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# Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day 2011

*Thank you to everyone who attended Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day 2011, co-sponsored this year by The Arc of Florida and the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council.*



Nearly 1,000 individuals attended the rally and press conference held in the Capitol courtyard.

They heard encouraging messages from Governor Scott, Senators, Representatives, and Cabinet members.



Senator Anitere Flores presented the second annual Idelio Valdes Leadership and Advocacy award to Kara Tucker.





Ms. Florida encouraged the crowd to visit lawmakers and make their voices heard.

Hundreds of self-advocates spent a good part of the day bringing their message of "No more cuts" to lawmakers.



But there was also time to enjoy a dance as a local rock band performed.

Those attending DD Awareness day sent a very powerful message to lawmakers and the Governor, and they can be proud of the impact they made.



## Council Members

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**Michael Smith** - Escambia County

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**Robert Whitney** –Disability Rights Florida

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The Council is a non-profit organization that receives its funding from the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities. The Council operates independently of any state agency or department.



## Director's Message

On April 1st, the disability community received the devastating news that provider rates were once again being cut. But this wasn't a 2.5% cut, or even a 5% cut – which would have been bad enough. This was a 15% cut (actually, a 15% to 40% cut), which supposedly would plug the \$170 million deficit in the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) budget.

On April 15, Governor Scott withdrew the executive order mandating the 15% cut, and lawmakers agreed to find the money in their House and Senate budgets to the make up the deficit.

While it's true that the 15% cut rule was rescinded, and while it's true the House and Senate found monies to fund APD's deficit, we are not out of the woods yet.

I see this recent action as a wake-up call for all of us who serve and care about individuals with developmental disabilities. We will never get all the funding needed for the Home and Community Based Services Waiver to adequately support Floridians with developmental disabilities to live in the community.

So how do we support individuals with developmental disabilities and their families? That needs to be our focus.

This does not mean that we do not continue to advocate for adequate funding both for individuals receiving services and individuals waiting for services. This also does not mean that we make this APD's problem – it is everyone's problem.

This most recent near-disaster is a clear message for all of us, together, to look beyond the waiver for funding and to take responsibility for how we sustain a system that can support individuals with developmental disabilities in our Florida community.

*Debra Dowds*

Executive Director

## **Requesting Public Comments on the Council's 2012-2016 State Plan**

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council has been working on developing its proposed 2012-2016 Council State Plan for over a year. We have solicited information from individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, caregivers, state agencies, developmental disabilities organizations and other stakeholders. We have reviewed documents, conducted surveys, facilitated focus groups, conducted interviews, and gathered information from as many sources as possible.

The Council has met in subgroups and as a whole many times to discuss and develop our proposed goals and objectives. While we are still doing some fine-tuning, we are offering Floridians an opportunity to comment on the goals and objectives that will guide our work for the next five years.

Please provide us with your comments regarding the focus of work for the next five years. If you have specific suggestions regarding implementing these goals and objectives, please include these as we will be developing implementation activities over the next couple of months.

**Your input, comments and suggestions may be provided by email to [fddc@fddc.org](mailto:fddc@fddc.org), by fax at 850-922-6702, or by mail to Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, 124 Marriott Drive, Suite 203, Tallahassee, FL 32301**

**The deadline for input, comments and suggestions is  
Monday, May 23, 2011**

**State Plan Goals and Objectives <http://www.fddc.org/news/goals-and-objectives>**

# A Guide for Pulling Together a Disaster Preparedness Kit on a Tight Budget

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*Written by Carrie Akerstrom with special thanks to Carol Dunn, Seattle Red Cross, Mary Schoenfeldt, Everett Office of Emergency Management, and Cindy Van Wambeck, SAMMI volunteer of the year in Sammamish 2007 and to ReadyCorps staff and volunteers.*

