



RICHLAND NEWHOPE -  
RICHLAND COUNTY BOARD  
OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 - 2027

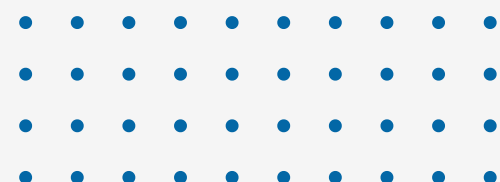


**Mission:** Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities is dedicated to supporting people to be valued members of their community and to live the life they desire.

**Vision:** Richland County is a community that values and respects the abilities of all people.

## Board Members

Mike Ziegelhofer, President  
Richard Otto, Vice-President  
Amanda Chapman, Secretary  
Michael Howard  
Luke Trieber  
Stephen Swank  
Regina Jefferson  
Michele Giess, Superintendent



# Planning Process

During the planning process for 2025-2027, the Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities (Richland Newhope) developed a comprehensive three-year strategic plan that sets the agency's priorities. This year, we reaffirmed our five core values—Dignity & Respect, Personalized Service, Community, Excellence, and Accountability—which are central to achieving our mission.

In the 2024 planning cycle, we identified service gaps, gathered stakeholder feedback, and crafted a forward-thinking plan that will serve as our roadmap for the next three years. This document is the result of that effort and will guide our priorities in the years to come.

As a funder of services for individuals with developmental disabilities, Richland Newhope remains committed to connecting people with both paid providers and natural supports in the community to meet their individualized needs, as outlined in their person-centered plans. We continue to directly serve children from birth to age three through our Early Intervention program and provide extensive residential support to those living in our licensed homes.



# Person-Centered Excellence

Since late 2010, Richland Newhope has been committed to becoming an organization that embodies Person-Centered Excellence. We use person-centered tools to understand what is important to those we support and to help them live the lives they choose. We celebrate their successes across the agency, using their stories to highlight their strengths and value within their relationships and the community.

***“I am proud of who I am and what I can do. From a young age, Newhope saw my abilities, not my disability. With their support, I can live my life just like anyone else. There are no limits to what I can achieve.”***

***- Richland County Self-Advocate***



# Person-Centered Excellence

**Three key outcomes have been identified as priorities for Newhope's Person-Centered efforts:**



## For the Individuals

Individuals are valued members of the community through the meaningful connections and relationships they choose.



## For the Employees

Employees are empowered to support individuals to live, work, and participate in their community.



## For the Organization

All aspects of Richland Newhope will be engaged in supporting a balance between what is important to individuals and what is important for them, ensuring they have meaningful lives.





# Values



## Dignity and Respect

All individuals have an inherent right to be treated with dignity and respect.

The agency values its employees and promotes a positive working environment.

## Accountability

As individuals take control and authority over their lives and resources, they assume greater responsibility for their decisions and actions.

The agency utilizes resources in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

## Community

Individuals are encouraged to be engaged in the community.

Agency partnerships improve the quality of supports and provide opportunities for individuals and families.

## Excellence

Individuals have access to high quality services to help them live the lives they choose.

