

Press Release

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BUSH/JENNINGS BUDGET REFLECTS A CONTINUED FOCUS ON FLORIDIANS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

TALLAHASSEE - Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) Director Shelly Brantley today applauded Governor Jeb Bush and Lt. Governor Toni Jennings for their ongoing commitment to serving persons with developmental disabilities. The Bush/Jennings 2006-2007 budget includes more than \$1.3 billion to serve persons with disabilities, in addition to new funds to serve as many as 3,000 Floridians with developmental disabilities currently on the waiting list for agency programs.

"This budget reflects the Governor and Lt. Governor's ongoing commitment to strengthening support and services for Floridians with developmental disabilities, while promoting community inclusion and fostering independence," said APD Director Shelly Brantley. "Governor Bush's exceptional leadership means more persons with developmental disabilities will get the medically necessary supports and services offered through state programs."

Governor Bush is a leading advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities was established in 2004 to support Floridians with developmental disabilities in working, learning and community living. During the last eight years, Governor Bush has increased funding for developmental disabilities by \$833.3 million or 165.7 percent.

The Bush/Jennings budget recommendations for 2006-2007 include:

Enrollment Expansion for APD Services: \$48.6 million increase

This recommended increase in funding for home and community-based supports and services helps as many as 3,000 persons with developmental disabilities who are currently on the waiting list for agency programs. Home and community-based supports includes supported employment, physical therapy, respite, nursing services, supported living coaching services, in-home supports and environmental accessibility adaptations.

Crisis Enrollment: \$7.6 million

The Bush/Jennings recommended budget allocates \$7.6 million to provide waiver services to individuals with developmental disabilities in crisis situations, meaning an individual is homeless, a danger to self or others, or the individual's caregiver is no longer safely able to provide care to the individual.

Support Coordination: \$6.4 million increase

This recommended increase provides for a 10 percent rate increase for support coordinators that serve persons with developmental disabilities. Support coordinators act as liaisons between clients who are served through a waiver program and providers to identify, develop, coordinate and access supports and services on behalf of or assisting an individual or family.

Mentally Retarded Defendant Program (MRDP): \$2.7 million increase

This recommendation provides funding for an additional 18 beds in the Agency's forensic unit. APD's forensic system is a set of facilities and programs serving individuals with mental retardation and autism who have been charged with felony crimes but were determined by the court to be incompetent to proceed in the legal system due to those disabilities. The MRDP program provides housing and rehabilitative services to individuals determined by the courts to pose a danger to themselves or others while awaiting the resolution of the question of their trial competency.

Information Technology: \$5.2 million

This recommended allocation supports the initial redesign planning for the agency's Allocation, Budget and Contract Control (ABC) computer data system that maintains client records and files. The system tracks consumer enrollment in the program and eligibility for specific programs, provides for transmission of consumer specific expenditures, and documents Medicaid Waiver expenditures.

The ABC system is used for budget and planning purposes.

"Governor Bush and Lt. Governor Jennings have outlined a clear vision of continued enrollment efforts coupled with enhanced program opportunities," said Brantley. "The agency remains committed to supporting persons with developmental disabilities in living, learning and working in all aspects of community life."

For more information about the Bush/Jennings budget recommendations, visit www.myflorida.com or <http://apd.myflorida.com>