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2020 Annual Report Intellectual and Developmental Disability Services Supported by Denver Mill Levy Funding

Working Together for Denver

January 1, 2020– December 31, 2020

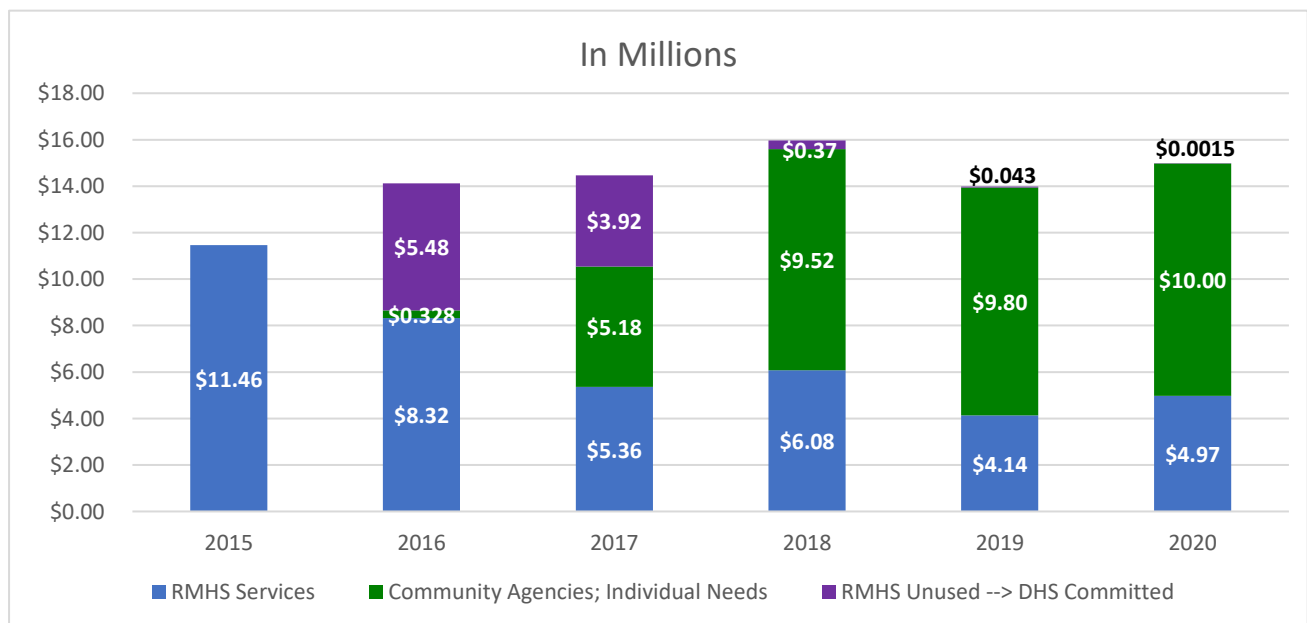
Introduction

For 29 years, Rocky Mountain Human Services (RMHS), a non-profit human service organization, has been the Denver hub for I/DD services, providing both service coordination and direct services. In 2003, Denver voters generously approved a mill levy property tax to benefit Denver residents with I/DD. As the State’s designated Community Centered Board (CCB) for Denver, RMHS is the only authorized agency to determine I/DD eligibility for Denver residents. Furthermore, RMHS contracts directly with the State to provide Early Intervention services as well as case management and administrative functions for state funded I/DD programs and Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) across all long-term care waivers in Colorado. These roles and business associate agreements inherently give RMHS direct access to the people that are eligible for Denver’s mill levy funding. This coupled with our strong relationships with other CCBs, providers, and advocacy groups gives RMHS the farthest reach to ensure that each Denver resident with I/DD has access to mill levy funds to meet their individualized needs regardless if they receive service coordination through RMHS.

The Mill Levy Program provides the flexibility needed for Denver residents to access programs and services and receive funds to pay for individualized services and resources not available from Medicaid or other funding sources because of limited, rigid and/or prohibitive rules and regulations. RMHS leverages this position along with flexibility offered through mill levy funding to:

- **EMPOWER** Denver residents with I/DD to directly access mill levy funds to meet their individuals needs for services and supports
- **SUPPORT** individual’s unmet needs through wrap-around services and external community partnerships that provide unique I/DD services and support.
- **PROVIDE** additional support across departments and programs to eliminate wait lists, enable service coordinators more time to work with clients, and enhance Clinical programs.

Denver Human Services (DHS) maintains administrative oversight of the mill levy dollars and oversees the contract with RMHS to deliver these funds to support Denver residents with I/DD. Over the last 5 years, RMHS has finely tuned the mill levy funding and transformed it into a robust person-centered program.

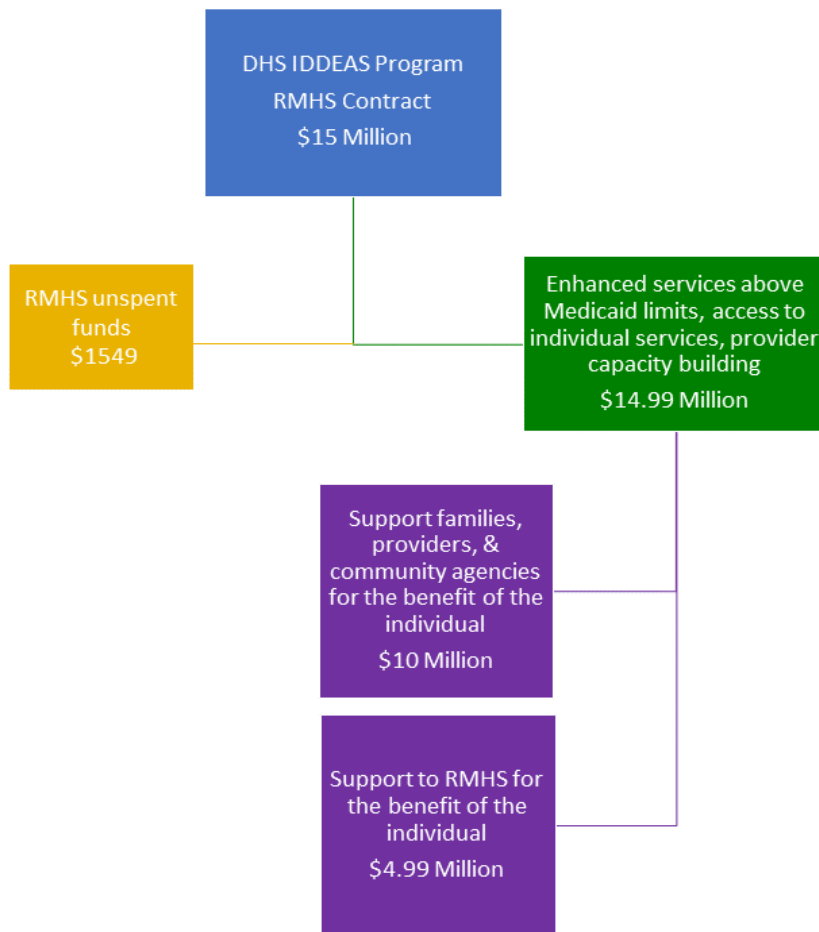


Even in the most ideal of years, the I/DD system is extremely complex, and families are often faced with navigating multiple systems. As Denver’s CCB and DHS’s largest mill levy contract, RMHS was best positioned to quickly respond to the unprecedented challenges brought on by COVID-19. Family’s and people’s needs shifted or changed, and programs had to adapt. Due to the flexibility of mill levy funding coupled with RMHS’s direct access to Denver residents with I/DD, RMHS was able to ensure that the Mill Levy Program goals remained constant despite the pandemic challenges.



This report covers the contract period of January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020, with a maximum contract amount of \$15 million. RMHS is pleased to report the successful expenditure of 99.9% of that to budget maximizing funds going directly into the community to support individuals, family members, existing providers, and new program development --- while keeping administrative and overhead costs lean.

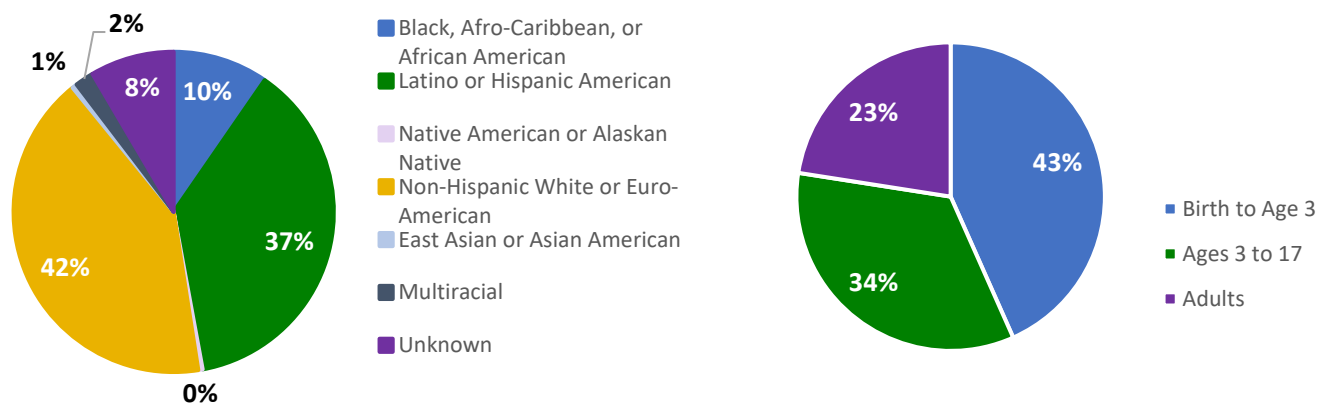
2020 RMHS Mill Levy Funding



Demographics

In 2020 the RMHS Mill Levy Program served more than 4,500 unduplicated Denver Residents with I/DD across multiple program areas. It is worth noting that this figure represents a 4% decrease in 2020. This was directly attributed to a decrease in Early Intervention Services enrollment due to the July 2020 emergency rule to change the eligibility criteria as well many families’ decision to terminate telehealth services during the pandemic.

RMHS programs includes Early Intervention Services for children birth to 3 years, the Family Support program for children 3-17 years of age, and service coordination for Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS) in Medicaid and state-funded across the lifespan for children and adults. RMHS is the access point for I/DD services in Denver and serves a diverse group characteristic of the residents in the City and County of Denver at large.



Mill Levy Access

The Mill Levy team strives to be the “Easy Button” in the complex IDD service delivery system for Denver Residents with I/DD or developmental delays. **Our goal is to provide an equitable and simple mill levy request process for Denver residents with I/DD, regardless if they receive case management services through RMHS.** Mill Levy Program staff meets monthly, and as needed, with each program area to provide technical assistance and guidance to continually streamline the mill levy request process. In compliance with the DHS and RMHS contract, our approval process ensures the request is appropriate to an individual’s needs and not available through other resources before approving

There are two ways to access mill levy funds. The individual can either work through their RMHS service coordinator or submit a request directly through the RMHS website. Denver residents receiving case management from another agency can access mill levy funding by submitting a request through the website at www.rmhumanservices.org/ml or by contacting the RMHS intake department.

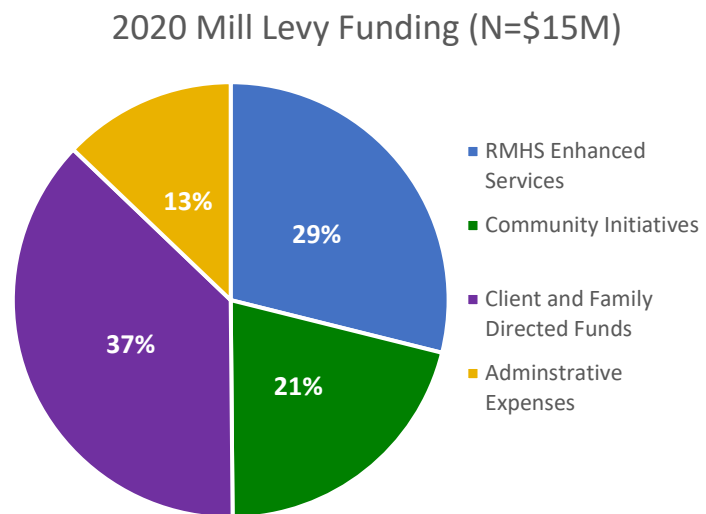


Either route will connect the individual with the appropriate RMHS staff to support them in verifying or determining eligibility. Once Denver residency and I/DD eligibility are verified, they will be connected to a service coordinator who can assist with an Individual Request or create a Mill Levy Support Plan (MLSP) to facilitate the request for mill levy funding. The individual does not have to be currently enrolled in a program to receive mill levy funded services.

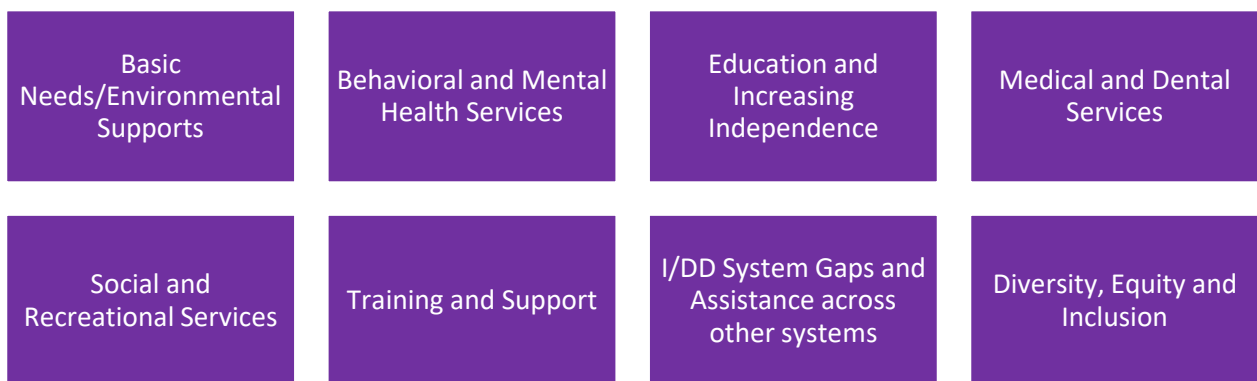
Mill Levy Funding

RMHS distributes annual mill levy funds through three mechanisms while targeting priority funding areas described below.

- Client & Family-Directed Funds** empower Denver residents with I/DD to directly access mill levy funds to meet their individual needs for services and support through Individual Requests and MLSPs.
- RMHS Enhanced Services** provide additional support to Denver residents who access RMHS services by eliminating wait lists, enabling service coordinators more time to work with clients, and enhancing clinical programs.
- Community Initiatives (External Projects)** support to individuals through organizations and businesses that provide unique I/DD services and support in a priority funding area.



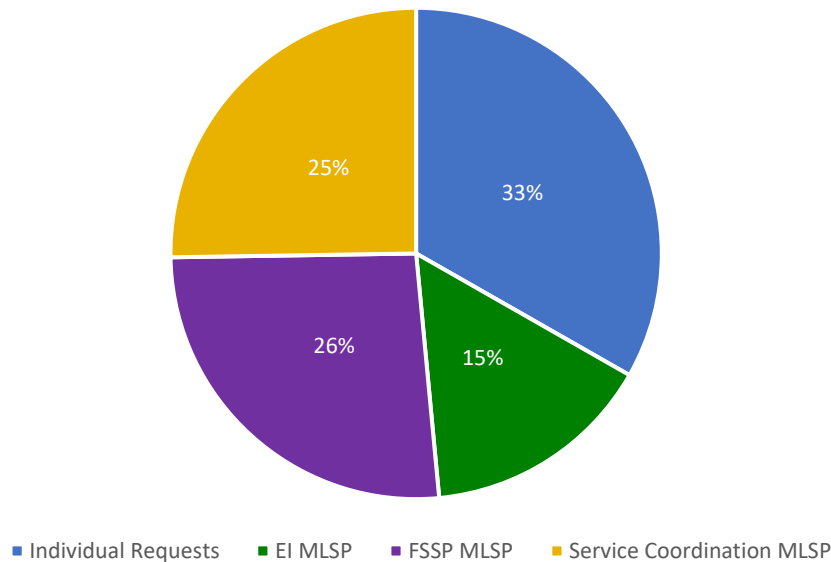
Throughout 2020, RMHS has continued to provide mill levy funding to community agencies, providers, family members and individuals, according to the funding priority areas outlined by RMHS stakeholders and the Community Advisory Council in 2019. As the events of 2020 unfolded, the CAC recommended and RMHS adopted an additional priority area to include an emphasis on **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**. These funding priorities are used to categorize and describe mill levy funding.



