

WORKIN' THE CAPITOL 2022

VIRTUAL DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
AWARENESS DAY &
2022 FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE SESSION

FLORIDA SAND FELLOWS
BREAKING BARRIERS TRAINING ACADEMY



WHAT IS DD DAY?

- The purpose of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day is to bring awareness of developmental disabilities to legislators.
- This year, the event is virtual because of COVID-19. Meaning that some things will be a little different, but our advocacy efforts will be the same.
- We advocate throughout the legislative session: January 11-March 11.

WHAT'S THE SAME

- Still call, email, and send post cards
- Still share your story and materials with legislators, by yourself or with your group
- There will be speakers and an exhibit hall
- Represent yourself and FL SAND Professionally-be prepared.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT

- Meetings with legislators are via phone or Zoom and *don't have to be on DD Day*
- Email priorities vs hand them out
- Speakers, exhibits will be virtual
- At home, sometimes distractions happen. Just do your best to limit them.

VIRTUAL ADVOCACY: WHAT TO EXPECT

- Appointments with legislators/aides will be by phone or over Zoom
- While we would love to be in person, in some ways this makes advocacy easier because it eliminates transportation and access issues we as people with disabilities may have.
- We still have the ability to advocate to our elected officials, and that's the most important thing!

HOT ISSUES THIS YEAR!

FL SAND Priorities

- Pay Fair for My Care (Provider Rates)
- Supported Decision-Making: “I Decide”

THE VIRTUAL VISIT PROCESS



CALL OR EMAIL YOUR
LEGISLATOR'S OFFICE TO
REQUEST A CONFERENCE
CALL OR ZOOM
APPOINTMENT



BE ON TIME TO
APPOINTMENT



KNOW WHAT YOU'RE
GOING TO SAY
BEFOREHAND

Find legislator contact information on
[FSACentral.org](https://www.fsacentral.org)>Resources>Policy & Legislative
Action

MAKING THE APPOINTMENT

- Let them know you are a constituent – someone who votes in their district
- You may only be able to meet with a Legislative Aide, but that's OK
- Have a 30 second speech saying why you want to meet with them
- Tell them you'll send them a Zoom link or phone number for the appointment
- If you can't schedule an appointment, you can always try a different day (recommended) or send a letter/email instead.

PREPARE FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

- Resources
 - www.flsand.org, Click on drop-down labeled About > Legislative Advocacy to find legislative resources including information on:
 - Pay Fair for My Care (provider rates), supported decision-making, etc.
 - FL SAND priorities: www.flsand.org>About>Legislative Advocacy
 - Your parents, providers, other self-advocates who have worked with legislators before
- Prepare a message with no more than 3 key points
- Prepare a story from your life related to your message. The goal is to touch their hearts – It's ok to write and read your story, or send them a written copy

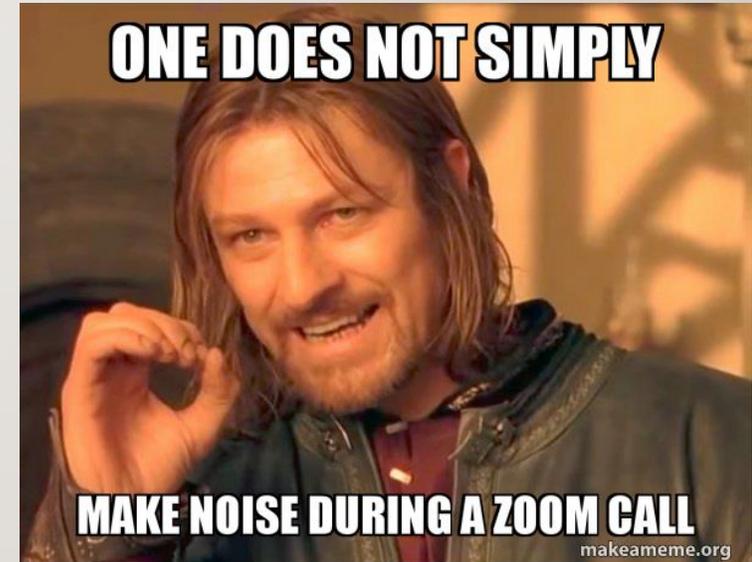
PREPARING FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT CONTINUED...

- Test Zoom technology before the appointment to make sure everything is working, lit well (use lamps or natural light in front of your face), and you are comfortable.
- Charge your devices and have any materials ready. Priorities can be emailed to legislators ahead of time.



PREPARING FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT CONTINUED...

- Select a place with as few distractions as possible (turn off the TV, avoid eating, if others are nearby ask them to be quiet).
- Remember that we all need to be professional and prepared. Practice what you're going to say with a friend or family member. Groups can have practice sessions.
- Have fun!



