



# FL SAND Legislative Priorities 2024

FL SAND is a network of 15 grassroots, self-advocacy groups that represents people with disabilities throughout the state of Florida. We advocate for disability rights and inclusion for all and represent hundreds of self-advocates in Florida. You can learn more about us at [FLSAND.org](http://FLSAND.org), or reach us at [contactflsand@gmail.com](mailto:contactflsand@gmail.com).

FL SAND supports Medicaid Home- and Community-Based services (HCBS) that provide people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families access to independence and life in the community. HCBS provide assistance with everyday activities, like bathing, dressing, making meals, and so many more. The problem is there isn't enough funding in Florida's Medicaid waiver programs to support everyone who needs services. This means that over 23,000 individuals who have been pre-enrolled for services have not received them and others, who are in crisis and need services immediately, are having trouble finding providers. Priorities #1-3 below offer solutions to the strain on HCBS and Medicaid in Florida. FL SAND also continues to support the passage of a bill to establish Supported Decision-Making for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



## #1 Inclusion of the iBudget Waiver in the Social Service Estimating Conference

Predicting and managing costs is essential through estimating the need for increased services for individuals currently enrolled in the iBudget waiver. The main factors contributing to increased services needs include the recipients aging and aging caregivers, crisis situations, and graduation from high school. ***FL SAND is asking legislators to begin including the iBudget waiver program in***

***the Social Service Estimating Conference to ensure adequate funding for waiver recipients experiencing crisis.***

## #2 Increase Support for Waiver Support Coordinators

***Require a well-trained support coordination workforce that uses the best techniques identified by case management experts to address the needs of individuals with I/DD.*** The State needs to encourage employment of people to provide support coordination services that are essential to create and implement a person-centered service plan for people on the iBudget waiver. Incentives can include rates commensurate with experience and training, along with streamlined reporting systems, and reduced burdensome regulations. This will increase the availability of qualified support coordinators and improve workforce stability.



### #3 Consider a Medicaid Buy-in Option for Workers with Disabilities

With Disability Rights Florida and other agencies, FL SAND supports the introduction of Senate Bill 212 by Senator Joe Gruters to establish and implement a Medicaid Buy-in program for Floridians with disabilities. If passed by the 2024 Florida Legislature, this legislation would create an optional state Medicaid benefit group specifically for workers with disabilities who have earnings in excess of maximum income eligibility levels. ***FL SAND is grateful for the Working People with Disabilities Program for those on the iBudget waiver and is excited about the possibility of income limits being further increased through a buy-in option.***

Medicaid buy in would allow many more people with disabilities the opportunity to work and earn to their full potential without the fear of losing vital Medicaid Services. Buy in also allows people with disabilities to contribute to Florida's economy by paying Medicaid premiums. Specifically, the legislation provides that the Medicaid Buy-in program "must provide full Medicaid benefits to eligible individuals and limit any premiums or cost sharing to a certain percentage of an individual's income, as determined by [the Agency for Health Care Administration]."

### #4 Passage of the Supported Decision-Making (SDM) Bill — HB 73 & SB 446

We continue to partner with other agencies such as Disability Rights Florida and the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council in supporting Supported Decision-Making as an alternative to full guardianship for people with disabilities. Offering Supported Decision-Making in Florida as an alternative to guardianship will indicate that legislators believe in and champion the rights and autonomy of individuals with disabilities. Emphasizing collaboration and assistance from trusted advisors in decision-making over traditional guardianship models creates a more inclusive and person-centered system. Supported Decision-Making ensures that decision-making processes respect individual choices and preferences.



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