

FLORIDA SELF-ADVOCATES NETWORK'D FL SAND

FLORIDA SELF-ADVOCACY CENTRAL

Grassroots self-advocacy on a statewide level





**United, we . . .
Speak!
Serve!
Act!**



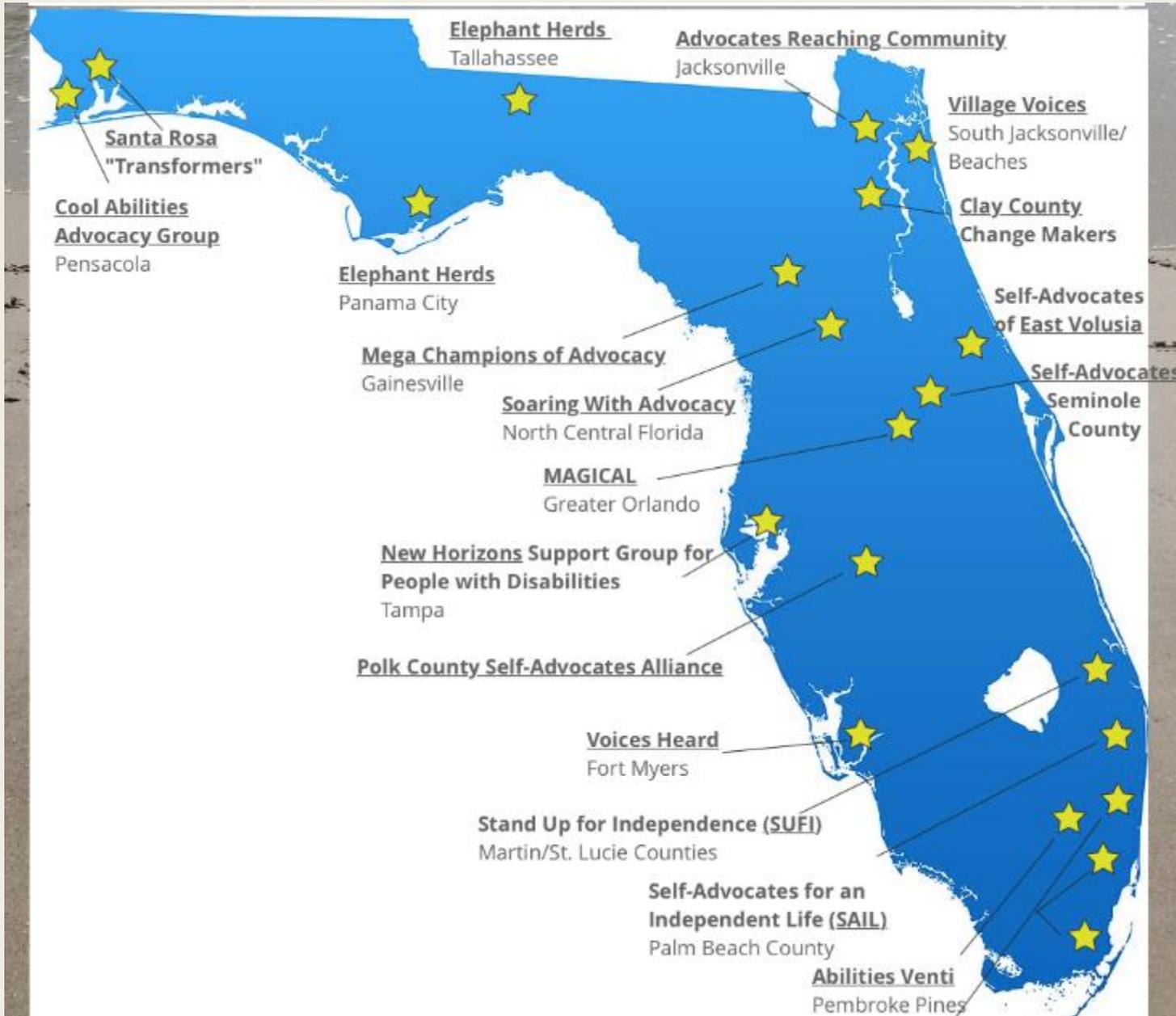
**Florida Self-Advocates
Network'D (FL SAND)
is a statewide
network of grassroots
self-advocacy groups.**

**Join Us!
flsand.org**



ABOUT FL SAND

FL SAND is an independent 501(c)(3) organization formed to expand the self-advocacy movement in Florida. It was formed by and led by self-advocates. FL SAND functions as a network of groups that supports local grassroots efforts, legislative platforms, networking with local businesses and civic communities, raising awareness, and promoting inclusion for all. FL SAND provides a united voice on statewide issues and topics that are important to self-advocates and all persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