- 1) Reminder: You don't have to put together a disaster preparedness kit together all at once so take a deep breath and do it little by little.
- 2) Start by asking yourself some basic questions: What will I need to stay warm? What will I need to stay cool? What will I need to store water (tip: you can use empty soda bottles for water containers after you wash them with soap and hot water) and food in? What will I need to see in the dark? What will I need to eat, drink, and cook with? What will I need to build a make shift shelter? What will comfort me and give me a sense of relief (i.e. comfort foods, travel sized lotions that smell good or a favorite book)? You have the idea!
- 3) Ask yourself this: What do I already have in my home? More than likely, you already have a few items you can add to your disaster preparedness kit and free stuff is a bonus. Think about clothing, sleeping bags, blankets, flash lights or head lamps, a whistle, a back packing stove, duct tape, tools, a can opener, batteries, a whistle, pet supplies, plastic bags, things you need to eat with, personal care items, shoes, gloves, a hard hat and matches (\* take care not to burn candles or cook on an unauthorized stove inside your house! Doing so may lead to a fire). You can add anything else you may need... Be Creative! After you have a list of items already in your home you can calculate how much the remaining items will cost you.
- 4) Look in your pantry! Do you have extra canned tuna (packed with water) or cans of soup? Both may help hydrate you in a pinch. How about peanut butter? This is good for sustaining your energy. Do you have any protein bars? These are small, inexpensive and good to eat on the run. Nuts are also good at giving you energy. Anything else that travels well and packs up small would be good to add.
- 5) Food wise don't forget some comfort food. Chocolate, hard candy, gum or mints can be a good mood elevator and they're cheap to buy.
- 6) Work with friends and family. They often have extras of things they don't use and you can take them or trade for them.
- 7) Use the Web! Two great sites to surf for free, trades or cheap goods: [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org) and [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)
- 8) How about shopping at thrift stores, surplus warehouses or any dollar store in your area? Often you can find inexpensive essentials like: back packs, bins, things you need to eat and drink with (no glass), toys for kids or clothing. Look around when you are there and ask yourself the basic questions listed on line #1 above.

- 9) What about department or large discount stores (tip: look for sale bins sometimes placed in the very front or back of the store)? Membership clubs and warehouse stores are also great and they sell items in bulk (tip: go in together with others on bulk items you may need and split them up for cost savings). Ask your doctor, dentist, or eye doctor if they have any free samples you can add like bandages, a tooth brush, some paste or floss, contact solution, a contact case or a glasses case.
- 10) Are you planning to stay at a hotel in the near future? Take the personal sized soap or small shampoo, the plastic cup, or any other small sized freebie items left by the staff.
- 11) Check the community pages, bulletin boards and garage sales in your area for inexpensive items you can add.
- 12) Don't forget about personal documentation and money: have copies of your driver's license, social security card and birth certificate in your kit. If possible keep a little money (like \$5, \$10 or \$20 in small bills and some quarters (for the phone booth if your phone is out) on hand. Keep all personal information and money in a secure location at all times.
- 13) "Kids are people too". Kids will need toys, coloring books, and treats, which provide them a sense of normalcy and routine in a disaster. Check with your local fire department because they may have some cool story books, coloring books and calendars for free. Not only are they fun, but they also list great disaster preparedness tips.
- 14) Manuals that tell you how to survive in the woods are a great reference. Often they will tell you what you can and cannot eat right in your own yard. Now that's free!

## Travelers with Disabilities and Medical Conditions

*Courtesy of the Transportation Security Administration*



*One of the primary goals of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is to provide the highest level of security and customer service to all who pass through their screening checkpoints. Their current policies and procedures focus on ensuring that all passengers, regardless of their personal situations and needs, are treated equally and with the dignity, respect, and courtesy they deserve.*

Although every person and item must be screened before entering each secure boarding area, it is the manner in which the screening is conducted that is most important.

In order to achieve that goal, TSA has established a program for screening of persons with disabilities and their associated equipment, mobility aids, and devices. The program covers all categories of disabilities (mobility, hearing, visual, and hidden). As part of that program, TSA established a coalition of over 70 disability-related groups and organizations to help TSA understand the concerns of persons with disabilities and medical conditions. These groups have assisted TSA with integrating the unique needs of persons with disabilities into airport operations.

Since the initial total ban on liquids, gels and aerosols took effect on August 10, TSA learned enough from the UK investigation to say with confidence that small, travel size liquids are safe to bring through security checkpoints in limited numbers. TSA has confidence in their increased security measures throughout the airport. Therefore, passengers can purchase drinks in the secure boarding area and bring them aboard their flights.

TSA's checkpoint security screening procedures for persons with disabilities and medical conditions have not changed as a result of the current threat situation. All disability-related equipment, aids, and devices continue to be allowed through security checkpoints once cleared through screening.

Additionally, TSA is continuing to permit prescription liquid medications and other liquids needed by persons with disabilities and medical conditions. This includes:

- All prescription and over-the-counter medications (liquids, gels, and aerosols) including petroleum jelly, eye drops, and saline solution for medical purposes;
- Liquids including water, juice, or liquid nutrition or gels for passengers with a disability or medical condition;

- Life-support and life-sustaining liquids such as bone marrow, blood products, and transplant organs;
- Items used to augment the body for medical or cosmetic reasons such as mastectomy products, prosthetic breasts, bras or shells containing gels, saline solution, or other liquids; and,
- Frozen items are allowed as long as they are frozen solid when presented for screening. If frozen items are partially melted, slushy, or have any liquid at the bottom of the container, they must meet 3-1-1 requirements.

However, if the liquid medications are in volumes larger than 3.4 ounces (100ml) each, they may not be placed in the quart-size bag and must be declared to the Transportation Security Officer. A declaration can be made verbally, in writing, or by a person's companion, caregiver, interpreter, or family member.