Client and Family Directed Funds

In our commitment to ensure that each Denver resident with I/DD has access to mill levy funds to meet their individualized needs, our team strives to eliminate the red tape and barriers that often get in the way. RMHS is pleased to report that **in 2020 \$5,350,990¹ was utilized solely for Client and Family Directed Funds** through the Mill Levy Program. Individuals supported and their families can directly access mill levy funding through Individual Requests and MLSPs.

Client and Family Directed Funds
January 2020- December 2020 (n=\$5.35M)



The trampoline continues to be godsend,” said Micah’s mother. “It’s been a great thing for him to work towards, to help motivate him to stay on task.” A week before remote schooling started in 2020 9-year-old Micah received a trampoline to help him cope with staying safe at home when the COVID-19 pandemic began. Micah, who has Down syndrome, rarely plays alone so it became difficult for him to be away from his friends at school. Since he received the trampoline from the Mill Levy program at RMHS, the trampoline has helped Micah cope with his feelings of isolation in play and promote his independent living skills. Micah enjoys jumping on his trampoline with his toy animals during the summer. His mother has even found it as a helpful tool to burn his playful energy and to help him focus on his schoolwork.



¹ Includes the 1% Revenue Cycle Allocation

Individual Requests

The ability for individuals with I/DD and their support systems to submit funding requests to support individualized needs through Client Assistance quickly is the most popular and successful piece of the RMHS Mill Levy Program. **The Mill Levy team motto is: Logic your way to the “Yes”, meaning if the person is eligible and the request is appropriate as intended by the ordinance and outlined in the DHS contract, we do everything we can to make it happen.** During the review process, Individual Requests are reviewed to determine if the request demonstrates a direct benefit to the eligible person and if there are other available funding sources. Requests can be fully approved, partially approved, or denied.

Examples of these include, but are not limited to:

- A horseback riding tour for an individual and care person to engage in an activity that has always wanted to be able to do but never had the resource to do so.
- Diapers and wipes to an individual when parents lost their job due to Covid and essentials are needed for health, safety and wellbeing
- Gloves, masks, sanitizer to ensure safety during a global pandemic
- Tutoring support for a transition age individual during remote learning to complete their transition program
- An ABA bill while on the waiting list to be approved by insurance
- A keyboard for an individual that is nonverbal to be able to express themselves and communicate through music
- Sign language classes for parents to communicate with their child in preparation for another surgery after the first surgery the child was unable to communicate through words
- Adaptive bike to increase independence and allow for participation in family adventures in the community
- An insurance co-pay for a speech device to allow a child the ability to communicate.
- A dental bill for a child that does not have dental insurance.

\$1,778,382 funded through Individual Requests

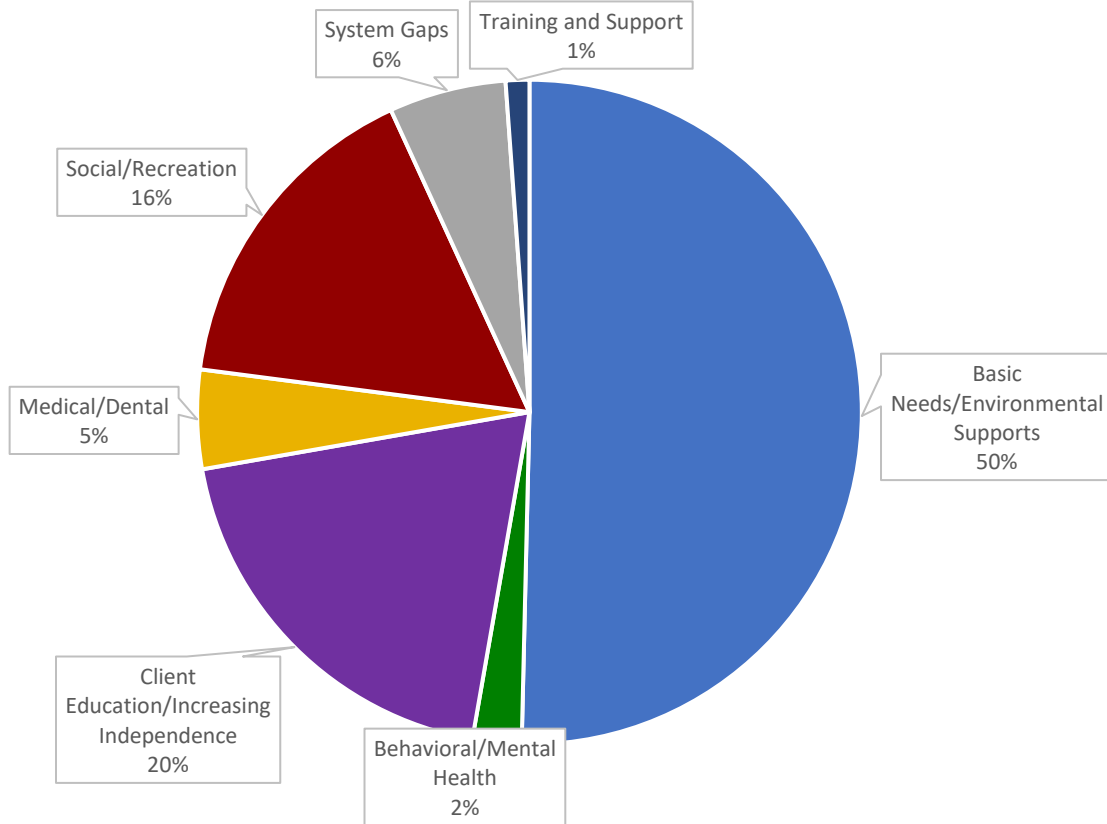
- 56% increase from 2019
- 1078 unduplicated Denver Residents submitted Individual Requests (3740 total requests)
- 91% Requested Amount of Funds Approved (full or partial amount)
- 2.1% Denial Rate of Total Requests



Tristan Lawrence did not expect the path to his dreams and goals to unfold on 12-foot poster paper. Tristan’s mother Gabrielle submitted a Client Assistance request to receive services from PATH to PossAbilities, an organization that helps individuals and businesses reach their desired future through person-centered planning. Facilitators from the program helped Gabrielle realize that Tristan had a large community of support who were more than happy to give up 3 hours of a Saturday to help Tristan put his PATH Plan together. “It was both eye opening and a huge sigh of relief to know he had a support system I didn’t even think about,” Gabrielle said.

In 2020, 100 percent of individual request approvals were for the benefit of the Denver resident with I/DD and met the definition of one or more of the following priority areas.

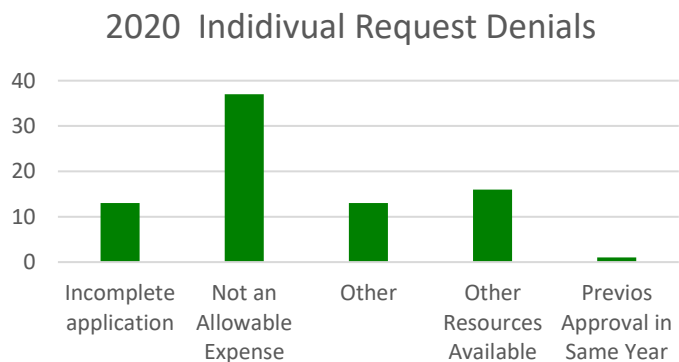
January 2020 - December 2020 for Individual Requests by Funding Priority (n=3740)



Denials

Of the 3,740 requests received, only 77 requests were fully denied, resulting in a 2.1% denial rate, reflective of the Mill Levy Program’s motto and commitment to make sure these funds reach as many Denver residents with I/DD as possible. This was a 50% decrease from the prior year due to improved training and technical assistance regarding request requirements. 2020 requests for funding were denied for the following reasons:

- 13 were for incomplete applications
- 35 were for services/supports that either did not directly benefit the individual with I/DD or were not allowable expenses.
- 16 were due to other resources were available to meet the need.
- 1 was due to receiving approval for the same request in the same year
- 12 were due to a unique reason and noted in the request database



In the response to the 77 denials, RMHS provided explanation about the reason for denial to the individual and/or family and provided information and referrals to other community resources when appropriate as well as information regarding the complaint process.

Mill Levy Support Plans

RMHS continues to offer the MLSPs that were first available in 2017. At least annually, the service coordinator works with the client to identify his or her needs, which may include services or resources not available from Medicaid or other funding sources. These needs are documented in an individualized service plan, and mill levy funds are then used to pay for identified services that other funding sources do not support. Service Coordinators offer MLSPs for each Denver resident with I/DD enrolled in the following programs:

The Mill Support Plans fill system gaps in support needs and provide additional services that are unfunded or underfunded by Medicaid or other resources.

- Early Intervention (EI) Services
- Family Support program
- HCBS-DD (Comp) Waiver
- HCBS-Supported Living Services (SLS) Waiver
- HCBS-Children’s Extensive Supports (CES) Waiver
- State SLS Program
- Mill Levy not in program (for Denver Residents that receive case management services outside of RMHS).

These programs are funded through federal and state funds including Medicaid and/or state general fund dollars. Individual Service Plans are developed using both public funds as well as private insurance to address the developmental and support needs of the person receiving services. Mill Service Plans are developed to fill system gaps in support needs and provide additional services that cannot be met through the program’s funding limits and requirements.

Early Intervention MLSPs

The Early Intervention (EI) program provides supports and services to infants and toddlers with developmental delays and their families. **In 2020 \$777,043 in mill levy funds was utilized to support 3,091 MLSP services for the benefit of 1,513 unique Denver children with developmental delays.** The Mill Levy team strives to support local businesses to provide as many of these services as possible. By doing so, we not only simplify the process, but also improve efficiency and ensure equity for the families receiving these services.

- **Music classes.** Facilitate development and learning, through the joy of music. As our communities shifted to the virtual world this year, these programs were able to adapt and continue to provide services to 445 children in 2020.
- **Environmental Enrichment.** Multiple options to help support therapeutic play through fun and engaging developmental toys, games, and books. These developmentally appropriate toy packages ensure that families have the right tools to continue to build on the skills learned in therapy sessions. Without this support, many children would only have these items available during therapy sessions and miss out on vital learning opportunities.
- **Home Safety.** Products such as cabinet locks, baby gate, monitors, stove guards, and outlet covers help families safeguard their home.
- **Essentials for Growth.** Support growth and development by having the right car seat, highchair, stroller, crib, and/or bed to meet the child’s changing needs.
- **Respite.** Families can choose a provider to care for their child with a developmental disability allowing them to take a break from care giving responsibilities.

<i>EI MLSP</i>	<i># of Children Benefited</i>	<i>Community Partnership</i>
<i>Music Classes</i>	319	Twinkle Together, Music Together, Mile High Music
<i>Environmental Enrichment</i>	626	Timbuk Toys
<i>Home Safety</i>	230	Autism Community Store
<i>Essential for Growth</i>	629	
<i>Respite</i>	596	Family Selected Providers

Family Support MLSPs

The Family Support program is a state funded program that provides individualized supports and services to families who are caring for a family member with developmental delays/disabilities. In 2020 **\$1,370,133 in mill levy funds was utilized to support 2,013 MLSP services for the benefit 1,131 unique Denver children.** Family Support program funding is determined by a child and family’s Most in Need (MIN) assessment that is completed by our Family Support Service Coordinators. **Respite continues to be the most significant need for these families with nearly \$1.1 Million utilized in 2020.** The MLSPs follows the overall design of the Family Support program to determine supplemental support needs.

<i>Family Support MLSP</i>	<i># of Children Benefited</i>
<i>Assistive Technology</i>	30
<i>Camp</i>	21
<i>Dental</i>	1
<i>Environmental Engineering/Home Mod</i>	1
<i>Housing</i>	1
<i>Medical</i>	10
<i>Family Support Menu</i>	206
<i>Parent/Sibling Support</i>	3
<i>Professional Services</i>	91
<i>Respite</i>	956
<i>Transportation</i>	4
<i>Other²</i>	42

With the goal to reach a greater number of families receiving Family Support program services in the Denver, we gathered data and feedback from families and the staff supporting them to launch the Family Support program mill levy menu. Although support in these areas was always available through Individual Requests, we patterned the success we have had in the EI MLSPs to identify common products and resources, while partnering with local businesses, to streamline the request and authorization process. Since September 2020, we were able to support these families by providing the following:

² adaptive recreation, tutoring, interpretation services, funeral expenses, memberships, specialized COVID requests

- **Sensory Menu.** Partnering with Sensory Kids Inc, we were able to provide 173 families with a variety of sensory items to meet the specific needs of their children. Items such as chewable necklaces, weighted blankets and vests, and pod swings are available to meet the varying sensory needs of individuals accepting services.
- **Essentials for Growth.** Ensure that the families we are serving, continue to have access to the right beds and car seats to support their child’s growth and development We were able to provide 99 families with the items needed to make sure their child was safe and supported.
- **Music Classes.** With the music classes offered to children and families in the Early Intervention program continuing to be offered through age 6, we began offering these classes to children ages 3-6, accepting Family Support services. Although, it was a small sampling and a new service made available, we are proud to report being able to continue services for 10 families upcoming in 2021.

HCBS MLSPs

In 2020 \$1,350,003 in mill levy funds was utilized to fund 2,376 MLSP services to benefit 1,943 Denver residents with I/DD. Service Coordinators meet four times per year, and as needed, with individuals enrolled in an HCBS waiver. At the quarterly in-person or virtual meeting, the team reviews the service and support needs and determines if there are any system gaps or additional support needs that are not available through the waiver or State funded program.

HCBS MLSPs are also offered to mill levy eligible people not currently enrolled in an HCBS program, are on the waiting list for the HCBS-DD Waiver, are not eligible for long term care Medicaid or receive case management outside of RMHS.

<i>HCBS MLSPs</i>	<i># of People Benefited</i>
<i>Behavioral Services</i>	232
<i>Community Connector</i>	4
<i>Day Habilitation</i>	581
<i>Homemaker</i>	278
<i>Mentorship</i>	121
<i>Personal Assistance</i>	230
<i>Pre-Vocational Services</i>	4
<i>Professional Services</i>	645
<i>Residential</i>	4
<i>Respite</i>	188
<i>Supported Employment</i>	65
<i>Transportation</i>	24

Anthony Thomas is on the autism spectrum and has had two major surgeries in the past two years. As a result, Anthony has constant supervision due to the pain caused by the surgeries. Because Anthony is nonverbal his mother, Salina, is his primary caretaker because she is the one that most fully understands his needs. Anthony receives support from the SLS waiver to meet some of his daily support needs and the Mill Levy Program has been able to provide additional supports such as personal care and day habilitation services through an MLSP as well as a laptop and headphones that he received through individualized requests. “As a single mother, sometimes I need help and RMHS has been able to provide that,” said Salina Mosley.



MLSP Providers

RMHS invites all Program Approved Service Agencies (PASAs), providing one or more of the above services to Denver residents, to contract with us to provide services through the MLSPs. **In 2020, RMHS contracted with 122 PASAs to provide MLSP services.**

Complaint Process

To ensure we are responsive to the community’s needs and accurately recording complaints, RMHS has an established complaint process for individuals to voice their concerns regarding the outcome of their individual request. **Between January 1 and December 31, 2020, RMHS only received 2 complaints, which were resolved through the complaint process.** Every effort was made to support the individual or family member seeking further consideration through this process.

RMHS Enhanced Services

Twenty-Nine Percent (29%) of the total mill levy funding expended in this reporting period supported enhanced services that **RMHS provided to more than 4,500 unduplicated individuals in Denver.** The purpose of these services is **to provide additional support to Denver residents with I/DD in accessing mill levy funding.** Without mill levy funding, these individual’s needs would not be met as comprehensively or as expeditiously.

