



**5-Year State Plan Look Back**  
**Goals & Outcomes**  
**2017-2021**

**2017-2021  
Transportation Goal  
5-Year Overview/Outcome Analysis**

At the close of the 2017-2021 state plan, the Council achieved the intended outcomes of its 5-Year Transportation Goal – 1) developing and implementing a minimum of three sustainable transportation solutions for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD); and 2) executing a minimum of one infrastructure change, resulting in increased access to safe and affordable transportation for I/DD.

Transportation solutions implemented over the life of the state plan included the Hillsborough Area Transit Authority (HART) Transportation Voucher Pilot project, and the Treasure Coast and Pinellas Transportation Voucher Expansion projects. The Citizens for Improved Transit (CIT) project and Advantage Ride project were not found to be sustainable, and information is not yet available on sustainability of the 21 rural and urban Innovation and Service Development projects. The sustainable projects, offering on-demand and door-to-door services, had provided more than 232,813 unique trips at the culmination of the state plan. Treasure Coast, serving four Florida counties, was able to isolate trips provided for approximately 1700 unique individuals with I/DD.

Major legislative accomplishments that resulted in infrastructure changes included 1) authorization of certain Transportation Network Companies to provide Medicaid non-emergency transportation services to a Medicaid recipient as amended in Section 316.87, Florida Statutes (F.S.); 2) provisions requiring transportation network drivers and prospective drivers to undergo background screening pursuant to s. 435.03, F.S.; 3) appropriations, including recurring appropriations, for implementing Innovation and Service Development projects. \$31,250,000, including recurring appropriations, were leveraged to support innovative transportation projects, which should lead to increased safe and affordable transportation options.

Additionally, a member of Florida SAND, was appointed by the Governor to the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged.

Major activities that supported attainment of the goal included 1) completion of the Transportation Options Research Study; 2) completion of two Transportation Voucher Pilot projects – HART and CIT; 3) interagency collaborative efforts with state level transportation agencies and organizations and technical assistance and support associated with their efforts, including the Florida Transportation for the Disadvantaged Advantage Ride project and Innovation and Service Development projects implemented in 21 rural and urban counties in 2020; 4) collaborative educational awareness, advocacy, and communication activities (e.g., Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day) in conjunction with Florida SAND, and Partners in Policymaking graduates and alumni (e.g., at least 39 self-advocates and family members in 2018); 5) informing policymakers (e.g., at least 42 via DD Awareness Day 2018); and 6) expansion of the successful HART Transportation Voucher Model to three new initiatives representative of six Florida counties in 2021.

Performance measures used to demonstrate attainment of the targeted outcomes included statute and regulations created or changed (3); promising and best practices created and/or supported (5); Council efforts that led to the improvement of best or promising practices policies, procedures, statute or regulation changes (6); and Council efforts that were implemented (7) to transform fragmented approaches into a coordinated and effective system that assures individuals with I/DD and their families

participate in the design of and have access to needed community services across all activities. Additionally, 319 individuals received training through the Council's transportation voucher expansion efforts.

Significant outcomes are provided below.

- The Hillsborough Area Transit Authority (HART) HARTPlus Customer Choice Voucher Program, developed a successful urban model that provided 27,813 trips providing 24/7 access to transportation services for individuals with I/DD in Hillsborough County and improved their ability to secure employment, pursue postsecondary education or training, and access the greater community. Service availability grew from 0.75-mile trips to 7.6-mile trips at an affordable \$4.00 per trip rate. In 2020, it was learned that these efforts have been sustained long-term, and recent data reflect an average of 7,000 trips per month since the inception of the project which translates to approximately 84,000 trips per year for individuals with I/DD in Hillsborough County.
- Citizens for Improved Transit (CIT), the rural model of the Transportation Voucher Pilot program, provided an estimated total of 7,441 trips covering over 126,000 miles for approximately 300 unique individuals with I/DD. These services similarly improved community access. At the culmination of Council funding, Palm Beach and Highlands counties, covering a large geographic area with urban and rural communities, were the primary participants, accessing trips between 11-20 miles at a \$3.50 cost per voucher. The rural counties in the service area were successful in transitioning from commercial taxi trips to bus passes, and CIT expanded into providing mobility management for Palm Tran, the transit authority operating in the service area, who agreed to provide free monthly bus passes to all students with disabilities enrolled in exceptional student education, benefitting approximately 600 students. Palm Tran also developed a special travel training program for teachers.
- Three Transportation Voucher Expansion projects were supported in 2021, and two began implementation in five new counties, representative of two (2) diverse areas of the state. The Treasure Coast consortium, serving two urban and two rural counties; and the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) had provided on-demand, door-to-door transportation for a total of 37,000 total trips to approximately 1700 unique individuals at the close of this state plan. 283 participants surveyed (92%) in the Treasure Coast consortium project rated the services as 4 or greater on a 5-point scale. These projects already have sustainability plans in place.
- The Task Force on Transportation Disadvantaged Services, established in Florida's 2017 legislative session under Chapter 2017-71, Senate Bill No. 2502, Section 13, implementing Specific Appropriation 249 of the 2017-2018 General Appropriations Act, led to a study and recommendations on transportation services specific to persons with I/DD. The legislation named the Council as one of 10 required members. The Task Force was charged with developing a report to include findings and recommendations to be submitted to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 15, 2017. The Council's Executive Director served on the Task Force, staff presented findings from the Transportation Options Research Study, and the Council supported participation of a self-advocate who was appointed to the Task Force.
- The Council promoted, as part of its legislative platform, recommendations from the 2017 Transportation Disadvantaged Task Force report. Resulting in part from the ongoing educational efforts by the Council, self-advocates, and other stakeholders, the 2018 Legislative Session

culminated in two of the four recommendations from the Task Force being funded. \$250,000 was directed toward a study with recommendations to redesign the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) transportation model with the help of a transportation consultant and transitioning of APD toward a collaborative partnership with the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinated System and community transportation coordinators. \$500,000 was allocated through the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged for an innovative grant program specifically for individuals with I/DD for a pilot door-to-door, on-demand transportation program. This project, Advantage Ride, was funded at \$475,000 and made available in three urban counties. Council staff provided support for this initiative.

