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2019 Annual Report Intellectual and Developmental Disability Services Supported by Denver Mill Levy Funding

Working Together for Denver

January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019

Introduction

Rocky Mountain Human Services (RMHS) is a non-profit human service organization that provides services annually to more than 4,700 individuals in Denver County with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD). We are a community-centered board (CCB), which means we act as a local hub and resource for individuals with I/DD and their families who need assistance in Denver. We serve the community by providing case management and direct services to individuals and families with I/DD. Our staff conducts more than 14,000 visits in the Denver community annually and ensures that individuals with I/DD are receiving the services necessary to meet their needs.

In 2003, Denver voters generously approved a mill levy property tax to benefit Denver residents with I/DD. As a result, Denver residents can access programs and services, and receive funds to pay for individualized services and resources not available from Medicaid or other funding sources. In this report, RMHS is highlighting its efforts to meet Denver residents' needs through two primary goals:

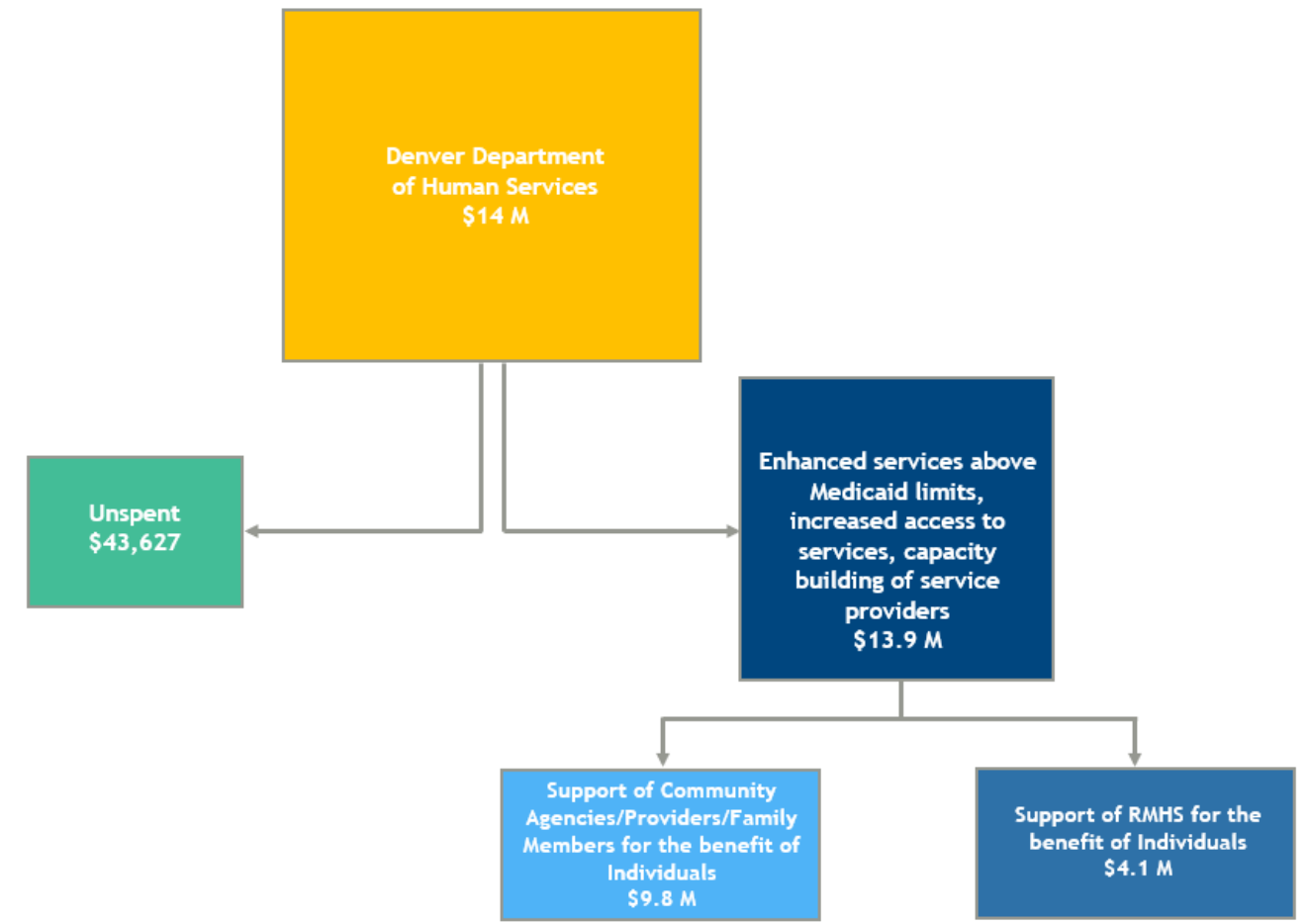
- 1. Increase access to services.**
- 2. Increase flexible service options to address individualized needs through a variety of providers.**

Goal 1: Increase access to services

The Denver Department of Human Services (DHS) maintains administrative oversight of the mill levy dollars and maintains a contract with RMHS to deliver programs and services to support the community. Since 2016, RMHS has increased funds going into the community to support individuals, family members, existing providers and new program development. RMHS has developed processes and infrastructure to simultaneously meet the needs of individuals with I/DD and providers who serve them. We have also conducted outreach and information-sharing through our website, public and one-on-one meetings to get the word out about this resource. Through these combined efforts, we provided enhanced services to 4,731 unduplicated Denver residents with I/DD between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2019.

This report covers the contract period of January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019, with a maximum contract amount of \$14 million. In 2019, RMHS expended \$13,956,374 for enhanced services to the I/DD community. Of this amount, approximately 30 percent of funds supported RMHS services for this population, and 70 percent supported individual requests, community agencies, providers and family members.

Graph 1 January 2019 – December 2019 Mill Levy Summary



Denver mill levy dollars provide enhanced services for people with I/DD. These dollars support RMHS services as well as the enhanced services that community organizations and agencies provide. In this way, individuals benefit from mill levy support by accessing the funds directly and through community agencies providing services not otherwise available. RMHS recognizes the importance of monitoring programmatic intent and outcomes and tracks mill levy dollars accessed by individuals and by agencies. Ultimately, it is the individual with I/DD who benefits from enhanced services.

Services Sought through Mill Levy

Our stakeholders and Community Advisory Council members outlined seven priority areas of mill levy funding as a way to categorize and describe spending. As RMHS has approved mill levy funding to community agencies, providers, family members and individuals, 100 percent of approvals have been for the benefit of individuals with I/DD and met the definition of one or more of the following priority areas.

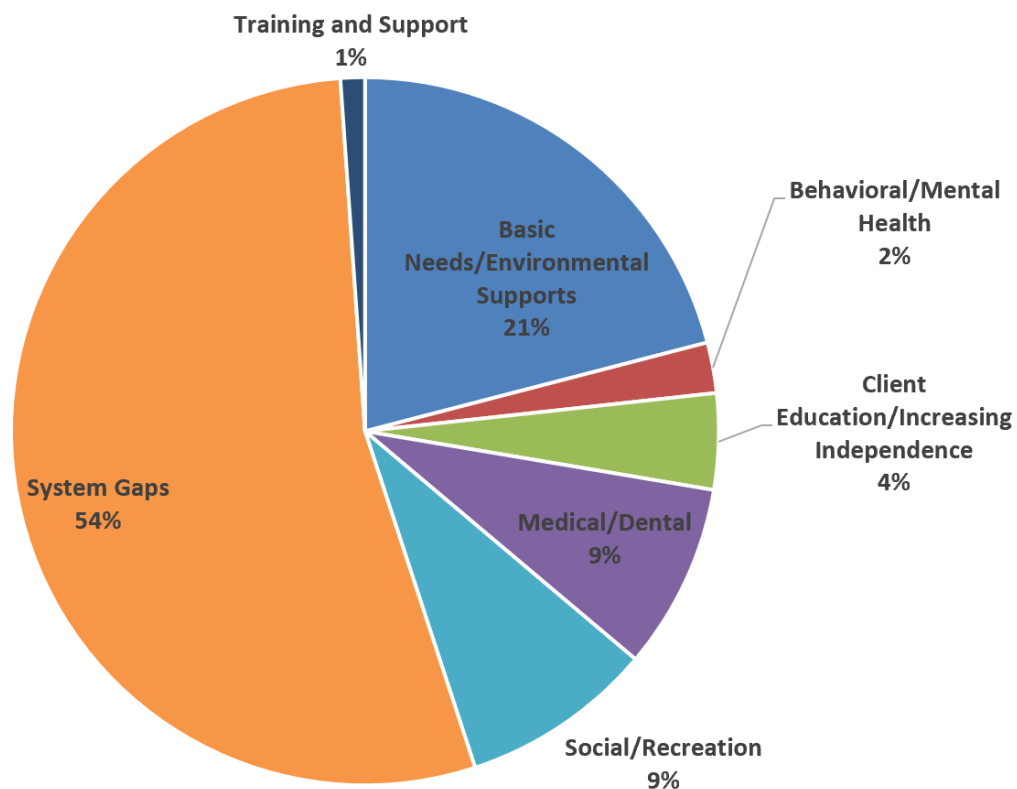
1. **Basic Needs/Environmental Supports:** Meeting individuals' and families' needs such as housing, transportation, wheelchair accessibility, and furniture or clothing expenses.
2. **Behavioral/Mental health:** Improving individuals' access to quality mental health and behavioral health services and supports.

3. **Client Education and Increasing Independence:** Providing opportunities for individuals to learn, grow and increase self-determination over their lives.
4. **Medical/Dental:** Improving individuals' access to quality medical and dental supports and services.
5. **Social/Recreational:** Increasing opportunities and access to social and recreational activities.
6. **Training and Support:** Providing training and educational services to assist caregivers, providers, families and the general public about I/DD topics.
7. **System Gaps within the I/DD System and Across Other Systems:** Services and supports needed during times of transition or not covered by other resources such as the transition out of foster care, provision of music therapy, testing for I/DD eligibility, and services beyond those covered by Medicaid or other funders. A primary service in this priority area is respite care.

Individual Requests

Residents of Denver with I/DD have two ways to access mill levy funds. They can either contact their RMHS service coordinator or submit a request directly through the RMHS website. In 2019, RMHS received 4,646 completed requests (93% of which, or 4,316, were fully or partially funded) for 1,955 individuals, a 21% increase from last year's number of individuals supported. The total amount of funding granted to support those individual requests was \$2,464,057.79. This covers requests that come in both through the Client Assistance and FSSP Supplement Programs. Graph 2 provides a summary of funds granted by priority area.