RMHS Departments Providing Enhanced Services	2020 Mill Levy Funding
Service Coordination	
Intake	\$ 1,027,140
Family Support program	\$ 847,442
Service Coordination (HCBS and State SLS)	\$ 585,162
Developmental & Behavioral Health	
Early Intervention Services	\$ 728,260
Children's Clinical Services	\$ 851,665
Communications and Community Relations	
Communications & Outreach	\$ 91,179
Mill Levy Program	
RMHS Initiatives	\$ 202,470

Enhanced Service Coordination

The following RMHS departments are specifically responsible for providing enhanced service coordination through a variety of programs and age groups: Intake, Early Intervention Services, Family Support program and Service Coordination. RMHS service coordinators provide case management to children and adults receiving Medicaid and state funded I/DD and developmental delay services. Case management includes intake activities, eligibility determinations, service enrollment, and ongoing service coordination and monitoring of services. Service coordinators also assist individuals in securing other non-developmental disability-funded services and benefits, such as medical, social security, and educational services. As Denver's CCB, RMHS is responsible for intake and eligibility determination for all Denver residents seeking I/DD services.

Enhanced Service Coordination	2020 Number of People Served³
Intake	3,090
Early Intervention Services	2310
Family Support program	1461
Service Coordination (HCBS and State SLS)	1160

The following highlights some ways that enhanced service coordination directly impacts people supported and their families:

- **Intake.** Increase time spent with each Denver resident during the intake process to provide options counseling and assess needs that could be met through an **MLSP for individuals seeking eligibility/enrollment**, but not yet enrolled in a program.
- **Early Intervention Services. Reduces wait time for children from birth to age 18 to receive assessments for developmental delays and disabilities**, so they can receive therapies as soon as possible.
- **Family Support program.** Provides additional funding beyond state dollars for direct services and case management for families of children ages 3 and older with I/DD. **Without mill levy funding, 275 individuals would wait for services.** *Please Note: This number was calculated on the SFY 20-21 Family Support program budget. The State gave RMHS additional resources to serve more individuals through the state funds. The waitlist would have been more than 800 in SFY 19-20.*
- **Service Coordination.** Individual's needs often surpass Medicaid's one billable activity per month reimbursement model for service coordination. **Mill levy funding enhances service coordination by lowering caseloads, which in turn allows staff more time to be responsive to the individualized needs.** This funding also allows for flexibility to meet individual needs by supporting functions that are not for eligible for reimbursement through Medicaid or state funded programs.

³ Some individuals receive services from more than one RMHS program during the year and are therefore included in each program's count.

Children’s Clinical Services and Support

The RMHS Mill Levy Program was able to support children receiving Early Intervention services through enhanced clinical services. In 2020, **\$1,027,140 in mill levy funds was utilized to support Children’s clinical team for 2,601 unique Denver children with developmental delays.** Among these children the clinicians completed **3,094 assessments** and provided **51,966 individual treatment** sessions. These numbers include children enrolled in state funded EI services as well as mill levy eligible children that are not enrolled in EI services.

\$1,027,140 for Children’s Clinical Services

- **3,000+ Assessments**
- **51,996 Treatment Services**
- **No waitlist for children under 3 for diagnostic assessments for autism**

In addition to the assessment and treatment services, Mill levy funding was able to offer virtual training programs for parents in 2020, which included:

- Potty-training program (English/Spanish)
- Parent coaching program
- Speech training program

Communications and Outreach

In 2020, \$91,179 mill levy funds were used to maintain necessary staff and cover actual costs to conduct community outreach and communication activities including but not limited to Denver mill levy funded services and supports. This outreach provides us with opportunities for stakeholder feedback as well as raising community awareness about accessing services through the Mill Levy Program. Prior to the pandemic, RMHS was able to participate in 9 in-person events with nearly 1500 attendees. With the onset of the pandemic in March, many of our typical and scheduled outreach events were cancelled or indefinitely postponed.

Our **Communications and Outreach (C&O) team quickly adjusted to support Denver residents with I/DD and their families during the ongoing public health crisis.** RMHS is pleased to report that our team was able to capitalize on their skills in the virtual space to continue to get the word out to as many people as possible, as highlighted below:

- Created a new community resource newsletter and an expanded, online resource library. Both the newsletter and online library highlighted mill levy-funded services supports and resources alongside community partners available to help meet a wide array of basic needs. The monthly e-newsletter is distributed to more than 2,000 subscribers.
- Created COVID-19 specific website pages to share [latest guidance](#) and [resources](#).
- Conducted 8 Community Advisory Council meetings, shifting to virtual meeting in April 2020.
- Held a virtual community forum for RMHS clients, family members and the community to learn about the RMHS Mill Levy Program. For more details about the virtual community forum, please see page 21 of this report.
- Regularly updated the RMHS website to:
 - Provide new information about community partners and valuable resources and programs.



- Publish Board and Community Advisory Council meeting agendas, presentations and minutes and organization reports.
 - Provide translations of key information for Spanish speakers.
 - Maintain online calendar of client, partner and community events.
 - Share stories about clients and families who have benefited from mill levy funding.
 - Offer an online request form to non-RMHS clients needing to request mill levy funds to meet individual needs.
- Participated in various virtual resource fairs and conferences including, Rocky Mountain Syndrome Association, Grupo Vida, and Healthy Baby Summit.
 - Created virtual informational packets for groups that C&O would normally meet with in person.
 - Shifted in-person to virtual standing meetings such as the Denver Human Services Virtual Community Network Meeting that is held every two months.
 - In addition to creating a new informational brochure for the RMHS Family Support Services program in both English and Spanish, the C&O team ensured that digital copies of all informational brochures and flyers were available for distribution by RMHS staff and at online meetings and events.
 - Promoted mill levy-related efforts, including community partner events and client stories, through social media communications.
 - Provided in-depth highlights of Mill Levy Partners monthly in the RMHS community newsletter.
 - Maintained Mill Levy Partner Facebook Group Page for partners to share resources and information.

RMHS Initiatives

RMHS uses a portion of the mill levy funding to mitigate barriers to services and supports through dedicated staff positions and targeted programs, RMHS Initiatives. In 2020, RMHS utilized **\$202,470 in mill levy funds to meet system gaps, extend our reach to Denver residents with I/DD, and ensure people waiting for other services or seeking eligibility and/or services are accessing mill levy-funded services as needed.**

Dedicated Staff Positions

RMHS uses mill levy funds to staff positions, which provide service coordination to Denver residents with I/DD that do not receive RMHS CCB case management services as well as targeted service coordination to address acute needs. RMHS is pleased to report that in 2020, we were not only able to maintain the existing Mill Levy Service Coordinators in each program, but added additional positions including the Denver Early Steps Program Manager, Denver Public Schools (DPS) Liaison and Crisis Case Manager to fill specific gaps that were highlighted during this unprecedented year. Each mill levy dedicated position and key areas of focus are described below:

EI Engagement Specialist

- Increase engagement during all stages of the Early Intervention program
- Identify needs, gaps and barriers to improve services and experience for all participants
- Develop programming and supports to best meet needs
- Provide easier access to supports and services

Family Support Program Children's Coordinator

- Provides education and options counseling regarding RMHS and other services
- Identifies family needs that may not be covered under the Family Support program or private insurance
- Maintains the Mill Levy not in program (NIP) caseload

Adult Waitlist Coordinator

- Coordinates mill levy services for individuals who are:
 - Not eligible for long term care Medicaid
 - Enrolled in a non-I/DD Medicaid waiver (Elderly, Blind, Disabled Wavier, CMHS, HCA)
 - Enrolled in case management services with another CCB and reside in Denver.
- Monitors HCBS-DD waitlist status
- Provides options counseling to individuals and families regarding available services and supports through Medicaid waivers, mill levy funding and/or community resources.

DPS Liaison

- Coordinates communication with Denver Public Schools
- Connects families seeking eligibility and enrollment with the RMHS Intake Coordinator for DPS
- Connects families that are enrolled in services with their Family Support program service coordinator
- Supports families in receiving ample IEP and educational supports
- Participates in DPS SEAC Special Education Advisory Committee
- Provides options counseling and support to families during key milestones to ensure continuity of services
 - Children just entering school (ages 3-5)
 - Youth preparing for adult services (age 14)
 - Youth transitioning to adult services (ages 18-21)

Crisis Case Manager

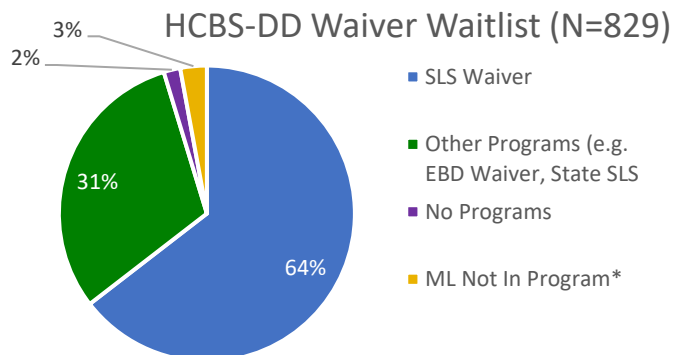
- Provides support or functions as lead service coordinator in crisis/emergency situations
- Develops relationships and liaises with other emergency programs and resources to assist Denver Residents with I/DD
- Attends the RMHS Human Rights Committee to support Denver residents with I/DD and provide resources that are available to support that individual.
- Trains service coordination on community resources

Denver Early Steps Program Manager and Program Assistant

- Assess changes to the State EI eligibility criteria
- Track all children July 1- December 31, 2020 that were denied State EI Services.
- Develop program requirements for Denver children impacted (25%-32% Delay)
- Develop framework to mirror existing EI services
- Develop project plan for January 2021 implementation for EI Denver EI Services

HCBS-DD Waiver Waitlist Management

As the state-designated CCB, RMHS manages the HCBS-DD waiver waitlist for individuals residing in Denver. Currently there are 829 Denver residents waiting for the HCBS-DD Waiver, which includes residential services and supports. Most of these individuals currently receive supports and services through the HCBS-Supported Living Services (SLS) Waiver or other HCBS waiver or a state funded program. **Eligible people that are not receiving any services comprise only 2% of the waitlist.**



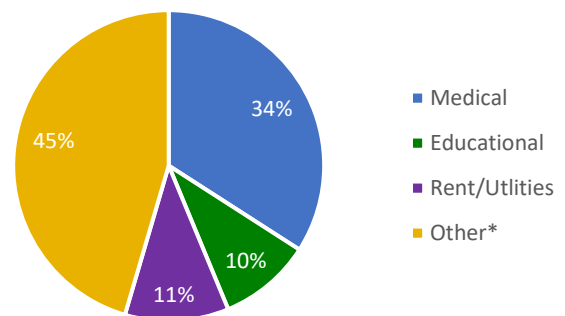
*ML Not in Program includes individuals that receive case management services outside of RMHS and are receiving HCBS waiver or state funded services.

As described above, the Adult Waitlist Coordinator is funded through RMHS Initiatives to support mill levy eligible individuals that otherwise do not have an RMHS CCB service coordinator.


In 2020, the Adult Waitlist Coordinator provided service coordination to 106 individuals throughout the year. Each person was provided with MLSP service options including respite, day program, music therapy, massage therapy, behavioral services, personal care, mentorship, homemaker services. **Twenty-three people requested at least one of the MLSP service options.** The remainder declined MLSP service options because they were already enrolled and receiving sufficient support through an existing HCBS waiver or state funded program or they indicated they were not in need of these services. **Additionally, the Adult Waitlist Coordinator assisted with 176 Individual Requests that were approved to support individual’s unique needs.**

2020 Adult Waitlist Coordinator Caseload	
Not on a waitlist, receiving other services (CHRP, CLLI, Foster Care)	3
Not on a waitlist – no other services	16
Active with another CCB	19
On HCBS-DD Waiver Waitlist – no other services	23
On HCBS-DD Waiver waitlist – with other services (EBD, CMH, HCA)	45

Individual Requests (n=176)



*(i.e., furniture, clothing, exercise equipment, recreational activities)



One eligible person enrolled in the Home Care Allowance program also received day programming services through an MLSP. He was able to participate in supported community connections 4 days per week, with a small group to participate in fun activities, engage with peers, increase social and safety skills, and enhance his quality of life. He recently graduated from high school and otherwise would not have any structured activities or programs to spend his time.

Another person enrolled in the HCBS-EBD waiver was also eligible for Denver mill funding. He received music therapy through an MLSP to support his communication needs and helps him to better express himself and his needs.

Children's Clinical Team Supports

As described above, mill levy funding provided diagnostic and treatment services through our Children's Clinical Services and Supports program. To recruit and retain highly qualified staff, employ best practices, and ensure excellent service delivery, RMHS utilized additionally mill levy funds through RMHS Initiatives to support the clinical team and families through the following:

- **Trainings for clinicians.** Mill levy funds provide continuing education opportunities and access to specialized trainings to keep our clinicians up to date on most current research and therapeutic models.
- **Clinical Support Supplies.** In response to the pandemic, clinicians had to pivot immediately to a telehealth setting. Mill levy funding was able to support buy purchasing various products to enhance the telehealth experience. Mill levy funding also purchased standardized diagnostic assessments to for the clinicians completing diagnostic assessments for children under 3.
- **Play and Learn Library.** Therapeutic equipment to support the child's clinical treatment. This enables the family to test the equipment before purchasing it to determine if it is effective for their child.
- **COVID Safety Kit.** In response to the pandemic and as the State began authorizing in-person therapy, mill levy funds were used to provide the Clinical Team with adequate supplies to comply with all COVID safety protocols such as face shields, thermometers, gloves, disinfectant, hand sanitizer, and a variety of masks.

Denver Early Steps

RMHS was already seeing the effects of the pandemic on the early intervention families and its decline in enrollment due to a variety of challenges, particularly with the telehealth model. Understanding the value and long-term outcomes for children in early intervention services, these concerns escalated in July 2020. The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) responded to the state budget crisis by promulgating an emergency rule which shifts the threshold for EI services in Colorado from a 25% delay to a 33% delay (12 CCR 2509.10 Vol 7.901). These changes **projected a 27% reduction in new enrollments in 2021 leaving more than 400 children ages birth to 3 years old without EI services in Denver.**

Due to RMHS's key role in the community, we were able to assess the needs of children no longer eligible for State Early Intervention programs and make strategic recommendations on how mill levy funds could pivot quickly to meet a critical need for Denver families.



RMHS immediately approached DHS to re-prioritize 2020 RMHS Initiatives funds to include a program manager position to initiate program development for the **proposed Denver Early Steps program to provide early intervention services for those children that would no longer qualify under the new rule.** RMHS developed a budget and initial framework that would mirror the EI Colorado program so that families would experience minimal differences. **DHS promptly approved the Program Manager position and subsequent \$2.9 Million dollar budget to fund the Denver Early Steps program in 2021.**

Community Initiatives (External Projects)

Since 2017, RMHS has been providing funding opportunities for community agencies to propose unique and innovative programs that would otherwise not be available through current funding sources. Each of the 2020 projects met at least one of the funding priorities as previously outlined in this report (see page 5).

In 2020, 27 projects were initially approved. One project terminated their contract due to the inability to provide group respite in a COVID environment. The 26 remaining projects were able to make modifications successfully and safely to their scopes of work to deliver the intended services in a remote and/or COVID conscious setting. These projects have demonstrated resiliency, innovation, and passion to move forward during this pandemic.

The Community Initiatives collectively utilized \$2,904,740 in mill levy funding and impacted nearly 2,000 Denver residents with I/DD and/or their family/caregiver ---during a pandemic! Because of the implementation delays and their proven ability to shift during the pandemic, RMHS with support from DHS offered 1-year extensions to the existing contracts to fully realize their intended outcomes and maximize the number of people served.

The following provides an **overview of the types of services and target populations across the 2020 Community Initiatives collectively**. Please see Appendix A project level detail budget, people served, and outcomes achieved.

6 Projects Serving Children

- Inclusive social development after school groups, recess facilitation and camps
- Early childhood inclusive education using the LEAP Preschool Framework
- Teaching children with and without disabilities in inclusive early childhood environments
- Connecting families to community resources
- Training for parents with children preparing to enter the school system.
- Affordable telehealth parent coaching through the Parent-Mediated Early Start Denver Model (P-ESDM)
- Services for children with I/DD who are survivors of trauma, abuse or neglect.