The agency continues to be a leader in its industry

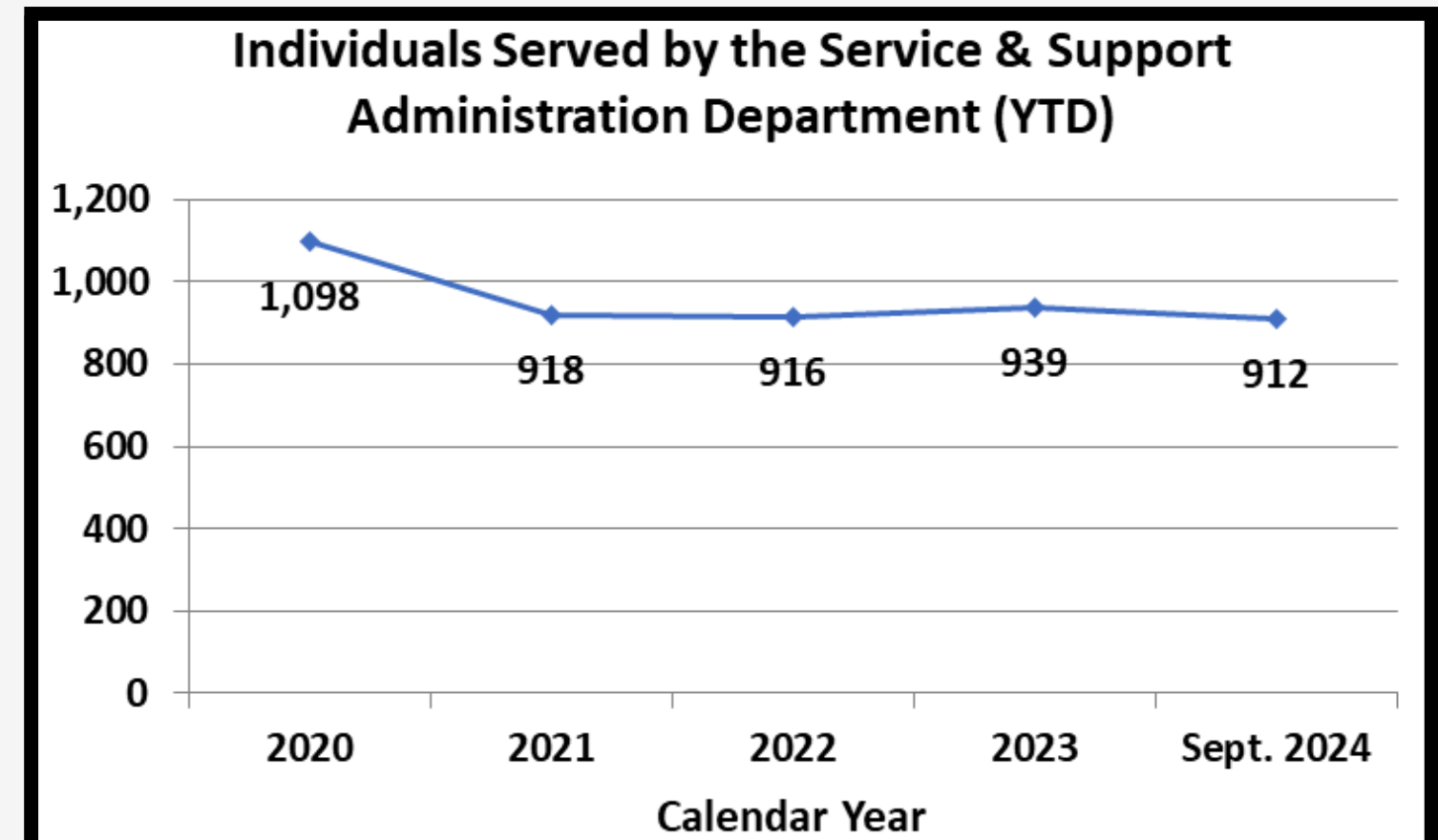
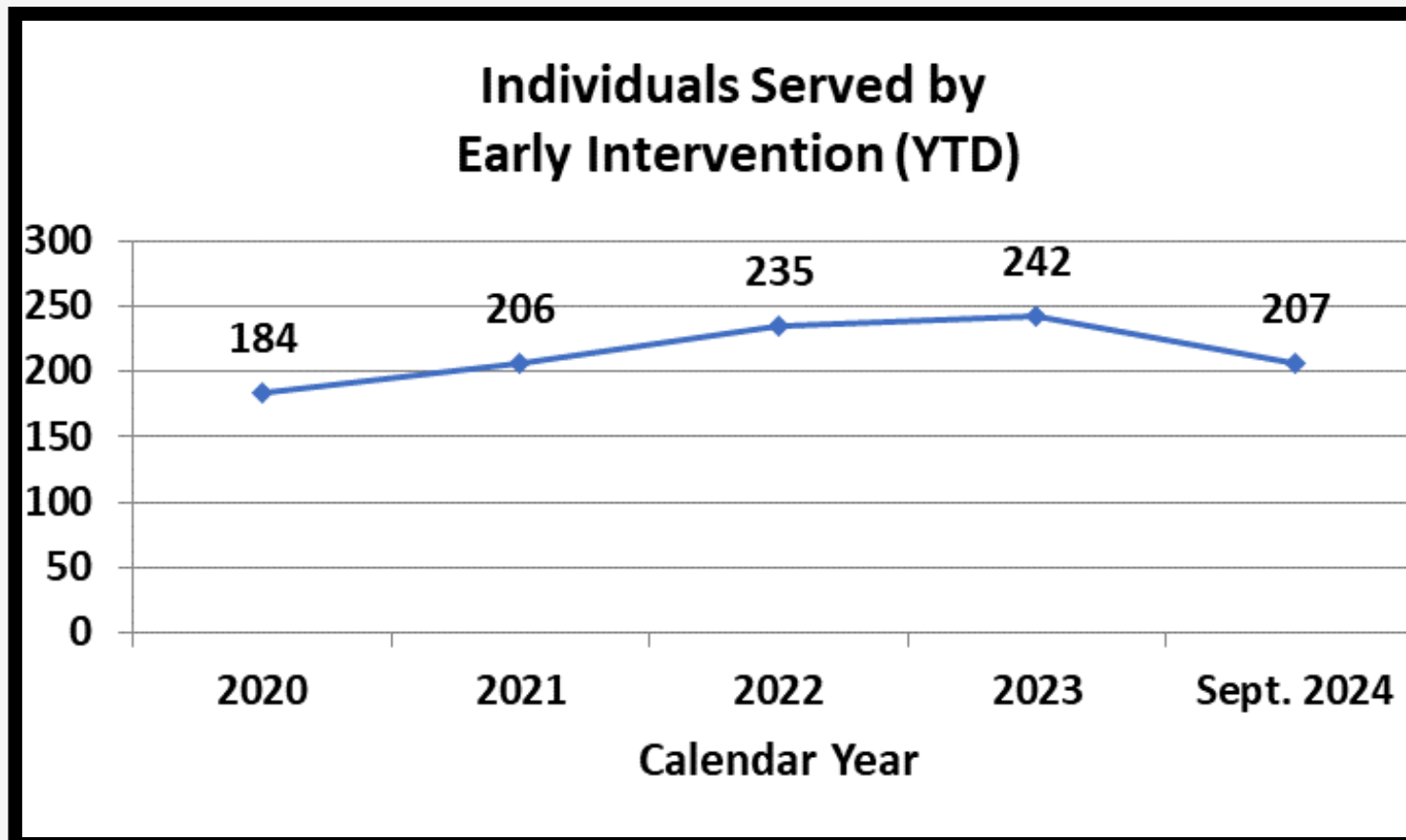