- The Council and Florida SAND continued to support increasing transportation options as part of their legislative platforms in 2019, resulting in significant positive outcomes from the 2019 Legislative Session. The pilot door-to-door, on-demand Advantage Ride program was extended for another 12 months via an allocation of \$500,000. The Commission reported in 2020 that the program served approximately 483 individuals and provided over 20,000 trips. \$10 million in funding was appropriated to the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund to conduct a competitive grant program. Additionally, CS/HB 411 was passed, authorizing certain Transportation Network Companies to provide Medicaid non-emergency transportation services to a Medicaid recipient as amended in Section 316.87, Florida Statutes. This bill also required transportation network drivers and prospective drivers to undergo background screening pursuant to s. 435.03, F.S.
- An individual with developmental disabilities, also a Florida SAND member, was appointed to the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged in September 2019.
- In 2020, \$10 million in recurring funding was secured that allocates funding to the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund to conduct a competitive grant program.
- The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged began implementation of the Innovation and Service Development projects through awards to 21 rural and urban counties in 2020. These new options were supported in the amount of \$4.5 million from the \$10 million recurring legislative appropriation.
- In 2021, the \$10 million recurring legislation appropriation remained in place. Innovation and Service Development project implementation results are expected early in 2022.
  - *We have recently learned that 18 projects representative of 27 rural and urban counties were funded in the amount of \$5.2 million in 2021.*
  - *Additionally, as part of the 2022 Legislative Session, the Florida Legislature authorized the use of up to \$4 million in Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund monies to administer the Innovative Service Development Grant Program. Project applications for 2022-23 are due May 13, 2022.*

**2017-2021  
Employment Goal  
5-Year Overview/Outcome Analysis**

At the close of the 2017-2021 state plan, the Council achieved the intended outcome of its 5-Year Employment Goal – Data from each of the nine signatory partner agencies/organizations to Florida’s Employment First efforts will reflect a 25% increase in the number of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities gaining employment at or above minimum wage over the established 2014 Employment First baseline data.

The percent above the 2014 baseline for Florida’s Employment First efforts was exceeded with the number of individuals with disabilities gaining employment at or above minimum wage by 48% over 2014 Employment First baseline data. Florida’s Employment First efforts included nine agency partners who reported data, and the number of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) who gained employment cannot be isolated. Other factors to consider include the following:

- Lag data is reported by many agencies and organizations. To calculate the percentage consistently among all partners, 2018-2019 data was the latest data used for reporting purposes.
- Several agencies made changes to their calculation methods and data systems during this state plan, which may also have impacted data presented.
- The Agency for Persons with Disabilities reported 8,960 individuals wanting employment who were not employed in the 2014 baseline data and reported 7,184 wanting employment who were not employed in the 2018-2019 data. This represents a decrease of 1,776 individuals wanting employment who were not employed.

Florida’s collaborative Employment First efforts were instrumental in attaining the desired outcome. While systems change impacts among each Employment First agency and organization partner that support Employment First are too numerous to list, several significant outcomes of their collaborative work include 1) a renewed five-year Employment First Interagency Cooperative Agreement among 11 agency and organization partners; 2) a shared data dashboard; and 3) an updated Employment First Communications Plan.

A total of \$4,550,000 in state appropriations was leveraged for the Employment Enhancement Program (EEP) over the life of this state plan. This funding has been appropriated in varying allocations to the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) to help individuals on the waiver waiting list obtain jobs and maintain employment. Another legislative accomplishment was creation of s.14.36, F.S., the Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act of 2021 that creates a system-wide approach to improving equity and access to workforce training and education for all Floridians with an increased focus on underserved populations. The REACH Act will integrate Florida’s various labor portals into one portal. Florida’s Abilities Work Portal, created in collaboration with the Employment First partners, will be included within the master portal.

By way of the EEP appropriation over the past 5 years, 458 individuals obtained employment and 1,188 maintained employment. Fifty-seven (57) individuals with significant disabilities obtained employment through the Rural Routes to Employment initiative. It is estimated that 175 students with I/DD are securing competitive employment annually after participating in the Project SEARCH youth model for a total of 825 over the life of this state plan.

Major activities that supported attainment of the goal and systems change outcomes included 1) technical assistance, training, and support through the Employ Me 1st/Employment First Florida initiative; 2) an Employment First Collaborative Training (EFCT) Toolkit grounded in competencies for employment specialists, scaling up six diverse sites in Florida to serve as a State-wide Customized Employment Technical Assistance Center, and ongoing technical assistance, training, and mentoring through the EFCT Initiative; 3) creation of a Florida Project SEARCH Adult Model; 4) translation of EFCT materials into Easy Read formats; 5) updates to the *Changing Face of Benefits* online course, workbook, and supplement. In the first year of the state plan, work was completed for additional efforts that led to the implementation of promising and best practices and resulted in systems change outcomes, including 1) the Rural Routes to Employment initiative, which culminated in a nationally available replication guide; 2) the Benefits Planning and Asset Development Initiative, which delivered train-the-trainer training; and 3) expansion of the Florida Project SEARCH youth model, which led to Florida having the greatest number of Project SEARCH sites in the nation.

Performance measures used to demonstrate progress and attainment of the targeted outcomes included policies and procedures created (70); statute and regulations created or changed (2); promising and best practice created and/or supported (73); Council efforts that led to the improvement of best or promising practices, policies, procedures, statute or regulation changes (113); and Council efforts that were implemented (87) to transform fragmented approaches into a coordinated and effective system that assures individuals with I/DD and their families participate in the design of and have access to needed community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community. 2,445 individuals were educated or trained through the Council's employment efforts.

Significant outcomes are provided below.

In 2017, \$750,000 was appropriated to the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) for the Employment Enhancement Program (EEP) and resulted in 131 individuals securing employment, 22 securing internships, and 288 individuals maintaining employment via ongoing support services. The Rural Routes to Employment initiative culminated with 10 sites representing 17 counties securing employment for 57 individuals with I/DD through the life of the five-year initiative. 78 stakeholders participated in training; 23 received the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) Community Employment Certificate. A system change outcome resulted in the ability of employment service professionals who attain an ACRE certificate to become certified VR Discovery providers. The Benefits Planning and Asset Development initiative updated the *Changing Face of Benefits* online course. 68 individuals completed the Train-the-Trainer course and 31 received a certificate of completion. A 6-month follow-up survey resulted in certified trainers reporting training an additional 221 individuals for a total of 454 trained as trainers. The Project SEARCH youth model was expanded to 15 new rural and urban sites. Expansion efforts led to Florida's implementation in 41 sites, with an annual average of 268 students completing Project SEARCH programs. This resulted in an employment rate of 78.8%.

In 2018, \$900,000 in funding was appropriated to APD for the EEP and resulted in 70 individuals securing employment, 10 securing internships, and 255 maintaining employment. The "Explore Work Curriculum" was developed via the Employ Me 1st initiative with self-advocates. The curriculum was featured in an article by Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) titled, "A Purpose in Life: Why Employment First

Matters to Self-Advocates” and is also posted on the Think Work website. One self-advocate advisor contributed to the document “Fast Facts about Employment for People with Disabilities in Florida, Working in the Community: Why it’s Important.” HB 1437, Ch. 2018-72, L.O.F., relating to “Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities,” passed and became effective July 1, 2018, requiring that participants in an adult or youth work experience under either the Florida Department of Education’s Division of Blind Services (DBS) or Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) be deemed employees of the state to obtain workers’ compensation. The Employment Options Informed Choice initiative trained 21 employment professionals in the Informed Choice Curriculum (ICC). 27 shadowing experiences were completed via 17 employers with 21 persons completing the program. The curriculum and train-the-trainer materials were shared with stakeholders (e.g., the Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, APD). The EFCT provided training, technical assistance, and mentoring to 60 people from 10 organizations.