6 Projects Serving Teens to Early Adulthood

- Social and life skills development in inclusive settings
- Preparing and training for life transitions
- Post-Secondary school goals and independent living skills
- Vocational/trade education
- Classroom curriculum designed to make best use of technology skills

9 Projects Serving Adults

- Educational and economic arts opportunities for adults with I/DD



- Inclusive small group weekend, evening and community experiences and travel opportunities
- Supports for people who are at risk or experiencing homelessness through intensive case management and navigating the eligibility process for I/DD services.
- Increase employment opportunities
- Financial Health, Technology Essentials and More than a Job Classes
- Job training while cultivating life and work skills, social emotional engagement, and tools for independence and wellbeing.
- Crisis support, training and consultation for dually diagnosed adults with IDD
- Develop and practice social skills. Coaching sessions for parents and caregivers.
- Opportunities to practice independent living skills, build relationships, develop capacity to make choices and self-advocate

5 Projects Serving All Ages

- Pilot program designed to improve communication between mental health and I/DD service providers and offer cross-system services.
- Resources and support with special needs planning from
- Training for parents to support other parents and positive behavior support training for the parents of younger children
- Inclusive yoga opportunities and nutrition and cooking classes
- Support groups, social events, resource fairs, trainings in an accepting and sensory-inclusive setting.

With input from the CAC and other stakeholders, the Mill Levy Team continues to streamline the Community Initiatives selection process. **In the fall of 2020, RMHS worked with the CAC to update the scoring rubric and priority funding areas to include accessibility and diversity, equity, and inclusion, respectively.**

The selection process now includes a 2-tier approach. In the first tier, RMHS staff across the various programs are selected to participate in the proposal technical scoring. In the second tier, the ML Director meets with RMHS Executive Leadership for final project approval. This tier includes a review of the technical scores, recommendations from the Mill Levy Program management team, as well as input from the CAC. **This approach allows RMHS to select the community initiatives that will meet the most relevant, underserved and/or impactful support needs for Denver residents with I/DD.** RMHS looks forward to continued success in 2021 with all of our Community Initiatives.

COVID 19 Response

In these difficult financial times, we recognize how important mill levy funds are in meeting the unique needs of individuals and families as they navigate both the economic downturn and impacts of COVID-19. The Mill Levy Program allows us the financial flexibility to pivot quickly and assist people who have pressing needs and scant options.

Housing Stabilization Assistance

Due to the significant housing crisis in Denver during the pandemic, DHS partnered with RMHS early on to make additional funds available through an agreement for housing stabilization assistance related to COVID-19. This ensured RMHS could meet the increased need for such individualized supports and keep our families safe at home. These funds **provided immediate assistance for housing stability to Denver residents with I/DD or developmental delays experiencing unexpected challenges due to COVID-19.**

Housing Stabilization Assistance

- Rent/Mortgage: \$438,252
- Utilities: \$30,022

From May to December **\$468,273.88 in mill levy funds** were utilized **for housing assistance, relocation expenses, temporary housing, and utilities to 205 individuals.** The amount required to support this need exceeded the additional funding provided and was shifted to the main contract to ensure Denver residents with I/DD were supported. Examples of individuals we were able to support included:

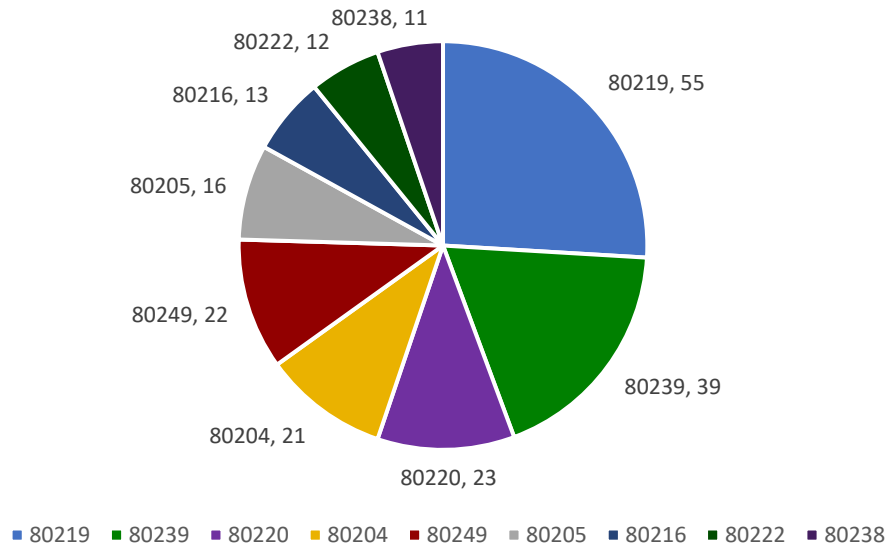
- **Rent for a single mom with a child who has Autism.** They were able stay in their apartment after mom lost her job due to Covid until unemployment benefits could start. This provided the child a stable environment which is essential for an individual with Autism and allowed for the child to continue to engage in therapy sessions.
- **Rent for a family with two children receiving support from RMHS.** The entire family contracted Covid and were unable to work temporarily.
- **Internet bill for a child receiving support to access Telehealth services** when in person therapy services were suspended.

The funds to support 205 individuals focused on those greatest in need in the Denver community as demonstrated in the following graphs by zip code and ethnicity, respectively.

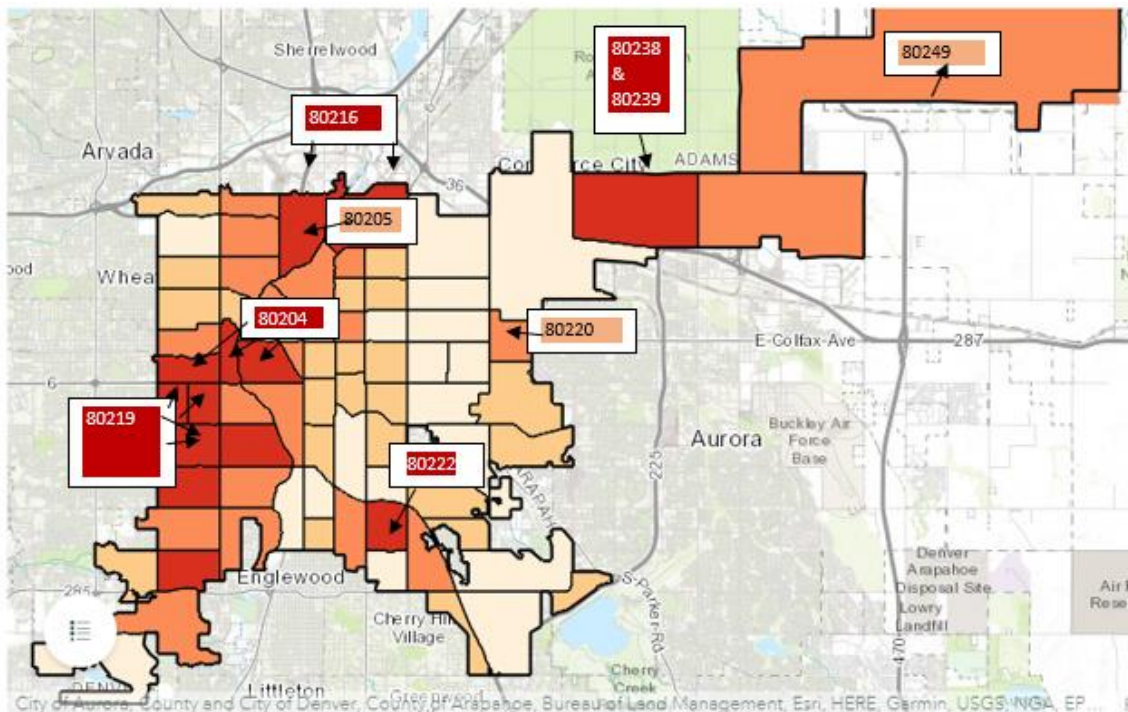
Zip Code

The top 9 zip codes for number of requests match the disproportionate rate that these communities have been impacted by COVID-19.

Housing Stabilization Assistance by Zip Code



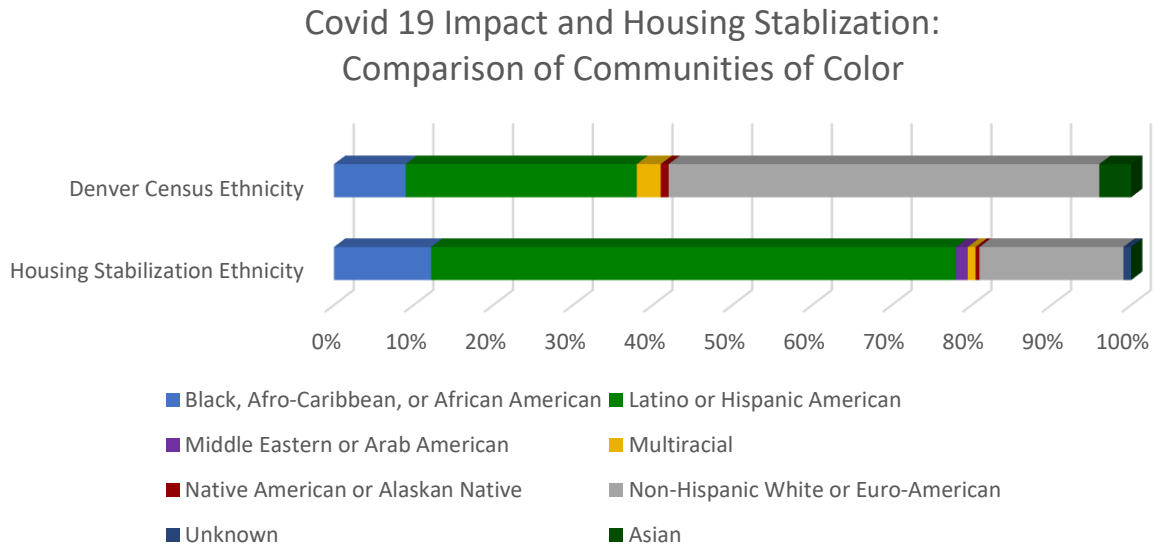
City and County of Denver COVID Hotspots ⁴ Data



⁴ December 2020 review dates for HSA Contract in comparison to COVID cases on 11/17/2020.

Ethnicity

The highest percentages served through the Housing Stabilization Assistance contract were for Black and Latino individuals which matches the research for the disproportionate rate that these ethnic groups have been impacted by COVID-19. According to an article published by Colorado Public Radio with data from Colorado Health Foundation, “Black and Latino residents are getting sick and dying from COVID-19 at higher rates in Colorado, and nationally. They are also disproportionately feeling the effects of the pandemic-sparked recession.”⁵



Virtual Community Forum

From Surviving to Thriving: Accessing the Mill Levy Program to Support Your “New Normal”. With most children starting school remotely and day programs continuing to meet virtually, it became apparent that the pandemic and safer at home orders were not going away any time soon. Individuals supported, families, and stakeholders reported that many were struggling to navigate the “new normal”. Since the onset of the pandemic, the Mill Levy Program team monitored trends and solicited feedback regarding the needs that were not being met or new needs that had surfaced across programs. The purpose of the community forum was to remind Denver residents that **mill levy funding has been and continues to be available to offer individualized wrap-around services through Individual Requests and MLSPs.**

⁵ <https://www.cpr.org/2020/09/10/communities-of-color-hit-hard-by-coronavirus-step-in-to-fill-the-gaps-in-the-governments-response/>

Compared with United States Census Bureau <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/denvercountycolorado>

Attendees were able to choose to attend a variety of sessions. The presenters highlighted the following services and supports that emerged as common needs resulting from pandemic and emphasized their availability to Denver residents with I/DD and their families and caretakers. **One session was offered fully in Spanish and had more than 40 attendees.**

Dependent Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows parents to focus on the child with I/DD during a telehealth session or doctor's appt, IEP meeting or during remote school.
Educational Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay for a family selected provider to provide support in the remote classroom.
Education Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase individualized school supplies, not provided by the schools, to meet the learning needs of the child with I/DD.
Homemaker Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support with housecleaning, meal planning and other necessities to support a home environment conducive to learning and wellbeing.
Internet Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure affordable and reliable access to internet service to be able to stay connected and build virtual connections.
Technology Devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laptops, tablets, Chromebooks and other devices are available through our individual requests.
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SupportsResources to teach skills needed to thrive in the virtual world.

To make as many people as possible aware of how mill levy funding could alleviate some of the stressors that resulted from these needs, the Mill Levy Program team provided a technical assistance session in advance for all service coordinators across programs in preparation for the virtual community forum held in October. We also advertised the forum on the RMHS website, through social media and in our monthly newsletter, and through the members of the CAC and their respective organizations. RMHS is pleased to report that **the virtual forum was a great success with at least 75 people in attendance, which was more than any other in-person community forum hosted by the Mill Levy Program in the past.**

Boredom Buster Packages

In March, when the COVID 19 pandemic was impacting people around the world, individuals and families were faced with school and day programming closures and lack of in-person support services. The Mill Levy Team worked with local community vendors and case management to quickly develop and deploy "Boredom Buster" packages.

- 324 packages to ages 0-3
- 380 packages to ages 3-9
- 197 packages to ages 10-18
- 435 packages to ages 18+

Thoughtfully crafted, these packages included a wide variety of items designed to benefit clients with activities they could do on their own, as well as with others, to stay engaged. They provided opportunities to keep busy, be entertained, reduce anxiety and/or tap into their creative side. RMHS was able to provide packages to 1336 individuals. This included individuals of all ages with a developmental disability or delay living in Denver.



Denise lives alone in her apartment so the impact of COVID 19 was particularly isolating. She was so excited to receive her package! The picture says it all.

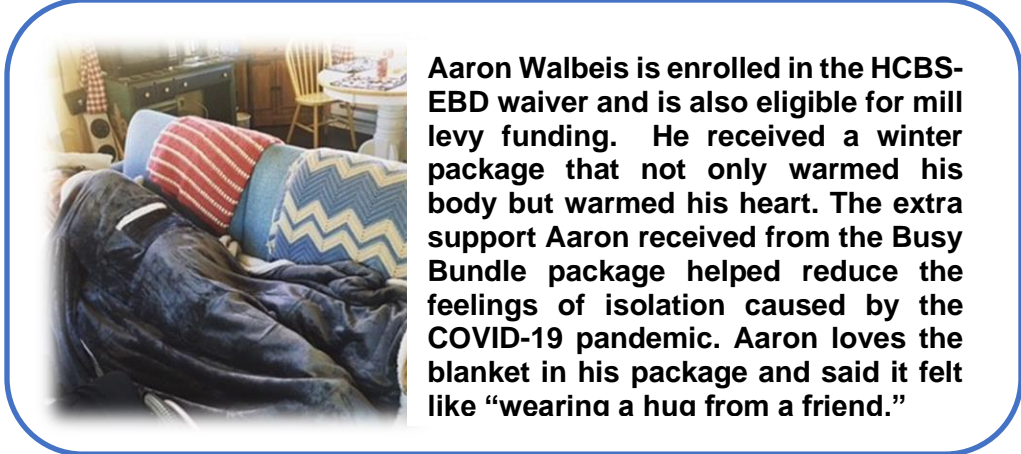
Winter Packages

As the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic progressed into late 2020, many Denver residents with I/DD continued to practice safer at home guidelines and had been largely homebound and restricted from participating in their normal daily activities. In response to the bleak prospect of not returning to any type of normalcy and the positive feedback from the Boredom Buster packages, the Mill Levy team worked with RMHS program staff to develop three winter packages aimed at combatting the ongoing effects of the pandemic. Two were specifically offered to eligible adults and one for families with an eligible child receiving early intervention services.

Adult Packages

The Mill Levy team along with service coordinators worked hard to ensure that the 528 requested packages were ordered and shipped by the end of December.

- **“All Bundled Up”**. This package included items to support a comfortable and healthy home, such as humidifiers, air purifiers, heated blankets, an InstaPot, and a cookbook.
- **“Busy Bundle”**. This package countered cabin fever by providing entertainment options such as handheld video games, art supplies, puzzles, an awesome fidget cube, drone, and a mini basketball hoop.



