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Dade and Monroe counties



Annual Report 2014

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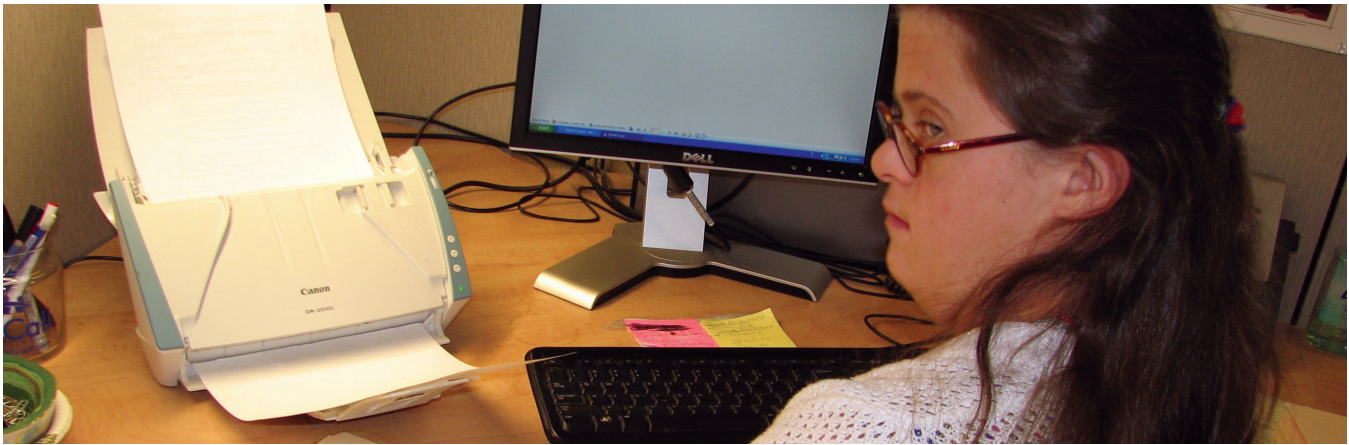
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Kelsey Adams

Sailing Toward Success

JACKSONVILLE, FL—International maritime equipment provider W & O Supply wanted its Jacksonville office to reduce the amount of paper being stored for its transactions. The maritime company has been in business for more than 30 years with offices all over the globe.

W & O Supply hired Kelsey Adams two years ago to work in the Human Resources office; however, with her great organizational skills, she was soon snatched up by the Accounts Receivable office to help the other workers meet their paperless effort. Credit and Collections Director Brenda Britt said, “Kelsey is a great part of our team. Her duties are essential to help keep everything moving quickly and efficiently. She has helped us become paperless much faster than we would have without her help!”

Adams has Down syndrome and receives services from Florida’s Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD). Adams’ job duties include checking email, delivering invoices and checks, scanning documents, and shredding unneeded paper. She works five days a week and has become a valuable asset to W & O Supply.

Britt said, “Kelsey always comes in with a great attitude. Her happiness is contagious. She is such a pleasure to be around. She is meticulous with scanning our credit files. She has learned to multitask during this process which has enabled her to get more credit files scanned in a shorter period of time. She has a routine and always knows her responsibilities and what is supposed to be next.”

Adams loves getting her paycheck directly deposited into her bank account. She is saving up money and hopes to live in her own apartment with friends in the future.

Besides working, Adams likes hanging out with friends and family. She is also committed to being healthy. She said, “I love fitness, running, basketball and Weight Watchers. I also love to read, draw, and write letters. I love Club Arc which is an easy-going, laid-back place where you can eat pizza, play games, and dance to a DJ!”

APD supports people with developmental disabilities to live, learn, and work in their communities. The agency annually serves more than 50,000 Floridians with autism, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, intellectual disabilities, Down syndrome, and Prader-Willi syndrome.

APD a year in review



Florida Governor Rick Scott



APD Director Barbara Palmer

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) enjoyed a successful 2013-2014 state fiscal year. At Governor Rick Scott's recommendation, APD received \$36 million from the Legislature to offer enrollment to nearly 1,600 people in the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Medicaid waiver. Enrolling new individuals into the waiver from the waiting list had not happened in eight years. Additionally, the agency worked with about 200 people with developmental disabilities to prepare them for the job market. They were provided on-the-job training, internships, and for those that landed a permanent job—supported employment services.