In 2019, \$900,000 in funding was appropriated to APD for the EEP and resulted in 126 individuals securing employment and 11 internships, and 342 maintaining employment. The EFCT Initiative provided training and technical assistance to a total of 51 people.

In 2020, \$900,000 in funding was appropriated to APD for the EEP and resulted in 93 individuals securing employment, 11 internships, and 303 maintaining employment. The EFCT Initiative provided training, technical assistance, and mentoring to a total of 80 people.

In 2021, \$1,000,000 was appropriated to APD for the EEP, and outcome data will be reported in 2022. The EFCT Initiative provided training, technical assistance, and mentoring to a total of 33 people. Impact data will be available in 2022.

Feedback on employment initiatives:

- “The conversations in Florida have changed since the state began its Employment First efforts in 2011. The culture shift has been to move from focusing on individuals receiving services and focus on helping people receive the supports needed to be in the community.”
- "Thank you, FDDC, for supporting this training and this work. We are working collaboratively to create the pillars needed to support this work going forward. As we build the capacity through certification to do the work, VR is providing training and guidance to staff. The FDDC support has been tremendous, and we thank you."

**2017-2021**  
**Elementary through Postsecondary Transition Goal**  
**5-Year Overview/Outcome Analysis**

At the close of the 2017-2021 state plan, the Council achieved the intended outcomes of its 5-Year Elementary through Postsecondary Transition Goal by 1) achieving a minimum of four new improvements to transition services that assist students from elementary through post-school transition, resulting in meaningful post-school outcomes with adequate services and supports for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and 2) improving or developing two or more policies or practices to assist students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, elementary through post-school, in attaining meaningful post-school outcomes with adequate services and supports.

The most significant outcomes of the Council's work that led to attainment of the goal outcomes are described below.

**A minimum of four new improvements to transition services that assist students from elementary through post-school transition, resulting in meaningful post-school outcomes with adequate services and supports for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities included the following:**

- Approximately 23,200 copies of the updated First Steps Guide, which helps families better navigate the pre-kindergarten through postsecondary system and advocate for more inclusive and appropriate opportunities in education, including transition through all education levels, were widely disseminated.
- Collaboration with Project 10: Transition Education Network resulted in completion of two publications for students with disabilities and their family members: 1) a middle school transition trail map, and 2) an overview of career and technical education in middle and high school and postsecondary education.
- Collaboration with the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA), which was created by the Florida Legislature's ground-breaking legislation in 2016, has significantly expanded the number and type of postsecondary institutions offering postsecondary education for students with intellectual disabilities from two in 2017 to 19 in 2021. FCSUA provided funding in the amount of \$9,000,000 to seven career and technical colleges, six state colleges, and six universities to implement or continue inclusive postsecondary programs for 169 students with intellectual disabilities in 2021. These models help to fulfill the Council's desired outcome of state-wide expansion in diverse postsecondary program settings.
- The Council-initiated Florida College postsecondary model for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, Project ACHIEVE, continued to operate as a promising program with a 72% completion rate and has assisted other Florida Colleges considering start-ups of similar models.
- Project TOPS, established by the Council at the Robert Morgan Educational Center in Miami-Dade, was designed as a replication of Project ACHIEVE in a career and technical education (CTE) college. A Project TOPS Replication Guide was developed with Council support and Project TOPS staff provided technical assistance and site visits for other counties wishing to replicate their model. Project TOPS received approval by the FCSUA, as it meets the state requirements for a comprehensive inclusive program. Project TOPS secured a 2-year enhancement award in the

amount of \$300,000; received approval as a federal Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP) to enable students with intellectual disabilities to receive Pell and other federal scholarships; gained capacity to obtain state financial aid up to \$7,000 a year per student for a 5-year period; and secured an additional \$900,000 in funding in 2021. The program is now able to fully sustain its efforts. From 2015-16 through 2020-2021, Project TOPS enrolled 87 unduplicated students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in inclusive postsecondary CTE programs; 57 students earned at least one occupational completion point (OCP) in their career certificate program, mastering all competencies for a job; 42 students were full program completers, earning a career certificate, and 10 students remained in the program for another year; at least eight students who took industry certification exams passed them, earning industry certification.

- Sustainable research-based online training modules and supplemental resources were developed, piloted, and will soon be available state-wide on the FCSUA website for secondary and postsecondary educators. The FCSUA agreed to develop the platform and host the modules and related resources on their website and maintain them over time for long-term sustainability purposes. At least 593 people were educated or trained through the Postsecondary Models' speaker series, conference training, and webinars delivered in 2021. FCSUA has already posted recordings of the Speaker Series, a catalogue of the promising practice overviews, and other accompanying resources on their website.
- Sustainable research-based online training webinars and supplemental resources for secondary and postsecondary educators, and other stakeholders that address identified barriers and solutions for improving access to, and completion of, postsecondary education by individuals who identify as having Autism and as Hispanic or Latino were developed, piloted, and are now available on the University of Central Florida Center for Autism and Related Disabilities' (UCF CARD) website. New resources targeted directly to students and families and four new videos produced in 2021 are also available on the website. UCF CARD agreed to host the webinars and resources on their website and maintain them over time for long-term sustainability. At least 625 individuals were trained or educated through this initiative. In 2017-2018 the number of students identified as Hispanic/Latino ASD in the Florida College System (FCS) was 249. For 2018-2019, the number rose to 433, an increase of 198%.

**Two or more policies or practices improved or developed to assist students in attaining meaningful post-school outcomes with adequate services and supports included the following:**

- Florida career and technical centers/schools/colleges were deemed eligible in 2017 by the U. S. Department of Education for federal funding under the Higher Education Opportunity Act, providing access to the Florida Center for Unique Abilities' program and a growing number of programs. In 2021, FCSUA had awarded funding to seven career and technical colleges, six state colleges, and six universities to implement or continue inclusive postsecondary program for 169 students with intellectual disabilities. The federal eligibility determination contributed to establishing at least seven of the programs and may have also contributed to the six state colleges, as many state colleges in Florida offer career and technical education on their campuses.
- In 2021, House Bill 173, which was supported by the Council, was passed during the legislative session and resulted in the most substantive changes to secondary transition in more than 20 years through amendments to Section 1003.5716, Florida Statutes. Among the most significant changes were lowering the age for beginning certain transition services to age 12 or seventh

grade, whichever occurs first; and requiring new procedures for informing parents and students who meet the requirements for a standard high school diploma of the option to defer the receipt of the diploma.

