Connections:

Tools and Resources for Adult Life

This initiative is sponsored by United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc.
This Guide is designed to help individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities and their families connect to tools and resources that will help identify the options that are available to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in adult life.

The Guide seeks to connect you to resources that may be important in adult life and explores a range of opportunities in critical areas of: employment, education, community resources, transportation and self-advocacy.

Eddie Hall, a member of the Florida Development Disabilities Council, reflected on his experiences as a young person with a disability starting his career. He urges young people and their families to not be afraid to:

- Ask questions
- Talk about your disability
- Earn a paycheck
Employment in Florida is defined as integrated employment, including supported employment, customized employment, and self-employment, where an individual is paid by an employer at minimum wage or greater or receives earnings through one’s self-employment business, fully integrated in the community workforce, with a goal of maximum self-sufficiency.

What Employment First Means

Employment First means that having a job in the community is the first choice for people with disabilities, including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

For Information and Resources on Florida’s Employment First Initiative, go to:

http://www.employmentfirstfl.org/
Who does APD serve?

APD serves more than 50,000 Floridians with developmental disabilities as defined in Florida Statutes, Chapter 393. This includes individuals with:

- Autism
- Cerebral palsy
- Spina bifida
- Intellectual disabilities
- Down syndrome
- Prader-Willi syndrome
- Children age 3-5 who are at a high risk of a developmental disability

Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)

APD works with local communities and private providers to support people who have developmental disabilities and their families in living, learning, and working in their communities.

The agency also works to educate the public on disability issues and focuses attention on employment for people with disabilities.
How do I apply to receive services from APD?
You can call the regional office in your area.

**APD's Regional and Field Office Contacts**

- **Northwest Region** - Bay, Calhoun, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Wakulla, Walton, and Washington counties - Fields 1 and 2  
  Phone: 904-992-2440
  Phone: 850-488-3763
- **Central Region** - Brevard, Citrus, Hardee, Hernando, Highlands, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Polk, Seminole, and Sumter counties - Fields 7, 13, 14, and 15  
  Phone: 407-245-0440
- **Suncoast Region** - Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Hillsborough, Lee, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, and Sarasota counties - Suncoast Field 23 and 8  
  Phone: 800-615-0440
- **Southeast Region** - Broward, Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, and St. Lucie counties - Fields 9 and 10  
  Phone: 561-837-5564
- **Southern Region** - Dade and Monroe counties - Field 11  
  Phone: 305-349-1478

This guide can be found at: http://resourcedirectory.apd.myflorida.com/resourcedirectory/
What services does APD provide?

APD provides:
- Supported employment services
- Employment Enhancement Project (EEP) Project is time-limited
- Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waiver through iBudget Florida
- Supported living services
- Consumer Directed Care Plus (CDC+)
- Placement in an Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) for individuals with developmental disabilities
- Individual and Family Supports (IFS) funding for non-waiver customer expenses

For more information about APD, go to: http://apd.myflorida.com/about/faqs.htm

Even though there is a waiting list for APD services, it is important to register for services for several reasons:
- New funds are allocated based on the number of individuals eligible for services who are on the waiting list.
- Some services like EEP are open only to eligible individuals who are on the waiting list.

Employment Enhancement Project (EEP)

This is a time-limited program that is currently funded until June 2016. It is designed to help people transition from school to competitive employment in their community.

Basic Criteria:

- Job-Seekers must be 18 years of age or over. If in high school, they must be in their last year.
- The highest priority will be for people leaving school to begin working in competitive employment in their communities.
- Job-Seekers must be on the APD Waiting List. Participation in the EEP will not affect an individual’s Waiting List status. This project is specific to employment.
- Job-seekers must not have an active case with Vocational Rehabilitation. If they do, they are not eligible for EEP funded services.
- The funds will be allotted on an individual basis, with an average of $2500.00 per person.
Florida Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

**Employment**

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is another important resource for people with disabilities seeking employment. If you need job training, education, health services and accommodations, VR may be able to help.

VR offers a great variety of services designed to meet individual needs. Making an appointment with a local VR office is the best way to find out what services VR offers that may meet your needs. In addition to traditional placement and job training services, VR offers additional employment options for individuals with disabilities including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

**Examples of VR Services:**
- Supported Employment
- Self-Employment
- Supported Self-Employment
- Job-Site Assessment and Accommodations
- Job Placement
- Job Coaching
- On-the-Job Training
- Discovery
- Career Counseling and Guidance
- Training and Education After High School
- Degree programs at Colleges and Universities
- Career and Technical programs
- Medical and Psychological Assessment
- Vocational Evaluation and Planning
- Assistive Technology and Devices

**VR ELIGIBILITY**

You may be eligible for VR services if your goal is to become employed and:
- You have a Physical, Mental Health, Intellectual, Developmental or other disability that interferes with your ability to become employed, and
- You need VR’s help to prepare for, find or keep a job.