Group Locations

- Self-Advocates of East Volusia (Daytona)
- Abilities Venti (Pembroke Pines)
- Stand Up for Independence (Martin County)
- ELEPHANT HERDS (Panama City and Tallahassee)
- People First of South Florida
- Voices Heard (Fort Myers)
- New Horizons Support Group for People with Disabilities (Tampa)
- Self-Advocates for an Independent Life (SAIL) (Palm Beach County)
- Advocates Reaching Community (Jacksonville)
- Santa Rosa Transforming Lives (AKA "The Transformers")
- Village Voices (South Jacksonville)
- Mega Champions of Advocacy (Gainesville)
- MAGICAL (Greater Orlando)
- Clay County Change Makers
- Self-Advocates of Seminole County
- Polk County Self-Advocates Alliance
- Soaring with Advocacy (North Central)
- Cool Abilities Advocacy Group (Pensacola)



Stand Up for Independence Group (Martin/St. Lucie) training high school students about disability issues

What is Self-Advocacy (from the FL SAND member's perspective)

- Speaking up and speaking out about the things that matter to you and your community, your goals, and dreams.
- This doesn't need to be done alone but should be self-determined as much as possible.
- SA in their words video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9yD7RA5kWY>

HOW FL SAND STARTED...

- FL SAND evolved from a grass-roots self-advocacy project sponsored by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) in 2006
- Several existing self-advocacy groups were given a small grant, training, and support to form a statewide self-advocacy group network, taking the name Florida Self-Advocates Network'D, or FL SAND, in 2008
- FL SAND achieved 501c3 status in 2015, and is continually working toward expansion and innovation



WHAT FL SAND DOES...



FL SAND supports self-advocacy and self-determination statewide through several initiatives including but not limited to:

- Local advocacy projects benefiting communities through events such as the wheelchair challenge, community disability awareness day, fundraising, addressing accessibility and transportation problems, volunteering, partnerships and more.
- Working together on statewide issues such as employment and transportation access and preserving community-based services, etc.
- Developing and presenting self-advocate led trainings through our Breaking Barriers Training Academy.
- Training self-advocates who demonstrate leadership capabilities to help within the organization and mentor others.
- A statewide self-advocacy conference held every other year

FL SAND'S STRUCTURE...

- Each group has independent local meetings, events, projects, officers, advisors
- At the state level, FL SAND has a Board of Directors comprised of one representative from each group and at-large members
- The board meets every other month by teleconference, except for the June meeting, which is held at Family Café



2021 Legislative Priorities

The FL SAND board has decided on three main legislative priorities for 2021:

- Preservation of Florida's iBudget funding and fair wages for providers who preform vital services that allow many with disabilities to live independently vs. in expensive institutions.
- Advocating for the passage of supported-decision making in Florida as a less restrictive alternative to guardianship.
- Making Floridians with disabilities a priority in vaccination, in access to protective equipment, in testing and all services needed to protect our vulnerable population against COVID 19.

FL SAND 2021 Legislative Priorities

Florida Self-Advocates
Network'D
(FL SAND)



Preserve the iBudget

Floridians with intellectual and developmental disabilities have proven they live vital, productive lives that contribute to the greater community. They have a right to live, work, worship, volunteer in, and contribute to their communities. Despite their valuable contribution, this important group of voters lives with the threat of losing vital services due to lack of competitive wages for the essential direct service workers who provide their medically necessary care. These low wages and a growing waitlist threaten the momentum towards independence people with disabilities have gained over the years, and may force some into more costly institutional settings.

- ⇒ Fund the Waiver
- ⇒ Anticipate Growth
- ⇒ Increase Provider Rates
- ⇒ Move People Off the Waitlist

We support yearly increases for the iBudget Waiver that match the need for more services under this funding, including an increase in the rate of pay for direct service providers. The iBudget Waiver should be included in the social services estimating conference to secure a commitment to fund the essential services needed by the nearly 35,000 people currently funded on the waiver. Lastly, funds to move people off the waitlist onto the waiver should be increased.

Your talking points to legislators might be . . .

1. *“I need my services to live independently and contribute to my community.”*
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.”*
5. *“I need providers to help me live independently but they earn very little money. Please increase the hourly rate for direct service workers.”*

- Prepare a story from your life related to your message. The goal is to touch their hearts. It’s okay to read.





Supported Decision-Making

When people with disabilities need support with decisions like choosing where to live or deciding how to spend their money, there are limited options, which leads to overuse of guardianship and guardian advocacy, two laws that allow a person's rights to make decisions be taken away and given to someone else.