Major activities that supported attainment of the goal and systems change outcomes included 1) collaboration on systems change and capacity building efforts with state agencies and organizations responsible for secondary transition and postsecondary education; 2) supporting Project TOPS; 3) completion of the online modules for secondary and postsecondary educators based on research findings and a strategic plan that addressed the identified barriers and resource needs for developing and enhancing multiple inclusive postsecondary program models through the Council's Postsecondary Models initiative; 4) completion of webinars, videos, and supplemental resources by the Improving Postsecondary Outcomes—Targeted Disparity initiative.

Performance measures used to demonstrate progress and attainment of the targeted outcomes included policies and/or procedures created or changed (7); statute and/or regulations created or changed (1); promising and best practice created and/or supported (14); Council efforts that led to the improvement of best or promising practices, policies, procedures, statute, or regulation changes (11); Council efforts that led to the implementation of policies, procedures, statute, or regulation changes (12). Additionally, 1,257 people were trained or educated through elementary through postsecondary transition initiatives.

Feedback on elementary through postsecondary transition initiatives:

- One parent's comment about her son enrolled in the Project TOPS Commercial Arts Program: "TOPS is wonderful. I never thought my son would study after high school. Getting him to finish high school was a big challenge for our whole family. He started the program with Mr. Martin slow and now is about to graduate. I know it took him longer than other students, but I don't care. I am so proud. He is doing it thanks to TOPS. Without TOPS, my son would not be finishing. Now all he talks about is getting a job and being professional. I hope TOPS continues forever."
- One Project TOPS student's comment after earning a career certificate in Commercial Art Technology in his inclusive career and technical education program: "I finished what I started and now I'm going to Miami-Dade College stronger and better prepared."
- Another Project TOPS student said that his experience working in the graphics department as an intern for another technical college had "prepared him for the real world."

**2017-2021**  
**Self-Advocacy Leadership Goal**  
**5-Year Overview/Outcome Analysis**

At the close of the 2017-2021 state plan, the Council achieved its 5-Year Self-Advocacy Leadership Goal – a minimum of 250 Floridians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and a minimum of 100 family members or allies who are not currently participating in leadership and advocacy will participate in leadership, advocacy and systems change activities in culturally diverse or cross-disability coalitions.

Major activities that supported attainment of the goal included 1) supporting the Florida SAND state-wide self-advocacy organization; 2) supporting Partners in Policymaking (PIP); 3) developing and supporting the Florida DD Network Collaborative Leadership Development Program in collaboration with The Mailman Center at the University of Miami, the Florida Center for Inclusive Communities at the University of South Florida, and Disability Rights Florida; 4) supporting Project VOTE, which later transitioned to Access the Vote, in collaboration with Disability Rights Florida; and 5) supporting the DD Waitlist Campaign in collaboration with the Florida Center for Inclusive Communities at the University of South Florida.

- 848 self-advocates and 240 family members were reported as participating in Council-supported activities under the Self-Advocacy Leadership Goal designed to increase their knowledge of how to take part in decisions that affect their lives, the lives of others, and/or systems.
- 380 self-advocates and 199 family members indicated that they were engaged in advocacy activities.
- 193 self-advocates and 148 family members indicated that they served on cross-disability coalitions, policy boards, advisory boards, governing bodies, and/or are serving in leadership positions.
- 235 self-advocates were reported as members in 19 Florida SAND groups involved at the local grassroots level with self-advocacy in 2020. Updated numbers be available in 2022.

Florida self-advocate leaders emerging from these initiatives were instrumental in the state and federal appropriation of funding in the amount \$2,474,255,124 reflected in the Transportation, Workforce, and Broad Systems Change goals, as well as attainment of the Working People with Disabilities Program described in the Self-Advocacy Systems Change goal.

Significant outcomes from each initiative are provided below.

**Florida SAND**

Florida SAND is an independent 501(c)(3). It supports its local groups to increase the members' capacity for self-advocacy. The Council supports Florida SAND as the state-wide self-advocacy organization. Florida SAND members continued to gain knowledge to increase their capacity for fundraising, membership recruitment, retention, outreach, and facilitating their operation as an independent organization; Florida SAND increased their level of independent responsibility for the communication hub showing increases across mediums; Florida SAND members obtained access to resources and supports to serve as trainers and mentors through the Fellows program; and Florida SAND strengthened existing local grassroots groups related to leadership, training, and mentoring skills. While the outcome for Florida SAND to become a fully functional, independent organization with mechanisms for long-term

sustainability was not fully achieved, strong progress was made on this outcome. The Fellows program has made progress with skilled leaders who have delivered regional training for self-advocates, and in 2021, provided training for 350 waiver support coordinators. Florida SAND has also held bi-annual conferences and grown the number of self-advocate presenters at the conference from 2 at the inception of this state plan to 15 self-advocate trainers during the 2021 conference.

- Florida SAND reported 235 self-advocate members in 19 groups involved at the local grassroots level with self-advocacy in 2020. Updated numbers will not be available again before 2022.
- A total of 559 self-advocates and 126 family members participated in Council supported activities designed to increase their knowledge of how to take part in decisions that affect their lives, the lives of others, and/or systems.
- Of the 559 self-advocates and 126 family members participating in Florida SAND activities, 356 self-advocates and 85 family members indicated that they were engaged in advocacy activities and 135 self-advocates, and 45 family members served on cross disability coalitions, policy and/or advisory board.
- 97% of self-advocates and 80% of family members expressed satisfaction with project activities.
- One data limitation which is important to note is that the data collected for Florida SAND indicated concerns regarding duplicity of participants attending more than one event. This issue will be reviewed and addressed in subsequent years to more accurately collect and report data.

### **Partners in Policymaking**

The Florida PIP classes are modeled after the Minnesota Partners in Policymaking program. A recent PIP training class agenda, which is covered by attending six 2-day sessions over a 6-month period, included the following content: 1) FDDC Information, History of Person First Language, History of Disability; 2) Inclusion in Schools, Inclusion Law; 3) Financial Matters, Marketing and Job Development, Employment Marketing; 4) Self-Determination and Person-Centered Planning; 5) Legislative Advocacy; and 6) Social Capital and Community Building, as well as Organizing for Change.

With the onset of COVID-19, PIP classes were shifted to a virtual forum through Zoom. While being fully virtual can present barriers to networking, there was a benefit noted. More public policymakers were able to join during the 2021 virtual training year, which allowed policymakers from across the state to be engaged with program participants during Session 5 which includes mock testimonies. One member of the U.S. Congress and many state legislators joined.

PIP graduates are among the top systems change leaders in Florida at the local and state level.

