Connections Guide

This project is provided by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc., supported in part by grant numbers 1901FLSCDD-01 and 2001FLSCDD-01 from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.

Funded by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council.

Welcome!
This guide will help you start your adult life.
Are you looking for a job or making plans to live on your own? This guide can help!

Who is This Guide For?
People with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families.

What is This Guide For?
The Connections Guide will help you with many parts of adult life, including:
Employment
Community
Education
Transportation
Self-Advocacy
Housing

EMPLOYMENT FIRST INITIATIVE
“Employment First” means that having an:
• Integrated job
• In the community
• That pays at least minimum wage
• Or is paid through self-employment

Should be the first choice for people with I/DD.

Florida’s Employment First Partners
• Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities
• Florida Department of Education
• Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
• Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
• Division of Blind Services
• Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
• CareerSource Florida
• Florida Department of Children and Families, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Office
• Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc.
• Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, Inc.
• The Arc of Florida, Inc.
• Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged

To learn more, go to: employmentfirstfl.org

Employment

AGENCY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (APD)

APD Can Help People with These Disabilities

• Intellectual disabilities
• Autism
• Spina bifida cystica or myelomeningocele
• Cerebral palsy
• Prader-Willi syndrome
• Down syndrome
• Phelan-McDermid syndrome

APD helps people with I/DD and their families to live, learn, and work in their communities.

The agency also teaches the public about employment for people with disabilities.

HOW TO REACH APD
resourcedirectory.apd.myflorida.com/resourcedirectory

Find help and programs in your area. APD Resource Guide - Call the Number for Your County:


407-245-0440 Brevard, Citrus, Hardee, Hernando, Highlands, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Polk, Seminole, or Sumter

800-615-8720 Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Hillsborough, Lee, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, or Sarasota

844-766-7520 Broward, Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, or St. Lucie

305-349-1478 Dade or Monroe

Contact APD for Help With:
- Supported employment and supported living
- Employment Enhancement Project
- Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services Waiver through iBudget Florida
- Consumer Directed CarePlus
- Individual and Family Supports funding for non-waiver customer expenses

To learn more: apd.myflorida.com/about/faqs.htm

Employment

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR)
You may be able to get VR services if:
- You have a physical or mental disability.
- Your disability makes it hard for you to start or keep a job.
- You need VR’s services to get or keep a job.

A VR Counselor will answer your questions.

To find out what services VR can offer you, make an appointment with a local VR office. If you have records from schools, doctors, or jobs, bring the records with you to your VR appointment.

Helping People Find Good Jobs
Examples of VR Services:

- Vocational Evaluation and Planning
- Career Guidance
- Job Coaching
- Job Placement
- On-the-Job Training
- Training and Education After High School
- Job Site Accommodations
- Supported and Customized Employment
- Assistive Technology and Devices
- Medical and Psychological Assessment
- Time-Limited or Psychological Treatment

VR Offices

To find a VR office:
800-451-4327 or RehabWorks.org/office_directory.shtml
On the website, click on your area to find a VR office.

If you receive Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income for your disability, you can probably get VR services.

VR Helps With:

- General Employment Services
- Supported Employment Services
- Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blind Services
- Florida’s Ticket to Work Program

Employment

CAREERSOURCE FLORIDA
CareerSource Florida has Career Centers across the state. These Career Centers are paid for by the U.S. Department of Labor.

CareerSource Centers offer services including:

- A Disability Navigator to help guide you through the system.
• Money to provide special services for people with disabilities.
• Special training.
• Support for employers who hire people with disabilities.

The CareerSource Florida network partner in your area has many services to help you connect to a rewarding career. Visit abilitieswork.employflorida.com to get started.

**CAREERSOURCE FLORIDA: SOLUTIONS THAT WORK FOR YOU**

- Career Services: How to find a job that suits you.
- Education Services: Training programs and schools.
- Community Services and Benefits: Health, welfare, nutrition and money.
- Youth Services: Jobs and other paths beyond high school.
- Job Seeker Services: Finding a new job and how to develop a good resume and cover letter.
- Labor Market Services: Trends in the labor market.
- Disability Services: Employment, health, and money services.
- More Resources: Statistics, college career centers, state and local partners.

For help connecting with career and training opportunities, please visit abilitieswork.employflorida.com

**Home Life**

**HOME LIFE**
Options include apartments, condominiums, townhomes, houses, or mobile or manufactured homes.

Home ownership may be the right option for you if you have enough income.