Graph 2
January 2019 – December 2019 Funding for Individual Requests by Category (n=4,316)



Individual requests have resulted in funding for diverse needs. Examples of these are:

- 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.
- Camp for a child with a diagnosis of Down Syndrome to receive group therapy sessions with other children.
- Swim lessons for a child to improve overall motor development.
- An exercise bike for an individual with limited strength to improve overall mobility.
- A washer and dryer for an individual with bladder and bowel incontinence.
- A new hearing filter for an individual who hears an excessive amount of environmental noise that cause him to become overwhelmed and act out.

On average, an RMHS service coordinator meets four times a year with individuals who use RMHS for their case management services. 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 through either a mill levy service plan (see p. 6) and/or an individual request.

When an individual submits a request directly through the RMHS website, staff reviews the request in accordance with the contract between RMHS and DHS to ensure the request is appropriate to an individual's needs and not available through other resources before approving. **Individuals in Denver are eligible for mill levy services regardless of their current case management agency.** Those who RMHS does not currently serve can request access to mill levy-funded services and supports through our website at www.rmhumanservices.org/ml.

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 Denver Mill Levy Program.

Of the 4,689 requests received, 43 could not be processed because they were incomplete. Of the 4,646 completed requests, 330 (7 percent) were not funded. Requests for funding were denied for the following reasons:

- 211 were due to previous funding provided to the individual and the individual's limit for specific services had been reached
- 7 were for individuals residing outside Denver or not confirmed as having an I/DD
- 19 were due to the availability of other resources to support the request
- 90 were for services/supports that either did not directly benefit the individual with I/DD or were not allowable (purchasing a pet or international travel, for example)
- 3 were denied for other reasons

In all denials, RMHS provided explanation about the reason for denial to the individual and/or family and provided information/referrals to other community resources when appropriate.

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 how their individual requests were handled. Between January 1 and December 31, 2019, RMHS received six complaints. Every effort was made to support the individual or family member seeking further consideration through this process.

Goal 2: Increase flexible service options to address individualized needs through a variety of providers

Mill Levy Service Plans

In addition to providing funds to meet individual requests, RMHS continues to implement the individualized mill levy service plan model, which began in August 2017. Our goal is that service coordinators develop mill levy service plans for every Denver resident whom RMHS serves and reach as many Denver residents not accepting services through RMHS as possible. Individuals may receive services through either a Medicaid Waiver, State program or Early Intervention, and will have a mill levy service plan completed over the course of the year. More information about our 2019 mill levy service plans can be found in the Appendix.

Community Agency Requests

There are two ways agencies can access mill levy funds through RMHS to support people with I/DD in Denver: as an External Initiative provider and/or as an Unmet Needs provider.

Through our External Initiatives Program, community agencies can access mill levy funds to expand and implement new programs and services to meet the holistic needs of Denver residents with I/DD. We were excited to launch our partnerships with community agencies in 2017, and we work every day to improve this funding program so more Denver residents with I/DD have access to these unique services. This process (located here: www.rmhumanservices.org/community-partners) offers a framework for how applications are evaluated, as well as the associated timelines for submission and approval.

In addition to external initiative partnerships described above, program-approved service agencies (PASAs) are also invited to contract with RMHS as an unmet needs provider to provide services through individualized mill levy service plans, as described on page 6.

In total, RMHS contracted with **103 community agencies** in 2019 to provide mill levy-funded services and supports.

- 26 community agencies were contracted with RMHS to provide external initiatives. (Please see Table 1 for more detail about these agencies.)
- 77 community agencies were contracted to as unmet needs providers to provide services through individualized mill levy service plans.
- Five community agencies provided services through external initiatives as well as through individualized mill levy services plans (these agencies are also included in Table 1).

Table 1
2019 External Agency Initiatives

Implemented Projects	Project Purpose & Service Types	2019 Spending ¹	Individuals Served ²
Basic Needs/Environmental Supports			
Homelessness Project (CFPD)	<i>Conducts outreach to homeless individuals who are diagnosed with or have indications of I/DD and who need assistance connecting with I/DD services and other benefits.</i>	\$320,908	91
Behavioral/Mental Health			
ASPEN & BRANCH Programs (Tennyson Center for Children)	<i>Provides behavioral supports and educational services to dually diagnosed students with I/DD in the classroom (Aspen) as well as behavioral and adaptive supports in the community and home; focusing on family stability (Branch).</i>	\$192,907	18
Laradon Expansion of Behavioral Services	<i>Offers behavioral services and supports beyond Medicaid-defined services, including crisis support, customer-specific trainings, and consultation and training to external systems.</i>	\$51,472	35
Client Education/Increasing Independence			
Ability Connection Colorado: RAMP Extension Program	<i>Serves transitional-age youth and foster care youth with disabilities in a peer oriented, adult and community supported environment. RAMP work is based on an evidenced based model that focuses on goal setting, education, mental health and social supports through a setting of career exploration and jobs in a 4-6 weeklong program and a yearlong program</i>	\$70,339	51
Access Gallery	<i>Engages the community by opening doors to creative, educational and economic opportunities for people with disabilities to access, experience and benefit from the arts. Individuals explore a variety of work options in the arts, learn workplace skills and earn an income via art sales</i>	\$48,999	26

¹ Total 2019 spending is equal to the total amount paid for services delivered in 2019. Depending on the timing of invoices received, spending totals included in Table 1 may not be reflected in reported agency spending.

² Agencies are responsible for submitting number of individuals served to RMHS on a monthly and annual basis.

Family Friendly & Higher visions in education (Art Garage)	<i>Provides art-based learning to youth and young adults at-risk, under-served and/or with mental/behavioral and/or physical disabilities to explore and improve self-esteem and social emotional development (FF). Empowers young adults with Down Syndrome to tell a personal story informed by their experiences and interests through tactile art (HVE)</i>	\$20,114	53
Arts & Community Exploration - ACE (Jewish Family Service)	<i>Provides vibrant and creative art projects, group and individual music therapy, cultural and holiday explorations, recreation and community-based experiences to young adults and adults</i>	\$80,062	19
Colorado Cross Disability Coalition (CCDC): Probate Power	<i>Provides estate planning and probate legal services</i>	\$10,666	22
Easter Seals	<i>Conducting a pilot program utilizing an IPS (individual placement and support) model for supported employment for competitive employment opportunities and to test modifications made to IPS best practices to inform changes to supported employment services offered in Colorado</i>	\$133,601	22
Guided by Humanity Yoga	<i>Enhances quality of life by providing inclusive, accessible yoga classes in the community</i>	\$79,628	123
Honeyman	<i>Empowers adults to incorporate ride share into their daily lives, allowing them the freedom to access their community spontaneously and with dignity by teaching them how to access ride share services safely.</i>	\$82,684	25
Pizzability	<i>Provides job opportunities and employment with research-based supports in a restaurant for adults. The environment of the pizzeria is accommodating and accessible as well as sensory friendly to staff and customers of all abilities</i>	\$165,000	19
Resource Ability (Financial Health Institute)	<i>Provides training to address financial health and economic life skills through a systematic approach that impacts the financial health of the entire community while supporting the retention and implementation of skills learned</i>	\$280,500	203

REVEL: Mentor Program	<i>Supportive environment that incorporates a unique mentor program where teens and adults with disabilities can connect, work, learn, develop social relationships, and thrive together in an inclusive and welcoming community</i>	\$75,251	14
Self-Employment Education (Celebrate EDU)	<i>Teaches the benefits of entrepreneurial education</i>	\$58,070	74
TACT	<i>Offers support and education in a variety of trades, including welding, electronics, fiber arts, graphic design, audio engineering, carpentry, auto mechanics, computer programming, photography, and instrument making</i>	\$298,658	51
THRIVE: Redeem	<i>Mentorship program geared towards African American males ages 5 – 21 who are at risk of suspension, expulsion and/or prison and lack a meaningful relationship with a positive African American male role model</i>	\$172,035	13
THRIVE: Project Independence	<i>Delivers trainings to parents and youth with I/DD to provide information and resources during the time of transition from high school to adulthood</i>	\$74,411	30
Social/Recreational			
Project World (Activity Options)	<i>Offers community activities and overnight travel opportunities to adults</i>	\$232,322	124
Social Inclusion (Connect Us)	<i>Provides opportunities for families and youth for social connections through after-school social groups, inclusive recess facilitation and parent support groups</i>	\$220,040	674
The Wayfaring Band	<i>Transformative all-inclusive travel experiences on the road and at home provide real-world opportunities for adults to practice independent living skills, build genuine relationships, and develop their capacity to make choices and self-advocate</i>	\$241,222	22
System Gaps			
Family Respite Care program (Anchor Center for Blind Children)	<i>Provides parents and caregivers with the opportunity to enjoy a short break from their many caregiving duties, while feeling confident that their child with special needs is being well-cared for</i>	\$10,000	23
RISE School of Denver Music Therapy	<i>Music therapy uses the tool of music to engage children and embed opportunities to work on their developmental goals, including motor, social-emotional, cognitive, and speech-language goals</i>	\$4,298	8

Training & Support

Autism Community Center	<i>Social enterprise that offers hard-to-find products, resources, support groups, events and employment opportunities to the local autism and I/DD community. Empowers people and breaks isolation, connecting families and individuals living with autism to information and to each other in an accepting and sensory-inclusive environment</i>	\$185,114	328
Firefly	<i>Educates and trains first responders and law enforcement professionals on what autism is, what signs to look for, and how to tell the difference between an individual with autism and an individual under the influence of alcohol or mind-altering substances</i>	\$8,000	0
Parent to Parent	<i>Developed and implemented a data system to help match support parents with parents new to the system nationwide. Also trains new support parents</i>	\$33,913	103
RISE School of Denver LEAP Scaling Up	<i>Integrated curriculum approach (i.e., designing learning experiences that promote children's skill development across multiple domains) is used to provide opportunities related to all areas of development in order to scale up and sustain program-wide inclusion</i>	\$14,545	8
Thrive Autism Collaborative	<i>Parent coaching model pilot (P-ESDM parent-mediated Early Start Denver Model) in an evidence-based early intervention program for young children with identified developmental delays and/or risk for autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD)</i>	\$65,028	6

