

ANNUAL REPORT

2025



Florida
Developmental
Disabilities
Council, Inc.



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Over the past 30 years the **Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. (FDDC)** has helped people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), their families, and support professionals throughout Florida. We work hard to improve laws, policies, and programs based on the needs identified in our 5-year state plan.

In the 2025 fiscal year, the FDDC made strong progress in Year 4 of its 5-year plan. The Council provided training, shared practical information, and advocated for systems change. This helped people with I/DD and their families live healthy, meaningful lives in their communities.

Please review our various initiatives and what we have accomplished as we create the road map for a better future for Florida's I/DD community through education, advocacy, and partnerships.



The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council worked on **five goals** in 2025:

- Access to Services
- Home- and Community-Based Delivery Systems
- Aging Caregivers
- Self-Advocacy Leadership
- Broad Systems Change/Emerging Issues

Through strategies such as outreach, training, technical assistance, interagency collaboration, barrier elimination, and policy advocacy, the Council worked to improve the lives of individuals with I/DD across Florida.



GOAL #1

Access to Services

One of the persistent challenges for individuals with I/DD and their families is locating reliable, clear, and timely information about available services. Families often struggle to navigate complex systems and may not know what resources exist at different life stages – from early childhood through adulthood and into the senior years.

To address this challenge, the Council continued building a Statewide Access to Services Information System, gathering information and developing tools to help families find and use resources across all life stages.



Key Achievements:

- Compiled key resources from all 15 Family Care Council geographic areas, building a comprehensive statewide directory.
- Created the structure for a web tool to help families and caregivers identify and access services with sitemaps for 9 areas. In addition, 27 content modules were developed to assist families in understanding and making the most of the services accessed.
- Supported education and advocacy efforts resulting in key legislative outcomes that will improve the lives of individuals with I/DD.

GOAL #2

Home- and Community-Based Services

Families of individuals with I/DD rely on a network of professionals — including direct support professionals (DSPs), behavior therapists, and case managers — to help their loved ones thrive at home and in the community. Shortages in this workforce, combined with inconsistencies in service quality, create significant gaps in essential care. Additionally, navigating case management systems can be difficult due to inconsistencies in service quality and availability.



Individuals with I/DD and co-occurring mental health conditions have particularly complex support needs that require coordinated responses across multiple systems.

To address these challenges, the Council conducted 6 activities to strengthen the home- and community-based services workforce, improve care quality, and expand support for individuals with dual diagnosis and/or challenging behaviors.

Key Achievements:

- Completed the Working with Case Managers Guide, and accompanying training videos to help individuals with I/DD and their families navigate case management more effectively.

GOAL

Home- and Community-Based Services

Key Achievements:

- Completed a DSP Workforce Roadmap outlining pathways for recruitment, retention, certification, and long-term wage strategies to build a sustainable DSP pipeline.
- Developed and released two instructional videos to accompany the Residential Tool to help individuals with I/DD and their family choose a place to live.
- Pilot tested quality-measurement tools for Adult Day Training and Employment Services.
- Developed, tested, and shared a 12-module competency-based curriculum for Board Certified Behavior Analysts and behavior therapists. Nine Florida universities integrated all or parts of the curriculum into their academic training programs.
- Offered the four-module Dual Diagnosis training series in virtual, asynchronous, and in-person formats throughout the year; completed a pilot framework for integrated service planning for individuals with complex support needs.
- Piloted first responder training with Law Enforcement Officers and Emergency Medical Service trainers and trainees.



GOAL #3

Aging Caregivers

As caregivers grow older, ensuring continuous and appropriate support for their family members with I/DD becomes an increasingly urgent concern. Many aging caregivers worry about who will provide care when they are no longer able to do so, and limited coordination between aging and developmental disability service networks has created additional barriers to accessing the supports families need.

To address these challenges, the Council focused on building cross-network collaboration, conducting research on aging caregiving families, and working to strengthen the policies and systems that serve them.

Key Achievements:

- Facilitated 36 virtual Communities of Practice meetings across 19 Florida counties, with 64 participants from 39 organizations representing both the aging and I/DD networks.
- Reported 103 service referrals in 2025, covering transportation, housing, respite, guardianship, congregate meals, health services, and support coordination.
- Completed the Strive to Thrive study –identifying what helps aging families thrive and the barriers they face.



GOAL #4

Self-Advocacy Leadership

Many individuals with I/DD face barriers to self-advocacy, including limited access to leadership development opportunities and systemic challenges in having their voices heard. Without strong self-advocacy skills and networks, individuals with I/DD and their families may struggle to participate meaningfully in the decisions that shape their lives.

The Council worked to expand self-advocacy networks and strengthen leadership programs to ensure that individuals with I/DD and their families have the skills, knowledge, and support needed to advocate effectively.