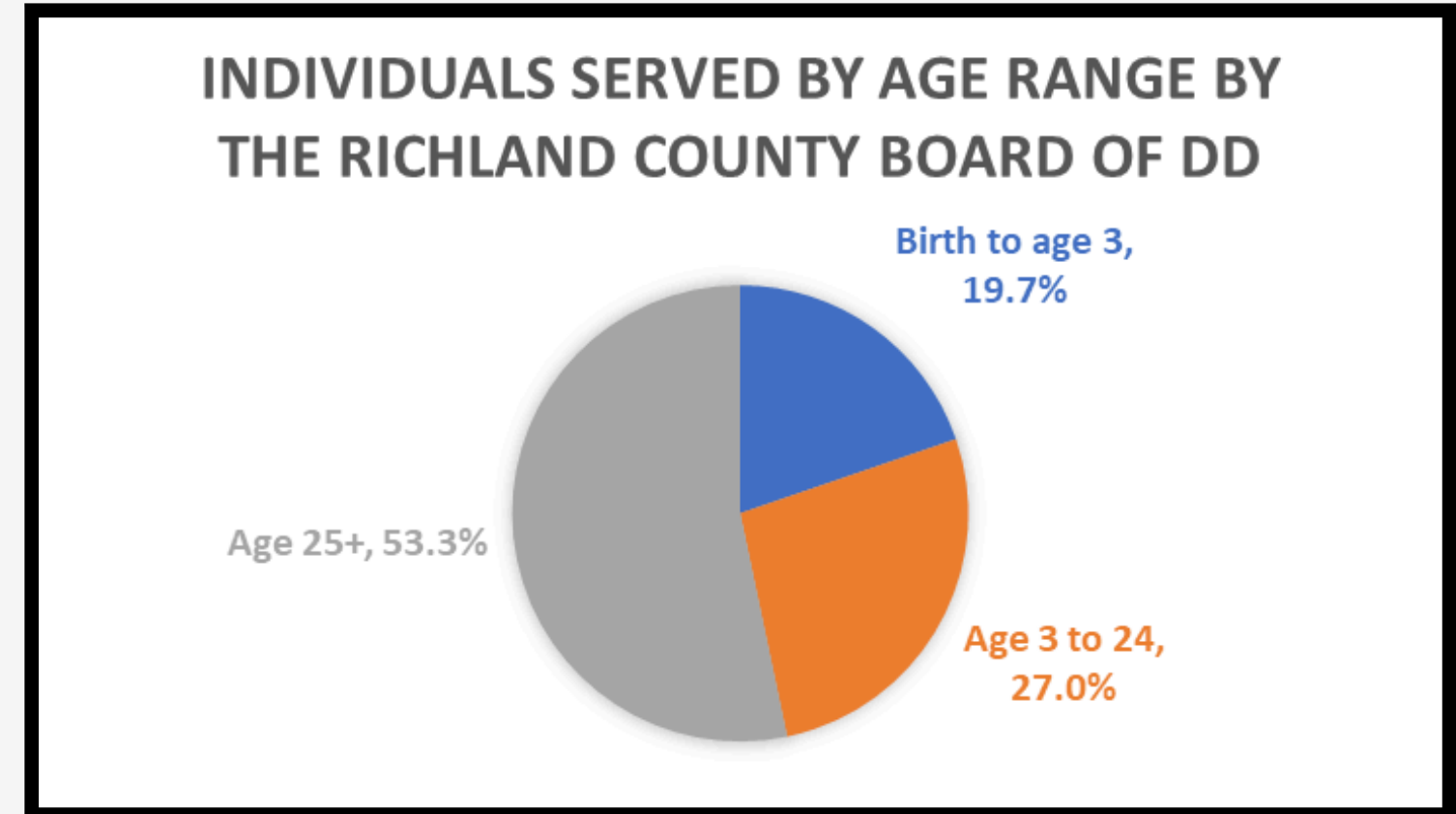
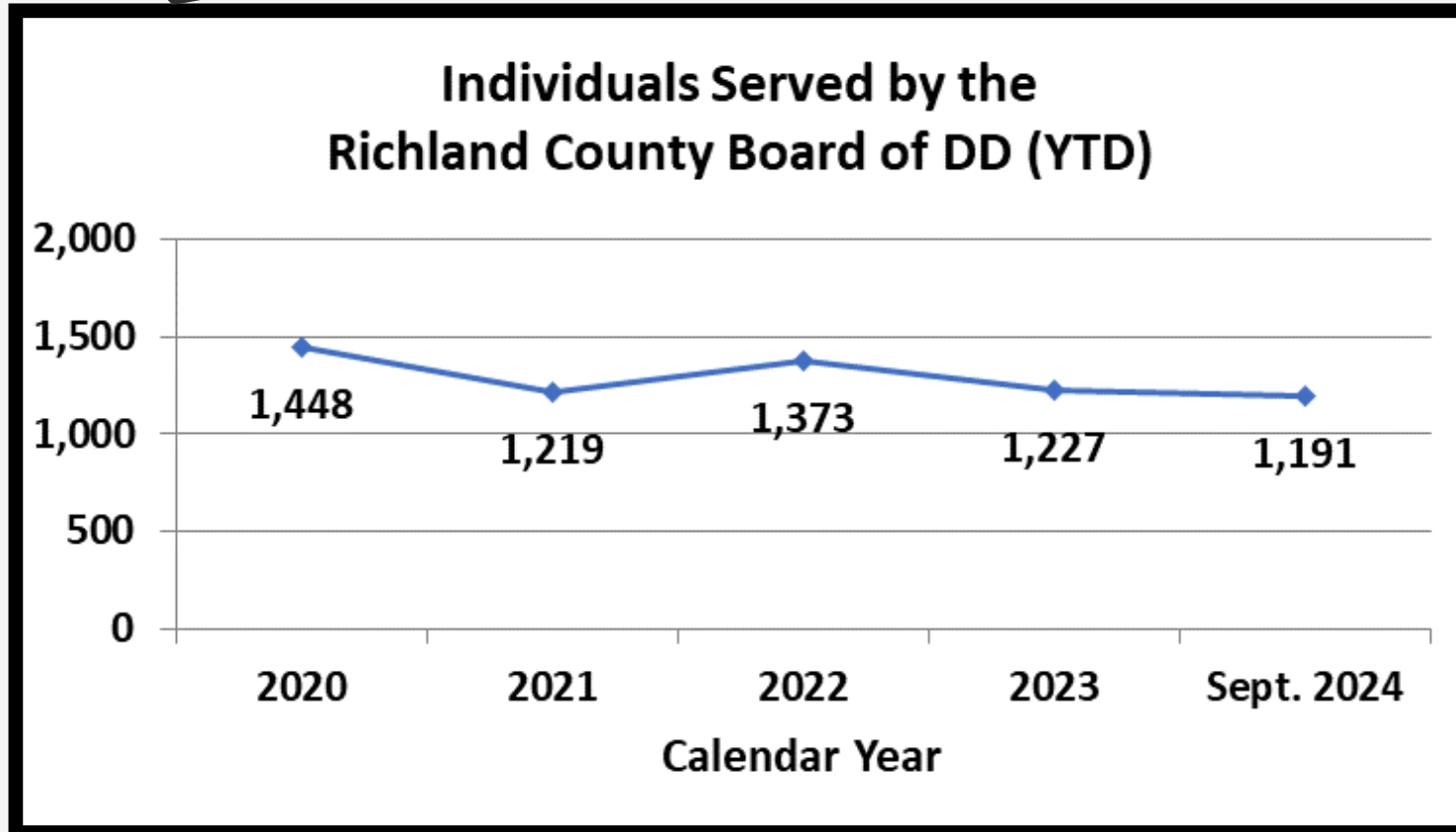
## Personalized Service