Renting a home is a common choice for people with limited incomes or who want the flexibility. Rent assistance is sometimes available.

Finding affordable housing can be hard. A supported living coach or agency can help.

Supported Living provides people with individualized help to choose where and how they want to live in homes of their own.
A supported living coach or support coordinator, using in-home supports and community resources, can help people live on their own and be a part of the community.

**Education and Training**

**UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES**
Many schools in Florida offer programs with extra help for students with I/DD after high school. Some programs offer scholarships and other help with costs.

For more information:

Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education:
[fciche.com/resources/programdevelopment/credential-guidance](http://fciche.com/resources/programdevelopment/credential-guidance)

The Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA) at the University of Central Florida:
[fcsua.org/E_postsecondary.php and fcsua.org](http://fcsua.org/E_postsecondary.php and fcsua.org)

Florida Comprehensive Transition Programs approved for federal financial aid:
[studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements/intellectual-disabilities](http://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements/intellectual-disabilities)

State Universities:
[flbog.edu/universities](http://flbog.edu/universities)

Florida Colleges:
[fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system](http://fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system)

Commission for Independent Education:
[fldoe.org/policy/cie](http://fldoe.org/policy/cie)

**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**
Success Story
“I knew I could do it, but it was tough,” said Josh. Today, Josh works in the automotive service industry.
Josh Duncan went to Florida State College at Jacksonville with the help of Project Achieve. This project was initiated through funding by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council.

Explore a CTE program at a Florida College:
fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system

Explore a CTE program at a Florida Technical College:
fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/dist-ps-instit.stml

**Self-Advocacy**

**FLORIDA SELF-ADVOCATES NETWORK’D**

Self-Advocacy is when people speak for themselves instead of having someone else speak for them.

Florida Self-Advocates Network’D, or FL SAND, is a state-wide network of self-advocacy groups.

FL SAND is led by Self-Advocates who are active in speaking up for themselves. They promote rights, work for systems change, and create community inclusion.

People involved in Self-Advocacy help each other work for change.

They work on both big goals, like closing institutions, and individual issues, such as supporting someone with their personal concerns.

To learn more: flsand.org or contact flsand@gmail.com

**Disability Rights**

**DISABILITY RIGHTS AND ISSUE RESOLUTIONS**

Issues with Social Security disability determination or appeals?

Call 1.800.772.1213.

Issues with Americans with Disabilities Act?

Call the Commission on Human Relations at 1.800.342.8170 or the ADA Hotline at 1.800.514.0301.
Issues with Housing?
Call Disability Rights Florida at 800-342-0823 / 800-346-4127 (TDD).

- Information and referrals
- Self-advocacy support
- Technical assistance
- Investigations into complaints of abuse, neglect, and rights violations
- Assistance with Social Security Representative Payees and their beneficiaries.
- Dispute support
- Negotiation and mediation support
- Advocacy services
- Litigation (lawsuits)

To learn more: disabilityrightsflorida.org or 800-342-0823.