Aaron Walbeis is enrolled in the HCBS-EBD waiver and is also eligible for mill levy funding. He received a winter package that not only warmed his body but warmed his heart. The extra support Aaron received from the Busy Bundle package helped reduce the feelings of isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Aaron loves the blanket in his package and said it felt like “wearing a hug from a friend.”

Infant Packages

Based on feedback from the children's program areas, the Mill Levy team targeted the third winter package toward families with children under 18 months. This package provided some essentials as well as toys, games, and books to ease the continued toll the pandemic was taking on families. **We were able provide 50 families with hours of fun for their children, without the worry or potential risk that a trip to the store could bring during these challenging times.**

Summary

RMHS provides service coordination and direct services to adults and children with I/DD in Denver and surrounding areas. As the CCB and single point of entry for individuals seeking assistance for needs related to I/DD, RMHS is in the best position to meet this community's needs. As demonstrated throughout this report, this was never more apparent than during 2020 as we faced unprecedented challenges throughout the pandemic and other national and local crises. Despite these challenges, RMHS remained steadfast in the goals of the Mill Levy Program to increase access to services, offer flexible service and provider options and meet individualized needs.

RMHS is grateful to the City and County of Denver for its generosity to people with I/DD and is honored to serve these individuals every day. RMHS is resolved in our commitment to embrace challenges and to create responsive and innovative solutions through the mill levy funding as demonstrated throughout this year. We were not only able to reshape and develop new programs and fill system gaps, but we continued to provide the individualized wrap-around services that enhance people's quality of life and wellbeing and make all the difference for that individual and family --- which is at the heart of the Mill Levy Program as highlighted in one final example from 2020.



One-and-a-half-year-old Allison⁶ is hard of hearing and receives services from the EI program at RMHS. Her mother, Claire, ran into tough times during the COVID-19 pandemic. RMHS Mill Levy Program was able to help, addressing a variety of developmental and support needs for Claire and Allison, providing full wrap-around supports in 2020. Allison's EI case manager worked with Mill Levy to create a support plan to help in Allison's development and completed an Individual Request to help the family keep a stable home environment.

Through Denver mill levy funding, Allison gained access to a menu of options based on identified needs to enhance the services she received from the State's EI program with an EI MLSP. From her personalized plan, Allison attended music classes and received toys to aid her development. In her classes, she learned how to match her movements to rhythm. For example, she began to recognize her head and other parts of her body by connecting music to the movements. "The classes and toys Allison received this year to support her development made being home much easier and educational," Claire said.

In addition, the family received housing support through the Mill Levy Program client assistance Individual Request option after Claire's hours at work were cut by 50 percent as her company struggled with the new realities brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Claire usually managed paying the mortgage and utilities but with the cut in hours she was no longer able to support those payments, putting Allison's home and learning environment at risk. The Mill Levy Program provided financial assistance to pay for 4

⁶ The family provided a release to share their story, but asked that their names be changed to protect their privacy.

months of rent and some of the utility bills from the COVID-19 Housing Stability Fund offered through the RMHS Mill Levy Program. This assistance was possible because of the steps RMHS has taken to ensure local funds are offered from an individual lens, allowing us to meet people where they are.

For questions about this report contact:
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Appendix A: Community Initiatives (External Projects)

Ability Connection Colorado

Parent to Parent of Colorado (P2P-CO), offered by Ability Connection Colorado, is a parent support organization, which provides ongoing information and emotional support to over 4,000 families across Colorado. P2P-CO provided support and training for Denver parents who have children with developmental delays or I/DD. Through the Mill Levy Program, P2P-CO was able to provide support and training for Denver parents.

Parents who want to learn to support other parents received the opportunity to an 8-week on-line training for parents. Parents who received trainings were then matched, upon request, with a new parent looking for information and emotional support. The new challenges created by the Covid19 Pandemic created a need for parents to stay connected more than ever so P2P-CO made modifications. Program adaptations included:

- **Resource Sharing.** During 2020, this training was **supplemented with additional information for parents requesting support around social/emotional/behavioral or mental health needs.**
- **Digital Learning.** In addition to the parent support model, P2P provided a 10-week online training targeted toward parents of younger children (ages 2 – 8) who have challenging behaviors. The focus is to **equip families to use positive behavior support methods with their children in their homes and to be able to advocate for positive behavior support** in their schools and communities.
- **Online Parent Support Group.** Created an **online parent support group** to serve as a forum for families to ask for support and responding to individual requests for support.

“Recognizing feelings and choices was a big part of what we learned as a family...how we communicate those feelings and the choices we make because of those feelings can be negative or positive, so how to make positive outcomes no matter what the feeling are was BIG for our family. This workshop and training improved that so amazingly and the ground I gain with my child in these 13 weeks, I couldn’t have imagined gaining in 10 months!”

“I think the “Fill the Bucket” challenge helped my son so much...it gave us something to look forward to doing every day and a goal.”

-Participants Feedback

In addition to the work that was outlined for 2020, P2P-CO responded to the COVID crisis by implementing weekly updates to families from the information shared in the State sponsored COVID-19 webinars and distributing these resources. The program transitioned many of its services to support parents in need during the pandemic. P2P-CO **supported 145 Denver Parents and utilized \$27,981.43 of mill levy funds** resulting in the following outcomes:

- **Decreased average time for matching a parent with a support parent.** The number of days was decreased by 61% going from an average of 11.5 days in the beginning of the year to 7 days in quarter 4.
- **Achieved high levels of satisfaction with matches from requesting individuals** (9 respondents). 88% of parents reported that being connected to individual support was helpful.
- **Continued to assess overall satisfaction with Parent Training.** The majority of participants (ranging from 84-92%) were satisfied/very satisfied with all survey questions.

Access Gallery

Access Gallery engages the community by opening doors to creative, educational and economic opportunities for people with disabilities to access, experience and benefit from the arts. Access Gallery leverages visual arts to support young adult artists with I/DD to increase independence, integrate into the community and successfully enter the workforce. The Covid19 Pandemic forced Access Gallery to swiftly and substantially redesign programming efforts to continue meeting the needs of their artists. Program adaptations included:

- **Digital Learning.** Partnered with fellow mill levy partner Financial Health Institute (FHI) to design and integrate digital learning options for participants resulting in the **successful delivery of over 175 online classes.**
- **1:1 on-line Mentoring.** Developed an individualized, hands-on plan for each artist to receive one-on-one mentoring with professional artists. This created a space to excel at their own art while communicating with outside resources and ultimately increasing their economic opportunities. **80% of the participants state they have gained new artistic skills and value getting to work with professional artists.**
- **Art Kits.** Provided artists with the necessary "work at home" supplies and materials to continue developing their craft.
- **On-line Art Exhibitions.** Hosted **6 online shows for artists to exhibit and sell their work**



Despite and because of the pandemic, Access Gallery was able to realize positive outcomes in 2020 including the artists learning how to work and maximize their google drive skills, created online portfolios, increased their networks through email and other online platforms, and learned how to positively present themselves on-line.

- Access Gallery supported **67 individuals and utilized \$100,000.00 of mill levy funds.**
- Artists were selected by the Colfax Ave Business Improvement District for two out of their fifteen power for Colfax Strong, celebrating the strength and resiliency of Colfax Avenue while amplifying the creative voices of artists of color and the LGBTQ+ community.
- One Artist was chosen to "paint her version of a Zoom meeting", which was subsequently turned into a 9'x billboard in downtown Denver on the corner of 16th Champa in the Theatre District.
- In April and May, 103 weaving kits were distributed using scraps of leftover materials from artists making hundreds of masks.
- Conducted 49 workshops where 70% of the participants or their providers stated they worked with new mediums and enjoyed working in a social environment.



boxes

32'
and

- 100% of families and participants reported that they are or their loved one are benefiting from the individual mentoring and smaller group classes. 80% reported that the Gallery was an important place where they developed their art talent.

A.J is an illustrator, artist, and young man with autism. He has been a longtime supporter and artist of Access Gallery. He is one Access Galleries most prolific and mobile artists. It is not unusual for AJ to travel 20 or more miles any day. He seems to intuitively know bus routes, has a fascination with trains and will stop whatever he is doing when a large truck rolls by. AJ creates wonderful characters from his imagination and his exploits around Denver. Over the years, AJ has developed a signature character we lovingly call “Light Bulb Head Dude”.

we lovingly call “Light Bulb Head Dude”. His recent work has taken “Light Bulb Head Dude” to new heights both in terms of size and scale. A.J.’s work has been exhibited at many galleries in Denver’s Santa Fe Art District. He received an Award of Excellence from the 2013 VSA Emerging Young Artists Program, which featured his work Mix-Up in a nationally touring exhibition, and his illustrated world appeared in a short film that was accepted into the 2017 Palm Springs International Animation Festival. He is a huge asset to Access Gallery and is becoming known for his artistic skills nationally. Also, during the pandemic AJ has sold seven paintings and has received a commission from a hotel for two original pieces of art.



Activity Options, LLC

Project World is managed by Activity Options LLC, a Colorado Program Approved Service Agency (PASA) which provides a range of services to people with I/DD. The experienced staff worked with the I/DD community in Denver for many years. Project World has been partnering with the Mill Levy Program to organize small groups, weekends and evening community activities as well as overnight travel within Colorado and nearby States since 2018. Activities are chosen by the participants and can include sports, music, theater, local events, physical activities and social opportunities. Door-to-door transportation is provided, and all costs are covered for Denver residents with I/DD.

Expand Your World



While the travel and experiences are a major focus of the project, the relationships that are built during these activities cannot go without notice. Participants form friendships and relationships with one another, extending beyond the scope of the project. During the Covid-19 pandemic these relationships were needed more than ever in a community that is already so affected by isolation. Project World worked hard to maintain their programming and adapt to the ever-changing regulations and safety restrictions. Program adaptations included:

- **Adjusting group sizes.** Project World adjusted group sizes to **follow safety regulations and restrictions to continue meeting in person.**
- **Virtual Connections.** Project World created another way for people to **stay connected in the program through virtual connections.**

The pandemic may have reduced the number of original trips and activities that Project World set out to do, but it did not affect the quality of their services or value to the participants. Project World adapted the amount of people **able to safely meet in person. By doing so, they and created a means for people to connect virtually and maintain the critical relationships and services they had come to count on.**

Activity Options **supported 67 individuals and utilized \$130,000 of mill levy funds resulted in the following outcomes** across four major focus areas:

- **New activity for individuals.** 68% of people who responded to the survey stated the activity was something new for them
- **Activity not possible without program.** 86% of people who responded to the survey stated they would not have been able to do this activity without Project World
- **Individuals' input valued.** 90% of people who responded to the survey stated that they felt their input was valued and important in deciding activities.
- **Would recommend to others.** 87% of people who responded to the survey said they would recommend Project World to others

Anchor Center for Blind Children

The **Family Respite Care Program** at Anchor Center provides families with needed respite from their child’s unique and often challenging caregiving duties. This program provides families peace of mind knowing that their children are being taken care of by skilled and trained staff members, volunteers, and students from the Denver School of Nursing. During each five-hour session, children participate in structured games, arts/crafts, snack making, outdoor play, and sensory activities, such as playing musical instruments and dancing.



In March of 2020, Anchor Center programming was closed due to Covid19 Pandemic. Despite efforts adjust and adapt programming to meet safety regulations, Anchor Center made the hard decision discontinue the program in the best interest and safety of the complex children they service. However, before doing so, Anchor Center **utilized \$4,132.53 to provide 11 Denver residents with these much needed respite events and transportation in early 2020**. Surveys were conducted following the services, and the outcomes of the pre-pandemic services, were as follows:

- **Overall Satisfaction.** There was a 100% satisfaction return in the services received in the first quarter.
- **Safe and Age Appropriate.** 00% of the first-time participates reported they felt Anchor Center’s facility, equipment, & respite care activities are safe and age appropriate.
- **Attendance.** Anchor Center projects that students using transportation services will attend school and programming services at least 90% of the time. Students returned to school after winter break the week of January 6th. School was closed due to the Covid19 pandemic for the month of March. Attendance during the time school was in session shows attendance above the 90% mark for first quarter.

Autism Community Center

The **Autism Community Center (ACC)** was developed in 2019 and continued to build on its foundation and impact in 2020. The overall mission is to **connect families and individuals living with I/DD to resources and to each other in an accepting and sensory-inclusive environment, while striving to create a world where people with I/DD and their families feel they belong and are empowered to thrive.** They empower people to break isolation by connecting families and individuals to information and to each other. ACC started the year by hosting events, support groups, and training in person at

“You guys are my guiding light”
– Mother of child receiving supports

“I’m sorry I’m getting a little emotional...but you really do get it”
-Parent response after parent support group

their center, but with the onset of COVID-19, they were forced to close down temporarily while they created changes to adapt to the needs of the people they serve. Program adaptations included:

- **Creation of Newsletter.** While they were closed, they **immediately reacted to support individuals by putting out a newsletter almost immediately on March 17th and March 28th with COVID resources.** It contained information about helping children with I/DD understand what was happening, helping parents understand their students' educational rights and what they can do to keep kids engaged when schools are closed.
- **Virtual Events.** ACC worked to change their events to a **virtual format, which was very well received and proved to be successful immediately** for the individuals with whom they provide services.
- **Resource Hub.** When they were able to reopen their space, they have been able to offer a **large open space to individuals to use computers and internet to access resources** or attend virtual events. They have also been able to find safe and creative ways to return to in person for some events.
- **Applications Assistance.** The Autism Community Center is now a **Medicaid Certified Application Assistance Site (CAAS) and three of their parent navigators are qualified to assist with applications for Medicaid / the Buy In and CHP+.**

In 2020, **ACC utilized \$195,000 of mill levy funds to support 501 Denver residents and hosted 91 events** which included:

- **Support groups.** Parent Support Group; Sibling Clubhouse (a support group for siblings of individuals with Autism); Adult Self-Advocates with Autism Support Group
- **Trainings.** Health Insurance Buy In; Accessing insurance and Medicaid Waivers; School Advocacy and the IEP process; Parent CNA service; Disability Law and its relation to special education law
- **Social Events.** Dungeons and Dragons Club; Outdoor movies; Holiday celebrations

After a training on becoming a CNA for your child, they were notified by a community partner that two of the families that attended the training are starting the process of becoming a parent CNA, one of whom has already started providing paid CNA care for her child. During a pandemic and with many people losing their jobs or unable to work due to not having childcare, this is a valuable tool to assure safety and care for children.

ACC captured their outcomes through survey results which were completed by 191 individuals:

- 100% of respondents said that because of the store they were **more knowledgeable about available services and supports**
- 93.8% of respondents said they agree or strongly agree that the Autism Community Center **makes them feel like part of a community**
- 100% of respondents said that they felt **more supported in their journey**

Colorado Cross Disability Coalition

Since 2018, with the support of mill levy funding, the Colorado Cross Disability Coalition (CCDC) offered the **Probate Power Project** to provide special needs planning, estate planning, probate administration, and uncontested guardianship services to Denver residents with I/DD and their families. CCDC utilizes mill levy funding to help individuals and families that would otherwise not have the means to access and navigate these important legal services. .

In 2020, CCDC **utilized \$13,466.75 to help support 10 individuals with I/DD and 8 family members with knowledgeable legal services** that resulted in the following outcomes:

- **Partnerships.** In the last quarter of 2020, CCDC **began a partnership with The Office of Public Guardianship in Denver, to begin providing legal support to individuals in need of guardianship support, who did not have anyone available to them to take on this role.** This is big step forward in supporting individuals in Denver who could benefit guardianship services.
- **Communications and Outreach.** CCDC periodically met with members of the I/DD community **to explain the services and opportunities available to them, and the value and importance of having a long-term plan.** The Probate Power managing attorney works with families create understandable estate plans that protect loved ones with disabilities, and guides families through the probate process when a loved one passes away.

"I worked with a family with three kids, and the oldest had severe autism. He turned 18 and I helped the parents acquire guardianship for the adult child so they could make decisions for him, access his medical records and speak to his doctors on his behalf. At the same time, we put an estate plan in place so they knew what would happen to their assets when they passed away and who would look after the kids, especially who would succeed as guardian for their eldest son. The family has peace of mind knowing who would be next in line to take care of their incapacitated son when they pass away."