Individuals have the power to make decisions to truly control their lives.

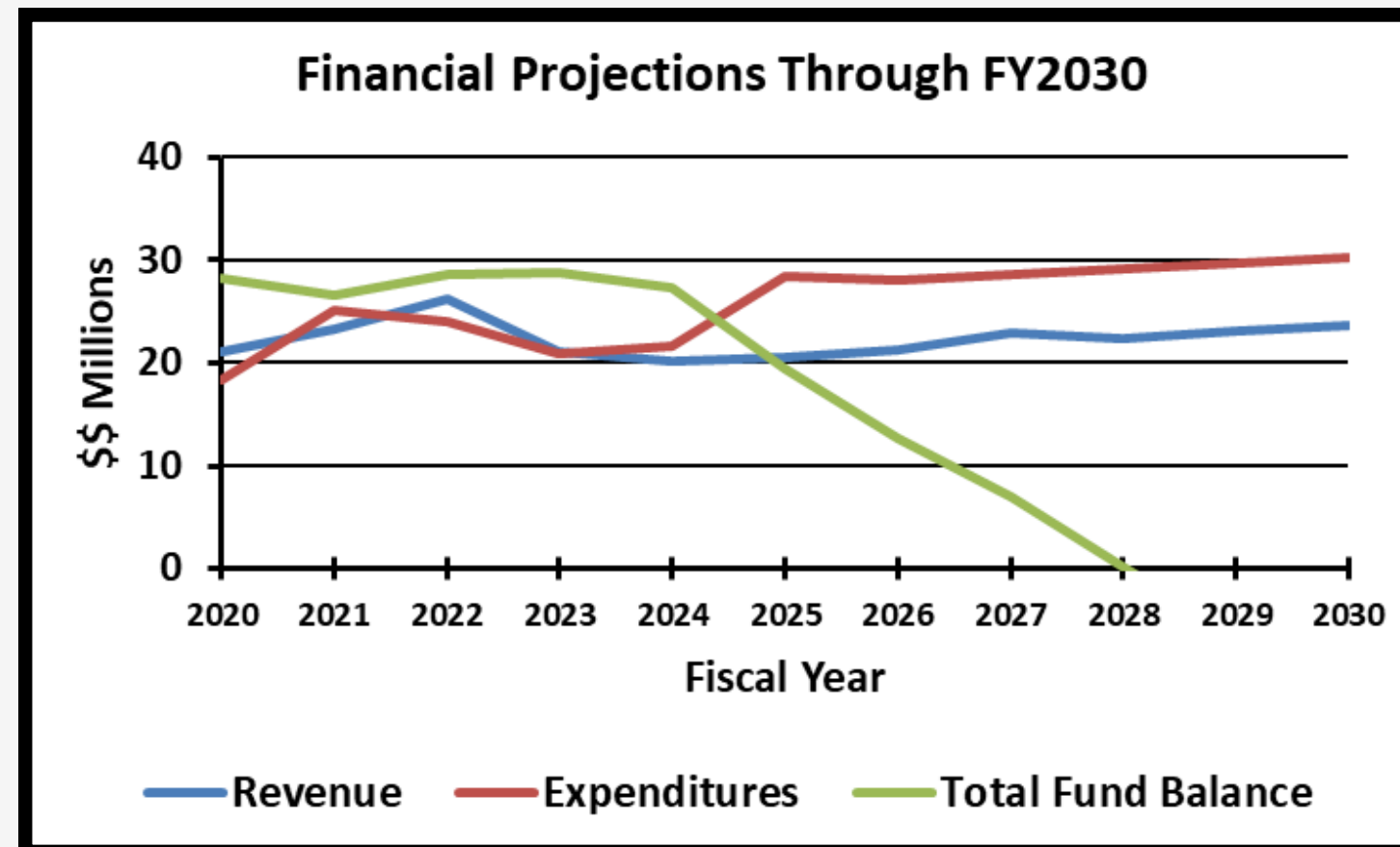
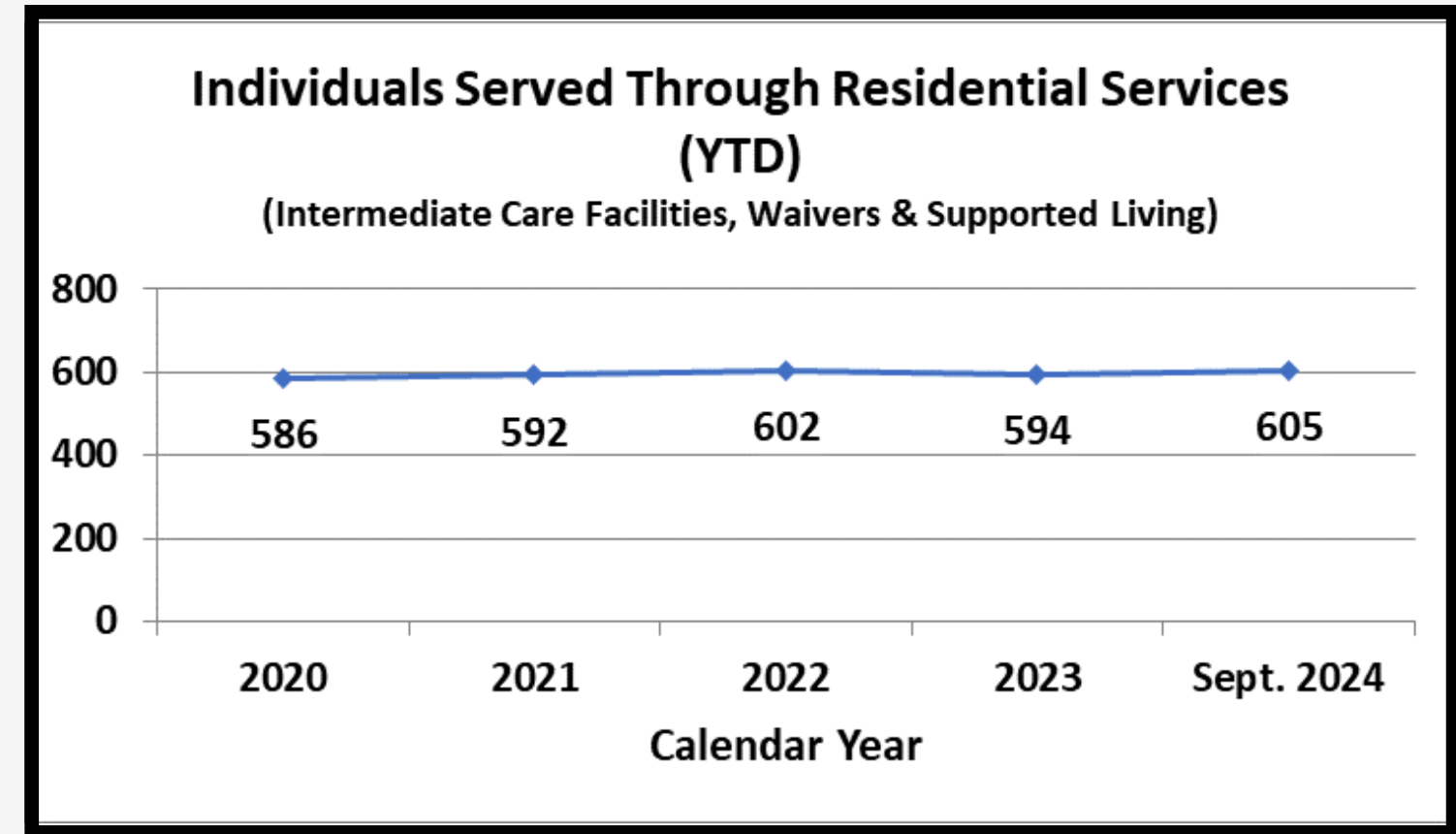