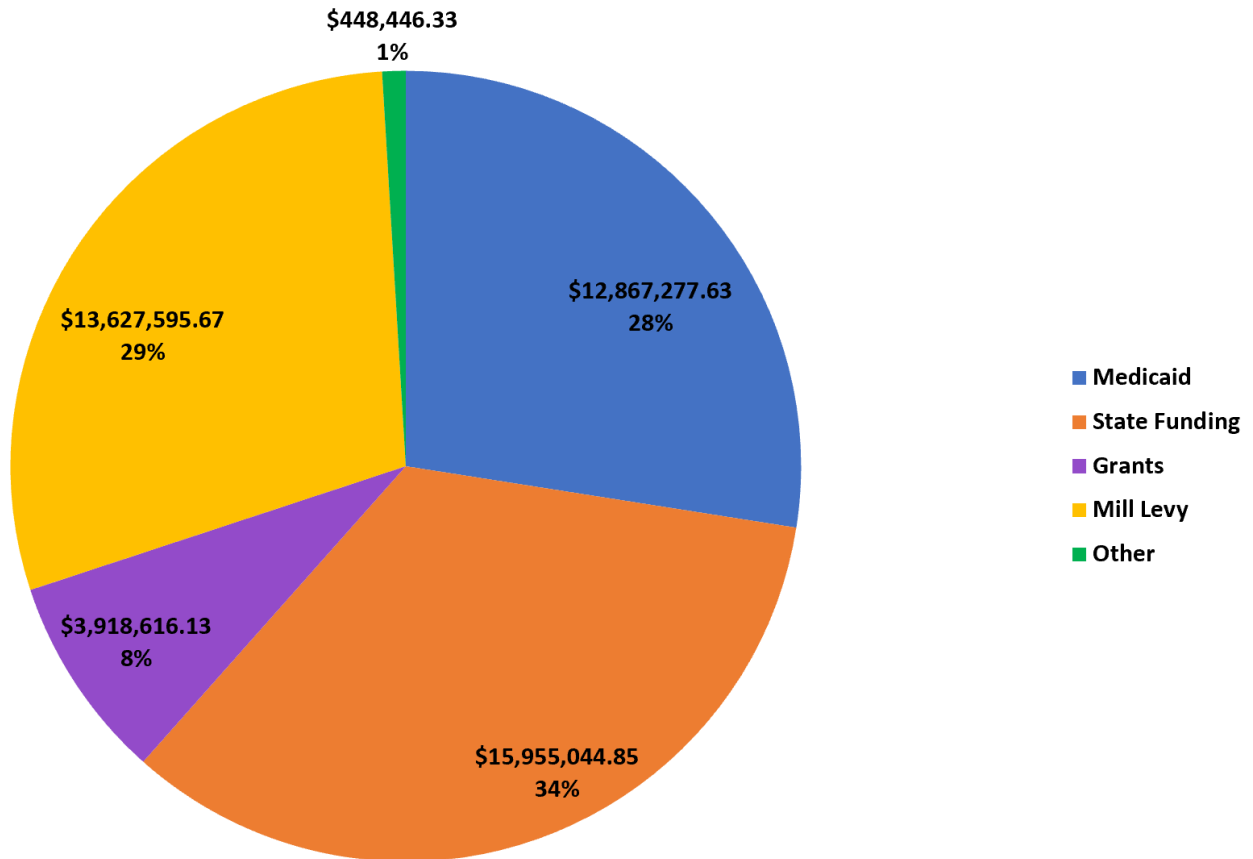
**Table 2: Mill Levy Distribution Details by Priority Area
January 2019 – December 2019**

Priority Area	Transaction Amounts	Number of Providers/ Families/ Organizations Paid
Basic Needs/Environmental Enrichment		
Assistive Technology	\$115,605.60	829
Basic Needs, Personal Care, Homemaker, etc.	\$38,347.90	102
Client Furnishings	\$173,977.30	1,182
Client Meals/Food & Dietary Supplements	\$11,686.80	59
Client Transportation	\$30,915.61	75
General Housing Stability Assistance (rent, utilities, etc)	\$432,471.68	118
Home Accessibility Adaptations	\$146,182.66	672
Residential Habilitation	\$74,984.14	19
Safety Items	\$9,002.95	1
Vehicle Modifications	\$3,270.41	3
Behavioral/Mental Health		
Assessments/evaluations	\$3,675.00	3
Behavioral Therapy	\$439,370.53	245
Other Professional Therapy & Svcs	\$11,859.31	18
Client Training & Education		
Client Training & Education	\$1,509,722.93	222
Medical/Dental		
Dental	\$110,532.55	27
Medical & Client Care Supplies	\$358,448.74	2,256
Other Medical Care (audiology, pharmacy, etc)	\$79,925.95	132
Specialized Med Equip/Wheelchair	\$1,718.82	2
Vision Services	\$14,428.70	15
Social/Recreational		
Camp	\$3,000.00	2
Client Travel	\$2,082.76	4
Recreational Activities	\$1,025,113.88	1,114
Social Skill Development	\$223,648.00	24
System Gaps		
Day Habilitation-Specialized Hab-Facility Based	\$108,481.25	159
Day Habilitation-Supported Comm Conn-Non-Facility Based	\$235,654.06	256
Interpretation Svcs	\$3,086.00	6
Mentorship	\$23,671.18	77
OT/PT/SLP	\$105,946.53	149
Other Professional Svcs (music therapy, hippotherapy, etc)	\$86,181.06	172
Pre-Voc/Supported Employment	\$204,071.00	62
Respite-Adult	\$104,735.38	82
Respite-Children's	\$1,114,899.71	1,884
Training & Support		
Family Ed/Support	\$101,137.31	71
Provider Training	\$28,047.41	8
Training & Support	\$181,919.54	12
Grand Total	\$7,117,802.65	10,062

Rocky Mountain Human Services Enhanced Services

In 2019, RMHS provided services to individuals in Denver through a variety of programs and funding sources. A breakdown of the costs of services and supports in 2019 is detailed in Graph 3³.

Graph 3
RMHS Cost of Services and Supports by Funding Source
January 2019 – December 2019



RMHS delivers services through multiple programs for children and adults with I/DD. Approximately 30 percent of the total mill levy funding expended in this reporting period supported enhanced services that RMHS provided more than 4,700 unduplicated individuals in Denver. In many cases, RMHS is the only provider of these services in Denver, and the services are not otherwise reimbursable but are important for the individual’s well-being. RMHS has continued to increase efficiencies and reduce its use of mill levy for enhanced services, which results in more funding for individual needs and community agencies. Mill levy expenditures by department are detailed in Table 3 and described below.

³ The amount of mill levy dollars listed on this graph does not include RMHS’s final 2019 invoice to DHS, which was not yet paid at the time of this report. Therefore, due to the reimbursement nature of the mill levy contract, the amount is slightly lower than the total expenditures for the year listed on page 2 of this report.

Table 3
 RMHS Enhanced Services
 January 2019 – December 2019

RMHS Departments Providing Mill Levy-Funded Services	Mill Levy Funding
Intake	\$836,462.00
Early Intervention	\$628,790.00
Family Services and Supports	\$700,000.00
Life Essentials Provider Network	\$77,797.74
Service Coordination	\$751,796.00
Children’s Clinical Services	\$1,052,160.00
Communications and Outreach	\$97,188.74
Total	\$4,144,194.48

Intake

The Intake Team at RMHS received an average of 278 referrals per month from Denver residents seeking I/DD services. Use of mill levy dollars to support this work enables RMHS to provide the guidance people need when seeking services in a complex system, from the initial phone call through the eligibility determination. In 2019, intake for 0-3-year olds were completed in an average of 25 days, and for individuals over 3 years of age in an average of 48 days. The Intake Team supports referrals and intakes for Early Intervention, Family Service & Supports Program, Service Coordination, and Children’s Clinical Services.

Early Intervention Services

The Early Intervention (EI) program provides supports and services to infants and toddlers with developmental delays and their families. EI services are available to all eligible children regardless of means to pay. The service delivery is distinct from those available in traditional health care systems in that they are family-centered, delivered in the context of activities and routines that naturally occur in the child’s typical environment, and the emphasis is on coaching families to support their child’s development rather than delivering therapy targeted only to the child. RMHS is the sole designated broker for EI services in Denver County.

Early Intervention includes both case management and direct services to address identified needs. Funding for these services includes state and federal funds, Medicaid, and private insurance. All these funding sources have various limitations on amount and type of services that can be funded. Mill levy funding helps fill the gaps and ensure that children and families receive all the services they need, regardless of their insurance plan. During this reporting period, RMHS served **2,508 Denver individuals**⁴ in this program. Over 90 percent of the children served in EI received additional mill levy-funded case management services. Without mill levy funding, these children’s needs would not be met as comprehensively or as expeditiously.

⁴ Some individuals receive services from more than one RMHS program during the year and are therefore included in each program’s count.

Family Service and Supports Program

The Family Service and Supports Program (FSSP) is a partnership between families and publicly funded supports. The program assesses each individual's and family's circumstances to determine the appropriate types of services or supports that can best assist and are least likely to disrupt the family's lifestyle. In FSSP, state funding covers direct services and case management activities, both of which are capped contractually to CCBs. Mill levy funding pays for the case management and direct services that other funding sources do not reimburse. RMHS is the sole provider of FSSP services in Denver. During this reporting period, FSSP served **1,419 Denver individuals**. Without mill levy funding, more than 800 individuals in FSSP would have lost case management and direct services and would be placed on a waitlist.

Life Essentials Provider Network

The Life Essentials Provider Network (LEPN) provides direct services for adults and children with I/DD through Medicaid programs. RMHS oversees a service model that uses family members as subcontractors to provide services. This increases individual choice and creates a mechanism to reimburse family members for the valuable services they provide. LEPN uses both nursing and quality assurance staff to enhance the quality of delivered services that are neither required nor funded outside of mill levy. RMHS uses mill levy funding to offer state-mandated trainings, such as first aid, to LEPN providers at no cost. During this reporting period, LEPN served **80 Denver individuals**. LEPN used mill levy funding to supplement the costs of providing oversight to 77 contractors serving those individuals. Other CCBs in Colorado have ceased providing services in this model due to the high administrative costs. Without mill levy funding, RMHS would be unable to provide this option to Denver residents.

RMHS made the difficult decision to close the Life Essentials Provider Network (LEPN) on September 30, 2019. We had hoped to identify a business model that would adequately fill the gap between the cost of providing intermittent in home and community-based supports for adults and children and the reimbursements we receive from Medicaid waivers, mill levy funding and other sources. Unfortunately, we were not able to come up with a model that would be sustainable, because it has always been our commitment to pass through the majority of the Medicaid waiver rate (88%) to the providers, many of whom are parents and other family members. LEPN staff and service coordinators worked with all individuals affected by this closure to identify other providers. We recognize that there is great need for intermittent in home and community-based supports for adults and children with I/DD in the Denver community, and we regret having to make this decision. But we do it while looking to the future and will continue to seek a sustainable way to support these individuals in obtaining the services and supports that they need.

Service Coordination

Service Coordination provides case management to children and adults receiving Medicaid-funded developmental disability services. Case management includes intake activities, eligibility determinations, service enrollment, and locating, coordinating and monitoring services. Service coordinators also assist individuals in securing other non-developmental disability-funded services and benefits, such as medical, social and educational services. As Denver's CCB, RMHS must process intake and eligibility for individuals in Denver seeking service coordination. During this reporting period, service coordination served **898 Denver individuals**.