549

Individuals and family members trained in leadership



GOAL #4

Self-Advocacy Leadership

Key Achievements:

- Sustained Florida Self-Advocates Network'D (Florida SAND) with 247 members among 13 active groups and 20 advisors. Four groups were led by 9 self-advocates.
- A total of 171 self-advocates and 378 family members received leadership training.
- Self-Advocates from the Fellows Leadership Program provided leadership training to 61 self-advocates and 9 family members.
- Fifty-one self-advocates and 50 family members reported serving in active leadership roles in organizations across the state.
- Partners in Policymaking engaged 110 self-advocates, 369 family members, and 849 stakeholders in educational and training activities.
- Reached 1,652 people through Goal 4 activities, including self-advocates, family members, and stakeholders who participated in Florida SAND events, Zoom workshops, and training programs.



GOAL #5

Broad Systems Change/Emerging Issues

Systemic barriers continue to prevent individuals with I/DD from fully accessing transportation, postsecondary education, and employment opportunities. Without sustainable funding and strong interagency partnerships, the programs that support community inclusion can be difficult to maintain over the long term.

The Council worked on multiple fronts to sustain and expand programs across these areas, leveraging state and local funding to create lasting, long-term solutions that serve individuals with I/DD throughout Florida.

Key Achievements:

- Sustained the Treasure Coast Advantage Ride and Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) Mobility-on-Demand programs through Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged grant awards; Advantage Ride provided 60,836 trips, with 92% used for employment or job training purposes, and PSTA served 566 individuals with disabilities per day across seven counties.

4,669

Floridians that gained access to transportation, training, and inclusion opportunities

GOAL #5

Broad Systems Change/Emerging Issues

Key Achievements:

- The Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA) awarded \$19.4 million – including \$3.2 million in student scholarships and \$16.2 million in program grants – to students enrolled in 33 approved Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Training Programs.
- Two Florida Project SEARCH Adult Model programs were sustained post-Council funding; follow-up data showed 71–83% of program completers attained competitive, integrated employment.
- The Florida Housing Coalition utilized Council-developed resources in approximately 15 community engagement meetings and 100 Catalyst webinars, reaching hundreds of participants with information on affordable housing.



The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council's mission:

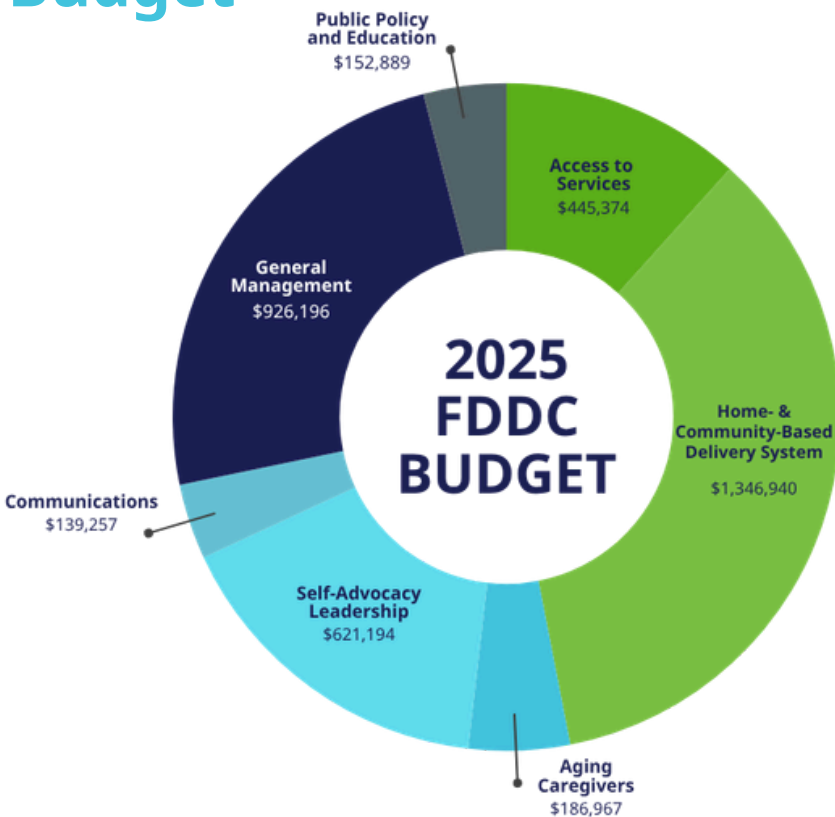
To advocate and promote meaningful participation in all aspects of life for Floridians with developmental disabilities.

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council's Purpose:

We affect policy and services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families and their supports through education, advocacy and partnerships.

Florida Developmental Disabilities Council

Budget



Florida
Developmental
Disabilities
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