A Counselor will assist you with an application and will help you find out if you qualify for services and what those services might be.

For more information, go to: www.rehabworks.org

KEY TIP:
If you have records from schools, doctors, psychologists, etc. it is helpful to take those records with you to your VR appointment.
Supported Employment is a unique employment service for individuals with the most significant disabilities who require ongoing services to succeed in competitive employment. Services and supports are designed to support the individual.

Self-Employment services are available to individuals who wish to start their own business. VR provides supports through this process to help make these dreams come true. Self-Employment is a customized strategy that works well for individuals who have the skills, desires, and interests to pursue self-employment.

Supported Self-Employment is also offered as a service option for individuals with the most significant disabilities. It is very similar to Self-employment but has additional support services provided on a longer term basis.

Discovery Services are offered through VR for people who need assistance in discovering what their unique gifts, strengths, and capabilities are. Discovery is a Customized Employment Option.
The State of Florida has a network of CareerSource Centers. These centers are funded by the U.S. Department of Labor.

CareerSource Centers often have specific services for individuals with disabilities. These services could include access to:

- A Disability Navigator to help guide you through the system,
- Special funding under the Disability Employment Initiative to provide targeted services for individuals with disabilities, and
- Specialized training may be available.

The CareerSource Center in your area offers the following types of services. Learn more about these services by going to:

www.Employermarketplace.com/jobseekers/
**Career Services**
Research specific occupations, choose a new career or analyze your skills to find an occupation that best suits you.

**Education Services**
Find a suitable training or educational program, as well as information on training providers and schools.

**Community Services and Benefits**
Find community services for which you are eligible, such as health, welfare, and nutrition and financial assistance programs.

**Youth Services**
Find information about finding a job, exploring different careers, and alternative post-high school paths for youth.

**Job Seeker Services**
Find assistance in looking for or getting placed in a new job and learn how to develop effective resumes and cover letters.

**Labor Market Services**
Access information about labor market trends, statistics, economic and demographic data.

**Disability Services**
Find information about services in your area that benefit people with disabilities, including employment, health, and financial resources.

**More Resources**
Find more information about statistics, college and university career centers, state and local partners.

For these CareerSource Resources go to the Florida Employer Marketplace at:

Looking for a College Experience

There are now 14 universities in Florida that offer on-campus experiences to individuals with intellectual disabilities who may not be eligible for traditional credited courses. These programs are supported by local school systems, service providers and the university through federal grants.

These programs range from 1-4 years. Six programs are specific to the county where the university is located. The programs at University of North Florida and University of South Florida have on-campus housing.

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<td>Project ACCESS</td>
<td>Florida Keys Community College</td>
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<td>VERTICAL Program</td>
<td>Florida State College at Jacksonville</td>
<td>18-25+</td>
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<td>Employment Institute</td>
<td>Indian River State College</td>
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<td>Project ACCEPT</td>
<td>Miami Dade College InterAmerican</td>
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<td>Project REAL</td>
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<td>Project SAINT</td>
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<td>The Learning Academy at USF</td>
<td>University of South Florida</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Successful Transition After Graduation For Exceptional Students (STAGES)</td>
<td>University of South Florida</td>
<td>18-22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project 10 STING RAY</td>
<td>University of South Florida St. Petersburg</td>
<td>18-22</td>
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<td>Polk County School District Transition Program</td>
<td>Warner University</td>
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</table>
Going to College?

- Training for some professional careers require a minimum of four years of college.
- Some professions require 6-8 years of education after high school.

For information about colleges in your area go to:
http://www.fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system/colleges/index.stml

Is a Trade or Technical Career For You?

Florida provides career, technical and adult education through local school districts. You can complete education courses where you can:
- learn a trade,
- earn a certificate in that trade, program, and
- learn about businesses that need qualified employees with these skills.

For more information about career and technical education go to:
http://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/index.stml

Josh Duncan was a dual enrollment student in the Duval County Public School system and went to Florida State College Jacksonville with the help of the VERTICAL Program, which provides support to students with unique abilities through the Project Achieve program from the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council.