Supported Decision-Making (SDM) allows people with disabilities to keep their rights and make their own decisions *with the help* of people they trust.

FL SAND supports SDM4FL, a non-partisan coalition of disability rights and advocacy organizations, self-advocates, and parents working together to pass a Supported Decision-Making Law in Florida. The group has secured sponsors for a bill that will make it easier for people with disabilities to use SDM. The proposed law will

include a sample agreement, explain the responsibilities of supporters, and require judges to consider SDM before they take away someone's rights.

Information about SDM4FL and the proposed law can be found at www.idecideflorida.org,

**FL SAND Supports the Passage
of the Supported Decision-
Making Bill: HB 681 & SB 1010**



Michael Lincoln-McCreight, FL SAND member, SDM4FL co-chair, and the first person in Florida to terminate his guardianship using Supported Decision-Making.

Your talking points to legislators might be . . .

1. *“People with disabilities deserve a voice and power to decide for themselves.”*
2. *“Everyone needs help with some decisions-- disability 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.”*

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COVID-19 Related Action



Your talking points might be . . .

People living with disabilities are proven to be among the most vulnerable populations when it comes to increased risk factors for complications and unique challenges associated with COVID 19. As such, FL SAND has made advocating for the solutions to these issues a priority.

FL SAND will work with legislators, officials, and other stakeholders at all levels to address the following COVID-19-related issues and safety measures in order to protect the disability population.

Increased Funding for and Streamlined Access to

- ◆ **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
- ◆ **Access to mobile and/or in-home testing**
- ◆ **Prioritized status in vaccine distribution for those who rely on multiple individuals to provide in-home care along with their caregivers**
- ◆ **Durable medical equipment-by increasing funding and decreasing documentation requirements**

Efficient Transportation

Transportation challenges for people with disabilities have been further complicated by the pandemic, particularly as it relates to access to vaccination and testing sites. Transportation systems statewide need to be specifically funded and adequately accessible to all for this purpose; individuals with disabilities need to be notified of vaccination appointments with enough time to arrange transportation; and vaccination sites should have dedicated individuals ready to assist these individuals as they arrive.

No Immunity for Abuse & Neglect

FL SAND opposes Civil Immunity as it could potentially give facilities a blanket justification to avoid accountability for abuse and neglect. Our population needs to be protected at all costs. As such, we urge the legislature and all stakeholders to join us in opposition to SB 72 and HB 7.

Florida Self-Advocates Network'D (FL SAND) is a network of grassroots, self-advocacy groups that represents hundreds of people with disabilities throughout the state of Florida. We advocate for disability rights and inclusion for all.

1. *“People with disabilities are proven to be more vulnerable to serious complications and death from COVID-19.”*
2. *“Those with disabilities living in the community, deserve to be prioritized too. Vaccine distribution is getting better, but access is still a problem for people with disabilities, especially those without transportation. Mobile vaccination and testing would help.”*
3. *“Because of close contact and care that many need, it’s important for those with disabilities and their caregivers to have access to PPE (Gloves, masks, etc.). This has been a problem.”*
4. *“Civil immunity may lead to more abuse and neglect of those with disabilities in facilities -- they deserve to be protected.”*

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IN HIS OWN WORDS: MICHAEL'S SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING STORY

<https://www.facebook.com/bbcworldservice/videos/265413308242549/>

FL SAND's Breaking Barriers Training Academy

Breaking Barriers is the training and public-speaking arm of FL SAND. Self-advocates are available to develop and present training on a variety of topics, to include:

- Self-advocacy and self-determination in community and various settings
- Train the Trainer in a variety of areas
- Training for support coordinators, medical professionals, and other providers
- Benefits of hiring employees with disabilities
- Customized training

Florida Self-Advocacy Central

- A self-advocacy news and information hub hosted by FL SAND
- Stay connected by subscribing and “Liking” their Facebook page



Florida's Go-To Source

for Self-Advocacy News and

Information



FSACentral.org



Florida Self-Advocacy Central

Florida's one-stop, go-to source for news, information, and dialogue about Florida's self-advocacy movement!

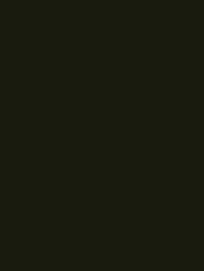
Check us out for

- Information on self-advocacy events and training opportunities
- Information on agencies and organizations that support self-advocacy
- News and feature articles about Florida's self-advocates, their accomplishments, and activities
- A place for YOU to contribute ideas, ask questions, and get involved!

Follow us on Facebook:

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FSACentral.org



**Breaking Barriers
Training Academy**



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