



FLORIDA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL, INC.

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INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council recognizes that the current living arrangements for adults with developmental disabilities who wish or need to live outside of their families' homes often do not adequately provide for safety, social connections, full belonging in the community, affordable housing, ability to move about their neighborhood freely, continuity, and a life long sustainability. Options for living arrangements that would provide the opportunity to address these issues are only beginning to emerge. The Council believes that Intentional Communities, designed to meet the unique needs of individuals with developmental disabilities, can offer a framework for creating greater choice of living arrangements; for bringing together the community supports and services to address many of the current issues; for enhancing choice, control and responsibility in all aspects of life; and for maintaining full inclusion with the community. The success and sustainability of Intentional Communities will require strong partnerships between families and the broader community.

Intentional Communities can be developed in many different forms, such as dispersed housing or clustering on a single parcel. The communities also can include many different types of living arrangements (from supported living, group homes, single family homes, apartments and Assisted Living Facilities) or include a limited variety of living arrangements (such as all supported living arrangements). Such communities can be privately funded or be a blending of public and private funding, including federal funds from the Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver. As Intentional Communities are developed, it is important to remember that the Federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services is developing guidelines that will govern how Waiver funds are used to optimize participant independence and community integration, promote initiative and choice in daily living, and facilitate full access to community services. These are values that the Council strongly supports for the use of Waiver funds.

As such, the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council supports the use of Medicaid Waiver funds in Intentional Communities that offer the following characteristics:

- Provides for housing options only – no workshops, day training, or common dining is provided on-site;
- Ensures easy access to the broader community;
- Encourages the broader community to come into the Intentional Community;
- Ensures that individuals with developmental disabilities create their own daily schedules and activities;
- Ensures that individuals with developmental disabilities choose their own supports and providers;
- Offers housing that is affordable;
- Provides special safety features; and
- Includes residents who are both individuals with disabilities (i.e., developmental disabilities and other disabilities) and individuals without disabilities in a sufficient mix so as not to create a segregated community;

Additional characteristics that are encouraged include options of different types of living arrangements (such as apartments, small homes, and 6-bed larger co-housing) and business enterprises that are easily accessible by the broader community.

The Council supports the development of criteria to determine when Medicaid waiver funds can be provided in Intentional Communities that reflect these values and characteristics.