In addition to providing case management to individuals enrolled in State and Medicaid Waiver programs, RMHS also provided mill levy-funded case management and services to **162 Denver individuals** who are waiting for those services, are receiving services through another CCB, or are choosing not to receive State/Waiver services but otherwise qualify for mill levy services, such as

individual requests and/or mill levy service plans. See page 42 for more information about waitlist coordination.

Case management reimbursement for services is capped at 60 hours per waiver recipient annually and some case management functions are not eligible for Medicaid reimbursement. Mill levy funding pays for case management beyond what is reimbursed through other sources. Without mill levy funding, RMHS service coordination caseloads would increase, reducing the organization's responsiveness to the community's needs.

Children's Clinical Services

The Children's Clinical Team provides comprehensive assessment, consultation and intervention services to infants, children and adolescents, from birth to age 18. As a CCB, RMHS conducts developmental assessments and diagnostic evaluations for children including those with autism spectrum disorder. Additionally, RMHS provides and uses subcontractors for intervention services, including occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech language pathology and psychology. Current funding for these services does not provide reimbursement to meet all an individual's needs, nor for the administrative oversight of sub-contractors. In this reporting period, the Children's Clinical Team served **1,689 Denver individuals**. Approximately half received assessment services only and half continue to receive ongoing intervention services. Mill levy funding in this area is making a significant impact. RMHS can complete diagnostic evaluations in two months or less, while other entities in the community are taking six months or longer.

Community Outreach and Communications

Mill levy funds are used to support community outreach and communication activities regarding services for Denver residents with I/DD, ensuring that their voices are heard and that the community is aware of how to access mill levy funds. The following RMHS outreach activities were conducted in 2019.

- Conducted six Community Advisory Council meetings.
- Held one Community Forum for RMHS clients, family members and the community to learn about the RMHS Mill Levy program. Information was presented highlighting the 2018 Mill Levy Annual Report along with information about services and supports available through the Mill Levy program in 2019. The forum was held at TACT, a 2019 mill levy-funded partner.
- Published a Mill Levy specific annual report which was distributed to the public at the RMHS community forum in April. Additionally, the annual report was distributed at outreach and other public events throughout the year.
- Presented to Denver City Council SAFEHOUSE Committee in April of 2019.
- Hosted the annual Summerfest event for adults with I/DD in the Denver community. The event was held in September of 2019 and was attended by over 400 people including RMHS board members, mill levy-funded partners, DHS staff and city council staff.
- 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.
- 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.
- Distributed a monthly e-newsletter to more than 2,000 subscribers.
- Presented at or had a resource table at over 50 Registered Neighborhood Organization meetings and community events.
- Hosted a Halloween dance for adults with I/DD at Laradon.
- Hosted a provider fair in August of 2019 for case managers and families interested in learning more about I/DD service options in the Denver-metro including services available through RMHS Mill Levy Partners.

Program Outcomes

RMHS provides mill levy funding directly to individuals and families in Denver, and caregivers and agencies that support Denver residents. RMHS is committed to meeting the unique needs of individuals; additionally, RMHS is committed to enhancing the capacity of community agencies to develop programs and deliver services to support Denver residents with I/DD.

RMHS is proud of the results achieved in 2019 through mill levy-funded services and supports. Whether new services were working to increase individuals' independence; keeping individuals and families healthy, safe and in their homes; increasing caregivers' skills; or improving quality of life, the results are remarkable. A summary of outcomes is provided in Appendix A. Below are some 2019 highlights:⁵

- More than 110 individuals and families received support for **housing stability**, including rental and utility assistance, so they can remain safely in their homes.
- Hundreds of individuals were able to **increase their independence** through educational opportunities such as:
 - Learning **trade skills** toward gainful employment
 - Increasing **cultural and artistic** exposure
 - Appropriately participating in **integrated yoga** classes
 - Improving **financial health**
 - Turning their interests into **entrepreneurial opportunities**
- Nearly 2,000 caregivers received respite support to enable them to better provide care to their family members
- Hundreds of individuals reported through survey efforts an improvement in their **quality of life** through social and recreational opportunities.

⁵ May include duplicate numbers due to reporting restrictions over two contracted terms.

- Over 1,100 individuals improved their **quality of life** through social and recreational opportunities.

Summary

RMHS provides case management 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. RMHS has embraced the opportunity to create responsive, innovative programs through the mill levy funding. For calendar year 2019, RMHS continued to maximize the impact of these dollars on the lives of Denver residents with I/DD. RMHS has used these funds to enhance the well-being of children and adults in a multitude of ways, including the following:

- Funding individual requests from over 1,900 individuals, including needed medical care and therapies when they are not covered or only partially covered by Medicaid or private insurance.
- Building services that are unfunded or underfunded by Medicaid or other funders, such as respite care, into hundreds of individuals' annual service plans.
- Supporting innovative programs through 103 community agencies to provide services to thousands of individuals, including educational and supportive services for school-age children with severe behavioral and other needs; providing entrepreneurial education to young people; and providing educational and employment support to teenagers and adults.
- Enhancing RMHS services, such as additional case management, first aid training for family members, and therapies for infants and toddlers, to more than 4,700 individuals when adequate funding is not available from the state, Medicaid or other sources.

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.

Appendix A: Program Outcomes by Priority Area

Priority: Basic Needs/Environmental Supports

Meeting basic needs and providing environmental supports for individuals and families includes addressing needs such as housing, transportation, wheelchair accessibility, and furniture or clothing.

Client Assistance (RMHS)

This project provides a way for individuals to access funds for specific needs when other resources do not exist to meet those needs. Requests are reviewed twice a week. RMHS funded 4,316 individual requests in 2019. Requests have included temporary assistance with rent or utilities to ensure housing stability, clothing, beds, tutoring, adaptive equipment, trainings for family and caregivers, and co-pays for needed therapies.

Homelessness Project (CFPD-Mission Supports)

Through collaboration with the Colorado Fund for People with Disabilities (CFPD), Mission Supports locates homeless individuals with or suspected to have I/DD. The program structure offers individuals one-on-one support with a peer advocate to obtain services and secure housing and other environmental resources.

In 2019 long term outcomes achieved:

- Team served 91 individuals
- 21 individuals were found eligible for services and enrolled with RMHS
- 38 individuals received assistance to obtain income through work, SNAP/EBT, A.N.D., or SSA disability benefits.

All individuals received case management, information and referral, wrap-around services, and other assistance to mitigate crisis situations and address immediate needs.

Client Assistance Successes

•Samuel is a 4-year-old who has frequent accidents throughout the day, is fed via g-tube, and has a trachea. The family's washer and dryer broke, and they were unable to purchase new ones. RMHS funded \$1640 to purchase a new washer and dryer for Samuel's care.

•Jason is a 2-year-old who is receiving hospice care and his family wanted to make him more comfortable at night. RMHS funded \$260 to purchase an elevated sleeping lounger and cover to support him at night.

•Justin is a 10-year-old who has a diagnosis that results in chronic and severe nose bleeds. The nose bleeds sometimes lead to behavioral outbursts making his personal hygiene challenging for his caregivers. RMHS funded \$456 to clean the carpet and furniture in the home to remove stains and keep his living environment safe and clean.

•Robin is a 27 old who has weakness in his muscles and can become easily fatigued. RMHS funded \$557 to purchase a new mattress, box spring, and bed frame to enable him to sleep better and alleviate his physical symptoms.

CFPD Mission Supports

In February 2019, Mission Supports began weekly intake meetings at St Frances Center where we met and conducted an intake for a 58-year-old gentleman. Derick was friendly and reserved during his intake and was notably in need of clean clothes and a winter coat that would fit his small body frame. Derick was uncomfortable and distracted by the recent loss of two of his fingers due to frost bite from sleeping in an alley during a recent snowstorm. Mission Supports helped him apply for a Social Security card and secured legal assistance to apply for an SSA disability claim. We then scheduled him for an evaluation to assist in determining his eligibility for I/DD services, helped him obtain clothes that fit him, a replacement Medicaid card and a birth certificate from his birthplace in Madrid, Spain.

Derick met with our Peer Navigator and through that meeting, he was able to get in touch with one of his out of state siblings, who was able to give us more information regarding Derick's childhood and past disability claim attempts. It had been four years since Derick last talked to his brother and through the Peer Navigator's assistance, he was able to reconnect with this family member. Derick attended two of our Peer Group meetings, one of which was hosted by the Denver Art Museum. Derick had never been to an art museum before and not only did he take part in the meeting discussions, but he also was able to experience his first art museum stroll after the meeting. Through the attention he has received from our transitional case management and peer meetings, Derick is much more open to share not only information about his experience but also insight and support to others served by Mission Supports. His attitude and mood get more positive with every interaction and he is fully focused on doing whatever it takes to get the services he's qualified for through RMHS along with permanent housing. In Sept 2019 Derick was found eligible and is now enrolled in services with RMHS.



Priority: Client Education/Increasing Independence

The following are community project partners offering education to clients with a focus on increasing their life skills and gaining independence.

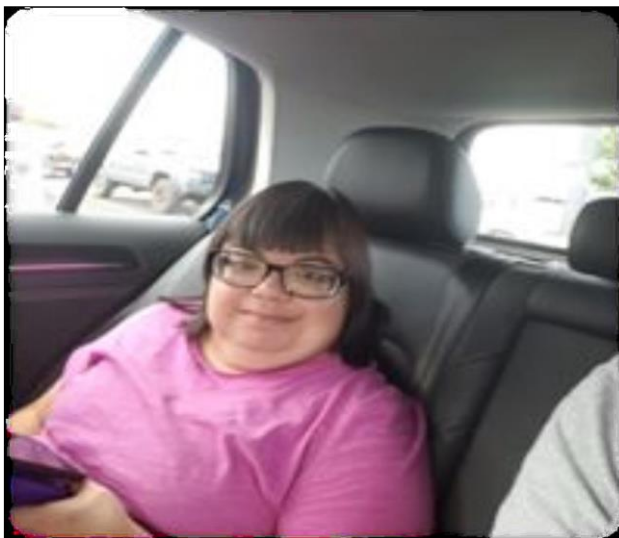
Honeyman

Honeyman Services, LLC. started the Ride Share Education Program in 2019 with the mission to share expertise and experiences supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in accessing ride share services such as UBER and LYFT. This program is an effort to give persons with I/DD the tools and skills they need to access their community in a safe, independent and dignified manner utilizing ride share services. Historically persons with I/DD have had very limited transportation options allowing them to access their community and, almost none allowing for spontaneous access. Furthermore, the few options available to them have not been options regularly utilized by the mainstream community. This program utilizes technology along with education and training to allow persons with I/DD to access the ride share phenomenon sweeping the globe. The team taught a total of three training sessions in the summer of 2019; each individual scheduled an individualized training with the instructor team upon completion of the classroom session.