**Resources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency/Organization</th>
<th>Resource Services and Supports</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) | APD provides services to people with I/DD in the areas of living, learning, and working.        | ✔     | ✔     | [apd.myflorida.com/about/faqs.htm](http://apd.myflorida.com/about/faqs.htm)
1-866-273-2773[resourcedirectory.apd.myflorida.com/resourcedirectory](http://resourcedirectory.apd.myflorida.com/resourcedirectory)
1-866-273-2773                                                                 |
| APD’s iBudget Waiver program for Florida Medicaid |                                                                                                |       |       |                                                                         |
| Directory of Resources for people with I/DD in Florida |                                                                                                |       |       |                                                                         |
| CareerSource Florida                  | Provides job counseling, training and placement assistance                                     | ✔     | ✔     | [careersourceflorida.com](http://careersourceflorida.com)
850-692-6887                                                                               |
| Centers for Independent Living        | Provides help in all aspects of independent living, including jobs                           | ✔     | ✔     | [floridacils.org/LocateYourLocalCIL](http://floridacils.org/LocateYourLocalCIL)
850-575-6004 Toll Free 1-866-575-6004                                                      |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>URL</th>
<th>Phone Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PCA Services Program: Assistance to working adult Floridians.</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://floridacils.org/pca-services-program">floridacils.org/ pca-services-program</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Youth Leadership Forum: Leadership training for high school students with disabilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://floridacils.org/youth-leadership">floridacils.org/ youth-leadership</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Rights Florida</td>
<td>Information and referral, self-advocacy support, complaint investigation/resolution, advocacy</td>
<td><a href="http://disabilityrightsflorida.org">disabilityrightsflorida.org</a></td>
<td>850-488-9071 or Toll Free 1-800-342-0823 or TDD 1-800-346-4127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down Syndrome Association of Central Florida</td>
<td>Resources on education, health and employment for people with Down Syndrome</td>
<td><a href="http://dsacf.org">dsacf.org</a></td>
<td>407-478-5621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Alliance for Assistive Technology (FAAST)</td>
<td>Provides assistive technology to eligible people</td>
<td><a href="http://faast.org">faast.org</a></td>
<td>850-487-3278TollFree 1-888-788-9216 TTY 877-506-2723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities at University of Central Florida</td>
<td>Support for on-campus college experiences that lead to employment</td>
<td><a href="http://fcsua.org">fcsua.org</a></td>
<td>407-823-5225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD)</td>
<td>Provides transportation services to people with disabilities</td>
<td><a href="http://ctd.fdot.gov/ctcsbycounty.htm">ctd.fdot.gov/ctcsbycounty.htm</a></td>
<td>850-410-5700 TD Helpline 1-800-983-2435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Education</td>
<td>State University System</td>
<td><a href="http://flbog.edu">flbog.edu</a></td>
<td>850-245-0466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Colleges</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system">fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system</a></td>
<td>850-245-0407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Career and Technical Education and Adult Education</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu">fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu</a></td>
<td>850-245-5071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of Blind Services</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://dbs.myflorida.com">dbs.myflorida.com</a></td>
<td>850-245-0300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Developmental Disabilities</td>
<td>Change policy and create services to support independence, inclusion, and</td>
<td></td>
<td>850-488-4180/800-580-7801 TDD 850-488-0956/888-488-8633 <a href="http://FDDC.org">FDDC.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Title: The Florida Housing Coalition
- **Decision-Making** of individuals with I/DD in all aspects of life

### The Florida Housing Coalition
- For an affordable Housing Resource Guide
  - [flhousing.org/publications](http://flhousing.org/publications)

### Florida Housing Finance Corporation
- Help to apply for a loan to buy a home
  - [floridahousing.org](http://floridahousing.org)

### Florida Housing Search
- Free resource to find affordable rental housing
  - [FloridaHousingSearch.org](http://FloridaHousingSearch.org)
  - 877-428-8844

### Local Public Housing Authorities
- Apply for rent help through a Housing Choice Voucher
  - [hud.gov/resources](http://hud.gov/resources)
  - 800-955-2232

### Social Security's Ticket to Work
- National program that pays local providers to help SSI/DI client get jobs and keep them
  - [choosework.net](http://choosework.net)
  - 866-968-7842

### Vocational Rehabilitation
- Provides services to people with disabilities including assessment, education, training, and accommodation
  - [rehabworks.org/office_directory.shtml](http://rehabworks.org/office_directory.shtml)
  - 1-800-451-4327

### Work Incentives Planning and Assistance
- Benefits Planning for Social Security Beneficiaries and Recipients
  - [ssa.gov/work/WIPA.html](http://ssa.gov/work/WIPA.html)
  - 1-866-968-7842 Voice
  - 1-866-823-2967 TTY

---

**Thank You**

We would like to pay our respects to our colleague, Barbara Butz, who initially developed this document with the Capstone Group in 2015. Barbara passed away in November of 2019. The guide was updated in 2020 by Dale DiLeo Consulting, Inc.

Special thanks to the following people for their guidance and input:
- Warren Davis, CareerSource Florida
- Cherie Hall, Disability Rights Florida
- Eddie Hall, FDDC Council Member and Self-Advocate
- Kiersten Lee, Agency of Persons with Disabilities
- Jan Pearce, Vocational Rehabilitation
- FDDC Council Staff

Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc.
124 Marriott Drive, Suite 203
Tallahassee, Florida 32301-2981 Phone 850-488-4180/800-580-7801
Fax 850-922-6702
TDD 850-488-0956/888-488-8633 FDDC.org