

Overview -- Adults with Disabilities Grant

Goal

The goal of the Adults with Disabilities grant is to provide adults with disabilities and senior citizens the opportunity for enhancement of skills that is consistent with their abilities and needs. Funds may be used in programs to:

- Improve quality of life through the provision of recreational activities and intellectual stimulation (primarily adult literacy)
- Serve adults with disabilities who are not suited for workforce development education programs (going into competitive employment)
- Provide lifelong learning activities to senior citizens.

Results

- In 2005-06, 16,594 students were enrolled in programs with 13,918 achieving at least one benchmark and 11,877 students achieving at least two benchmarks.
- All programs primarily serve adults with disabilities. The disabilities include a wide variety, but many focus on individuals with mental health or developmental disabilities.
- 11 of the programs also serve Senior Adult Learners
- The main focus of most of the programs is improving an individual's literacy to functional levels.
- As the goals for individuals with developmental disabilities has expanded to include work, 75% of these programs now include some training in workplace readiness skills, vocational education, or production style workshops.
- Many programs partner with business and industry to help students obtain employment
- 25 programs partner with the local ARC
- 3 programs fund the educational programs in state institutions
- More than half of the programs provide some sort of instruction in social or behavioral areas.
- 12 programs include recreation/leisure activities, but only one program is strictly recreational and that is SportsAbilities.

Funding

- Annually the Legislature allocates a specific amount in proviso to each of 50 school districts and community colleges.
- Each school district or community college responds to a Request for Application to identify what they plan to do with the specific funds and to project the number of individuals they will serve and how many will achieve benchmarks.
- The benchmarks are established based on individual needs and are identified in an Adult Individual Education Plan. (AIEP)

- 85% of the funds are distributed quarterly; with the remaining 15% based on how successful the district or college is in meeting its projection.
- No administrative funds are permitted.
- Approximately 85-90% of funds are used for teacher salaries and benefits.

History

- Prior to 1997, school districts and community colleges received funding for educational programs for adults, including adults with disabilities, through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) and the Community College Program Fund (CCPF).
- In 1997, the Legislature appropriated all funds for Adult Education and Adult Vocational Education in both school districts and community colleges in what was called the Workforce Development Education Fund. (WDEF). School district funds moved into this fund came from all of the vocational postsecondary program numbers as well as the Adult Ed categories of 401, 402, and 416, which was the Adult Handicapped Fund.
- In 1998, the Legislature required a task force on Adults with Disabilities, which recommended a grant program to continue services to Adults with Disabilities who could not be mainstreamed or succeed in regular FTE courses.
- Once these amounts were established, they have pretty much remained the same except that in 2001 (after 9-11) funds for all programs were cut. Most programs got funding restored the following year, but Adults with Disabilities has remained at about the same amount as that year.
- For the 2000-2001 year, a competitive grant process was conducted by the Division of Workforce Development. Dollars had to stay within the geographic areas of the community colleges, but could be applied for by any school district or college in the area. This was the Division's way of making sure that services would continue in those areas.
- The Legislature transferred funds from the Division of Workforce Development to Vocational Rehabilitation in 2004. Vocational Rehabilitation has managed the Grants for the 2004-05, 2005-06, and 2006-07 school years.