- A total of 114 family members and 18 self-advocates graduated from Partners in Policymaking (PIP) classes over this state plan.
- Of the 114 family members and 18 self-advocates completing PIP classes, 114 family members and 18 self-advocates indicated that they were engaged in advocacy activities and 103 family members and 15 self-advocates indicated they served on cross-disability coalitions, policy and advisory boards, governing bodies, and/or are serving in leadership positions.
- 100% of family members and 100% of self-advocates expressed satisfaction with project activities.

## **Florida DD Network Collaborative Leadership Development Program**

Florida's DD Network Partners have provided self-advocate and mid-career institutional leaders with experiences in developing state-wide systems change activities and provided opportunities for these leaders to present their recommendations to key stakeholders. The cadre members presented a mini-conference on employment in 2020 to 160 diverse stakeholders. In 2021, they presented to 137 people as part of the Florida Center for Inclusive Communities (FCIC) webinar series. They worked as a full team to develop a study, survey, and presentation with recommendations to improve employment opportunities for Floridians with I/DD who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, in 2021, the cadre members' White Paper on employment was finalized and steps were taken to put their recommendations into practice. These outcomes will support their continued engagement and impact within the Florida DD System as experts in employment for people with disabilities.

- A total of 6 self-advocates participated in the Florida DD Network Collaborative Leadership Development Program over the life of this state plan. Of the 6 self-advocates participating in the program, 6 indicated that they were engaged in advocacy activities and 5 indicated that they served on cross disability coalitions, policy and advisory boards, governing bodies, and/or are serving in leadership positions.
- 100% expressed satisfaction with project activities.

## **Project VOTE and Access the Vote**

Project VOTE became a robust collaboration over the past 5 years with Florida's protection and advocacy network, Disability Rights Florida (DRF), as well as many self-advocates, and Supervisors of Elections. This effort has been successful in training self-advocates and developing trainers in voting laws and voting processes in Florida. Long term partnerships and systems were formed between Disability Rights Florida and self-advocacy groups. The new Access the Vote website gave individuals with I/DD a tool to learn about voting that was particularly helpful during the pandemic. Self-advocate trainers, many who are members of Florida SAND, stand ready to continue serving as co-trainers.

- 38 voting trainers were trained and engaged in training 227 self-advocates who gained voter expertise and the potential to be co-trainers for future trainings.

## **Florida's DD Waitlist Campaign**

Florida's DD Waitlist Campaign began as a collaborative between the Council and the Florida Center for Inclusive Communities (FCIC) at the University of South Florida with the onset of this state plan. FCIC led the way in developing a website that remains widely used today. During the first year of work, two collaborative briefs were developed and posted on the website. In 2021, a new, collaborative policy brief, End the Wait, was developed and posted on the website. The website has been updated monthly with information on the number of Floridians on the DD Waitlist since the inception of this state plan, and reflected 22,759 as of January 2022.

- Florida's DD Waitlist Campaign, in conjunction with other activities related to the waitlist reported in the Broad Systems Change Goal, and with support from self-advocates, family members, and other collaborators is resulting in additional state and federal appropriations to bring people with I/DD off the waitlist.

**2017-2021**  
**Self-Advocacy Systems Change Goal**  
**5-Year Overview/Outcome Analysis**

At the close of the 2017-2021 state plan, the Council had achieved the intended outcomes of its 5-Year Self-Advocacy Systems Change Goal of securing at least one systemic change to federal and/or state statutes, rules, policies, or procedures designed to mitigate the income limits imposed on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in federal and state programs and restore their ability to independently control their income.

It is important to note that inclusion of this goal in the 2017-2021 state plan was heavily driven by self-advocates, and self-advocates were at the helm of moving the needle that led to the attainment of this goal with Council support.

Florida legislative outcomes and federal approval of the Working People with Disabilities Program increase the monthly income limit up to 550 percent of the Federal Benefit Rate for individuals with earned income through paid employment. Cash assets can be up to the amount of \$13,000 for a single individual and \$24,000 for a couple. In addition, the program allows participants to have a retirement account recognized by the Internal Revenue Service. Approximately 13,397 people enrolled in home- and community-based services waivers, including approximately 2,200 people who are currently employed and receiving services through the 1915(c) Developmental Disabilities Individual Budgeting Waiver and approximately 11,197 people who are estimated to have a disability who are receiving services through the 1915(b)/(c) Long-Term Care Waiver, stand to benefit from the Working People with Disabilities Program that became effective July 1, 2020.

Major activities that supported attainment of the goal included 1) completion of the Waiver Eligibility Income Limits Study in 2017; 2) educational awareness, advocacy, and communication efforts in 2017, 2018, and 2019, including the Council's 2018 and 2019 legislative platforms, "Working People with Disabilities Program," which educated and informed key stakeholders and at least 40 policymakers on the issues related to employment and critical health care needs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD); and 3) collaborative educational awareness, advocacy, and communication efforts with Partners in Policymaking and Florida SAND, who had approximately 113 members engaged in advocacy efforts.

Performance measures used to demonstrate progress and attainment of the targeted outcomes included statute and regulations created or changed (3); promising and best practices created and/or supported (4); Council efforts that led to the improvement of best or promising practices, policies, procedures, statute or regulation changes (3); Council efforts that were implemented (2) to transform fragmented approaches into a coordinated and effective system that assures individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of and have access to needed community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of the community. Additionally, at least 40 policymakers were educated through Developmental Disabilities (DD) Awareness Day activities on the issues imposed on people with I/DD regarding income limits.

Significant outcomes are provided below.

In 2018, the legislature directed the Agency for Health Care Administration (ACHA) to develop a report on the estimated costs and status of obtaining a federal waiver, state plan amendment, or other required federal authorization.

In 2019, the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) was legislatively directed “to seek federal approval for a federal waiver, a state plan amendment or other federal authorization to provide a program called Working People with Disabilities, for adults with developmental disabilities who receive services under Florida’s Medicaid Waiver programs. The agency shall request an increase to the monthly income limit up to 550 percent of the Federal Benefit Rate for individuals with earned income through paid employment. Cash assets can be up to the amount of \$13,000 for a single individual and \$24,000 for a couple. In addition, the program allows participants to have a retirement account recognized by the Internal Revenue Service. The agency is authorized to implement the program upon Federal approval and shall provide a report by June 30, 2020, of the number of participants in the program to the Executive Office of the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.”

In April 2020, federal approval was received, and the Council subsequently kept the pulse on steps toward full implementation.

On July 1, 2020, the Agency for Health Care Administration reported to the legislature, as was required, that the “Working People with Disabilities Program” was ready to begin outreach efforts. The program is being implemented consistent with the 2019 Agency for Health Care Administration Proviso under Florida’s Medicaid Waiver programs.