The agency and Family Care Councils (FCC) conducted 18 Town Hall meetings around the state with six

being co-hosted by Governor Rick Scott. A Town Hall meeting was held in February at Eglin Air Force Base in Fort Walton Beach with Governor Scott. Military personnel talked about the challenges of being transferred to Florida from another state where their loved one was receiving waiver services, then coming to Florida and having to go on the waiver waiting list.

APD, Governor Scott, and the Legislature worked together to solve this issue. Starting July 1, any active duty personnel who is transferred to Florida while their loved one is receiving waiver services in another state, will now be able to enroll in Florida's waiver as long as they meet Florida's eligibility requirements. Florida is the first state in the country to offer this benefit to the military. We are very proud that we can offer this help to the individuals who protect our freedom.



APD Employees teamed up to support Ability 1st

We expect continued success in the coming year because APD funding priorities were included in the 2014-2015 state budget, and we thank Governor Scott and the Legislature for their support. Here are some of the highlights:

- \$20 million to offer APD Medicaid waiver enrollment to about 1,100 critical needs waiting list individuals
- \$1.5 million is re-appropriated for the Client Data Management System which will be the new APD computer system to track customer information
- \$500,000 to continue the Employment Enhancement Project for about 200 waiting list individuals
- \$2.6 million to make repairs to APD residential facilities
- \$1 million for repairs at Rish Recreational Park, located on Cape San Blas
- \$400,000 for actuarial services to analyze the rates for companion and live-in services
- \$1.3 million for an increase in adult day training provider rates
- \$539,280 to increase the personal needs allowance for Developmental Disabilities Center residents in Marianna and Gainesville

Additionally, APD is happy to report that grandparents will now be able to serve as members of the FCCs. With passage of SB 762, the governor may now appoint grandparents to the FCC expanding those eligible to serve on the advisory boards. Our thanks go to the FCC bill sponsors— Senator Nancy Detert and Representative Jose Felix Diaz. Additionally, Governor Scott has appointed or reappointed 65 FCC members this year, helping to increase FCC membership.

I hope you enjoy reading the highlights from the past year. This report is organized by the agency's five priorities:

- Services to the Waiting List
- Employment
- Thriving Providers
- Fiscal Accountability
- Quality Assurance.

Thanks to all the various stakeholders that helped APD have a very successful year. Working together, we are improving services for Floridians with developmental disabilities, which is what we strive to do every day.

Barbara Palmer

APD Director

Serving the waiting list

The Florida Legislature supported Governor Rick Scott's recommendation to include \$36 million in the 2013-14 Florida Families First budget to serve people with critical needs on the APD waiver waiting list.

For the first time in eight years, APD offered waiver enrollment to nearly 1,600 people on the APD waiting list to receive needed services in their communities.

APD currently serves 30,057 individuals with developmental disabilities through the iBudget Florida waiver program. iBudget stands for individualized budget because each person's budget is based on their health and safety needs. Once an individual's budget is established, they can allocate the funding to the services they want and need. The HCBS Medicaid waiver offers a variety of services to help individuals with autism, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, intellectual disabilities, Down syndrome, or Prader-Willi syndrome live in their communities.

iBudget Florida provides to APD customers 27 services which fall under seven categories. The supports and services are: Life Skills Development, Supplies and Equipment, Personal Supports, Residential Services, Support Coordination, Therapeutic Supports and Wellness, Transportation, and Dental Services.

APD currently has 21,191 individuals on the waiver waiting list. APD may provide one-time services to people on the waiting list or assist people with an emergency. The agency enrolls individuals into the waiver who meet the crisis criteria which are being homeless, being a danger to self or others, or caregiver unable to provide care. Approximately 450 people are enrolled in the waiver through crisis each year.



Resource Directory postcard



Campers enjoying Rish Park

APD's Resource Directory

APD's online Resource Directory is helping individuals with disabilities learn about free and paid community resources. The directory, located at apdcare.org, offers users interactive tools, zip code search functionality, directions, and maps to find available resources and communicate with APD.

