



FLORIDA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL, INC.

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Continue to transition individuals off the iBudget waiver waitlist

The Council urges the Florida Legislature to continue their support of a meaningful long-term commitment to transition individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities off the waiver waitlist for Individual Budgeting/Home and Community Based Services.

The iBudget waiver is how Florida pays for community-based services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Advocates want to thank the legislature for funding services for those in Categories 3 (intensive needs), 4 (caregivers over age 70) and 5 (transition from school). However, there are approximately 20,000 individuals on the waitlist for iBudget waiver services primarily in the two remaining Categories 6 (age 21 and over) and 7 (age under 21), many of them have been waiting for more than 5 years. The problem of the iBudget waiver waitlist is a longstanding one and serving the number of people on this waitlist requires continued long-term support.

A lot has been done to help people on the waiting list, but many needs cannot be met without more funding to allow individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to receive the full range of services they need to be included into the community.

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are on the waitlist will continue to go without many critical services. Without services, these individuals could lose some of the abilities they have now or they could be institutionalized, which is more costly than providing home and community-based services.

Most Floridians with intellectual and developmental disabilities live at home with their families. But families of those on the waitlist struggle with heavy financial, physical and emotional burdens. These families often spend more than half of every dollar they earn to care for the needs of family members with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The legislature has done a good job of funding services for those in waitlist categories 3, 4, and 5, and some of the individuals in Category 6 (age 21 and over and further prioritization this year to those who have been on the list for over 10 years, have high needs and who are over 30). Continued waitlist funding is needed to provide waiver services to individuals with intensive needs, aging caregivers and for those who are transitioning to school who have come on to the waitlist and additional waitlist funding is also needed to address the needs of the 9,540 individuals who remain on the iBudget Waitlist Category 6. An example would be a 34-year-old man with intellectual and developmental disabilities who has completed high school and was not able to take advantage of the employment training initiatives that are available now for younger people. In addition, health benefits that were available when he was school age are not available to those over the age of 26 and he has mild physical challenges. This man wants to get a job and move out of his parents' home. The iBudget Waiver would give him a supported employment coach, a supported living coach to help him learn the skills he needs to live on his own and access to physical therapy to help him maintain the use of his legs.

Advocates are grateful that funding was allocated during the 2016 legislative session to take about 1500 individuals off the waitlist. The Council wants to maintain the positive waitlist reduction momentum from the past few years. Therefore, the Council requests funding to transition new individuals in categories 3, 4, and 5 and to start serving more individuals in Category 6.