In 2020, the Council worked with the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ADP) to develop plain language outreach materials and has informally evaluated the impact on individuals with developmental disabilities as they attempt to access the program. At the close of 2020, 2,888 stakeholders received the Frequently Asked Questions and Informational Infographic documents developed for outreach purposes directly through the Council’s dissemination efforts. The Council stands ready to continue educational outreach efforts to further assist in bringing this program to full-scale implementation across Florida.

In 2021, the two plain language documents developed collaboratively in 2020 to explain the Working People with Disabilities Program to individuals with disabilities and their families and disseminated by the Council were added to the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration’s website. While impact data is not yet available, we know that the Working People with Disabilities Program has the potential to impact approximately 13,397 people enrolled in home- and community-based services waivers. This includes approximately 2,200 people who are currently employed and receiving services through the 1915(c) Developmental Disabilities Individual Budgeting Waiver and approximately 11,197 people who are estimated to have a disability who are receiving services through the 1915(b)/(c) Long-Term Care Waiver.

The Council will continue to assess ease of access and implementation of the program to further evaluate the impact on individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Florida.

**2017-2021  
Housing Goal  
5-Year Overview/Outcome Analysis**

At the close of the 2017-2021 state plan, the Council had not fully achieved the intended outcome of its 5-Year Housing Goal to attain a minimum of one systemic change to statutes, rules, policies, or procedures designed to improve choice and provide for financial support for safe, affordable, and inclusive housing with access to support services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Council was unable to begin work on addressing this goal until 2018. Planned activities were making good progress until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted the schedule of planned Consolidated Plan meetings at the local level. Many counties who had Consolidated Plan meetings scheduled either cancelled their meetings or pushed them out to future years. In some cases, meetings were held remotely. Participants in the 2020 training developed and delivered workshops to provide knowledge on Consolidated Planning processes and empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, families, and other stakeholders to engage in Consolidated Planning processes and created action plans for participating in meetings and advocating for community housing. Few reported progress, but we were encouraged that some activities were undertaken (e.g., attended a Consolidated Plan public hearing or community meeting, coordinated with advocates/service providers during the Consolidated Plan process, participated in local housing forums or regional summits, and participated in a virtual community meeting). Additionally, new policies and procedures were created as templates for local government entities to improve upon and/or implement in their communities with the 2021 training, but follow-up has not yet occurred, and we do not know if these policies and/or procedures are being implemented. A total of 51 local government employees with responsibility for Consolidated Planning participated in the Framework for Effectively Engaging Individuals with Disabilities training, which holds promise that based on their interest, they will improve and implement changes to their policies and procedures. These activities will be continued into early 2022 and monitored for progress thereafter. Legislatively, \$250 million in CARES Act funding for rental and mortgage assistance was allocated to affordable housing programs in 2020.

Major activities that supported the goal included 1) development of the Community-Based Planning Guide; 2) development of the Community Engagement Plan; 3) developing and delivering training in how to engage effectively in local planning processes surrounding HUD funds and advocate for long-term policy change statewide; 4) developing the Framework for Effectively Engaging Individuals with Disabilities; 5) developing and delivering training of government entities on the Framework for Effectively Engaging Individuals with Disabilities.

Performance measures used to demonstrate progress and attainment of the targeted outcomes included policies and/or procedures created or changed (15); promising and best practice created and/or supported (15). Additionally, 147 people were trained or educated, representing 96 people with the desire to participate in Consolidated Plan meeting and advocate for long-term systems change, and 51 people representing local government entities.

Significant outcomes are provided below.

During 2018, the Council established and convened a state-wide stakeholder work group and developed a "Community Based Planning Guide." The stakeholder work group reviewed and provided input during

development of the guide, and their input led to the expansion of recommendations from that publication which resulted in development of a “Community Engagement Plan” in 2019.

Produced in 2019, the “Community Engagement Plan” detailed the most effective means for individuals, families, and advocates to become active in housing policy discussions and decision-making to ensure that funding for safe, affordable, and inclusive housing for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities is prioritized in the Consolidated Plan. The effort contributed to the knowledge base on how to impact funding decisions and become involved in planning processes which ultimately determine local government investment in housing.

Additionally, in 2019, the state-wide stakeholder work group produced strategies that served as the foundation for training to promote understanding of key housing planning processes and coordination at the local level to create change. Insight from the group members, several of whom provide supportive housing services or have an instrumental role in their local government’s Consolidated Plan, including family members, provided perspective on the type of support communities need to successfully establish a voice in housing planning matters.

In 2020, training was developed and delivered to provide individuals, families, and other stakeholders with the tools, detailed information, and specific points of entry into housing programs, state initiatives, and their related planning processes. A total of 65 individuals including individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their family members, and other stakeholders completed training representative of three (3) cities and three (3) counties among at least three (3) different geographical areas of the state. Participants indicated an increase in their knowledge of how to engage effectively in local planning processes surrounding HUD funds and advocate for long-term policy change state-wide.

Additionally, in 2020, \$250 million in CARES Act funding for rental and mortgage assistance was allocated to affordable housing programs. These funds enabled housing program administrators to activate their disaster strategies with guidance from the Florida Housing Finance Corporation and assistance from the Florida Housing Coalition, helping local communities to respond to housing emergencies in terms of keeping families out of homelessness by staying in their rental housing and in their homes.

In 2021, a new resource, the Framework for Effectively Engaging Individuals with Disabilities in the Consolidated Planning process, was completed and virtual training was held. The purpose of the training was to improve the knowledge base of local government entities charged with implementing the Consolidated Planning process. Fifty-one local government staff representing 30 entitlement communities and 20 counties across the state, along with 24 additional stakeholders, participated in the training. Pre- and post-surveys indicated an increase in the participants’ knowledge of how to engage individuals with disabilities, families, and stakeholders effectively in local planning processes surrounding HUD funds; and advocate for long-term policy change state-wide. This resource and knowledge gained by the training participants will provide greater understanding of the needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and how to assure they are included in all aspects of the Consolidated Planning process.

Additionally, in 2021, the core team of state-wide stakeholders representative of three cities and three counties in three different geographic areas of the state, who were trained in 2020 and committed to actively participating in the Consolidated Plan process, initiated implementation of their action plans for impacting housing and funding at the local and state levels. While we received limited feedback and progress reported on implementation of action plans due to COVID-19, we were encouraged that some stakeholders attended a Consolidated Plan public hearing or community meeting, coordinated with advocates/service providers during the Consolidated Plan process, participated in local housing forums or regional summits, and participated in a virtual community meeting held for the Consolidated Plan. Responses obtained from the individuals who took known action on their plans in 2021 indicated the resources that helped them achieve their goals included: access to notifications, a directory of disability organizations, having contact information, access to a telephone and mobile smart phone, and access to a computer. These strategies, among others, were further developed into procedures that can be used by local government entities to improve their current procedures.