There are 7,239 resources in the directory. It receives an average of 275 visits a day. The website also includes an events calendar and a video tutorial to help users navigate the online Resource Directory more efficiently.

Game Changer

APD coordinates with professional and collegiate sports teams to give donated tickets for various sporting events to individuals with developmental disabilities. The tickets provide opportunities for individuals to experience sporting events. The agency's program, Game Changer, is designed to give an unforgettable sports experience to a person with a disability and his or her family. This year, 78 families on the waiting list were able to attend a sporting event.

The William J. (Billy Joe) Rish Recreational Park

Rish Park, located on Cape San Blas, received \$1.4 million for bayside improvements this year. Rish Park, opened in 1975, is the state's only park specifically accessible for people with disabilities and is operated by APD. The park is located at 6773 Cape San Blas Road in Gulf County. It is named after former State Representative Billy Joe Rish who was instrumental in securing the land from the federal government in 1968 and designating it for use by people with disabilities. The park stretches from the Gulf of Mexico to St. Joseph Bay.

The bayside improvements include a new boardwalk, new freshwater fishing pavilion, new restroom, and a new saltwater fishing pier. The bayside project is scheduled to be completed by January 2015.

This park offers a low-cost option for individuals with disabilities and their families to rest and relax on the beautiful Florida coast. Visit apdcare.org to learn more.

Path to employment

APD received \$500,000 for employment from the Florida Legislature during the 2013 Legislative session. This money was used to help students and adults on APD's waiting list find jobs and internships throughout Florida. Services funded included Supported Employment coaching, follow-along services, paid internships, transportation, personal assistance, and some ancillary services and products.

APD worked closely with schools, families, and providers to achieve our goals. Through this appropriation, 174 individuals on the waiting list are in competitive employment or internships, with more landing jobs every day.



APD Director Barbara Palmer, APD customer Renee Llewellyn, and Governor Rick Scott

Employment First

APD partnered with other state agencies responsible for employment of people with disabilities to increase Florida's emphasis on jobs. The Employment First initiative is highlighted by the following achievements this year:

- Governor's Executive Order 13-284: "Reaffirming Commitment to Employment of Floridians with Disabilities" signed Oct. 8, 2013.
- Interagency Cooperative Agreement – a long-term, cross-agency commitment was signed to improve employment outcomes for Floridians with disabilities. As part of this initiative, APD policy and practices have been identified for revision to focus on employment as the first priority for APD customers.

APD Customers in Jobs

APD has been focused on increasing the number of people with developmental disabilities in the workforce. Currently, 3,576 individuals are in competitive employment. That is a three percent increase from the beginning of the year.



APD customer Larry Cardarelli and Linda Lawrence

Exceptional Employer Awards

The state of Florida recognized seven businesses for being exceptional employers of people with disabilities. The annual celebration was held as part of Disability Employment Awareness Month in October.

Governor Rick Scott presented the Exceptional Employer Awards to each of the businesses. Additionally, Governor Scott presented each business with his Business Ambassador Award for their employment efforts involving people with disabilities.

The 2013 award-winning businesses were:

- **Beck Automotive Group of Palatka**
- **Express Employment Professionals of Pensacola**
- **McDonald's Restaurants**
- **Sykes Enterprises, Inc. of Lakeland**
- **TJX Companies**
- **Wendy's Restaurants (JAA Restaurant Holdings, LLC) of Boca Raton**
- **Winn Dixie**



