



FLORIDA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL, INC.

124 Marriott Drive, Suite 203, Tallahassee, Florida 32301-2981

Phone (850) 488-4180 • Toll-Free (800) 580-7801

Fax (850) 922-6702 • TDD (850) 488-0956/(888) 488-8633

The Individual Budgeting/Home and Community Based Services Waiver – a lifeline for individuals with developmental disabilities to ensure health, safety and access to their communities

- **The Council urges the Florida Legislature to protect individuals with developmental disabilities and their families who receive the Individual Budgeting/Home and Community Based Services Waiver from any further service reductions.**
- **iBudget Florida needs sufficient time to be fully evaluated before other redesign options for the Individual Budgeting/Home and Community Based Services Waiver are considered. The iBudget is the best option to provide a managed care framework that can contain costs and provide a choice of services and providers.**
- **The Council urges the Florida Legislature to support a meaningful long-term commitment to eliminate the Individual Budgeting/Home and Community Based Services Waiver waitlist before 2020 or sooner and to appropriate funding for a substantial amount of individuals to come off the waiting list in 2014.**

The Individual Budgeting/Home and Community Based Services Waiver (the Waiver), administered by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) offers supports and services to assist individuals with developmental disabilities to live in their community. Services are provided based on individual service plans. The Waiver funds vital supported employment assistance, transportation, and personal care services that are necessary for individuals with developmental disabilities to have access to their community and a meaningful life. Examples of other Waiver services include speech, physical, occupational and behavioral therapies not provided by regular insurance or Medicaid. These services are essential for the 29,326 individuals on the Waiver and need to be protected. In addition, service providers must have adequate financial incentive to provide services in all areas of the state.

The iBudget is the system used by APD to develop service plans and funding allocation for each individual on the Individual Budgeting /Home and Community Based Services Waiver. The iBudget gives APD the mechanism to strengthen the fiscal and operational controls of the Waiver to ensure that spending is within the legislative appropriation. iBudget Florida gives APD customers more control and flexibility to choose services that are important to them. APD needs at least a year to fully evaluate the iBudget that was fully implemented in July, 2013. The iBudget provides a strong managed care framework that can be adjusted rather than abandoned to a managed care system of health maintenance organizations.

There are 22,432 individuals on the waitlist for Waiver services as of July 1, 2013. Funding was allocated during the 2013 legislative session to take 750 individuals off the waitlist for the first time in seven years. The problem of the Waiver waitlist is a longstanding one. Reducing the number of people on the waitlist will require long-term support for a comprehensive plan that includes a continued financial commitment. The legislature must be encouraged to provide an appropriation to further reduce the number of individuals on the waitlist. Other strategies such as increasing the availability of informal and volunteer services and promoting access to generic or shared services for individuals with developmental disabilities living in their communities can also address the waitlist to meet this growing unmet service need. The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council and many other organizations and families in the state are committed to this goal and are in the process of developing a strategic plan that can be used to partner with the Legislature to significantly reduce the number of people on the Waiver waitlist.