



Message from the Director

September provides several opportunities to recognize the people and partnerships that support Floridians with developmental disabilities. During Direct Support Professional (DSP) Recognition Week, we celebrate the dedicated DSPs across Florida who help individuals achieve greater independence and participate in their communities. September is also National Preparedness Month, an important reminder for individuals, families, caregivers, and providers to plan ahead for emergencies. As we look ahead to October, I am excited to celebrate the 20th Annual Exceptional Employer Awards and recognize outstanding employers and employees across Florida. Thank you for your continued commitment to the individuals and families we serve!

– Bob Asztalos



Each year during National Disability Employment Awareness Month, APD recognizes outstanding Florida employers and exceptional employees with disabilities who make a meaningful impact in the workplace. Help us celebrate 20 years of exceptional employment by submitting a nomination or sharing the opportunity with your community partners and networks.

Save the Date: Tuesday, October 20, at 10 a.m. on the 22nd Floor of the Florida Capitol.

Nominate an Employer here: [2026 Exceptional Employer Nomination Form Survey](#)
Employee here: [2026 Exceptional Employee Nomination Form Survey](#)



Stakeholder Meetings: Enhancing Waiver Support Coordination Services

APD, in collaboration with the University of South Florida (USF), will host stakeholder meetings across the state to gather feedback on enhancing the quality, capacity, and consistency of Waiver Support Coordination services. Individuals, families, Waiver Support Coordinators, providers, advocates, and other stakeholders are encouraged to attend and share their perspectives.

Orlando – September 8

6:00–7:00 p.m.
AC Hotel Orlando Downtown
333 S. Garland Ave., Skyview
Room, 19th Floor
Orlando, FL 32801

Tallahassee – September 14

6:00–7:00 p.m.
Location TBA

Tampa – September 22

12:00–1:00 p.m.
USF Marshall Student Center
4103 USF Cedar Circle, Room
2709 – Hillsborough
Tampa, FL 33620

Sunrise – September 28

6:00–7:00 p.m.
Arc Broward
10250 NW 53rd Street,
Building 2, Great Room
Sunrise, FL 33351

Miami – September 29

9:00–10:00 a.m.
Rohde Building Miami
410 NW 2nd Ave., Visionary
Room N-1007
Miami, FL 33128

Virtual Meeting – October 6

5:30–6:30 p.m.
Webinar Number: 2530 552 8796
Password: 7McJpQePT42
Phone/Video Password:
76257737

Jacksonville – October 7

6:00–7:00 p.m.
The Arc Jacksonville Villages
Village Community Center, Room
TBA
3675 Kirbo Rd.
Jacksonville, FL 32224



Observances

- National Preparedness Month
- National Service Dog Month
- Suicide Prevention Awareness Month
- Direct Support Professional Recognition Week | September 13–19
- Deaf Awareness Week | September 21–27

APD SUPPORTS BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE



APD was proud to participate in the Florida Children & Youth Cabinet's Back-to-School Supply Drive to support Florida foster families. Thanks to the generosity of APD staff, our donation boxes were filled with school supplies to help students start the school year prepared for success. Deputy Director Lorena Fulcher also joined volunteers to help stuff backpacks with donated supplies for students across Florida.

Thank you to everyone who contributed and helped make this effort a success!



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: JERRY MIXION

Congratulations to Jerry Mixon, APD's August Employee of the Month!

Jerry's career with APD began at Sunland Center in 1996, when the agency was still part of DCF. He joined Sunland as a psychological specialist and has spent the past 30 years helping individuals with disabilities thrive. A Licensed Professional Counselor, Jerry continued to grow professionally during his time at APD and pursued his passion for behavioral services by becoming a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Since then, he has served in several leadership roles and had the opportunity to lead, teach and mentor many talented colleagues. Jerry has also developed strong relationships with professional organizations, state partners and teams across APD, helping strengthen programs and provide consistent, quality care for Sunland residents. We're grateful for Jerry's many years of service and his continued dedication to the individuals, families and colleagues who make up the APD community.

DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION WEEK



Direct Support Professional (DSP) Recognition Week is an opportunity to celebrate the dedicated professionals who provide essential support to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Every day, DSPs help individuals live, work, participate in their communities, and pursue greater independence. APD is proud to recognize Florida's DSPs and thank them for their commitment, compassion, and the important role they play in the lives of the individuals and families we serve.

TWO NEW APD IN A MINUTE VIDEOS



APD has two new APD in a Minute videos highlighting the iBudget Waiver and Respite services!

What is the iBudget Waiver?

Learn what the iBudget Waiver is, who it serves, and how it helps eligible Floridians with developmental disabilities access services and supports.

What are Respite Services?

Did you know APD may provide Respite services for eligible individuals under age 21? Learn what Respite is, when it can be used, how to access services, and important steps to take before receiving support.

Check out both videos and learn more about services available through APD!
<https://apd.myflorida.com/resources/videos.htm>

BECOME A FLORIDA UNIQUE ABILITIES PARTNER

Your organization may already qualify to become a Florida Unique Abilities Partner! The program recognizes businesses and organizations that create opportunities for Floridians with unique abilities through employment, community engagement, and other meaningful support. Learn more about the program and see if your organization qualifies by visiting apd.myflorida.com/unique.



NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

September is National Preparedness Month and an important reminder for individuals with developmental disabilities, families, and caregivers to plan ahead for emergencies. APD encourages everyone to review their emergency plans, update supply kits, keep medications and important documents accessible, and make a plan for any disability-related supports or services that may be needed during an emergency. Taking a few steps now can help you and your family stay safe, prepared, and informed when an emergency occurs.



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