Declared liquid medications and other liquids for disabilities and medical conditions must be kept separate from all other property submitted for x-ray screening.

For more information on these measures, please read the TSA letter outlining this policy -- [Changes in Allowances for Persons with Disabilities at Airport Security Checkpoints](#) (pdf, 101Kb)

## **Updates on Council Projects**

### **Discovering Personal Genius**

The purpose for this project is for an entity to work with 2 to 4 school districts across the state that have an active and stable Project SEARCH program and/or Supported Competitive Integrated Employment Training Team (SCIETT) in place to conduct Discovering Personal Genius (DPG) profiles on targeted High School students with developmental disabilities in secondary transition. The project provider will work with the school districts transition specialist to:

1. Identify & train pertinent school district staff on conducting the discovering personal genius (DPG) vocational profile;
2. Identify students who will be exiting the school system and seeking employment as a post school outcome, to conduct an evaluation;
3. Refer student with a completed profile to the Project SEARCH program and/or SCIETT team, Vocational Rehabilitation or Agency for Persons with Disabilities representative(s) for additional supports/services to secure employment;
4. Provide ongoing technical assistance and training.

### **Supported Employment for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities in Rural Communities**

This project is designed as a multi-year project to develop best practices for employment in rural communities. These best practices will include a description of the service delivery systems used, community characteristics and customer characteristics that these systems have been successful in facilitating for employment.

Employment options for people with developmental disabilities have increased over the last 20 years to the point where employment is an expected outcome and in many cases the primary option for individuals with DD. Roughly 40% of the nation's 3,700 supported employment vendors provide services in rural areas of the United States (RRTC/VCU, 1997; McGaughey, et al., 1994; DiLeo & Langton, 1996). These percentages hold true for Florida. Supported Employment, Customized Employment and entrepreneurial options are the primary service delivery systems in delivering these employment opportunities in rural areas.

## **Project SEARCH Status Report**

Currently there are eighteen (18) Project SEARCH sites up and running with two (2) others committed to start during the 2010/2011 school year. There are also several areas preparing to begin an adult model Project SEARCH. The original five pilot sites of: Miami, Hollywood, West Palm Beach, Jacksonville, and Pensacola are now entering their third year of operation and West Palm Beach, Miami and Pensacola have seen expansion beyond their original locations.

The second year pilot sites of Miami, Brevard, and Pensacola have successfully begun their new programs. The second year pilot site of Orlando delayed the start of their program until August 2010, but has now begun with three (3) locations. Most of these areas already have plans for expansion beyond their original FDDC funded locations. Although not recipients of the original RFP from the FDDC, both Tallahassee and Stuart have started Project SEARCH programs. Port Saint Lucie is also in the initial planning stages and securing all needed partners.

A component of the third year of the FDDC's involvement has been the implementation of the Adult Project SEARCH model. Technical assistance and facilitation have been given to areas already participating in the high school transition model. Almost every current Project SEARCH partnership has expressed interest in the adult component. Currently there are two (2) adult programs located in Brevard and Jacksonville. The Jacksonville program is actually a hybrid student/ adult program although they have had a pure adult model in the past. The Hudson group has also secured additional funding from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) to begin an adult model but this process has been delayed due to conflict with the APD contract and a lack of ability to find enough eligible candidates for the program. It is possible these issues will be resolved soon, adding the third adult program in Florida.

The focus of the third contract year has been to continue to provide technical assistance and support to all existing locations in order to assure their long term sustainability and fidelity to the Project SEARCH model. Training in job development, social security benefits and work incentives, and other related areas will be provided in order to ensure high job placement numbers.

For each project SEARCH site funding remains a prevalent issue. Even some of the original, more established sites are finding it difficult to cover the cost of program and continue to seek grant monies in order to offset some of the cost. It is evident the high placement rate is needed as well as a good working relationship with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD). The statewide coordinator has been working with both of these funding agencies in order to affect systems change with the goal of increasing funding for successful programs.

**The Following New Projects were Approved at the  
March 2011 Council Meeting**

- Approved \$150,000 from Child Development/Education Task Force for the Let's Get Everyone to Work-Videos project.
- Approved \$80,000 from Health Care/Prevention Task Force for Physician Training projects.
- Approved up to \$40,000 from Health Care/Prevention Task Force for "Coping with Stress- Related Stress – A Guide for You and Me."
- Approved \$55,000 from Health Care/Prevention Task Force for Community Wellness Needs Assessment project.
- Approved \$75,000 from Employment Task Force for Employ Me 1<sup>st</sup> Steering Initiative.
- Approved \$41,847 from Community Living & Service Coordination Task Force for the Waitlist Strategic Plan project.

**To learn more about the Council, including information on free publications,  
go to [www.fddc.org](http://www.fddc.org).**

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