Josh had to work very hard but he persevered and gave it his all and that hard work is paying off. “I knew I could do it, but it was tough”, explains Josh.

Today, Josh is thrilled to be employed at Jiffy Lube and is looking forward to a life-long career in the automotive service industry. This student is just one example of what can be achieved through working together to overcome obstacles and help students succeed.
What Is Self-Advocacy?

Self-Advocacy is about independent groups of people with disabilities working together for justice by helping each other take charge of their lives and fight discrimination (Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered). Self-Advocacy refers to individuals advocating for themselves versus having someone else speak for them; and in the larger context describes a grassroots civil rights movement where individuals participate on their own and within Self-Advocate run organizations or associations in a variety of activities designed to influence public policy and practice as it relates to equal opportunity.

People involved in the Self-Advocacy movement help each other to advocate for things like power-sharing and system change. As a movement, we work on broad goals, like closing all the institutions in the country, but we don’t forget the individual person with a disability who has problems in his or her own life. We support each other as much as we can, and because of this we have learned many lessons about listening and speaking up. (Kennedy, M., 1996)

Tips and Connections

FL SAND is the Florida Self-Advocacy Network and was officially formed in 2011. FL SAND is an independent Self-Advocacy movement that has come together to form a statewide network.

FL SAND is a statewide association led by Self-Advocates who are united and active in speaking up for themselves, promoting rights, advocating for system change and creating community inclusion and awareness of its members.

You can contact FL SAND at: http://flsand.org/about-fl-sand/
Disability Rights and Issue Resolutions

Self-Advocacy

Florida Disability Rights

Sometimes, a self-advocate needs more information and support to insure they get what they need from organizations. In Florida, the Disability Rights Center is the place to call. Disability Rights Florida offers the following services at no cost to the individual:

- Information and referrals
- Self-advocacy support
- Technical assistance
- Investigations into complaints of abuse, neglect and rights violations
- Dispute resolution support
- Negotiation and mediation support
- Advocacy services

You can contact them at:

www.Disabilityrightsflorida.org

Issue Resolutions

Issues with Social Security disability determination or appeal information
Call the Social Security Administration at 1.800.772.1213.

Issues with Americans with Disabilities Act or complaints
Call the Commission on Human Relations at 1.800.342.8170. You can also call the ADA Hotline at 1.800.514.0301.

Issues with Landlords?
If this is an issue with HUD Housing and Urban Development housing, contact the fair housing line at 1.800.440.8091. If you have an issue with your landlord, contact the Legal Services office in your county for advice.
## Resource Guide

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Resource, Services and Supports</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Link</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)</td>
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<td>1-800-866-273-2773</td>
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<td>850-921-1119 TTY- State of Florida 711</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centers for Independent Living</td>
<td>These programs provide assistance in all aspects of independent living, employment may be included</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>850-575-6004 Toll Free 1-866-575-6004 Lost FLDR</td>
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<td>850-488-9071 or Toll Free 1-800-342-0823 or TDD 1-800-246-4127</td>
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<td>Downs Syndrome Association of Central Florida</td>
<td>Resources on education, health and employment for individuals with Downs Syndrome</td>
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<td>407-478-5621</td>
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<td>Florida Alliance for Assistive Technology (FAAST)</td>
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<td>850-487-3278 Toll Free 1-888-788-9216 TTY 877-506-2725</td>
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<td>Florida Consortium on Post-Secondary Education and Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>Educational and training programs on 14 campuses</td>
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<td>727-873-4660</td>
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<td>Florida Department of Education</td>
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<td>850-922-6044</td>
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<td>Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD)</td>
<td>Commission and its local boards provide transportation services to individuals with disabilities including para-transit</td>
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<td>TD Helpline 1-800-983-2435</td>
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<td>National program that pays local providers to help SSI/DI client get jobs and keep them</td>
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Special Thanks

We want to thank the members of the Guide’s Advisory Committee of the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council for their work on this guide:

- Beth Romans-Corsi, FDDC, Program Manager, Employment and Transportation Task Force
- LeeAnn Herman, State Office Employment Coordinator, Agency for Persons with Disabilities
- Jan Pearce, Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Supported Employment Administrator, Transition Team Member
- Kevin Johnson, President, Bishop Grady Villas
- Judith White, Florida Department of Education, Secondary Transition Specialist
- Eddie Hall, Member, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council