Outcomes achieved in 2019:

- 25 Denver Residents served
- 7 individuals successfully completed the classroom and individual training
- Before attending the training sessions 63% of respondents reported that they had never used ride share services and those that had reported a frequency of a few times a month, none reported multiple times a week or daily. After completing the session, individual training and follow up, 13% of respondents reported using ride share services daily, with another 37% reporting using ride share services once or twice a week.

Accessing the community as independently as possible has also been a driving factor in all areas of the program. Upon completion of the program 62% of respondents reported that they access ride share services completely independently or with minimal assistance.



"Now, I can go anywhere I want." Bennett L (individual accepting services)



<https://www.9news.com/article/news/local/a-denver-class-is-opening-new-doors-for-people-with-disabilities/73-3da98d33-9f01-490a-9fd7-20f844a1b867>

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. More than 70% of individuals with I/DD (ages 16-64) are unemployed in the United States (U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics). Moreover, those living with I/DD are more than twice as likely to live at or below the poverty line as those without disability (Center for Poverty Research, UC Davis). Youth over the age of 21 are especially susceptible of falling through the cracks as support services are lost when youth transition from the school system to adulthood. The transition becomes more complicated as many students have few to no vocational options, thereby leaving them isolated and at greater risk of feeling alienated.

Access Gallery supports young adults and artists with I/DD in their efforts to integrate into the community and workforce through the medium of visual arts. Additionally, using the arts as a tool to increase and maintain independence and assisting individuals who are living with I/DD succeed in the workplace. In 2019 Outcomes realized:

- Access Gallery has completed the following three residencies:

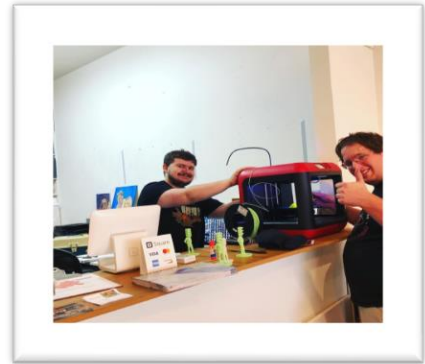
1. **The "I Need A Hero" based around comic book stories and character development:** 12 artists with I/DD were featured in this show, additionally because of this show, 3 artists with I/DD were invited to have a booth and sell their work at a local comic book/zine festival.
2. **IKEArt which involved utilizing materials and equipment from IKEA to make art sculptures:** Resulted in a gallery exhibition with 13 young adults with I/DD being featured during this show.
3. **Entrepreneurship and Work Readiness through the Arts:** 7 different commission projects were realized, included the largest commission-based project to date where artists created 50 pet portraits for employees at Comcast and were paid out over \$3,000 to the artists involved.

- Entrepreneurship Job Development Residency eight-week creative career focus summer program for youth between the ages of 16-21 years old with I/DD learn about self-advocacy, receive exposure to a wide range of creative career options while also working on collaborative and individual art commissions and learn general job skill development; 16 youth with I/DD participated and completed this residency program.
 - 15 participants learned new concepts about selling art-based products and general job skills
 - 13 participants participated in a job/art skills development class.
 - 8 participants worked a First, greeting guests and talking about their artwork.
 - 3 participants worked with a mentor artist to create the illustrations for a disabilities right book that will be printed and promoted around the State
 - 15 participants worked together to create a wide range of collaborative and individual pieces for the end of program Pop Up Store.



Access Gallery

Adam is a young man who has been participating in Access Gallery's programs since he left high school. He has become our 3-D expert and even got an internship at a 3-D printing store. He sells items in our store, participated in our corporate commissions and has grown tremendously as a working artist. He has been working through a variety of concepts and designs and has greatly evolved his products, especially with new medium of a 3-D printer. He is now in the process of starting his own business and we continue to support him in this process. He has found a community at the gallery.



Easter Seals

Easter Seals is conducting a two-year pilot program utilizing an IPS (individual placement and support) model for supported employment to increase employment and sustain employment for job seekers living with I/DD for competitive employment opportunities. Due to the success of the model for people with mental illness, there is a movement to implement IPS to serve other populations, including individuals with IDD. The National Core Indicators Project found that only 14% of working age adults, supported by state IDD agencies worked in individual competitive jobs. The Institute's survey research also found that Employment Specialists inconsistently use established promising practices for job development with this population, negatively influencing an individual's success. IPS is a promising model for this population with an Illinois pilot program finding an average employment rate of 39% and employment sustainability rate of 55%. As part of the IPS supported employment model, an ESC Employment Specialist will support each job seeker through the following phases of employment: intake; engagement; assessment; job placement; job coaching; and follow-along supports. The IPS model outlines 25 best practices for every aspect of employment services delivery. During 2019 22 job seekers participated in the first year of the pilot program. Below are the outcomes realized in 2019:

- 40% of individuals served found employment (National avg is 14%)
- 44% of those placed in employment retained their job after 90 days from job start

Easter Seals

Joe* found himself facing multiple barriers. He lost his job suddenly and was homeless. Joe immediately needed to find a job. Further complicating the situation - Joe had no supports, aside from a previous job coaching connection with Easter seals Colorado. Fortunately, the IPS/IDD Pilot enabled job development services to begin immediately. Joe became employed within weeks! In addition to securing employment, Easter seals Colorado Employment Specialist helped set up transportation to the new job, as well as provided disclosure, advocacy, and coaching services. Because the IPS/IDD model goes beyond employment supports, Joe's Employment Specialist reached out to our community connections with Catholic Charities, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless and other non-profits to help address his homelessness. Today, Joe continues to be successful at his new job, and remains employed at that location.

* Name changed.

Guided by Humanity Yoga

Guided by Humanity (GBH) was created to provide inclusive and accessible yoga opportunities as well as nutritional eating and cooking classes to increase overall wellness for the I/DD community in Denver. GBH served 123 individuals in 2019. This program is giving students the tools to control their own well-being. In 2019, GBH added two new locations and one new day program for yoga classes to increase accessibility of services to new students which also increased the number of classes offered. Below are the outcomes realized in 2019:

- Increasing community awareness of individuals with I/DD: GBH held 3 inclusive yoga for all community events with students with I/DD, physical disabilities and neurotypical community members practicing yoga together.
- Increasing self-confidence level among students: survey results show that most students are more likely to try a new sport after attending a yoga class. Observations show that students are beginning to engage with each other from different day programs before and after class and students with the highest attendance rates are showing a decreased dependence on the instructor and listening more intently.
- Increasing leadership skills among students: observations show students with the highest attendance rates are assisting with sound work and demonstrating what poses look like.

- Increasing nutritional cooking skills: observations show that the majority of individuals display an increase in mindful eating by slowing down while eating the foods. Participants also report trying new foods and taking recipes home to cook themselves.

Guided by Humanity Yoga

Consistent classes at yoga studios has allowed for increased community engagement amongst GBH students and neurotypical students attending other yoga classes. First quarter and throughout this past year, GBH has received feedback from a few yoga instructors that have attended our All abilities classes stating it was a powerful practice with the lack of egos from All Abilities students, the environment was welcoming and friendly for yoga students to attend, and neurotypical students coming into Mudra enjoy seeing All abilities students coming into the space as yoga is for everybody! The past 4 quarters and continued throughout this past year, GBH has received several inquiries from yoga teachers and volunteers seeing the work in the community and wanting to be involved with GBH.

–Mary Sims
Owner, Guided by Humanity

Art Garage

The Art Garage implemented two programs in 2019 that focused on integrative learning that reinforces student success and providing fully accessible arts-based programs for those with specialized needs. The Family Friendly Programs served ages 2-18 and focused on arts-based learning by exploring an issue or theme, discussing aspects that relate to personal identity, encouraging social-emotional communication through group dynamics and listening to the unspoken language that each student conveys. The Higher Visions in Education program served individuals ages 18 and older to tell stories using art that are determined by the students and informed by their own experiences and interest. The Art Garage served 53 individuals with I/DD residing in Denver in 2019. Below are the outcomes realized in 2019:

- In the Family Friendly Program:
 - Students were observed by art instructors and schoolteachers to exhibit increasing independence over the course of the overall project such as washing paintbrushes, selecting materials, cleaning up their areas and helping each other.
 - Based on observations, students showed an increase in following directions and responding to guidance with inquisitiveness and enthusiasm.
- In the Higher Visions in Education Program:
 - Students were able to explore what the artwork means to them personally as well as supporting each other in the artistic process as a group.
 - Students showed an increase in confidence by presenting their artworks and speaking about their creative process in front of an audience of approximately 70 attendees at the public reception.

Autism Community Center

The Autism Community Store empowers people and breaks isolation, connecting families and individuals living with autism to information and to each other in an accepting and sensory-inclusive environment. In 2019, The Autism Community Store created an Autism

Community Center; a safe, friendly, inclusive space that is welcoming to people of all abilities and offers education, support and recreational opportunities to individuals with I/DD and their families. The Autism Community Center is a community hub, a comprehensive resource for the underserved Autism community, a place to belong, and a bridge to other resources and the broader community. At the Autism Community Center provided a parent support group, autism trainings, an autism resource fair, a sibling clubhouse, a parent's night out, community social events for individuals with autism, and an autism family support center for resources.

The Autism Community Center captured their outcomes through survey results:

- 93% of those who participated “Agree” or “Strongly agree” that The Autism Community Store has helped me feel more knowledgeable about services and supports available for myself or my child.
- 92% of those surveyed “agree” or “strongly agree” that Coming to the Autism Community Store has helped me feel better emotionally.
- 92% agreed or strongly agreed that “Coming to the Autism Community Store has helped me feel less alone in my journey
- 92% of respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that The Autism Community Store helps them feel connected to others.
- 98% of respondents indicated their experience at the Autism Community Store was positive, with over 82% rating it as “Excellent.”
- 91% of respondents feel the Autism Community Store makes a difference for themselves and their family.



Pizzability

Most adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) are either unemployed or underemployed, despite their ability, desire, and willingness to work in the community. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2019 only 30.7 percent of persons with a disability were employed. Not only does Pizzability provide employment for individuals with I/DD, but it provides supports needed to sustain employment and gain transferrable skills within the service industry. There are some programs that hire adults with I/DD to assemble pizza boxes, but not make pizzas or serve pizzas. Pizzability showcases the vast skillsets of employees with intellectual and developmental disabilities within a restaurant in the heart of Cherry

Creek, a well-known area for high end dining and fashion. They employ and train adults over the age of 21 who fall into the categories of autism, down syndrome, deaf, blind, and cerebral palsy among others.

Pizzability outcomes realized in 2019:

- 13/14 employees⁶ who reside in Denver have sustained employment in 2019. This shows a 93% employment retention rate among individuals with I/DD.
- 93.8% of employee's self-report “I love my job at Pizzability”
- 60% of employees have increased independence level within the various skill sets needed at the pizzeria.
- Increased confidence level among employees: Staff has a routine each time they work. They

⁶ Table 1 reports a total of 19 individuals served in 2019. Five employees were not included in the total number who sustained employment because they were trainees during the time reported.

know exactly what to expect and do. They begin each shift with a visual checklist in front of a mirror to ensure they are work-ready. They have seen increased confidence levels in all staff as they work and get paid for the work they do.