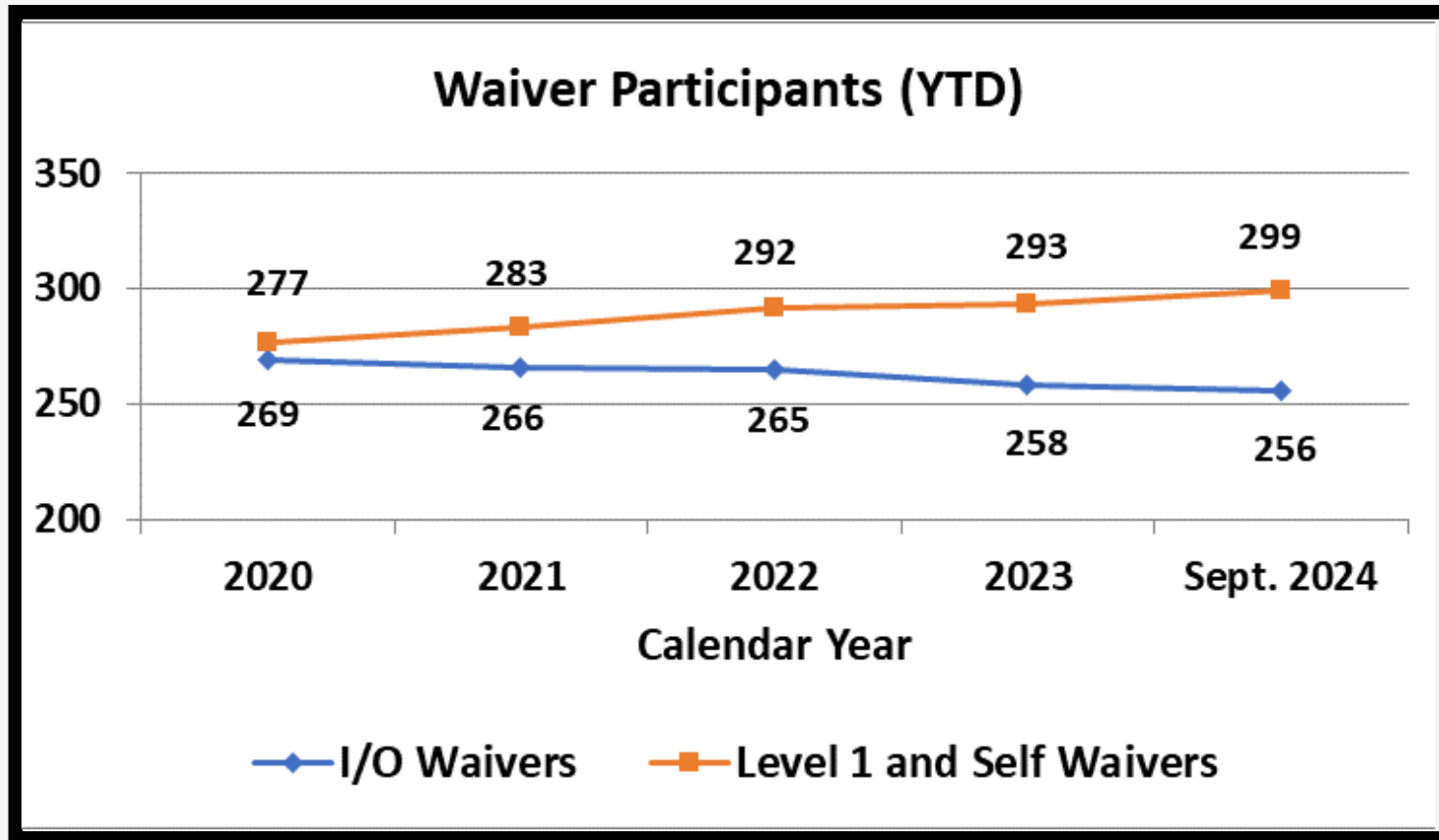
The agency fosters an environment that nurtures growth, discovery, creativity, and collaboration.



