabled individuals in board positions.

This initiative grows out of SHA's earlier IHC-funded work: the [Integrated Community Project \(ICP\)](#). The ICP was designed to increase the capacity of individuals with disabilities to engage more fully in the communities where they live, drawing on their own lived experience. What began in Bergen, Camden, and Ocean counties expanded with the support of additional funders to nine counties, adding Cumberland, Hudson, Middlesex, Passaic, Somerset, and Union and one town, Westfield. In Westfield, a report with nine priority recommendations was developed. SHA developed leadership teams who used their experience, input, and shared voice to develop and distribute two key resources: the *Self-Assessment for Municipalities* and the *ICP Toolkit for Municipalities*. These tools help communities move toward full inclusivity and a deeper understanding of the potential of people of all abilities. The reach of the ICP has extended beyond SHA's own work as well — most notably, the Atlantic Center for Independent Living (Cohort 3) drew on these resources in their efforts to increase civic participation among people with disabilities, a testament to the ICP's broader influence across the IHC grantee community.

Like many organizations launching new initiatives, SHA navigated familiar challenges: building capacity and managing the ever-present constraints of time and funding. Yet they have pressed on — and the results speak for themselves. Successes include ICP participants securing full-time employment in advocacy and policy roles and serving in volunteer leadership roles.

Through both initiatives, SHA is building the kind of community involvement that benefits people with disabilities today and lays the groundwork for many more in the future — a community that incorporates a best practice in integration, one board seat, one empowered voice, and one more step toward full inclusion at a time. SHA acknowledges the generous support of the [New Jersey Division of Disability Services](#) (DDS), the [New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities](#) (NJCDD), The [Westfield Foundation](#), the [Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation](#) for the support of its community integration work.