- CCDC Probate Power Managing Attorney

Colorado Fund for People with Disabilities

Mission Supports is a program of the Colorado Fund for People with Disabilities (CFPD), which recognizes the tremendous need in the community to assist individuals with an intellectual disability (I/DD) who are at risk of, or currently experiencing homelessness to achieve stability. Mission Supports provides transitional case management services and navigation assistance for eligibility processes for enrollment into RMHS. The program serves homeless or at-risk individuals who have or could have an I/DD and consider Denver their community.



The Covid19 Pandemic caused CFPD to evaluate and adapt the program to continue to assist individuals through the enrolling process. Covid19 created an extreme increased risk to CFPD staff and to individuals due to the many outbreaks in major referral sources such as shelters and jails. CFPD adapted its program to protect staff and people served from the spread of the virus. In **2020 CFPD was able to make pivots to programming to continue to meet individuals needs towards long term stability**. Program adaptations included:

- **New System for Intake.** CFPD developed a new system for intakes utilizing technology with current referral sources and identified new referral resources
- **Accessing New Populations.** Developed an outreach process and technique to access any new individuals experiencing homelessness due to the depressed economy.
- **Staff training.** I.E: education on LTC Medicaid Waiver, HDMI Database for those experiencing homelessness, Government Benefits during COVID19 Response etc
- **Developed New Transportation Options.** Transportation for individuals needed to be re-evaluated because of the instability of public transit systems due to shutdowns or delays and CFPD staff could no longer safely transport due to staff safety.

Mission Supports quickly adapted to meet the needs of staff and the vulnerable communities that they serve. Due to the continued safety concerns for staff and individuals peer meetings and meet-and-greets for people who have previously been determined eligible discontinued after the first quarter of 2020. In 2020 CFPD, supported **86 individuals and utilized \$304,000.00 of mill levy funds** that resulted in the following outcomes:

- Successfully identified 59 homeless individuals that will likely meet the I/DD eligibility, that are interested in enrolling in services; 42 likely met I/DD eligibility and CFPD completed their intake process.
- Out of 42 intakes, 29 were identified to pursue services with RMHS.
- 12 individuals were successfully referred to RMHS; 12 Individuals were successfully enrolled into HCBS IDD or SLS services at RMHS.
- Time from the referral/intake process with CFPD transitional case management to eligible/enrolled and in services at RMHS decreased in 2020; an average of 10.2 months for the 8 who began services in 2020, with 18 months being the longest and 3 months being the shortest. For those individuals identified in 2020 an average of 5.5 months from the time of their intake with CFPD program to the time of our referral to RMHS, with 27 months being the longest and 3 months being the shortest.



A 30-year-old man by the name of Benjamin¹ tested positive for Covid19 early in May 2020. His recovery suffered due to the lack of a support network even though he has a relationship with his mom. At the time, Benjamin had been jumping from shelter-to-shelter and in and out of multiple hospitals. He was able to find relief when he began receiving services from the Mission Support Program. When he asked by the Mission Supports case manager if he was interested in having a guardian, Benjamin was eager to move forward in the process. Shortly after, Mission Supports made one of the first petitions to the new Office of Public Guardianship Commission. Over the past six months, Mission Supports has collaborated with Benjamin's mom, his case manager at Mental Health Center of Denver and multiple providers from local hospitals and shelters to provide the court the best picture of Benjamin's life and needs. With help from Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition, Mission Supports moved towards a guardianship appointment. A court visitor was appointed to interview Benjamin and those interested in the role as his guardian. Everyone involved felt strongly that appointing a guardian is the best option for helping Benjamin live a stable, healthy life. Benjamin is now actively enrolled in programming at RMHS.

Connect Us

Connect Us provides year-round, inclusive social and emotional learning programs that improve the quality of life for children of all developmental levels, abilities, and identities. Children are guided through intentional play that builds social skills, self-confidence, and personal identity. The strength of Connect Us lies in how they normalize and celebrate differences and how they meet children in real time, natural play



situations when and where learning is optimal. The facilitators coach, mentor and play alongside age-based groups of children of all abilities, establishing an equal playing field and promoting fun, friendly competition, teamwork and provide youth with I/DD and youth who are neurotypical opportunities to practice friendship and leadership skills in an inclusive setting with the goal to influence the larger community norms.

While Connect Us usually provides services in schools throughout the year, they were forced to adapt when the Covid19 pandemic began in March. Program adaptations included:

- **Digital Learning.** This project had to shift from the physical setting in schools to virtual offerings.
- **Recruitment.** Since they were no longer on-site, staff reached out to the schools as well as repeat summer camp participants and to RMHS to get the word out about the virtual offerings. **This proved effective in the last couple of months of school as enrollments increased.**

- **Summer Camp.** As summer break approached, Connect Us overwhelmingly heard from parents that a safe, in-person option was needed to meet many children’s needs. Connect Us **reinvented their plan again by putting together an in-person summer camp comprised of small groups at an outdoor park.** It was a huge success. They served a wide range of children in a safe outdoor setting and received significant positive feedback.
- **New Partnerships.** In the fall, Connect Us was still not able to return to the schools, but **Lowry Elementary presented with the opportunity to partner with Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, which includes numerous Lowry students. They provided fall sessions in-person groups at 2 locations along with 2 winter break in-person camps.** Program activities included opening sharing circle, yoga, arts & crafts, science, physical play, snow play, recess & creative games, and topic-related discussions.

“It’s fun to get outside and play. It makes people happy to be outside and to play with people who aren’t your brother or sister. You guys help us with our problems and you help me with my anger issues.” -5th Grade Student

“Is it camp today?” This is what I’m asked every single morning by my 6 and 4-year-old sons. Camp days are the only days they get dressed and are ready to go without me telling them to do so. They love it and we wish there was camp every day. My youngest used to be very touchy with just about everyone. He did not respect boundaries. Since coming to camp, he has stopped touching people and is more aware of physical space. He has learned at camp what it means to be 6 feet apart and wears his mask in public now without any battles. You’ve been working with my oldest son {by request} on truth-telling and solving problems in a positive way instead of getting angry or shutting down. He is using language he must have learned at camp. His lying and approach to solving problems have improved. We needed Connect Us this summer after months of being stuck at home. As a mom and a psychotherapist, I cannot recommend your programs enough. Thank you for all you do for kids.” - Parent

In 2020, Connect Us rose to the challenge to find ways to move this project forward. While complying all COVID safety guidelines, they continued to provide an opportunity for outdoor play. Even though protocols were adjusted but the focus remained the same to meet the need for social connection that is so important now more than ever. During this reporting period, Connect Us utilized \$191,202 of mill levy funds to supported 80 children with I/DD and an additional 134 who present with similar social challenges, but have not disclosed or pursued an I/DD determination. The delivery of these services resulted in the following outcomes:

- **Summer camp** improved social-emotional skills: self-confidence, approachability, resiliency, adaptability, empathy, impulse control, cooperation, problem-solving, initiating social interaction, willingness to try new things.
 - 79% of program participants improved in one or more of these areas.
 - 75% of participants with DD or suspected diagnosis improved in one or more of these areas.
- **Fall in-person Sessions** Improved social-emotional skills: self-confidence, approachability, resiliency, adaptability, empathy, impulse control, cooperation, problem-solving, initiating social interaction, willingness to try new things.
 - 94% of program participants improved in one or more of these areas.
 - 97% of participants with DD improved in one or more of these areas.

DPS ACE Passport to Independence



Denver Public Schools (DPS) is the public-school system in the City of Denver serving approximately 93,000 students in 207 schools across the district. The DPS ACEConnect Transition services team works with students with disabilities and I/DD. The DPS ACEConnect Passport to Independence program works specifically with students with I/DD to gain independent living and self-determination skills through community-based instruction that aligns with post-secondary goals for independent living and services for community experience. Students set goals around self-advocacy and pro social communication in recreation settings and

then have an opportunity to “try out” these skills for future adult settings they will encounter. Considering the Covid19 Pandemic, DPS ACEConnect Passport to Independence program had to substantially rethink and redirect programming efforts when their community partner Denver Parks and Recreation were dispersed due to Covid19 and no longer able to provide programming options for youth to choose from. Program adaptations included:

- **Digital Learning.** DPS needed to transition all workshops to an online format and provide the necessary materials for students from home. Staff were able to offer students in **a goal-setting and technical support class to help students set goals and adapt to remote learning before they begin their workshops.**
- **Creating New Alliance.** New alliances were made with **four different community partners; Yogamunity, Art from Ashes, Grow Haus and Youth on Record.**
- **Reducing social Isolation.** Staff worked with students to reduce social isolation and develop self-determination skills for the most vulnerable students during the pandemic by **collaborating with 4 community partners.**
- Remote learning caused barriers for students especially those with I/DD. The Passport to Independence project adapted to the needs of these children by creating preparatory workshops to support student goals and provide additional tech support to students with I/DD. DPS supported **9 youth utilizing \$8,869.63 of mill levy funds** resulting in the following outcomes:
 - 42 total workshops provided.
 - 9 youth and their families were connected to RMHS services and supports and 5 are currently in process.
 - During pre-program survey 35.3% of youth shared that they know what they need and what they’re good at with an increase after workshops rising to 47.1%.
- **This increase in self-knowledge around preferences is encouraging because youth with significant disabilities are not often given opportunities to explore or express preferences.** This can limit their personal growth as they transition into adulthood -- thereby limiting what they seek to connect to in terms of community-based programming

“We had just come back from Thanksgiving break and we were waiting for all of the students to arrive online. In this workshop most of the students were from Manual HS and one student was from Strive Prep. When the Strive Prep student arrived, another student from Manual HS enthusiastically said hello, said he missed seeing him the previous week and asked how his break was. This set off a flow of natural conversation and students trying to make plans to get together outside of school when it was safe” - Yogamunity staff member

- Community partners have shared that **working with the youth in Passport to Independence has expanded their perceptions of who they can effectively serve** and augmented their program delivery model to be **more inclusive of youth with I/DD**. Community partners shared that they have grown both personally and professionally collaborating with ACEConnect to deliver these services.

Easter Seals

In the second year of their pilot program utilizing an **Individual Placement and Support (ISP) Model** for supported employment, Easter Seals continued to build upon their foundations from their 2019 initiative. With stable community employment being a long-standing need amongst individuals with I/DD, the adaptation of the IPS model (used to support people experiencing mental health concerns) to support other populations is an important step. IPS supported employment involves an Employment Specialist, coaching an individual through the major phases of employment: Intake, Engagement, Assessment, Job Placement, Job Coaching and Job Maintenance.



Easter Seals creates lasting employment opportunities by providing fully integrated supports such as housing and transportation while closely matching what employers are looking for with the skills, abilities, and aspirations of those job seekers.

Covid19 disrupted employment nationwide, including a debilitating impact people with I/DD seeking employment. Despite the pandemic, Easter Seals utilized **\$86,227.02 to serve 9 individuals seeking meaningful employment** resulting in the following outcomes:

- In the first quarter of 2020, Easter Seals saw a remarkable **increase to 71% employment rate from the 40% employment rate in 2019**.
- After the Covid19 pandemic began, Easter Seals watched their new employment placements fall to zero after April 1. Easter Seals continues **to adapt their strategies and model as the employment model continues to shift around them** and are hopeful to see their employment rates return to the pre-pandemic success levels.
- They continued to support the individuals they served in maintaining their current employment and were proud to report that in one of the worst employment markets in recent history, **33% of the individuals placed in jobs, were still employed throughout the year**.

Financial Health Institute

Financial Health Institute (FHI) defines “financial health” as the dynamic relationship of one’s financial and economic resources as they are applied to or impact the state of physical, mental, and social well-being. FHI developed programming to improve financial health throughout Denver’s I/DD community. Trainings and classes were provided to individuals with I/DD, case managers, care staff, managers/supervisors, and families. Their person centered, systematic approach impacts the financial health of the entire community and supports the retention and implementation of skills learned by individuals due to the support of the community they are at the center of. **In 2020 FHI conducted two projects utilizing mill levy funding:**

ResourceAbility (18+) is designed to provide opportunities to develop strategies to manage resources, reduce stress and improve overall health. Programming includes facilitated classes, life skill experiences in social settings, seminars/training for agency staff/case managers on the use of technology and online educational tools.

Transitioning Young Adults (TYA) (16-25) is designed to enhance awareness of the multiple domains of adult life, encourage practice of essential life skills and provide opportunities for the participants to make lasting improvements in their state of physical, mental and social well-being. The TYA program utilizes digital technology in order to build upon participant’s familiarity with technology to enhance personal economics, employment options and life skills. Class topic examples include: More than a job: preparing for employment sustainability, financial health for transitioning young adults, preparing for housing access and sustainability and internship in digital learning.



In light of the Covid19 Pandemic FHI had to substantially rethink and redirect programming efforts. Program adaptations included:

- **Digital Learning.** FHI **developed virtual live class curriculum as well as asynchronous curriculum** to ensure participants would be able to access FHI programs in all learning environments.
- **Supported other Partners.** FHI heard and **responded to the need of fellow mill levy partners Access Gallery and Jovial Concepts** to support in the design and integration of digital learning options for their programs.
- **Created a New Program.** As the pandemic continued it became paramount to support Denver’s I/DD community with the tools to have a safe, engaging and supportive space to gain access, familiarity and comfort to utilize the digital and virtual world; thus **a new program was designed, developed and integration is set to begin in 2021 with Thriving in a Virtual World (TVW).**

FHI uses a blended learning curriculum to teach students to build independent living skills and valuable financial knowledge. FHI uses its ResourceAbility Online Learning Environment to host a library of courses to share with students. FHI moved all of its courses to a distance learning format to protect staff and students from the spread of the virus. Not only did they shift their own courses but also helped other organizations/ mill levy partners create and switch to an online curriculum. FHI realized the following outcomes across their mill levy funded programs:

- “I have been saving for a vacation to California!” When asked how much money was saved, he discreetly and happily replied, “A LOT!”
- “I have learned a lot and I am spending less.”
- “I want to learn more about counting money so I can become a cashier at Walmart”

-Participants' Feedback

ResourceAbility supported 78 participants utilizing \$268,000.00 of mill levy Funds.

- 110 classes delivered
- 94% of participants reported that they liked the class, 93% reported the class was helpful and 97% would like to take another class.

TYA supported 112 participants utilizing \$186,000.00 of mill levy Funds.

- 64 classes delivered
- 81% of participants reported they liked the class, 85% reported the class was helpful, 87% would like to take another class. Staff reported 98% of students were actively engaged in the class.

- “This class helped me know I need to keep a job in mind so I can buy my own stuff, food, and games”
- “I want to live with a friend or maybe a roommate”

-Participants' Feedback

FHI utilized \$68,000.00 in mill levy funds to develop the Thriving in a Virtual World technology support platform and program to be fully implemented in 2021.

- Held multiple focus groups.
- Created hard copy starter kits – General, iPhone, Android, Chromebook; Created one starter kit video
- Developed RA/TVW Website
- Created TVW Introductory video; Created online TVW Client/Participant Portal
- Began relationships with multiple people and organizations who are interested in supporting this project.

Guided by Humanity Yoga

Guided by Humanity (GBH) was created to provide accessible, inclusive, and compassionate yoga and mindfulness programming. GBH's approach is trauma-sensitive which means they consider details such as the environment, language, and historical context to best accommodate students. Covid19 restrictions were a huge barrier for Denver residents accessing this program with most participants choosing to stay at home to be safe. GBH created modifications to the program to create an accessible and inclusive program during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Program adaptations include:



- **Virtual Classes.** GBH shifted their yoga classes to a virtual format to provide a safe opportunity for people to attend yoga classes during the Covid19 pandemic.
- **Breakthroughs.** GBH officially opened at a brick and mortar as the first inclusive and accessible non-profit yoga studio in the state of Colorado. As GBH made this move forward, they remain inspired and motivated to begin developing a new culture in the yoga community to de-center the “typical” view of a yoga body (bendy, thin, able bodied and financially able) in a more public setting and continuing to change perspectives in the yoga community.