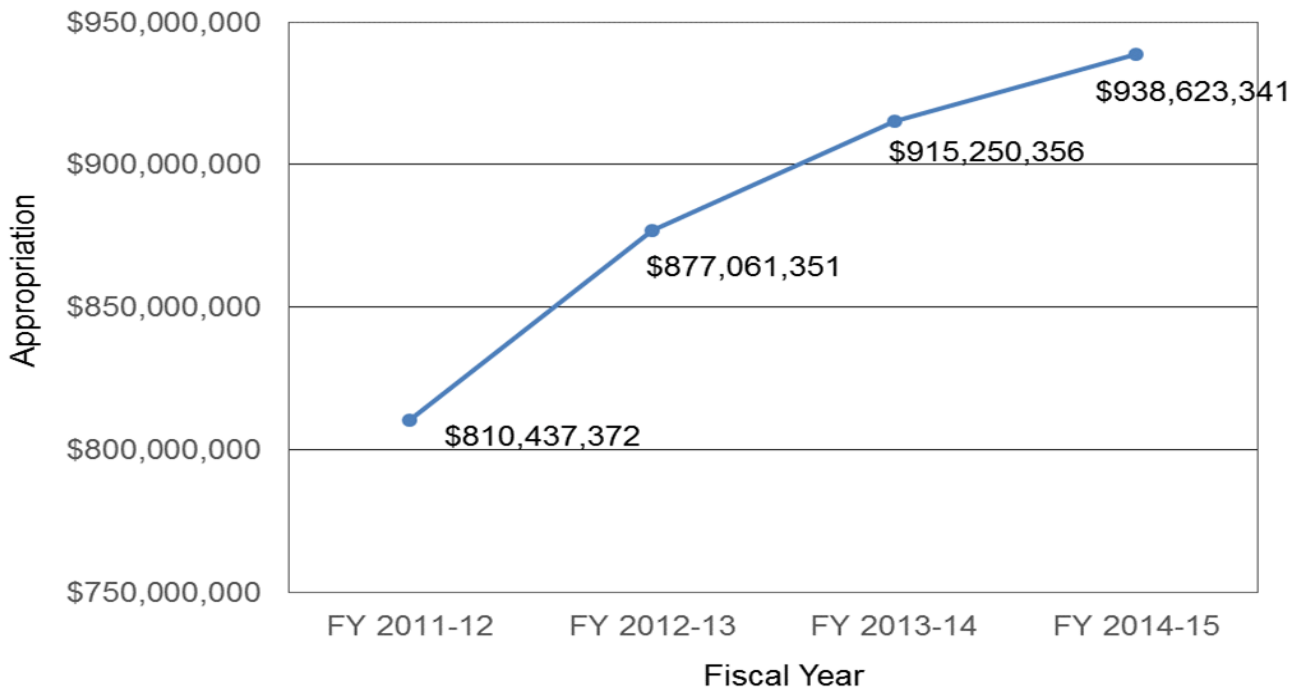
Winn-Dixie Human Resources employee Cecily Culbertson accepts Exceptional Employer Award

Worthwhile investment

APD’s annual budget is more than \$1 billion. The Developmental Disabilities HCBS Medicaid waiver budget has seen steady growth over the past three years. The Legislature allocated an additional \$20 million for the 2014-15 fiscal year, bringing the

iBudget waiver budget to \$938.6 million. The majority of the agency’s financial resources fund services that allow individuals with disabilities to live at home or elsewhere in the community.

Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waiver Appropriations



Rewarding Awards

APD employees saved Florida taxpayers more than half a million dollars through efficient and creative ways to performing work. APD staff took home five Prudential Productivity Awards this year—two for Tacachale in Gainesville, two for Sunland Center in Marianna, and one

for the agency’s state office. Prudential Productivity Awards honor state employees who create and implement cost-savings initiatives for state government. The five entries combined saved the agency and Florida taxpayers a total of \$635,243.

Continuous improvement

APD focused its quality assurance activities this year on compliance and process improvements. The agency initiated regional monitoring of employees who check monthly on living conditions at APD-licensed facilities and the status of people who reside in them. These visits verify the consistency of quality reviews related to health, safety, and well-being of group home residents and compliance with licensure rules. APD employees who conduct these visits ensure monthly inspections are thorough and uniform statewide. It facilitates the provision of technical assistance to both APD employees and service providers.

Improvements in services and the quality of service delivery also are underway. Parents, advocates, service providers, and representatives from Florida Association for Behavior Analysts, Florida Arc, Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, and Department of Children and Families Mental Health program are working with APD to address concerns identified at a series of public forums hosted by the agency. Individuals with developmental disabilities and mental health issues are among the population groups who will benefit from planned enhancements.