# Agency Data



# Agency Data



# Person-centered excellence will be achieved with four identified areas of focus:

- **Meeting the Needs of Individuals and Families**
- **Community Engagement**
- **Staff Retention and Engagement**
- **Operations/Fiscal**

# Area of Focus #1: Meeting the Needs of Individuals and Families

## Goals

1. Continue to evaluate the needs of individuals and families we support and modify services according to those needs.
2. Ensure that all individuals are engaged in the person-centered process to the best of their ability and they are supported to achieve their desired outcomes.
3. Support individuals to maximize the use of technology whenever possible.
4. Evaluate and continue to build housing resources for people we support.
5. Enhance advocacy efforts and leadership opportunities for individuals we support.
6. Evaluate and enhance Transition Youth Services.
7. Enhance relationships with educators of school aged (Pre-K to 12) children and their families.
8. Provide Supports to those served as they navigate transitions throughout their lives.

## Area of Focus #2: **Community Engagement**

### Goals

1. Continue to strengthen relationships with Government, Corporate, and Non-Profit Partners.
2. Ensure we maintain an adequate pool of providers to meet the needs of the individuals we support.
3. Ensure that our external marketing strategies are sufficient and impactful.

## Area of Focus #3: **Staff Retention and Engagement**

### Goals

1. Implement our plan regarding the use of the Predictive Index tool and In2Great resources to evaluate position descriptions, support the hiring process, and help build stronger teams.
2. Redefine and clarify how we communicate our expectations to support the agency's mission and vision.
3. Prioritize agency employee engagement and retention efforts to ensure we maintain a consistent work force.
4. Increase the overall competency of our workforce through training and development.



# Area of Focus #4: Operations/Fiscal

## Goals

- 1. Explore facility upgrades and relocation opportunities.
- 2. Align technology with the agency strategic plan and mission.
- 3. Ensure transparent and responsible oversight of fiscal resources.





# Early Intervention Services

**Purpose:** Early Intervention (EI) is designed to promote family competence and confidence by assisting families in learning and applying strategies that will help them meet the unique needs of their children with delays and/or developmental disabilities in their natural environments. Each family has an Early Intervention Service Coordinator who is the primary point of contact for the family. Once a child is eligible and services are determined, a Primary Service Provider provides regular support to the family. The Primary Service Provider is backed up by a team of other professionals who can provide services to the child and family through consultation and/or joint visits. The frequency and intensity of visits depend on the child and family's needs and available resources. The scope of services provided by the RCBDD is specified in its Strategic Plan and by Board resolution. Early Intervention services are provided to families with children who have been determined eligible under Ohio Revised Code 5123-10.

When families exit the program, they are asked to complete an Early Intervention Survey. This gives us feedback to ensure that we successfully follow the key principles for providing Early Intervention services and that evidence-based best practice achieves the desired outcomes.

**Services:** Services available from the Early Intervention program include: 1) Service coordination. 2) Special instruction by certified Developmental Specialists who assist families in learning and applying various approaches that will help families meet the needs of their children. (3) Other professional services that are identified as part of the plan. (4) Coordination of other EI services needed to meet outcomes not provided by the RCBDD EI program. (5) Transition planning to assist when a child turns three to link to the child's school district. If applicable, the school district ensures that if a child is eligible for services at age three, they begin their Individual Education Plan (IEP) at age three.

# Early Intervention Services (Cont.)

**Projected Number Served**: Based on previous data, we anticipate that for Calendar Year 2025, more than 300 referrals will be received. At least 200 will be determined for eligibility for Early Intervention services. The average enrollment ranges from 120 to 130 at any given moment since families enter and exit the program continuously throughout the year.

**Resources Available During 2025**: Services provided by the Early Intervention program areas are outlined in RCBDD plans and Board resolutions. For 2025, the Board can allocate up to four full-time equivalent (FTE) Service Coordinator positions and up to five Developmental Specialists. The RCBDD will support the families in prioritizing their needs and identifying outcomes desired within the parameters established in applicable law, the RCBDD plans, and the available resources.

**Organization Structure**: Under Federal and Ohio law, the Ohio Department of Children and Youth Services is currently responsible for implementing and overseeing the Early Intervention program throughout Ohio. The RCBDD provides specified Early Intervention services in accordance with Board resolutions and available resources.

**Public Relations Activities/Schedule of Events**: The Early Intervention program is represented on local and state committees, including the Maternal Child Health Network, Community Network, and DODD Early Intervention Stakeholder Advisory Group. The EI program participates in various events for families throughout the year and at different community locations in collaboration with community partners. We attend Family Council as part of the community of providers of services for children in Richland County. In 2025, outreach will focus on physicians, local childcare providers, Early Head Start programs, and community events. In addition, local collaboration is made with school districts to improve transition support for children transitioning from Early Intervention to preschool.