While GBH was able to provide virtual classes, many students with more profound supports were not able to access Zoom for virtual classes or needed individual support with movements. Due to these limitations, GBH was not able to serve as many individuals and experienced a dramatic reduction in participants for the project from March to July. While less individuals were served, this sense of normalcy and continued activity was a lifeline for many students in a time of great change. **In 2020, GBH supported 38 individuals and utilized \$70,000 of mill levy funds resulting in the following outcomes:**

- **Increasing self-confidence level among students.** 46.2% of respondents reported they tried other adaptive sports after doing yoga; 92.3% of respondents reported they have made at least 1 friend in the yoga classes
- **Increasing Independence skills among students.** 100% of respondents reported they can set up their own space and get ready for class independently.
- **Increasing accessibility of services to new students.** 100% of respondents reported they want to keep doing yoga with Guided by Humanity.

Jewish Family Service

The Jewish Family Service (JFS) project **Tools for Life** uses a two-fold approach to improve the quality of life of adult residents of Denver County who have I/DD. JFS created an evidence- and research based six-week social skills groups curricula (both basic and advanced options). The program directly benefited individuals with I/DD by equipping them with skills necessary to function well in various social, home, work, and community settings.

At the same time, the program provided indirect benefits to individuals with I/DD by providing six-session Caregiver Coaching in ABA groups targeted to parents, guardians, and caregivers of adult people who have I/DD. The sessions educated caregivers about ways to help adult individuals with I/DD increase skills and decrease behaviors of concern. The project aimed to provide in person training to vulnerable populations, but the Covid19 pandemic forced JFS to make modifications to the program. Program adaptations included:

- **Digital Learning.** Curricula for both direct and indirect trainings was adapted to a virtual environment including a 1:1 telehealth training, and indirect parent/caregiver training done with videos shared through asynchronous means.

Despite the challenges faced, JFS was able to adapt its project services and utilize \$27,599.80 to provide 9 individuals with direct social skills training in the following areas:

- Greetings, Personal Interactions, Conversations, Good-byes
- Finding Common Interests
- Understanding Perspectives
- Displaying Empathy
- Active Listening
- Phone and Text Etiquette
- Problem Solving
- Conflict Resolution
- Self-Advocacy – It’s Okay to Say No
- Self-Monitoring–Tracking My Progress
- Self-Awareness–Living My Values
- Goal Setting: Hopes and Dreams=Objectives and Goals



Staff noted positive increases in social skills and social interactions with Individuals attending classes, which was quantified in the pre-test and post-test assessments.

- **Basic Skills.** Average score from pre-test to post-test increased by 50%
- **Advanced Skills.** Average score from pre-test to post-test increased by 33%

Jovial Garden

Jovial Concepts innovatively addresses the problems of food scarcity in low-income neighborhoods by converting lawns and other public spaces into garden classrooms. Jovial Concepts aims to empower underserved communities to thrive by creating access to high quality food, promoting healthy and sustainable living, and increasing self-reliance. Individuals with I/DD utilize these garden classrooms to learn and participate in job training and social interactions. Students learn valuable life and practical work skills in the “seed to table programming” created to teach students about growing produce, harvesting crops, nutritional planning, and making healthy meals. In 2020, Jovial Garden made adjustments to the delivery of their services to accommodate safety requirements related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Program adaptations included:



- **Digital Learning.** Jovial Garden partnered with fellow mill levy funded FHI to design and integrate digital learning options for participants to learn how **to build a garden bed, grow a garden, basic planting, and even tune into chef stories, nutrition, and cooking classes from their home computers.**
- **Integrated Safe Gardening Practices.** Developed gardening practices that protected volunteers against the spread of COVID-19. **100 hours were put in to train Garden volunteers** to maintain the gardens until participants could safely engage in programming during the second quarter.
- **Harvested Food for Families.** Weekly gardening sessions were held in 15 garden bed classrooms that harvested over 4,794 pounds of food donated to struggling families and local food banks. **80% of participants report they learned about food insecurity and gardening.**

Jovial is one of the many programs that found ways to continue to deliver services and protect at-risk populations they serve during these challenging times. As a vital community resource for food, Jovial continued to harvest food for vulnerable communities while keeping participants safe by following CDC recognized safety precautions and transitioning classes online for digital learning.

- Jovial supported **11 individuals and utilized \$52,000.00 of mill levy funds.**
- **15 garden bed classrooms were utilized for a total of 4,794 pounds of food harvested.** This harvest was then delivered to struggling families that signed up through Jovial’s weekly meal program as well as donated to the local food bank.

Online surveys were sent to participants and/or their caregivers who helped them to complete the survey to measure the program results. Staff were included in the survey as well to weigh in on results from their personal observations of participants throughout the program.

- 80% of participants report they learned about food insecurity and gardening.
- 90% of participants report that the information they learned can be used in their everyday life.
- 80% said they noticed they were eating more fruits and vegetables.
- 44% were currently experiencing poverty

Laradon

In 2020 Laradon offered three projects utilizing mill levy funding including the FIT Family Navigator Program, expansion to behavioral health services and a collaboration with the Mental Health Center of Denver (MHCD) as described below.

Family, Infant, and Toddler (FIT) Family Navigator Program sets out to connect parents to resources in the community. The goal is to reduce family stress through referrals to food banks, childcare centers, and other agencies focused on basic needs to enable parents to better support their child's needs and learning. The pandemic altered their plan to hold weekly Play-and-Learn groups at two neighborhood libraries, which resulted in shifting priorities to meet families where the need was most prevalent.

As unemployment and safety concerns developed across Denver, the FIT program utilized **\$20,977.80 to help 64 families in Denver stay connected to vital resources in their community**, including diapers, rent and utility assistance, health and wellness, and financial support. Laradon FIT provided supplies and free delivery to families to mitigate transportation barriers.

- **Winter Packages.** Delivered winter packages that included essential products for winter such as infant clothes and hygiene products.
- **Diaper Distribution.** Laradon FIT adapted its services to provide families additional support with diapers and wipes through an additional year-end grant provided by the Mill Levy Program.



The FIT Program goals also included ensuring families an equitable experience in accessing preschool programs. Although, the health concerns caused by Covid caused a decline in preschool registrations, the FIT Program is pleased that they were able to **assist 15 children and their families in the enrollment process**, including but not limited to:

- Scheduling assessments and appointments follow through
- Identifying potential preschools close to the family's neighborhood
- Completing all required enrollment paperwork

Expansion of Behavioral Services. The Expansion of Behavioral Services project at Laradon supports clients who have behavioral challenges beyond what is reimbursable through Medicaid, including crisis support, behavioral support training of staff, and involvement with the legal system. Project goals include decreasing inappropriate or problematic behavior of adult individuals and increasing the average length of placement in day programs, vocational, and residential settings.

Laradon developed positive behavioral supports for all individuals served, **increasing their quality of life and enabling greater inclusion in the Denver community**. The Covid19 Pandemic created major challenges to the project. Laradon adapted the program to address those challenges through:

- **Virtual Meetings.** Shifted from face-to-face to virtual team meetings and coordination to **continue to develop effective behavioral plans and interventions**.
- **Trainings.** Provided **virtual trainings to direct service providers** in the following behavioral services techniques:

- Antecedent intervention
- Signal recognition
- Engineering environments and approaches to mitigate triggers
- Differential reinforcement of alternate and incompatible behaviors to de-escalate during the early stages of crisis
- Person-centered approaches, especially social role valorization through strengths-based thinking.

In 2020, Laradon Behavioral **utilized \$62,925.25 to serve 23 individuals directly, and 70 indirectly, by providing training for their direct support providers.** The outcomes realized in 2020 were as follows:

- **Increased placement length.** The average length of placement for these 18 individuals stands at 2.56 years for Q4 2020. This is a 6.25% increase of the Q4 figure of 2.4 years, firmly aligned with the 12.5% increase in average residential placement for a one-year period called for by 6/30/21.
- **Increased quality of life.** Personal Outcome Measures (POM) assessment scores over the past year and a half increased from 89% to 95.74% overall completion of POM objectives. This increase demonstrates a substantial improvement in the overall quality of life for all beneficiaries of the project.
- **Decrease # of challenging behaviors.** The **average number of problematic behaviors per quarter was 2,859 for 2019, and in 2020, this average fell to 1,893.**

Mental Health Center of Denver Collaboration establishes a partnership between Laradon and the Mental Health Center of Denver (MHCD) to provide cross-system services and improve communication between mental health and I/DD service providers. An MHCD Mental Health therapist is embedded at Laradon and works directly with a dedicated Program Manager focused on bridging the traditional mental health interventions and medication management with the person-centered, Long Term Services and Support (LTSS) model utilized in programs for people with I/DD. Their goals are to address gaps and the lack of cultural competency that has existed in mental health services for people with I/DD and a co-occurring mental health diagnosis.

The start of this project was delayed, due to the Covid19 pandemic in 2020. However, **\$38,301.96 was spent to lay the groundwork and foundations for the continued development and expansion of services** including:

- Finalized Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Laradon and MHCD
- MHCD Therapist hired and embedded at Laradon
- Developed plan for training and cross-cultural collaboration
- Initiated implementation for Diagnostic Impressions utilizing the DM-ID in lieu of the DMS-V for 3 people in this program.

RAMP

Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program (RAMP)

is an innovative, national mentoring and life-skills program of Ability Connection Colorado. RAMP provides evidence-based, career-focused mentoring for transitional age youth with I/DD and youth in foster care. RAMP serves youth in two ways; a series of 4-6 weeklong summer intensive program and a yearlong program for youth in targeted Denver Schools. RAMP uses an evidence-based model that focuses on goal setting, education, mental health, and social supports through a setting of career exploration and jobs.

“I want to have more RAMP sessions because I get to spend time with my friends and talk to my mentor about more than just homework and school. My mentor is going to help me become a fashion designer and I really want to have extra sessions with her so I can start working on my career. I also like RAMP because I don't get to hang out or see anyone because of COVID so it's nice to see my new RAMP friends.”

-Program Participant

Considering the Covid19 pandemic, RAMP had to shift and pivot programming to developing and provide digital learning options. Program adaptations includes:

- **Digital Learning.** Youth and staff **showed incredible resilience in adjusting to a virtual environment**, but not surprisingly, they noted that it remained a challenge throughout the year.
- **Engagement.** The pandemic exposed significant inequities around the use of technology, continuing education and work preparation for I/DD youth and their families. **RAMP adjusted its program to address those inequities created and create virtual content that engaged youth.**

2020 Outcomes

- During 2020 RAMP **supported 46 youth and utilized \$68,000.00 of mill levy funds.**
- **Youth completed 108 sessions for the year**
- 100% of youth who were targeted to complete an Individual Mentor Plan (IMP) completed IMPs.
- 90% completed one or more of their weekly goals

Progress toward Long term outcomes

- 100 % of youth who transition to next grade, college or have been exposed to work in their community.
- 90% of youth can identify community support and self-advocate based on surveys and self-reflection
- 95% of youth engaged in career exploration in a variety of sectors.

REVEL Lounge

REVEL supports teens and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through the REVEL Lounge program. REVEL Lounge incorporates a unique Mentor Program that creates an environment where teens and adults with and without disabilities can connect, work, learn, develop social relationships, and thrive together in an inclusive and welcoming community. Early in 2020, REVEL was providing in person services, but when the Covid19 Pandemic became REVEL was forced to close. However, because of their major concerns about REVELers experiencing isolation and depression during the safe-at-home orders, they thoughtfully and quickly adapted their program to meet the needs of the people they serve. Program adaptations included:



Ben Goff (left) and Adonis Nieves (right) proudly present Mother's Day gifts that they painted while connecting at REVEL Lounge.

- **Virtual Connections.** The REVEL Virtual Lounge was launched April 13th to keep continue offering services. This allowed a way for REVELers to **stay connected with one another with the help from the mentors** who supported the activities during this time. Initially it was launched 3 days a week for an hour and after success, it was increased to **5 days a week for an hour**. Even though the program was just an hour a day, the **impact was significant, and friendships were maintained via the new format**.
- **Support Groups.** In late June, REVEL was able to host support groups for small groups and individuals. People **were ecstatic to see their friends again as the virtual fatigue had set in for the group** which was evident from the decrease in participation in June. In person with small groups has continued through the end of 2020 with **significant safety protocols in place**.

In 2020, Revel utilized **\$97,993.33 of mill levy funds to support 9 individuals** with the following outcomes:

- **Generalization of all goals to a variety of settings.** Transition from in person Lounge to Virtual Lounge. Some of the REVELers were successful in generalizing their skills to remote social interactions and learning while others still needed significant support from mentors and staff.
- **Increased social interactions between individuals with //DD and their peers.** The social interactions varied across the year in 2020 due to the shifts from in person to virtual and back again. Social interactions varied from 81 to 100% throughout the year with an overall average of 94%. This is a high level of social interaction.

Rise School of Denver

The Rise School of Denver (Rise) is an inclusive preschool serving children with and without disabilities between the ages of 6 weeks old through 5 years old. Rise's mission is to provide the highest quality early childhood education for all children, including children developmental delays and I/DD, in a fully integrated model. The program is staffed with lead teachers that hold a Master of Arts (MA) and license in Early Childhood and Special Education (ECSE) and four therapists: a physical therapist, an occupational therapist, a speech-language pathologist, and a music therapist.



To increase and sustain program-wide inclusion, Rise began adopting the LEAP Preschool framework in 2020. This model reflects both a behavioral and a developmentally appropriate approach for teaching children with and without disabilities in inclusive early childhood environments. During the Covid19 Pandemic, the school not only met the challenges, but saw great growth. Program adaptations included:

- **New Team.** During the summer, RISE built a team committed to the growth of the LEAP model within their program. During the weekly transdisciplinary meetings, each classroom consistently reports new goals that have been mastered. **The motto at Rise this year has been “When COVID made things harder, we got better.”**
- **LEAP Model.** RISE continues receiving practice-based coaching from the Positive Early Learning Experiences Center at University of Denver (DU) in the LEAP model and they have adopted this model into their program.
- **Safety Precautions.** Rise closed for a portion of the year once the pandemic began, and then returned in May and June to run a program that was very different from before including a great deal of safety precautions.

Rise has seen firsthand how practice-based coaching effectively impacts teaching practices. Internal Rise coaches received coaching by the DU coach which led to an increased the rate at which Rise is scaling up the LEAP model. LEAP evidence-based practices and the social skills curriculum is now being embedded into many routines and across all classrooms. In 2020, Rise School **supported 8 Denver children while enhancing the overall delivery model for all children served through Rise and utilized \$25,000 in mill levy funds** resulting in the following outcomes, which exceeded the original goals:

- 100% of children have **demonstrated improvement across their goals.**
- Rise had a goal to have one classroom achieve fidelity with LEAP by June 2021. **The LEAP coach informed Rise that by June 2021 it is anticipated that two classrooms receiving coaching will have met the required fidelity** score to be considered a LEAP classroom.
- Past LEAP Quality Program Indicators (QPI) on a 5-point Likert-style scores were 1's and 2's with no 5's. While neither classroom has met fidelity yet, **current QPI scores average 3's and 4's, with some noted 5's.**

TACT



Teaching the Autism Community Trades (TACT) provides trade and technical school training to children and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The program gives students the tools to not only find a job but to find the job that is right for them. TACT's programs are designed to increase student's proficiency and confidence in their marketable interest(s) which lead to employable jobs and lasting careers. TACT achieves this through three areas, Career tracks (ages 14-30), camps (ages 5-21) and workshops (ages 16-30). The school for individuals on the spectrum teaches students subjects that offer exposure to different trade related projects for individuals to refine their interests including auto tech, carpentry, welding, computer science, electrical, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics), instrument building, costume making, Arduino, metal working, auto mechanics and a number of intros to other trades classes. In light of the Covid19 Pandemic, TACT had to substantially rethink and redirect programming efforts to provide programming safely. Program adaptations included:

- **Digital Learning.** Digital learning options were developed and integrated along with online mentoring. **Students were provided with the necessary work at home supplies in all areas of the trades program** during the multiple community shutdowns that occurred.
- **Expansion of Eligibility. Expanded its summer program to include people with I/DD.** TACT heard and responded to the need for camp's that would include those with I/DD and not just include those with a primary diagnosis of ASD, due to social isolation many children were experiencing with distant learning.
- **1:1 teaching sessions.** Intensive safety research, training for all staff and implementation of Covid19 safety procedures took place in the second quarter which in turn **shifted all programming to a 1:1 model.**
- **Build at Home Kits.** In response to support the larger Denver community during social distancing TACT created a **variety of "build at home kits" that could be completed at home.** Kits varied from a coffee mug tree to a planter basket and more.