Other Accomplishments:

- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services approved the renewal of Florida's Developmental Disabilities iBudget HCBS waiver. The waiver went into effect March 15, 2014.
- For the first time in three years, there were no findings in a federal audit of APD's intermediate care facilities continued stay reviews (ICF-CSR).
- Operating Procedure 4-0007, "The Quality Management System for the Agency for Persons with Disabilities," became official on April 14, 2014. The operating procedure outlines roles and responsibilities related to quality outcomes for service provider performance.



Gov. Scott and Dir. Palmer at Eglin AFB Town Hall Meeting

Climate for growth

On January 28, 2014, APD held a kickoff meeting in Tallahassee with service providers and other stakeholders from across the state to brainstorm ideas for improving housing options and service delivery. Participants volunteered to serve in workgroups to design residential alternatives in the community to meet the needs of three specific groups: people with Alzheimer's and aging caregivers, people with Forensic involvement, and people with developmental disabilities who have mental health and/or intensive behavioral needs.

From the ideas generated at the kickoff, town halls, and other public meetings, action plans

are under development that will provide the framework for next year's Legislative budget request. Implementation will depend on funding, as well as statutes and rules.

The Dual Diagnosis and Intensive Behaviors Workgroup is looking at ways to develop short-term and long-term residential placement options, as well as crisis support teams. Increasing access to qualified providers for residential services is also a priority.

The Alzheimer's and Aging Caregivers Workgroup is developing three residential options: in-home services to assist people with developmental disabilities and their

caregiver to continue living at home, ways for them to live together in an alternate setting; and long-term planning to transition individuals receiving services into an appropriate living setting before their caregiver is no longer able to provide care.

The Forensics Workgroup is researching specialized homes in the community for individuals deemed by the courts incompetent to stand trial and then discharged into the community. The workgroup also is developing certification criteria and training requirements needed to serve this population. All three workgroups recommend training and resource development for providers, caregivers, medical practitioners, and others.



Having fun at Fanning Springs Disability Expo

The purpose of the Disability Expo was to provide individuals in rural areas a chance to learn more about community resources and recreational opportunities.

Reaching Rural Areas

APD wants to do more to help people with developmental disabilities and providers in rural areas. APD held its first Disability Expo at Fanning Springs on May 10. The agency partnered with the Arc of Levy County, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Florida

Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST), and the Florida Disabled Outdoors Association (FDOA) to ensure this event's success.

FDOA provided many opportunities for inclusive recreation like sit volleyball

and the parachute game. There were opportunities for arts and crafts with music provided by a live band. Controlled Chaos from APD's Tacachale Center performed several dance numbers getting the crowd of 400 really fired up.



APD customer Gregory Lipps and Director Barbara Palmer

Family Care Councils

The Family Care Councils (FCCs) are volunteers who advocate for people with developmental disabilities and their families. In 1993, the Florida Legislature created the FCCs (Chapter 393.502, Florida Statutes) in each service area of APD to advise the agency, develop a plan for the delivery of family support services within the local area, and monitor the implementation and effectiveness of services and supports provided under the plan.

FCC Membership

Official FCC members are appointed by the governor. Each council consists of individuals with developmental disabilities, as well as, parents, grandparents, siblings, and guardians of people with developmental disabilities who qualify for APD services. Each council is made up of 10 to 15 members. The council membership reflects the geographical areas and the various disabilities, ethnicities, and ages served by the agency. All interested persons are encouraged to become members of their local councils.

By law, each potential member must first be recommended for appointment by a

majority vote of the local council. The application is called Questionnaire for Gubernatorial Appointments and must be submitted to the Governor's Office by the council recommending the applicant for appointment. Local FCC bylaws require attendance at a number of meetings before recommending an applicant.

Each council is independent from the other. Most FCCs are active with other local organizations and partners to provide community forums, events, and conferences to benefit individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

Family Care Council Florida

A requirement in Section 393.502, F.S. is to "meet and share information with other local family care councils". For this purpose, the FCCs created the statewide council known as the Family Care Council Florida (FCCF). A chairperson or representative from each council meets bimonthly in central Florida to discuss and make recommendations on current issues and concerns affecting the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities. Invited speakers provide education and training not available in the local areas.