# Service and Support Administration (SSA) and Medicaid

**Service Coordination:** In the fall of 2022, Ohio transitioned to using the Ohio Individual Service Plan (OISP). Each individual and/or family will now be assisted in developing the OISP. The OISP is one plan for all of Ohio. The OISP places the needs of the person receiving services at the center of the planning process. The person leads the planning process by making choices, setting goals, and deciding how they want to live their life. The OISP can easily transfer from one county to another county if the individual and their family move within Ohio. The OISP shall specify the person responsible for service coordination and service monitoring as well as delivering the services. Plans shall be written in accordance with the Service and Support Administration and Behavior Support DODD Rules 5123-4-02 and 5123-2-06. The county board will assign a Service and Support Administrator to a person who is enrolled in a home and community-based services waiver within thirty calendar days after becoming aware that the person has moved to the county.

**Technology First:** In the spring of 2022, the state of Ohio developed a technology-first policy within the Ohio Revised Code 5123.025 to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to technology solutions. The Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities developed its own local policy to help ensure that technology solutions are explored and documented throughout the planning process; used to the greatest extent possible to support an individual's outcomes; establish benchmarks to increase the number of individuals who are accessing and benefiting from technology solutions; increase staff's skill and ability to assist individuals with technology solutions; collaborate with community partners to increase usage and awareness of technology solutions, and review on a regular basis.

**Employment Navigation:** RCBDD employs two full-time Employment Navigation Specialists. An Employment Navigation Specialist specializes in knowledge about specific employment-related supports and services. They assist students, adults, parents, teachers, and schools through transitional career pathways and community connections. Employment Navigation Specialists build relationships and partnerships with businesses that would benefit students and adults on their path to employment. Through these partnership opportunities, students gain experiences surrounding their transition goals. Building relationships with the area schools is a key component of developing a successful program.

**Emergency Response System:** Emergency response is available 24 hours per day, seven (7) days per week through the SSA's on-call system.

We will meet with each newly certified independent provider within 60 days of the provider being selected to provide services to an individual to confirm the provider understands the individual's person-centered plan and the provider's responsibilities. The meeting also ensures that the provider has contact information for the appropriate County Board staff.



# Service and Support Administration (SSA) and Medicaid (Cont.)

**Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)**: The MUI Unit in the SSA department manages all MUIs involving Richland County residents with developmental disabilities. Reported incidents are reviewed as potential MUI's and those incidents that rise to the level of being an MUI are investigated as appropriate. All issues involving abuse, neglect, or misappropriation are reported to Law Enforcement and/or Children's Services as appropriate.

**Free Choice of Provider**: Individuals will be supported to select providers of their choice from the list of all qualified and willing providers in accordance with the Service and Support Administration Provider Selection Procedure and the Home and Community-Based Services Waiver Providers DODD Rule 5123-9-11. An adequate pool of providers will be maintained to meet the needs of all individuals in Richland County.

**Waiting List**: DODD Rule 5123-9-04 sets forth the process to administer the waiting list assessment to determine if an individual has no need, a current need, or an immediate need. As part of this process, the Service and Support Administrator talks with the family about their needs and various ways to address those needs, including local resources, waiver services, and the option of seeking admission into an Intermediate Care Facility (ICF). Upon completing the Waiver Waiting List Assessment, a copy of the waiting list assessment, Due Process, and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities "Residential Options Counseling Pamphlet" are sent to the individual/guardian/family. The "Residential Options Counseling Pamphlet" outlines the differences between ICF services and waiver services. The Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities website also has a link to find ICF openings in the state of Ohio and the "Residential Options Counseling Pamphlet."

The Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities will continue to pursue all feasible options to address individuals with an identified need, including local funding, community resources, waiver services, and natural supports. Each year's waiver enrollment projections will be identified in the Level of Care component of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) Customer Relationship Management platform. Waiver expansion shall be based on the availability of matching funds and individual needs within the county. For CY 2025, we project requesting 25 Level One Waivers and 5 Individual Options Waivers to address the waiting list needs.

**Exit and Diversion Waivers**: All individuals considering moving to an Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) with eight beds or more must be presented with alternative options, including but not limited to a state-funded Diversion Individual Options Waiver slot.

All individuals wishing to move from an Intermediate Care Facility ICF will be offered an opportunity to receive a state-funded exit waiver.



# Residential

We support 33 men and women between our Raintree and Justine Homes. Personalized services are delivered by our team of well-trained Direct Support staff, Dietary, Nursing, Therapy, and Recreational teams. Residential services aim to create safe, supportive, and enriching living environments tailored to the unique needs and goals of each individual. As a valued community resource, it is our mission to support those in need and continue to be a premier service provider.



***“Newhope’s Residential Team is exceptional. They provide great care and are a blessing to the community. They are professional and responsive when a parent is in need of something. They take the time to answer questions and always respond back. This applies to the entire team: DSPs, Supervisors, Dietary, Therapy, Nursing Department, and the Director.”***

***–Mother of a Raintree resident***



# Multi-System Youth Services

Children are the future of our society. They are the building blocks of tomorrow. Children served by multiple systems in Ohio with developmental disabilities and behavioral health challenges are in desperate need of our services. County Boards have always been a beacon of hope for individuals with developmental disabilities. In partnership with the state of Ohio and our provider partners, we believe we need to enhance the resources and supports available in our communities to invest in these children today.

The Richland County Board has been seeing an increase in youth who are in jeopardy of out-of-county placement due to varying needs. These youth traditionally receive services from multiple local agencies; however, their support teams are at a crossroads with figuring out how to appropriately serve them while keeping them in Richland County.

Starting in 2024, the County Board developed a partnership with ViaQuest Healthcare Center, LLC. to operate the county's youth home for young men with complex needs.

In 2022, the County Board entered into a contract agreement with provider agency McElvain Homes to provide intermittent respite care for families. This program has been operating for 2 years and continues to offer vital respite services to families in need.