- Changed attitudes of public about I/DD population: The location in Cherry Creek is central to Denver and reaching many individuals that lack other experience with the I/DD population. Many people have stated they didn't know "those" kinds of people could work. Public perceptions are changing daily. We have a 98% positive customer feedback average.
- Offer safe and friendly atmosphere: Pizzability is an innovative and inclusive dining experience for individuals and their families where they can have their unique dining needs met in a safe and friendly atmosphere.

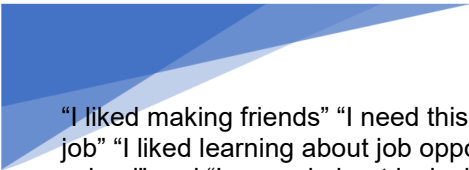
Pizzability is also reaching more people through media and changing the perceptions of how individuals with I/DD should work.

<https://303magazine.com/2019/10/pizzability-denver-employer-disabilities/>

THRIVE Project Independence

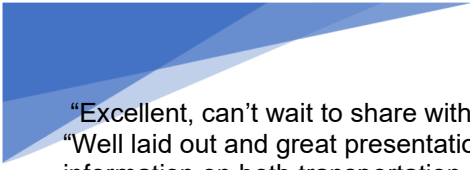
Project Independence provides information and skills through a parent and youth education and support training program to parents of youth and teens with I/DD. Parents will better understand the nature of their children's disabilities and the resources available to support a successful post-secondary life. In addition, youth with I/DD will better understand their educational, developmental and transitional needs resulting in successful postsecondary outcomes. During 2019, 4 workshops for youth and parents were completed; 20 parent/guardian participants per workshop and 15 youth participants. Both parents and youth were given a post-survey to measure how much the parents and youth have learned since their first session to the last and they have learned a lot.

- 92% of students agreed or strongly agreed
- 82% parents agreed or strongly agreed
- Youth finished their resumes and worked on self-advocacy skills in a mock IEP meeting
- Youth increased their knowledge on how to prepare for postsecondary life and being aware about community resources and options to make informed choices was the results of participating at the trainings
- Parents increased their knowledge on college options, PATH planning, independent living, transportation, disability planning, and discussing legal matters pertinent to families with children with disabilities.



"I liked making friends" "I need this so I can get a job" "I liked learning about job opportunities after school" and "Learned about inclusion and there is nothing wrong with being weird."

Youth response from evaluations



"Excellent, can't wait to share with the community" "Well laid out and great presentation" "Great new information on both transportation and inclusive higher-ed" and "...liked the ability to ask a variety of questions to knowledgeable people."

Parent response from evaluations



Thrive Redeem

Redeem is a mentorship program targeted towards African American males from ages 5 – 21 who have an Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD), who are at risk of suspension, expulsion and/or prison; and lack meaningful relationship with a positive black male role model. Many people in this country have grossly underestimated the value of a role model or mentor in the life of a child (Dortch & The 100 Black Men of America, 2000). Low school achievement, very low educational attainment, early exit from the public-school system, unemployment, and trouble with the law are the kinds of things that these young men have become accustomed to and believe is the way [of]

life (Polite & Davis, 1999). A positive African American role model can provide young men with a very powerful example of life outside of the walls to which they have become accustomed (Cephas, 2012). Redeem's staff and male volunteers from the African American community united together to help boys who have I/DD that are at risk of being victims of the system. In 2019 13 youth participated in the program and engaged in conversation with mentors on the following lessons: Friendship, Building Relationships, Triggers & Coping skills, Anger Mgmt., Work Ethics, Loyalty, Ethics & Morals, Circle of Influences, Respect, My Voice Matters, Appreciating Life & its purpose, Writing My Story (learning to write a plan for their life), I am My Truth & My Future (taking ownership of their life and its future) and Team Work.

Each mentee created an Independent Development Plan (IDP) where at least one goal is documented for the year.

In 2019 the following outcomes were achieved:

- 17% of mentees have reached acceptable to their goal
- 50% of mentees minimally acceptable at reaching their goal
- 33% of mentees are emerging at reaching their goal

Colorado Cross Disability Coalition (CCDC): Probate Power

With the support of Mill Levy funds, Probate Power focuses primarily on special needs planning for individuals and families with disabilities, but also assists clients with all other aspects of estate planning and probate administration. Probate Power also periodically gives presentations regarding special needs planning, guardianships, and public benefits to groups of families with special needs, so that they better understand the opportunities available to them and what they should consider as their children with special needs transition to adulthood. Probate Power is able to assist clients who would otherwise not be able to receive this type of legal services. In 2019, Probate Power was able to provide special needs planning services to 22 people with I/DD in Denver City and County.

ResourceAbility Program (Financial Health Institute)

Financial Health Institute (FHI) developed a program to improve financial health throughout Denver's I/DD Community. This training program addresses financial health and economic life skills. They

FHI

Mariah is a young lady who eagerly attends the financial health classes at Cottonwood. She made sure I knew how proud she is that she has only missed one of the classes. She has a bright and engaging personality and greets everyone with a smile. Mariah said, "It is interesting to learn about money management, like how to keep money and save money. This is the first time I have been in a class like this, learning about money, saving, and spending." Mariah is saving for an iPhone. Mariah said, "I save most of the 76 dollars I get and only spend 5 dollars each month." Mariah is working with Colorado Vocational Rehabilitation and hoping to have a job soon. When talking about her job she said, "When I start receiving money from my job the classes help me learn about needs and wants and how to decide what to spend. If I get a job as a cashier, I will be able to count back the money."

provide trainings/classes to individuals, case managers, staff, managers/supervisors and families. Their 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. During 2019, FHI scheduled and delivered classes for groups of customers with 7 community partners, serving 203 adults with I/DD.

FHI has developed and tested a customer survey to gain direct feedback about the classes provided. Here are the results from its survey for 2019:

- 84% of customers said they liked the classes.
- 68% of customers said they would like to attend another class.
- 88% of customers said they thought the classes were helpful.

Staff at host sites for the classes was also surveyed regarding their perceptions about their customers' reactions to the classes, Staff rated:

- 93 % of the participants were engaged all the time or most of the time
- 94 % of the curriculum was very or mostly relevant to the participants.

Self-Employment Education Project (Celebrate EDU)

Celebrate EDU's Self-Employment Education Project provides opportunities for client education and increased independence by offering innovative entrepreneurial education for individuals ages 15 to 50. Celebrate EDU is shifting perceptions of family members, service providers and staff providers about entrepreneurship possibilities. In 2019, Celebrate EDU served 74 individuals in the Kindling workshop and Discovering Entrepreneurship Course. Participants design a unique business model, business name and logo while also getting the chance to practice business etiquette, design a support network, and learn more about their own interests. Students learn about self-employment, personal strengths, ways to create a support network, set goals, and the importance of self-advocacy.

Outcomes realized in 2019:

- 98% of program participants have an increased understanding of business
- 92% feel more comfortable interacting with others
- 84% have improved communication skills

<https://celebrateedu.org/what-self-advocates-are-saying-about-kindling-workshops/>

TACT – Teaching the Autism Community Trades



The mission of TACT is to encourage and empower the full spectrum of individuals with autism through education and employment in skilled trades. The autism community is the highest unemployment sector in the country at 90%. TACT's programs lead to employable jobs and lasting careers. However, the goal isn't just to get a job. It's getting the right job in the right place that is personally fulfilling to each student based on their strengths. TACT is a trade and technical training program aimed at children and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). TACT achieves this through three areas, Career tracks (ages 14-21), Night/weekend programs/workshops

and summer camps (ages 5-21). Topics include: STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics), instrument building, costume making, Arduino, metal working, auto mechanics, and a number of intros to trades classes that offers exposure to different trade related projects for individuals to refine their interests. In 2019 TACT served a total of 51 student, some of which participated in more than one program: 13 students in the career tracks program, 20 students in weekend programs and 18 individuals in camps.

TACT's outcomes included improving students' empowerment, independence, socialization, flexibility, problem-solving and self-confidence, and therefore increasing the likelihood of gainful employment. Outcomes realized in 2019:

- Welding students secured a project with Priority Property Services to construct a fence for Red Peak Properties- a company that owns and rents apartments in the greater Denver area.
- Our TACT Construction, LLC team finished building custom worktables for the Clements Community Center Lakewood.
- TACT Auto LLC has hired our first individual with ASD and has sold our first vehicle - a 1963 Ford F100 pickup.
- Student hired with McDonald Auto Group is still successfully employed
- Worldwide Vintage Autos is one of the largest classic automobile dealerships in the world. We have partnered with them previously to sell the VW Beetle, the Corvair, and the Cherokee Chief. Because of the incredible work that our students do on these classic vehicles, they entrusted TACT with a 1962 Chevy C-10. This beautiful truck needed several repairs, including a complete engine swap.

<https://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/local-news/denver-nonprofit-teaching-the-trades-to-students-with-autism-leading-to-employment>

TACT

My wife and I stumbled onto TACT while looking for any resource we could find to help our son find a path to be productive and proud of himself in life. While we had tried vocational school, learning from a text, was simply not the path for our son to grow. At TACT we discovered amazing people, such as Danny, Becky, and Greg, who truly understood what it means to want your child to thrive. Our son flourished in their hands in the program in the auto mechanic department. The most amazing part was how TACT worked to help place our son in a job. They located businesses, which have the commitment to help young adults with challenges and then work with the companies to develop a work program in which they can succeed. Greg accompanied our son to shadow and mentor him the first few days on the job. TACT made sure that all the HR requirements were in place, so that the new job position could work out smoothly. Our son is currently employed, 40 hour per week at his dream job as an auto mechanic at a local Auto dealership. **-Excerpts from parent letter**

RAMP Extension for Foster Care Youth (Ability Connection Colorado)

RAMP is an innovative, national mentoring and life-skills program, which provides evidence-based, career-focused mentoring for youth with disabilities and other challenges. According to available statistics from the Institute for Educational Leadership, youth with disabilities are four times more likely to be adjudicated and only 30 percent receive high school degrees. SMART data reveals that in challenging fields of study and employment, such as STEM, individuals with disabilities are the most underrepresented. The RAMP Youth Intensive Services Program targets I/DD foster care youth with disabilities and other marginalized youth to ensure successful transition for youth between the ages of 13-25 in a peer oriented, adult and community supported environment. RAMP work is based on an evidence-based model that focuses on goal setting, education, mental health and social supports through a setting of career exploration and jobs.