**PREPARING:
DRESS TO
IMPRESS!**

FL SAND SHIRT

**SHIRT AND TIE, NICE BLOUSE,
OR DRESS**

**NO SHORTS OR JEANS IF YOU
HAPPEN TO BE ABLE TO MEET
IN PERSON IN A HOMETOWN
OFFICE**

DURING THE APPOINTMENT

- Again, keep your message to 3 points
- Stay on topic
- Don't forget your personal story
- If possible, screen share materials: FL SAND priorities flier and "IDecide" materials
- Thank the individual(s) for their time

FL SAND Legislative Priorities 2022



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, or reach us at contactflsand@gmail.com FL SAND has adopted the following 2022 legislative priorities:



1

PROVIDER RATES

2

SUPPORTED
DECISION-MAKING

3

MEDICAID
EXPANSION

4

INCREASED TRANSPORTATION
OPTIONS

1. Pay Fair For My Care

We are asking legislators to enact a permanent wage increase for providers along with continual support. Without it, Floridians with disabilities and their families will not only lose, but our communities will as well.

In Florida, at least 119,399 people with disabilities and/or aging adults receive Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) through Medicaid with over 71,000 people remaining on waitlists. Increased monetary support for HCBS, specifically a provider rate increase, is crucial to the rights and ability of people with disabilities to live lives of our choosing. The limits on available services have long surpassed critical levels and COVID-19 has only heightened the urgency of this issue. Without a pay increase attracting and retaining qualified providers is impossible. Already the direct support crisis is leading to group home closures, inability to deliver vital community supports, and leaving individuals without in home care for days and weeks at a time. The American Rescue Plan provides for temporary increases in support, including a one-time stipend for providers, but it is not enough. HCBS not only provides care for people with disabilities, but allows us to contribute too!

Your points might be ...



1. “I need providers to help me live independently but they earn very little money. Please increase the hourly rate for direct service workers.” AND/OR if applicable. “My services have been significantly impacted because of the very low pay.” Then explain how they’ve been impacted.
 2. “There never seems to be enough money for people with disabilities in Florida on the waiver and on the waiting list. There should be a way for lawmakers to estimate how the need will grow each year so we don’t have to worry about losing our homes, our jobs, or our transportation. Lawmakers do this for other groups like seniors and children, why can’t they do it for voters like me?”
 3. “Please include our leaders in the self-advocacy movement to advise you on changes to the programs that impact us. You can learn a lot from them!”
 4. “Waiting lists for the waiver are years long. This hurts people with disabilities and their families who need these services to live their best, most independent lives. Please include funding in the budget to move people off the waiting list.”
- Prepare a story from your life related to your message. The goal is to touch their hearts. It’s okay to read.

2. Supported Decision-Making

FL SAND stands with our friends and allies at "I decide" in asking the legislature to pass a supported decision-making law.

Like anyone else, people with disabilities want and have the right to self-direct their own lives as much as possible. They may need support in doing so, but everyone does! A supported-decision making law would provide an alternative to more restrictive guardianship for roughly 10-20 percent of those people under guardianships in Florida right now, and increase the self-determination of many others. Additionally, it would require the court system to more heavily weigh the rights and capabilities of individuals by mandating the consideration of a supported decision-making agreement, even if a guardianship is ultimately put in place.



3. Increased Transportation Options

- Monetary incentives to end paratransit driver shortages caused by COVID-19
- Funding for door to door and on-demand options in every region
- The ability to easily cross county lines.

4. MEDICAID EXPANSION

FL SAND is encouraging the legislature to strongly consider any future opportunities offered by the federal government to expand Medicaid, if such expansion would benefit people with disabilities. Florida is currently one of 12 states without medicaid expansion. This disproportionately affects those with disabilities and their families, many of whom go without needed healthcare and could benefit from the increased access that expansion would offer.



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Your points might be ...



1. SDM: "People with disabilities deserve a voice and power to make decisions for themselves."
 2. SDM: "Everyone needs help with some decisions--disabled or not. Needing help shouldn't mean people lose their rights."
 3. "SDM clarifies guardianship law, because it provides an alternative to full guardianship when it's not needed, which the current law doesn't do."
 4. "SDM saves resources for cases where guardianship is needed."
 5. Transportation: "Life doesn't take place in one county or by appointment for anyone and people with disabilities deserve the same freedom."
 6. Medicaid Expansion: Many people with disabilities are completely without healthcare, Medicaid Expansion would give access to care, and save money in the long run.
- Prepare a story from your life related to your message. The goal is to touch their hearts. It's okay to read.

RESPOND
THROUGHOUT
THE SESSION
AT KEY POINTS

- Stay current on progress via FL SAND and FSACentral Facebook pages, the FL SAND bi-weekly digest, and alert emails
- Subscribe to FSACentral.org news (scroll to the bottom on the page)
- Sign-up for FDDC emails at FDDC.org
- Respond to calls for action!

QUESTIONS?

CONTACTFLSAND@GMAIL.COM