In 2023, the County Board entered into a contract with provider Adu's Care to develop two permanent respite locations for individuals and families in need. These respite homes are meeting the needs of both individuals and families who require temporary planned and emergency respite services. Since its official opening in late January 2023, these homes have been utilized over 83% of the weeks.

Richland County Board continues to work in collaboration with the local Youth and Family Council to support youth with complex needs across multiple systems.



# Employment First

Like all young people, youth with disabilities should grow up expecting to work and succeed. Employment First requires a partnership with these young job seekers and other adults with disabilities, their families, employers, providers, the government, and the community. Richland Newhope is committed to fostering this partnership while raising expectations for people with developmental disabilities.

The Employment First Initiative, established in 2012 in Ohio, makes community employment the preferred outcome for adults with disabilities. Community employment can lead to greater independence, wealth, and higher self-esteem. Employers benefit from having a more diversified workforce. Our communities become stronger when all citizens are able to participate and contribute in all the ways they can.

There are efforts underway throughout Ohio to expand community employment services for people with developmental disabilities. The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) have a statewide job counselor initiative, allowing the state to support more people on a path to community employment.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), signed by the President in 2014, sought to update and improve the nation's workforce development system while providing supports to people with disabilities to enter and remain in competitive, integrated job settings. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act prohibits individuals age 24 and younger from working in jobs that pay less than minimum wage unless they first try vocational rehabilitation services. This Act includes exceptions for those deemed ineligible for vocational rehabilitation and allows individuals who already earn less than the minimum wage under a special minimum wage certificate through the Department of Labor to continue to do so.







# Provider Recruitment

We will strive to maintain an adequate pool of providers to meet the needs of individuals in Richland County. The ability to recruit and retain a sufficient pool of quality providers is critical to give individuals a choice and to meet the growing demand for all services.

The Coordinator of Provider of Recruitment and Development position was added in 2017 in an effort to better support existing providers and actively recruit new providers to Richland County. The Board continues to prioritize offering needed support to our provider community through various efforts, including but not limited to assistance with provider certification and the compliance process, numerous training opportunities, hosting provider meetings, and help with navigating the DODD system.

***“Richland Newhope has made my transition from working at an agency to becoming an independent provider incredibly smooth. From answering all my questions and providing helpful guides to offering a friendly face to talk to when any issues arise, the staff at Newhope has been invaluable. Their support makes me excited for the future!”***

***- Richland County Independent Provider***



# Self-Advocacy

Our agency continues to dedicate a great deal of effort and resources to ensuring that all individuals not only understand their rights but also feel empowered to speak up for themselves. We believe in fostering an environment where everyone's voice is heard, respected, and valued. By providing ongoing education, resources, and support, we strive to help each person become a confident advocate for their own needs and choices.

Project STIR (Steps Toward Independence and Responsibilities) is a train-the-trainer program designed to teach participants vital skills such as communication, problem-solving, self-awareness, self-determination, and understanding rights and responsibilities. The training uses hands-on skits and role-playing techniques over a seven-week curriculum, culminating in a celebration of completion. Graduates leave with a life course portfolio to use in planning meetings to articulate their future dreams and goals. The Project STIR curriculum is taught throughout the year at various Richland County day-habilitation facilities, Richland County high schools, and across Ohio. Richland County currently has five certified trainers to deliver this program.

Richland County is part of the Northwest Regional Ohio Self Determination Association (OSDA) District, meeting every other month with other counties in the district for trainings and to discuss various self-advocacy topics.

The Aktion Club and People First are self-advocacy groups that are dedicated to enhancing advocacy skills and giving back to the community. Our past service projects have included Kingwood Gardens, Buckeye Imagination Museum, Raemelton, Downtown Mansfield, Inc., and the Bird Sanctuary.





# Special Olympics

The Richland County Special Olympics program offers year-round sports training and competition for children and adults with developmental disabilities. Participants gain more than just physical fitness; they also build friendships, sharpen skills, and boost confidence that carries over into their everyday lives. Athletes and volunteers take on new challenges and celebrate victories together.

Sporting events are primarily organized and overseen by a dedicated network of community volunteers. The Richland County Board continues to support these programs both financially and through awareness efforts.





Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities

# Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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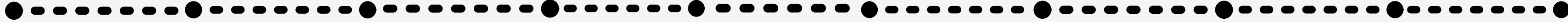
**[www.rnewhope.org](http://www.rnewhope.org)**



# THE RICHLAND COUNTY BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

## Richland Newhope Table of Organization

Individuals



- Early Intervention Service Coordination
  - Evaluation Intervention
    - Evaluation/Assessment
    - Provider of Service
  - Intake
- Occupational Therapy
  - Physical Therapy
  - Speech Therapy
- Recruitment Selection
  - Background Checks
  - Compensation and Benefits
  - Training
  - HIPAA
  - Legal
- Accounts Payable
  - Account Receivable
  - Payroll
  - General Ledger
  - Contracts
- Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)
  - Provider Recruitment
  - Family Support Services
- Service and Support Administration
  - Employment Navigation
  - Intake
  - MUI/UI Investigation
- Nursing
  - Habilitation
  - Recreation
  - Dietary
  - Laundry
  - Food Services
  - Transportation
- Public Education
  - Volunteer Program
  - Special Projects
  - Self-Advocacy
- Custodial
  - Maintenance
- Administrative Services and Planning
  - Strategic Planning
  - Accreditation Coordination
  - IS Management

- Services for Children ages 0 -3
- Therapy Services
- Human Resources
- Fiscal Services (Includes Business Manager)
- Medicaid Services (Includes Medicaid Services Manager)
- Service and Support Administration
- Residential Services
- Community Education
- Operations
- Administration Services and Planning

Pediatric Development Center Board

Superintendent

Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities (7 members)

- 5 members appointed by the Board of Commissioners
- 2 members appointed by the Probate Judge