During 2019, The RAMP Intensive program did outreach and referral services to 78 families, served 66 youth in session and provided outreach and referrals to an additional 150 people in the community. The challenge continues to be increasing the number of foster care youth and getting parents/Guardians to return the necessary paperwork for a youth to enter the program. In 2019 RAMP initiated an approach that connects youth to as many support systems as possible which has increased youth success and created an open dialogue with regards to families and the community talking about disability supports and advocating for individual youth.

Outcomes realized in 2019:

- 98% of youth based on session observation and case note reports have demonstrated increased soft skills which include, learning how to work with others, arriving to sessions on time, utilizing active listening skills and learning how to dress appropriately for the work.
- 98% of youth gained a better understanding of their strength skills and abilities, examples include, youth participating in career inventory assessments, youth learning leadership skills, and youth completing long and short terms goals.
- 100% of youth demonstrated increased awareness of how to seek and retain employment in the community. Examples include, youth participating in resume creation, job seeking activities, interviewing activities and community mapping activities and how to dress for an interview and professionally in the community.
- Youth worked intensively on disability advocacy and community mapping; understanding types of disabilities and how disability relates to strengths and opportunities. The youth learned about what it means to self-advocate, what is community advocacy and disability rights. Youth also learned through community

mapping how to locate resources in their community that are available to them now and in the future,

RAMP Extension for Foster Care Youth (Ability Connection Colorado)

Prior to being referred into the program by her teacher Kayla* had many school absences due to her health and her grades suffered as a result. Kayla had difficulties focusing and would often refuse to complete assignments or tasks. Kayla was very un-engaged and unmotivated during the start of the Summer Program at RAMP. She would refuse to work on her IMP and goals and did not seem interested in the program. After visiting Emily Griffith Technical College, Kayla started to ask questions and began to learn more about the programs. Kayla became even more engaged in RAMP after the Denver Police Department's Citywide Impact Team came as guest speakers. Kayla was thrilled to meet them and asked countless questions. Kayla got to sit in the police car and bonded quickly with detective Carla Havard. Kayla then shared that she wanted to pursue a career in law enforcement and would like to become a police officer. After this experience Kayla did not miss one session. By the end of RAMP, Kayla really connected with her mentor. She got to go shopping with her mentor for interview clothes as well as receive a laptop as an incentive for her hard work over the summer. Kayla completed her own professional resume, her IMP, and several weekly goals. Kayla also identified a field in which she was truly interested in pursuing (law enforcement).

*Name changed

REVEL Lounge (Mentor Program)

REVEL supports teens and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through the REVEL Lounge. The REVEL Lounge incorporates our 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. Research suggests that individuals with autism are at a greater risk of social isolation and depression than other populations. One in four individuals with autism has been completely isolated, meaning he or she has not seen or spoken to friends in the past year. Revel served 14 individuals in 2019.

Outcomes realized in 2019:

- Increased social interactions between individuals with ASD/I/DD and their peers REVELer participation was at 100% across all REVELers.
- Commitment and participation from mentors 100% for all of our mentors.
- At the beginning of 2019 Revelers require significant support from parents and REVEL staff for Initiation outside of REVEL and was not occurring naturally. At the end of 2019 REVELers are initiating

plans with each other outside of REVEL scheduled activities. Parents are getting to know each other and supporting with this facilitation.

REVEL has continued to expand their understanding of mentor commitment, recruitment, participation and retention. Mentor involvement during activities is increasing. Staff have trained mentors to increase initiation with REVELers and promote socialization. Self-report from parents and individuals continue to state increased levels of happiness and sense of belonging from attending REVEL's

program resulting in recurring attendance. In 2019 Revel was able to extend hours 5 days per week as and also added 4 new mentors that attend 10 hours/week each due to the growing program.

Priority: Behavioral Health/Mental Health Priority: Medical and Dental

Medical/Dental and Behavioral/Mental Health services include a wide variety of health-related services to ensure the health and well-being of individuals with I/DD.

Laradon Expansion of Behavioral Services

Laradon's Expansion of Behavioral Services project supports clients with behavioral challenges beyond what is reimbursable through Medicaid, including crisis support, behavioral support training of staff, and involvement with the legal system. This project served 35 individuals directly, and 100 individuals indirectly when training for their direct provider is taken into consideration for 2019. Laradon was able to add another behaviorist in 2019 to meet the growing needs of the project. 2019 outcomes realized:

- Census of individuals served has gone up from 17 individuals in 2018 to 44 in 2019
- The total number of challenging behaviors at the beginning of 2019 was 3,695. The total number toward the end of 2019 was 3,318. This is a 10% drop showing the positive behavior supports that the behaviorist has been able to better facilitate due to Mill Levy funding have made a difference.
- 84% of the objectives in adaptive, behavioral and person-centered support plans were met.

Project goals include decreasing inappropriate or problematic behavior of adult individuals and increasing the average length of placement in day, 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. This program allowed direct service providers to receive training in:

- Antecedent intervention.
- Signal recognition.

REVEL Mentor Program

When I first met this young man; he had recently completed the DPS transition program. He was unsure about what he was going to do and spent most of his time wandering his neighborhood popping into local shops. He began attending REVEL by taking the light rail and quickly made friends and experienced a variety of enjoyable activities during the day that replaced the mundane day to day at home.

When winter approached, he suddenly stopped showing up. When his mom would drop him off, he would often be upset and shouting about how he could not come to REVEL. Our staff listened and supported him and realized, he did not feel comfortable walking in the snow. Over the next year, our staff supported him and his family in creating systematic steps for him to complete and coping strategies for when he was afraid. His peers at REVEL encouraged him along the way. Now, he is proudly walking in the snow to REVEL and even offers to shovel the walkway and scrape off people's cars in our parking lot. The amount of pride and growth he has shown along with the camaraderie of his friends is truly what REVEL is about.

-Project Manager Stephanie Hill

- 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.
- A long-term outcome for this project is data from usage of the mill levy funds to offset expenditures for staff time related to the 18 different categories will be conveyed, at a future time, to HCPF and other decision-makers assessing the scope of behavioral service categories defined under the waiver.

Laradon Behavioral Services

Phillip* came back to Colorado because his guardian was concerned with neglect that was occurring in an out of state group home. He'd been there for 20 years, and not much was known about what life was like for him other than anecdotal accounts from his guardian and a support plan from that State. Nobody knew how acute Phillip's maladaptive psycho-sexual, aggressive and self-injurious behaviors were. Immediately after getting him into a host home and day program, he began stalking the host home provider's wife, attempting to touch women and children in the community, directing harassing and crude sexual innuendos toward women, etc. This required the immediate attention of the behaviorist in many areas; crisis intervention, team meetings, extensive travel time, consultation with various treating professionals, counselling, training and plan development, none of which had been identified on the waiver support plan or were an expected need based on the referral. Mill levy funds for this project made it possible for the behaviorist to provide an unprecedented level of support in this situation. Otherwise, Phillip would have been incarcerated, sent to the state hospital or ended up in the regional center. He has stabilized and is doing well in the host home. He now has the skills to participate in the life of his home and community and his life has turned around 180 degrees!

– Edward Hubbard
Laradon

*Name changed

Tennyson ASPEN and BRANCH Program

The mission of Tennyson Center for Children is to empower children who have experienced abuse, neglect, and trauma to bravely and safely change their life's story. Tennyson provides two programs targeting intellectual disabilities (ID), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), developmental disabilities (DD) or other unique needs that require a focus on adaptive or life skills. This project expands the number of Denver County children receiving services through Tennyson's two programs:

- ASPEN: Special education services are provided through the "Adaptive Skills for People with Emotional Needs" Program (ASPEN) for children on the Autism Spectrum who struggle with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and at least one other challenge such as extreme anxiety making it difficult to maintain placement in a traditional classroom.
- BRANCH: The second program, "Behavior Resources and Adaptive Needs in the Community and Home" (BRANCH) focuses on children ages five to 18 struggling with intensive behavioral issues due to mild to moderate 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 most pressing need this project addresses has been to expand services to the Denver I/DD child population. Before mill levy funding for ASPEN and BRANCH programs, Denver kids were underrepresented due to the Denver Public School policy to decline full reimbursement of the program's service costs, including direct and integrated therapy. Consequently, many students were not Denver residents. Tennyson outcomes for 2019 are as follows:

1. Students demonstrate reduced severity of crises as measured by the CAFAS assessment (ASPEN/ BRANCH)
 - a. ASPEN = 100% made meaningful improvement
 - b. Branch = 100% made meaningful improvement
2. Percentage of students who demonstrate advances at school in math and reading (and are enrolled for at least 6 months) as measured by iReady (ASPEN). The iReady outcome had several challenges including behaviors interfering with testing, refusal of testing and not showing progress made. The results below were lower than expected.
 - a. Reading: 0% of eligible students showed advancement in reading as measured by iReady
 - b. Math: 50% of eligible students showed advancement in math as measured by iReady
3. Increased numbers of resource connections to maintain student and family network of support (e.g. therapeutic services, medical needs, school services, housing support, transportation, etc.) as reported by teacher and clinician referrals (BRANCH/ ASPEN):
 - a. Branch = 7
 - b. ASPEN = 0
4. Percentage of parents/ guardians who participate in family therapy as reported by clinician (BRANCH)
 - a. 100% of parents/guardians participated at some point each quarter of the project.

Priority: Training and Support

Training and Support services include classes, conferences for parents/caregivers or providers, as well as the development of information provided to the general public about I/DD, such as on websites and at community events.

Firefly

Comprehensive training program for law enforcement officials, fire/rescue professionals, paramedics, and all other “first responder” professionals and volunteers so that they will become more aware and better educated on the signs and recognizable symptoms of autism spectrum disorder. Over the past decade alone, there have been numerous cases of individuals living with autism having been arrested and, in extreme cases, injured and even killed by police officers who mistook their behavior for intoxication, signs of drug abuse, or for resisting arrest and exhibiting what was perceived to be threatening gestures. By helping first responders recognize the signs of autism, they will be better prepared to conclude that the individual in question does not necessarily pose a threat to them or to anyone else. They can then assist the individual, rather than apprehend them. During 2019 development of the training was achieved through the following:

- 45 hours of research, document case histories, contact and interviewing victims
- 30 hours meeting with local law enforcement agencies
- 10 hours developing and creating curriculum outline
- Video production for simulation/content

Thrive Autism Collaborative

The Thrive Autism Collaborative worked with the parent-mediated Early Start Denver Model (P-ESDM) which is an evidence-based early intervention program for young children with identified developmental delays and/or risk for autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The overall goal is to increase its accessibility to families with ASD unable to access the P-ESDM through publicly funded early intervention programs. The project piloted a new model of parent coaching in the P-ESDM. The refinements maintained high-quality parent coaching

standards within a more feasible and affordable model for families to access and benefit from the P-ESDM.

