



## Florida ARF 2021 Legislative Platform

***Florida ARF represents more than 100 community agencies in the State of Florida, many of which were founded more than 50 years ago by families to provide critical care to their loved ones. These agencies and others provide services to thousands of individuals with disabilities and collectively provide jobs for more than 20,000 Floridians.***

### Platform Issues

- ***Addressing the Direct Care Workforce Hiring Crisis:*** A rate increase is needed for several iBudget waiver services so provider agencies can pay competitive wages to their direct care staff. This investment in the ID service system will cost \$22.3 million in General Revenue funds and will draw down an additional \$36.1 million in federal Medicaid match dollars and will help stabilize a service system that is grossly underfunded by increasing average direct care wages to \$10 per hour and \$12 per hour for Intensive Behavior staff.
- ***Protecting ICF/IID Services:*** Funding at \$316,912,059 (\$121 million GR & \$195 million Trust Funds) is needed for the community ICF/IID program to cover reimbursement rates and to fund a new level of care to serve individuals with severe behaviors. Also, proviso language amendments are needed to eliminate funding cuts when projected costs exceed appropriation levels.
- ***Maintaining Employment & Intervention Services:*** Funding for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Early Steps (Part C) programs must not drop below the current levels.
- ***Promoting Quality Residential Care:*** Legislative authorization is needed to update Room and Board payments for individuals in residential care to cover inflationary increases. Approval of this request should have a minimal fiscal impact for the state (less than one million dollars).

### Watch and Act Issues

- ***COVID Recovery Relief:*** The Association will support federal and state relief for providers who were adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to restore losses in revenues and infrastructure, including enhanced service flexibilities within Medicaid funded programs.
- ***Statutory Amendments:*** Amendments to the DD Act, Chapter 393, F.S., must meet the needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and should include removal of Supported Living service limitations.
- ***Public Policy Changes:*** Public policy changes must ensure that individuals with disabilities have the right to make informed choices regarding employment including the opportunity to choose their work settings.
- ***Employment Options:*** State policy that promotes gainful employment through state purchasing of products and services offered by RESPECT of Florida must be supported.
- ***VR Services:*** The Association will oppose legislation mandating competitive, unrestricted bidding for services.

### Track and Report Issues

Legislative activity will be monitored and all pending legislation that impacts Florida ARF members and the individuals they serve will be addressed as appropriate. Bills that require more than "Tracking and Reporting" will be moved to the "Watch and Act" status when needed.