

# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



*The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council's mission is "To advocate and promote meaningful participation in all aspects of life for Floridians with developmental disabilities."*

## ***The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council's Purpose:***

***We are committed to advocating and promoting programs, practices, and innovative initiatives that enhance the independence, productivity, inclusion, and self-determination of individuals with developmental disabilities in all aspects of life.***



# TRANSPORTATION

The Council helped key state transportation agencies and organizations like

the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged

better understand the needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

The Council's education and advocacy efforts helped bring

**\$79**  
**MILLION**

into services and programs for people with I/DD.

*In 2019, the Council and Florida Self-Advocates Network'D (SAND) once again worked on transportation for people with I/DD. Through the Council's education and advocacy efforts, the state continued to support a transportation program, provided new funding to create transportation options, and changed rules to improve Medicaid rides.*

- 1. The state gave \$500,000 to extend a free on-demand transportation program for people with I/DD for another year. This "Advantage Ride" program serves Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Manatee counties.*
- 2. The state gave \$10 million to the Commission on Transportation Disadvantaged to create new transportation options for people with I/DD.*
- 3. The state passed rules allowing transportation companies to provide Medicaid non-emergency rides.*

*One of the most important activities the Council worked on was communication. It is important for people with I/DD and their advocates to receive clear communication about transportation issues.*

**Through the Council's work, a person with I/DD was appointed to the Florida Commission on Transportation. This is a MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT for the Council.**

## EMPLOYMENT

*The Council worked to help people with I/DD get good jobs that pay well.*

*The Council's Employment First Partners reported several important results of their work.*

*The partners continued to educate the legislature and advocate for employment, which contributed to the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) continuing to receive \$900,000 of funding for their Employment Enhancement Program. As a result, 70 people on the waiting list got jobs, and 255 people kept their jobs with the help of employment services.*

*The Employment First partners also met these goals:*

- *Shared information with interested groups*
- *Kept up a useful website*
- *Supported and expanded local teams*

*The Council helped Florida become the top state in the nation for Project SEARCH. Project SEARCH helps people with I/DD in their last year of school get ready for jobs.*

**Florida now has 41 Project SEARCH sites,  
more than any other  
state in the country.**

# ELEMENTARY THROUGH POSTSECONDARY TRANSITION

In **2019**  
the Council continued  
to support  
**PROJECT TOPS,**  
an inclusive career education  
approach in the state  
technical college system.

The Project TOPS program secured

**\$300,000**

in funding from the Florida Center  
for Students with Unique Abilities.

- *32 students enrolled*
- *15 students earned an occupational completion point by mastering all job skills*
- *5 students earned career certificates*
- *90% of students enrolled had satisfactory academic progress*
- *Students enrolled won 9 medals in the SkillsUSA career and technical education competition*
- *Students enrolled won 6 medals in the state employment preparation competition*

The Council supported Think College to research barriers and identify solutions to expand postsecondary education and training for people with I/DD.

The Council provided funding to the University of Central Florida Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) to identify barriers and solutions to accessing and completing postsecondary education for students who identify as having an Autism Spectrum Disorder, and who also identify as Hispanic or Latino.

## SELF-ADVOCACY LEADERSHIP

- *In 2019, 113 people with I/DD actively participated in Florida Self-Advocates Network'D (Florida SAND). Florida SAND focused their education and advocacy efforts on transportation and direct service provider rates.*
- *28 people graduated from Partners in Policymaking (PIP) training.*
- *96 people with I/DD participated in Project VOTE training.*

## SELF-ADVOCACY SYSTEMS CHANGE

*In 2019, the Council continued to work on a program called Working People with Disabilities. The goal is to remove income limits for people with I/DD. This work, upon federal approval, will result so that people with I/DD can:*

- **keep their Medicaid benefits even if they earn up to**

**\$51,672**

**in 2020.**

- **keep cash assets up to**

**\$13,000**

**for a single individual  
and \$24,000 for a couple.**

## WORKFORCE (DIRECT SERVICE PROVIDERS)

*The Council's Pay Fair for Care campaign raised awareness of the importance of a fair wage for direct care. This resulted in a rate increase for Residential Habilitation providers totaling over \$28.7 million.*



## HOUSING

In 2019 the Council created a “Community Engagement Plan” to help people with I/DD get more involved in housing decisions in their communities.



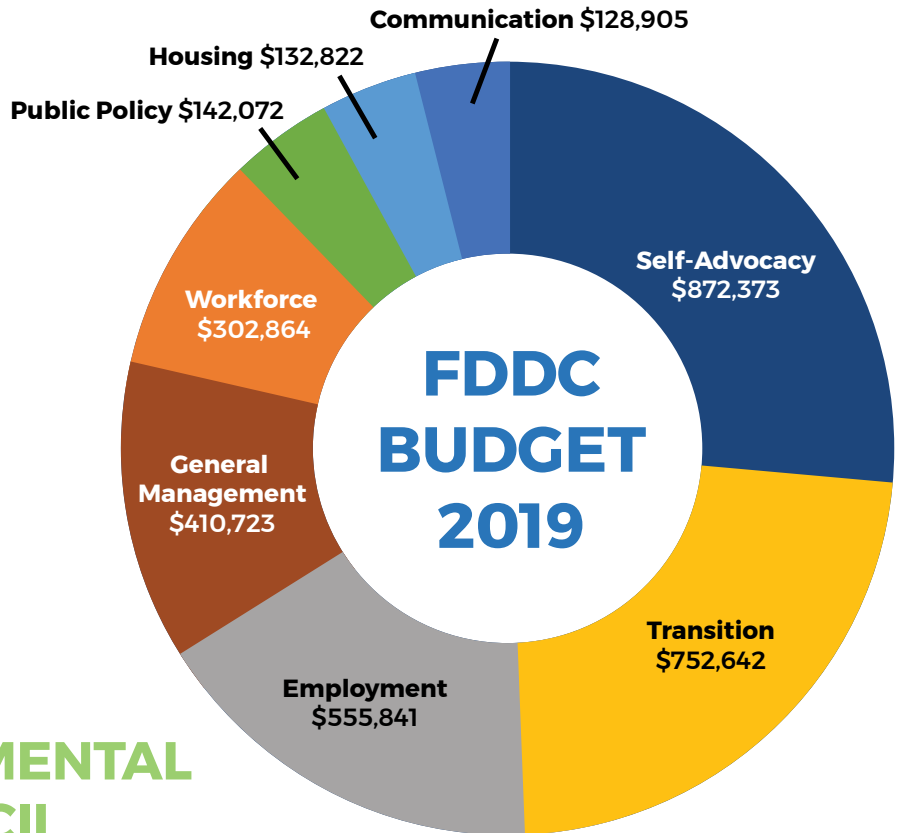
The Council will develop training and identify locations for getting people involved in housing within their local communities in 2020.

## BROAD SYSTEMS CHANGE



The Council continues its work to help people with I/DD get more involved in their communities. The Council supported funding Medicaid Waiver services to help people with changing needs. As a result of this work, the state gave \$18.8 million to expand iBudget Medicaid Waiver services. The federal government matched this amount, bringing the total funds to more than \$38.5 million.

# FLORIDA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL BUDGET



## FLORIDA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

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