**2017-2021  
Workforce Goal  
5-Year Overview/Outcome Analysis**

At the close of the 2017-2021 state plan, the Council achieved the intended outcome of its 5-Year Workforce Goal in making one or more improvements to practices, services, and compensation for community-based service providers to ensure that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities have access to, and receive services and supports from, a sustainable, qualified provider base.

Florida Direct Support Professional Core Competencies, a new competency-based curriculum delivered through online training modules for Direct Support Providers (DSPs), and a Recruitment and Retention Best Practices Guide are now available and represent improvement to practices that should result in improved services. Legislative outcomes over the life of this state plan that impact compensation resulted in the leveraging of \$907,905,870 that will impact Direct Support Provider rate increases in various capacities.

Major activities that supported the goal included 1) conducting a research study and supporting a stakeholder workgroup to review state and national practices for developing Direct Support Professional core competencies and training materials; 2) developing Florida Direct Support Professional Core Competencies; 3) developing the Florida Workforce Collaborative Training Initiative competency-based curriculum (i.e., online training modules); 4) developing a Recruitment and Retention Best Practices Guide; 5) piloting the competency-based curriculum with 40 participants; 6) engaging in educational awareness, advocacy, and communication efforts, including Developmental Disabilities (DD) Awareness Day, collaboration with Florida SAND and Partners in Policymaking on Florida's Pay Fair for Care efforts, and collaboration with key stakeholders (e.g., the Arc of Florida, the Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities).

Performance measures used to demonstrate progress and attainment of the targeted outcomes included policies and/or procedures created or changed (1); statute and/or regulations created or changed (2); promising and best practice created and/or supported (17); Council efforts that led to the improvement of best or promising practices, policies, procedures, statute, or regulation changes (4); Council efforts that led to the implementation of policies, procedures, statute, or regulation changes (8). Additionally, 192 people were trained or educated representative of 152 through DD Awareness Day and Pay Fair for Care educational activities and 40 participants in the Workforce Collaborative Training Initiative competency-based curriculum.

Significant outcomes are provided below.

Promising and best practices that should improve services included the following:

Through research of national and Florida practices, along with reviews and input from a stakeholder workgroup that included two family members and one individual with I/DD who are also Council members, the Florida Direct Support Professional Core Competencies were developed in 2019. Evidence-based and best practice training materials that aligned with the competencies were subsequently identified and a Recruitment and Retention Best Practices Guide was developed.

At the culmination of this state plan, over a 4-year period and with tremendous involvement of the stakeholder workgroup, a competency-based training program for Direct Support Providers (DSP) was developed and piloted with the DSPs, their supervisors, and support coordinators. The curriculum included 56 hours of didactic training and 24 hours of job shadowing with most modules accredited by the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP), and six modules developed specifically for Florida based on identified gaps. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) participated in the development, implementation, and piloting of the curriculum and is currently reviewing options for a DSP training overhaul that includes this model. They also agreed to consider allowing the DSPs and support coordinators who completed the training pilot to receive 10 continuing education credits to meet their annual in-service requirements. While this work will not be continued beyond 2021, the Council intends to pursue the adoption of this curriculum in Florida by the APD through their TRAIN Florida portal. This portal provides a comprehensive catalog of public training opportunities to professionals who serve the citizens of Florida at no cost. A well-trained, stable workforce will improve the care of this vulnerable population.

Legislative outcomes that improved compensation for community-based service providers and should improve services included the following:

- In 2017, the collaborative Pay Fair for Care Campaign, the Council's legislative platform and advocacy efforts, resulted in the Florida Legislature and Governor approving \$15.7 million for Department of Labor hourly wage adjustments and provider rate increases. Of the total \$15.7 million allocation, **\$4.4 million** was directed to personal supports, residential habilitation, adult day training and supported employment rate increases. The 2017 allocation was approved to be implemented as non-recurring funding.
- In 2018, continued educational and advocacy efforts, resulted in the 2017 allocation becoming a line item part of the base budget, ensuring recurring funding.
- In 2019, the Florida Legislature and Governor approved additional funding for a rate increase for providers of Residential Habilitation, which is direct support provided in a licensed group home. The appropriation was **\$11,108,623** from the state General Revenue Fund and **\$17,610,671** of the Operations and Maintenance Trust Fund. While a rate increase for the categories identified by the workgroup was not approved, stakeholders were encouraged that a rate increase for another Waiver service that provides direct support was approved.
- In 2020, the Florida Legislature approved additional funding for a rate increase for providers of Adult Day Training, Personal Supports (direct support provided in an individual's home), and Residential Habilitation (direct support provided in a licensed group home). The appropriation was \$40.6 million of the state budget. While the rate increases for direct and community-based service providers were ultimately vetoed, stakeholders were encouraged that rate increases for Waiver service providers were included and supported by policymakers and lawmakers indicated that these increases could be restored in the next fiscal year. Also, in 2020, the Florida Legislature reimbursed the Agency for Persons with Disabilities' deficit (accumulated over 2 years) with an appropriation of **\$241 million**.
- In 2021, the Council successfully advocated for Federal Rescue Act dollars to be pursued for home- and community-based services that would otherwise have been left on the table. Conditional federal approval for Florida's spending plan of more than \$1.1 billion was received on September 28, 2021. Within the \$1.1 billion, the submitted plan provides for funding that supports Florida's workforce crisis as follows: **\$356,426,996** to offer a one-time stipend to HCBS

waiver providers to support program activities; **\$266,604,000** to offer one-time direct payments to all HCBS waiver providers for capacity building and workforce retention/development; and **\$10,755,580** to increase provider rates to assist eligible children with medically complex conditions to receive continual medical care.

Feedback from the stakeholder workgroup on the Workforce Collaborative Training Initiative's competency-based curriculum training package for Direct Service Providers:

Nine of nine respondents rated the training package at the highest level of satisfaction.

One stakeholder workgroup participant added the following: "The training package is Great! Well thought out and able to follow."

**2017-2021**  
**Broad Systems Change Goal**  
**5-Year Overview/Outcome Analysis**

At the end of the 2017-2021 state plan, the Council met the 5-Year Broad Systems Change Goal of achieving a minimum of six systemic changes to statutes, rules, policies, or procedures at the state, regional or local levels designed to improve community inclusion for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and the outcome of addressing one or more emerging issues or emergencies in a timely manner through Council activities.

This goal allowed the Council to address objectives and complete initiatives from the 2011-16 State Plan that needed additional time to be achieved and provided a mechanism for addressing emerging issues. For continuity, Council efforts completed under this goal have been reported on under the appropriate goals (i.e., transportation, employment, education, and self-advocacy leadership). Other major efforts implemented under this goal that led to attainment of the Broad Systems Change goal are reflected below.