TACT utilized the isolation occurring at home to expand to populations that could benefit from their services and provide a viable solution to integrate their programs to at-risk populations. TACT was able to adapt its programs to include one-on-one session, help students adapt to distance learning and build independent living skills with kits that students built at home.

"I learned how to program a robot, how to use a CNC router, how a 3D printer works, made a candle holder"

"How to use tools, how to be strong, how to fix mistakes, how to use a big saw"

-Program Participants

In 2020, T.A.C.T. supported **42 students and utilized \$249,700.00 of mill levy funds** resulting in the following outcomes:

Career Tracks

- 31% of participants scored in the above average range on improving trades skills leading to gainful employment, 54% within the average range and only 2% scored in the below average range.
- 37% of participants scored in the above average range on Improving Job Readiness Skills leading to gainful employment, 60% in the average range.
- 28% of participants scored in the above average range on Improving student Empowerment and Independence, 53% in the average range.

Summer camps/individual lessons

- Completed 350 individual lessons in auto mechanics, carpentry, 3-D printing, STEM and welding.

Workshops

- 100% stated that they were proud of what they had created and 100% stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the workshop.

Partnerships and Competitive Employment

TACT is committed to long term goal of increasing integration and inclusion of individuals with ASD with in the trade fields as demonstrated by the following 2020 opportunities:

- TACT has secured partnerships with Piper Electric, Sturgeon Electric, 5280 Waste and Recycling, Rio Grande Company, Advance Auto Parts - National Pilot Program, Worldwide Vintage Auto projects (buying TACT rebuilt engines) as a pathway to employment.
- Weifield Group will be hiring TACT participants to help complete the electrical on a new Amazon warehouse being built in Colorado Springs.
- Work began in 2020 with Mind Shift- an organization that serves as a recruiting source for those with ASD to find work in technology and other fields. TACT STEM and STEM for Trades participants will be interviewing with members of their team in January of 2021 for possible placements in competitive integrated employment.

Brothers Giovanni Isara and Leonardo Esquivel worked with their TACT instructor to inspect a radiator and power steering pump for leaks in the 90-minute 1:1 auto mechanical lesson during the TACT summer program. TACT adapted its annual summer program in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to offer one-on-one sessions instead of a group summer camp experience. TACT also expanded their audience to reach students with and I/DD rather than only those on the spectrum. The 1:1 lesson was offered in person, with a Career Technical Education certified instructor. Members could choose lessons in five different fields: auto mechanics, carpentry, sewing, STEM and welding.



Giovanni and Leonardo were able to take the class together because they are members of the same household.

Tennyson Center

Tennyson Center for Children provides service to neglected, abused, and traumatized children. Mill levy funding supports children with I/DD in the Adaptive Skills for People with Emotional Needs (ASPEN) program and Behavior Resources and Adaptive Needs in the Community and Home (BRANCH) program.

ASPEN Program provides special education services for children on the autism spectrum who have an intellectual or developmental disability (I/DD) and at least one other challenge, such as extreme anxiety, making it difficult to maintain placement in a traditional classroom.

BRANCH Program focuses on children ages 5 to 18 with intensive behavioral issues due to a mild to moderate Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), dual diagnoses with ASD, or other undiagnosed behavioral conditions. Services are provided in a variety of settings in the home, school, and community.

The BRANCH program serves students in Tennyson Center who meet the criteria for I/DD and have experienced some form of trauma and almost all have experienced more than three Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). These children require specialized services and without Tennyson Center, would have limited options for meeting their differentiated needs. Tennyson's uniquely tailored programming begins with stabilizing children in crisis, providing relevant programming to facilitate social and behavioral healing, and integrating children back into their communities as much as possible.



In 2020, while dealing with the complexities of providing vital behavioral and emotional in a virtual world, Tennyson Center was able to adapt and continue Program adaptations include:

- **Virtual Connections.** Adapted the program to a virtual format to meet the needs of 9 individuals, each with highly individualized support needs.

Tennyson is an intervention school teaching child with I/DD to navigate the social and educational landscape to achieve the best possible level of academic and social-emotional learning. In turn, students learn proven coping skills to maximize their educational outcomes and live as independently as possible as adults. In 2020, Tennyson utilized **\$158,566 for 9 children across both programs.**

- **Unique individuals served:** BRANCH: 5 ASPEN: 4
- **Improved according to the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths assessment):** BRANCH: 60% ASPEN: 100%
- **Avoided hospitalizations:** BRANCH: 80% ASPEN: 75%
- **Avoided police contact:** BRANCH: 60% ASPEN: 100%

Thrive

THRIVE Center has served the metropolitan area of Denver since 2006. Thrive shares information, education, skills, and resources via workshops to parents and youth. Parents are then able to better understand the nature of their child's disability and the resources available to support a successful school experience and post-secondary life for their child. Likewise, youth can better understand their educational, developmental, and transitional needs resulting in successful postsecondary outcomes. **In 2020 Thrive conducted two projects utilizing mill levy funding: Project independence and 3-5.**



Project Independence provides two strands of trainings: One strand for youth (14-21) and the other for the participating youths parents. Training topic examples: Transition on the IEP, Person-Centered Planning, Disability Planning, Employment, College and Living Independently.

3-5 Project provides parent/caregiver trainings during the time when pick up occurs for their preschooler (childcare/Spanish interpretation available). Training topic examples: navigating special education, behavior is communication, how to advocate for your child, making friends, transitions from pre-k to kindergarten and components of an IEP.

In light of the Covid19 Pandemic, Thrive had to substantially rethink and redirect programming efforts for both projects. Program adaptations included:

- **Digital Learning.** Digital learning options were developed and integrated with all workshops/trainings changing to a remote platform, webinar format.
- **Connecting with the Larger Community.** Thrive staff engaged all their families with shared resources and made connections with the larger community for continued support of their families.

Extensive research was conducted on best practices to engage youth with I/DD during online and remote environments as well as to engage busy parents whose demands of their time increased ten-fold during the pandemic. Thrive transitioned the work to ease parent stress and work by transition training and workshops online.

During 2020 **Project Independence served 56 participants utilizing \$87,000.00 of mill levy funds** resulting in the following outcomes:

- Virtual tour for parents and youth of Metro college
- 100% of parents strongly agreed that workshop products and services provided were relevant.
- 80% of youth strongly agreed that workshop products and services provided were relevant
- 100% of youth strongly agreed, agreed that the materials were of high quality.
- Youth believed the following from participating in Project Independence: "Believed I can get a job" " I can speak up for myself with my teacher" "I can speak up for myself with my parents" "I can speak up at my IEP meeting"

During 2020 **3-5 project served 15 participants utilizing \$72,000.00 of mill levy funds** resulting in the following outcomes:

- 15 workshops/trainings for parents
- Parents have increased knowledge on how to prepare their preschoolers for kindergarten.

- Family responses: “Good information that every parent with a child with a disability should get.” “The presenter was very effective with her presentation skills and the material presented was very helpful in learning to be more effective in the IEP process.” “Love everything. One of the most empowering.”

Thrive Autism Collaborative

The Thrive Autism Collaborative continued their work using the Parent-mediated Early Start Denver Model (P-ESDM), an evidence-based early intervention program for young children with identified developmental delays and/or at risk for or diagnosed with an ASD. The project’s overall goal is to increase accessibility to families with ASD that are unable to access the P-ESDM through publicly funded early intervention programs.

The workshop provided individual coaching time to support parent-child learning activities and group time for parents to meet and reflect together on their goals and practice without children present. The follow-up sessions occurred over 6 months to check in on individual parent-child progress to support continued practice and learning with the P-ESDM. With the challenges brought on by the health restrictions due to Covid19, the project made modifications.

Program adaptations include:

- **Digital Learning.** Shifted to a fully remote model, with one family receiving in-person support due to individual needs. The project plans to evaluate the effectiveness of in-person vs. virtual parent coaching in 2020 to direct future programming decisions.

During 2020, the program **utilized \$70,530.49, providing 4 families with this meaningful training.** All 4 families completed the entire program with **very high satisfaction and increased perceived strength** regarding interactions with coaches, content appropriateness and relevance to their child’s learning priorities, and effectiveness in managing their child’s behavior and helping him/her learn and socially interact, and their overall program experience. The program achieved the following outcomes:

Children’s Progress

- **100% increased their overall skill acquisition from baseline** in the areas of receptive language, expressive communication, social skills, imitation, spontaneous play actions

The graph below demonstrates the progress made with each child:

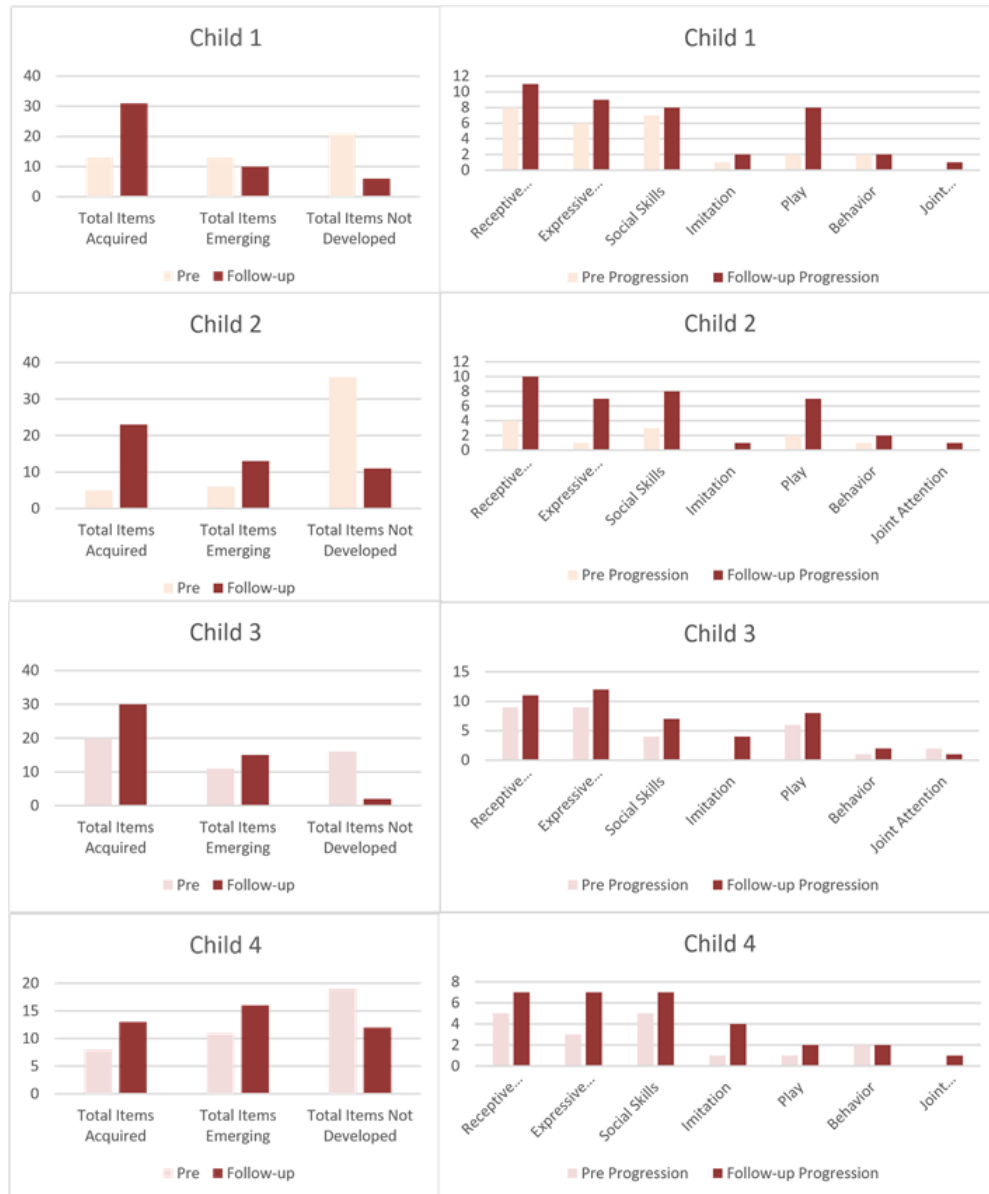
“Helping my son and our family communicate better and live happier lives for him and ourselves by learning tricks and tips to help everyday life.”

“I loved the fact that you all were willing to work with me and my son and let us do in person sessions...that really helped me learn techniques and coach me while I played with my son.”

My coach was so helpful in explaining what we were working on each time and I really liked the follow [up] emails so I wouldn’t have to take notes during the session.”

“The program allowed us to set the tone for how this family communicates and helps each other. It taught me great techniques on how to communicate, play, follow, [and] lead my son. A big thing to notice is that our son doesn’t have the tantrums that he used to at 30 minutes. He gets over “stuff” within a minute.”

-Parents Feedback



Parent Outcomes

- Improved change in parent’s knowledge, skills and performance using ESDM
- All parents showed a noticeable increase in their sense of competence in targeted areas of focus.
- All four parents reported the importance of a positive working relationship with their coach yielded:
 - Trust, caring, and respect
 - Agreement on the goals and process of ESDM sessions
 - Collaboration on the work and tasks to help their child learn and grow.
- All parents reached and stayed at fidelity with the ESDM at least by their last follow-up coaching session.
- Parents showed real integration of the ESDM intervention objectives they set with their coach on the first day of the workshop.

The Wayfaring Band



The Wayfaring Band provides support to build awareness and foster genuine connections among diverse communities through education, socialization, and transformative travel. The Wayfaring Band offers travel experiences, leadership development programming, community education workshops, and a public podcast. The Wayfaring Band implements education and advocacy programming throughout Denver that is designed to impact the local community. By changing the minds, behaviors, actions, and intentions of neurotypical social leaders, the Wayfaring Band hopes to address long-term issues of segregation and marginalization. The importance of social inclusion and awareness is paramount. In 2020, the Wayfaring Band started the year with travel. However, when COVID-19 pandemic arrived in March the program delivery shifted drastically. The Wayfaring Band has made (and continues to make) substantial adjustments to program design and delivery while delivering COVID safe events that meet the program's mission:

- **Virtual Programs.** Created new, innovative, virtual programs that are designed to continue offering transformational support while fostering genuine connection.
- **Timely Events.** Hosted events that addressed a number of social issue including

marginalization and segregation of neurodiverse communities.

- **My Voice, My Vote: An Accessible Conversation about the 2020 Election.** Bringing together a neurodiverse audience, participants talked about voting rights for people with disabilities and The Wayfaring Band invited a political science professor to answer questions.
- **Convened neurodiverse group of 19 BIPOC participants, including 12 adults with I/DD and seven seasonal staff members.** The BIPOC Caucus was completed in 2020 and will reconvene in 2021. Staff created a poster with the intent to share what was learned through the caucus with community members.

Wayfaring Band hosted a variety of event that were inclusive. In person and virtually, people experienced relationship building and spark conversations and discussions about current day issues. Wayfaring worked with different communities to reduce the feelings of isolation during Covid19. In 2020 The Wayfaring Band supported 233 Individuals with I/DD and 53 caregivers and utilized a total of \$239,476.30 in mill levy funds resulting in the following outcomes:

Place based learning opportunities. 89% of survey respondents who engaged with the virtual tours agreed or strongly agreed that the program allowed them to enjoy a destination they might not have been able to visit in real life.

Opportunities to experience new things, to be challenged and to be stimulated. 91% of virtual tour participants who completed the post survey agreed or strongly agreed that they learned something new during the virtual tour. 86% of tour participants who completed the post-survey Agreed or strongly agreed that the experience was a good change from their routine.

Genuine connections with participants and increased sense of belonging. 91% of virtual tour participants who completed the post survey agreed or strongly agreed that the experience helped them feel more connected and less isolated.

Increased understanding and use of accessible and inclusive language and behaviors. 91% of virtual tour participants who completed the post-survey agreed or strongly agreed that the content was engaging and easy for them to connect with – likely demonstrating that the “tour guides” were able to use accessible and inclusive language in their presentation.