As a direct outcome of the Council's work, \$1,535,099,254 in state and federal dollars were secured that will improve community inclusion for individuals with I/DD as follows:

- \$3.4 million in general revenue funds with 60% federal match to remove 350 individuals from the waitlist was secured in 2017.
- \$1,808,957 in recurring funds for the Help Me Grow base budget was secured in 2017.
- \$5 million in unspent federal funding was added to the budget and used by Part C for children's services and technological enhancements in 2017.
- \$241 million was appropriated to the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) to fill the 3-year hole left by no increases to address the changing needs of individuals served on the waiver in 2020.
- \$30,223,451 was appropriated to APD to bring people off the iBudget Waitlist in 2020.
- \$58 million was kept in the APD budget to serve individuals whose needs changed significantly over the year in 2020.
- \$95,666,846 million was secured in 2021 to bring people off the iBudget Waitlist.
- \$1.1 million in Federal Rescue Act dollars were pursued and conditionally approved for home- and community-based services in 2021.

Major activities that supported attainment of the goal included 1) completion of activities from the 2011-2016 State Plan; 2) outreach, coalition development, and citizen participation; informing policymakers; and related communication, education, and advocacy via the emergency "Save the iBudget" efforts; and pursuit of the Federal Cares Act funding.

Performance measures included statute and regulations created or changed (5); promising and best practices created and/or supported (7); Council efforts that led to the improvement of best or promising practices, policies, procedures, statute or regulation changes (16); and Council efforts that were implemented (21) to transform fragmented approaches into a coordinated system that assures individuals with I/DD and their families participate in the design of and have access to needed community services across all activities. Additionally, 2,658 individuals were educated or trained through the Council's Broad Systems Change efforts.

Significant outcomes are provided below.

- The Council's Waitlist Task Force and subsequent legislative advocacy contributed to the allocation of \$3.4 million in general revenue funds with 60% federal match to remove 350 individuals from the Waitlist. Additionally, the Councils' Waitlist Task Force contributed to the policy change of automation of the APD Annual Status Review letter that allows people on the Waitlist to notify APD if they have had a change in status.
- The Council's Abuse and Neglect Stakeholders Work Group secured changes to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Basic Training curriculum and approximately 422 new law enforcement recruits were trained in 2017.
- The Gainesville Health and Fitness (GHF) Center expanded its FIT for ALL program for adults with I/DD to include 17 underserved participants on the waiver waitlist. 100% of participants were satisfied with the program. The Community Health and Wellness program implemented in Gainesville represents a fully inclusive fitness program within a local gym. The program has been sustained and expanded over time and has been featured in local media.
- The Improved Coordination of Medicaid State Plan and Community-Based Services initiative developed fact sheets on "Making the Most of Your Florida Medicaid and iBudget Services." Through this collaborative initiative, the APD and the Agency for Health Care Administration were informed of areas where the coordination of services was unclear or needed to be clarified. Self-advocates who shared their personal experiences with accessing services and equipment really brought to light the lack of coordination between agencies and sources of payment. The Coverage Policy for Consumable Medical Supplies was improved as a result of this Council initiative.
- Three emerging issues were addressed within this goal in 2017, and as a result, 1) the recurring Help Me Grow base budget of \$1,808,957 was secured; \$5 million in unspent federal funding was added to the budget and used by Early Steps for children's services and technological enhancements; and 3) education on restraint and seclusion led to legislation proposed in the House and Senate with improved language in proposed HB 63 filed for 2018.
- In 2019, following notice of an Implementing Bill passed during Florida's 2019 Legislative session requiring a re-design report for the APD and the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), great concern was expressed by the community of individuals with I/DD who access home- and community-based services through Florida's iBudget. With growing concerns on the potential of having the program moved under commercial managed care, reduction of services, and ongoing budget deficits, the Council began efforts that would lead to some of the most significant outcomes of this state plan. To address the concerns of individuals with I/DD and their family members, the Council engaged in an intensive advocacy and communication effort to ensure all stakeholders were fully informed, sending broad notification to its 3,000 plus email contact list via various sources to inform stakeholders of a public input session. This brought in over 900 participants by phone and over 150 people in attendance at the state Capitol to provide 4 hours of input. A group of Council leaders met after the public meeting to decide on an effective approach to receive input specific to iBudget services and their importance. A small workgroup developed a 13 question survey to send to self-advocates and parents/guardians of self-advocates currently receiving services through the iBudget waiver. After vetting, the Council created and engaged in a 30-day outreach effort. One thousand nine-hundred and nine (1,909) unique individuals completed the survey, with 88% of respondents identifying as parents/guardians and 11% identifying as self-advocates. The majority 1) lived in their family home, 2) received their services through the iBudget waiver, 3) received or requested personal supports (i.e., personal care assistance, companion, and respite care), and 4) identified personal

care assistance, companion, adult day training and transportation as their top four most critical services in that order. Seventy-nine percent of respondents lived in their family home or own home, and of those, 32% were over the age of 60.

The data collected was used to build the 2020 legislative priority/focus. The Council launched a state-wide awareness effort called “Save the iBudget Waiver” and accompanying website with materials and social media opportunities to be used by self-advocates, family members, and caregivers state-wide before and during the 2020 Florida Legislative session. With personal care assistance emerging as the top priority, a self-advocate, who worked as a legislative aide, offered to make a video of her life in a day—the hallmark of the awareness effort.

As a result of the Council’s “Save the iBudget” outreach initiative in 2020, Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day, and subsequent legislative support, APD received \$241 million to fill the 3-year hole left by no increases to address the changing needs of individuals served on the waiver, received funding in the amount of \$30,223,451 to bring people off the iBudget Waitlist, and \$58 million was kept intact to serve individuals whose needs changed significantly over the year. Moreover, APD remained the state agency tasked with serving the needs of Floridians with developmental disabilities.

In 2021, as a result of the Council’s “Preserve the iBudget” efforts, Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day, and subsequent legislative support, APD received \$95 million to bring people off the iBudget Waitlist. Additionally, both the iBudget and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities were preserved in 2021. There was no attempt to move the iBudget waiver services into for-profit managed care.

Also in 2021, the Council successfully advocated for Federal Rescue Act dollars to be pursued for home- and community-based services that would otherwise have been left on the table. In July 2021, the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration submitted the Home- and Community-Based Services Spending Plan and Narrative, American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Section 9817, requesting an additional \$1.1 billion in federal Medicaid dollars over the next 2 years to bolster access to home- and community-based programs. The proposal directs \$191 million to serve more individuals under the iBudget Waiver. Florida received conditional approval on September 28, 2021. The submitted plan and conditional approval letter can be found on the AHCA website via the following links: [SKM\\_C300i21071215270 \(myflorida.com\)](https://myflorida.com/skm/C300i21071215270); [FL\\_Conditional\\_Approval\\_9\\_27.pdf \(myflorida.com\)](https://myflorida.com/fl/conditional-approval-9-27.pdf).