Parents participated in a five-day workshop with their child to identify and practice learning goals with the P-ESDM. The workshop days alternated between 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 support of Mill Levy funds, the outcomes in 2019 include:

- Improve progress at the child level:
 - Data indicate that all five children⁷ increased their overall skill acquisition from baseline.
 - 3 of the 4 families' scores increased significantly from baseline and through the last four months of coaching.
 - All families experienced a 15 to 20-point skill increase in the first 3 months of treatment, indicating improvement on a number of skills beyond those specifically targeted in intervention.
- Improved change in parent's knowledge, skills and performance using ESDM:
 - All six parents showed an increase in their fidelity scores in at least two sessions.
 - Caregivers 2 and 3 showed consistent fidelity scores in follow-up coaching probes commensurate with those expected of an ESDM certified therapist.
 - All parents that continued with follow-up coaching achieved a fidelity score of 80% at least once in follow-up probes, a score indicative of consistent, quality usage of the ESDM intervention.
 - Caregiver 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 showed consistent increases in scores across months.

The Rise School of Denver Scaling Up

The Rise School of Denver is an inclusive preschool serving children with and without disabilities ages 6 weeks through 5 years. In addition to lead teachers with an MA and ECSE license, there are four therapists on staff: a physical therapist, an occupational therapist, a speech-language pathologist, and a music therapist. The mission of the Rise School of Denver is to provide the highest quality early childhood education for all children, including children with developmental disabilities. In order to scale up and sustain program-wide inclusion, The Rise School of Denver will adopt the LEAP Preschool framework (Strain & Bovey, 2011). The LEAP Preschool Framework reflects both a behavioral as well as a developmentally appropriate approach for teaching children with and without disabilities in inclusive early childhood environments.

The classroom that is receiving coaching from the Positive Early Learning Experiences Center at University of Denver (DU) in the LEAP model has continued receiving these coaching opportunities on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. The DU coach has also worked alongside the teaching team at Rise to come up with several different materials to use within the specified classroom, including visual schedules, language and music boards, put-in tasks, etc. The DU coach has also been meeting with and supporting the internal Rise coach(es), including observation, coaching, and action planning. The Rise School therapy team met with the DU coach in order to promote consistency of the model. A large-group training has occurred for all Rise staff around LEAP's evidence-based inclusive practices. These accomplishments relate directly to the short-term outcomes of LEAP Adoption in the Target Classroom and to Improved child outcomes. The project has only run from July to December 2019, so outcomes will be further assessed as the project progresses.

⁷ Table 1 shows 6 individuals served, but one participant dropped out before the end of the project; therefore, the outcome data refers to the 5 participants who completed the project.

Parent to Parent of Colorado (Ability Connection Colorado)

Parent to Parent of Colorado (P2P-CO) 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 sons and daughters with developmental delays or intellectual/developmental disabilities. The training model includes an 8-week on-line training for parents who want to learn to support other parents. These trained parents are then matched, upon request, with a new parent looking for information and emotional support. In addition, P2P-CO provided a 10-week online training targeted toward parents of younger children (ages 2 – 8) who have challenging behaviors. They are equipping these 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. With the mill levy funding, P2P-CO has been able to achieve many of its goals:

- achieve high levels of satisfaction with matches from requesting individuals:
 - 100% of parents responded that Individual Support was helpful
 - 82% of parents were ‘very’ or ‘extremely’ satisfied with the process
 - 16% of parents were ‘somewhat’ satisfied (no parents reported dissatisfaction)
- achieve high satisfaction with trainings:
 - 100% of participants were ‘Satisfied’ or ‘Very Satisfied’ with the pace of the training
 - The majority of participants were satisfied/very satisfied with the Facebook format of the training with 2 participants being ‘neutral’
- increase knowledge and skills pertaining to being a Support Parent:
 - The majority of participants found the training topics ‘Helpful’ or ‘Very Helpful’
 - 86% of the trainees were satisfied/very satisfied with the thoroughness of the content presented in the training
 - 100% of participants were satisfied/very satisfied with the amount of knowledge gained from this training.

Priority: Social/Recreational

Cultural Passes (RMHS)

RMHS consistently receives strong feedback to support social and recreational opportunities for individuals, an area not currently supported by Medicaid or other insurance programs. Individuals on Medicaid with limited income have little to no resources to pursue social opportunities without support from mill levy funding. According to a recent AAA survey, 35 percent of Americans were planning to take a vacation 50 miles or more away from home in 2016⁸. In contrast, a recent poll of I/DD providers indicates that fewer than 5 percent of individuals accepting services can afford to travel, particularly given the additional expenses associated with supports for supervision and personal care necessary to travel safely. The benefits of projects in this area are in line with the benefits to anyone who needs a vacation: reduced stress, lowered anxiety, possible decrease in heart disease, improved mental health and improved interpersonal relationships. *The Journal of the American Medical Association* published a study that concluded men who take frequent annual vacations were 32 percent less likely to die from heart disease than those who did not take frequent vacations⁹. Stakeholder feedback to RMHS indicates that gaps exist in current systems and programs supporting people with I/DD related to recreational opportunities, health and fitness, and community integration. Several programs provide social and recreational opportunities for individuals with I/DD in Denver, ranging from supporting individuals to attend summer camp, taking local day trips to regional points of interest, and taking trips with family members or to see family members out of state.

⁸ <http://newsroom.aaa.com/2016/04/aaa-one-third-americans-will-take-family-vacation-year/>

⁹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jill-l-ferguson/health-benefits-of-taking-a-vacation_b_9384466.html

RMHS also provided annual cultural passes through a select number of vendors for individuals in services. In 2019, RMHS distributed:

- 303 Denver Botanical Gardens passes
- 95 Children's Museum passes
- 722 Denver Zoo passes

Project World (Activity Options)

The purpose of "Project World" is to facilitate access to community activities and overnight travel that will enable adults with I/DD to experience the world in the ways that other people do to increase inclusion, independence, social skills and quality of life. Activities include sports, music, theater, local events, physical activities and social opportunities. Participants continue to engage with each other in and outside of activities. Phone numbers are exchanged as friendships are forged during a shared experience to then be able to continue to spend time together. Several participants shared that they have tried new things, and they have made suggestions for things to do. Participants take pride in being part of a new community aside from their homes and day programs. They frequently ask to help with tasks as needed and look forward to the next activity.

Activity options provided access to community events to 124 individuals with I/DD, 100 day activities and 10 overnight travel. Outcomes realized in 2019:

- 52% of participants reported that they had made new friends 32% did things they were previously afraid to do.
- 84% of caregivers reported that with the time away from their dependent, they were able to do independent activities.
- 29% of participants looked forward to telling their immediate social groups about their experience.
- 79% of participants were able to report where they went and what they saw.
- 22% described some type of personal breakthrough.

Arts & Community Exploration –ACE Program (Jewish Family Service)

The ACE Program was developed to enhance cultural and artistic exposure for clients to participate in community offerings, while cultivating new skills and awareness in the process. ACE benefited 19 individuals in 2019.

Outcomes realized in 2019:

Community integration:

- Denver Parks & Rec Adaptive Culture Club workshop, where they learned about a variety of different cultures.
- American Museum of Western Art and Natura Obscura, an Immersive Art Experience with the Museum of Outdoor Arts.
- New excursions came by way of exploring the Idea Lab at the Denver Public Library, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Wildlife Refuge and Camp Christmas at the Stanley Marketplace hangar.
- Visiting local coffee houses in Denver; individuals learned some history about coffee making, watched the process from the roasting and grinding to finished product and learned the art of the decorative design making on the tops of the coffee itself. Each of the participants were able to partake in tasting different coffees and teas all while taking in their environment and interacting with the general population.
- 84% of participants reported I feel good about who I am
- 70% of participants feel proud of their accomplishments

Art Cultures/Art activities:

- Claude Monet exhibit at the Denver Art Museum
- Hudson and Botanical Gardens to see the vibrant flowers on display



- Access Gallery clients participated in a workshop called Fun with Photos. Participants were able to incorporate photos of themselves each featuring a unique artistic design.
- *68% of participants reported I developed my artistic skills*



Social Inclusion Project (Connect Us)

Connect Us provides year-round, inclusive social and emotional learning programs that improve the quality of life for children ages 3-13, of all developmental levels, abilities and identities. They offer after-school friendship and leadership groups, facilitated recess in public schools, and year-round camps. Children are guided through intentional play that builds social skills, self-confidence, and personal identity. Many organizations and schools seek to academically integrate those with ASD/DD, and some do work towards social inclusion. 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. In organic, loosely structured social environments, 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 an appreciation of differences. Every child is valued, and everyone belongs. It is in these one-of-a-kind, mutually supportive, skill-building settings that youth with I/DD and youth who are neurotypical alike can practice friendship and leadership skills and where social inclusion can flourish and becomes the community norm.

Connect Us delivered the following programs in 2019:

1. Connect the Tots group play facilitation program for preschoolers
2. Kindergarten and 2nd grade recess study in partnership with 2 elementary schools
3. School-wide recess facilitation programs in 2 elementary schools, grades k-5
4. After-School Friendship & Leadership Groups, 8-12-week winter, spring and fall sessions (age-based groups for children in k-5th, open to public)
5. School break social camps, winter, spring and fall break, ages 5-11 (open to public)
6. Teen social groups, community outings in Denver, 6th – 9th graders (open to public)
7. Summer camp, half-day program serving ages 3-13 (open to public). (Includes volunteer and paid job skills training program for previous Connect Us participants of all abilities who are now high school students).

Program results are supported by quantitative data (SAS evaluations) completed by Connect Us and Elementary kindergarten staff and through qualitative data collected throughout the study. Extensive post-program interviews were conducted with kindergarten teachers and paraprofessionals. Data from pre and post-program Social Aptitude Scales completed by the three kindergarten teachers on their own students and by recess paraprofessionals on all study-approved students indicates that Connect Us had a positive impact on students' social-emotional growth.

Based on staff and teacher input:

- 89% of participants with DD improved in one or more of these areas: self-confidence, social skills, emotional skills, with the most significant growth in self-confidence.
- 76% had improved social skills, approachability, cooperation and problem-solving
- 60% had improved emotional skills: impulse control, empathy and adaptability
- 74% increased their self-confidence, measured by how frequently they asserted their opinions/ideas, stood up for themselves/for others and took a leadership role

Post-program parent surveys revealed the following:

- 89% of parents were 'very satisfied' with the program and 11% were 'satisfied'
- 100% of parents intend to enroll their kids in future Connect Us programs

When asked to rate their children's social and emotional growth after participation in a Connect Us program, parents reported the following:

- 84% reported improvement in initiating social interaction
- 82% reported improved cooperation with adults and peers
- 84% reported improved flexibility and willingness to try new things
- 91% reported improved resiliency/rebounds faster from disappointment and frustration
- 89% reported improved self-confidence

The Wayfaring Band

The Wayfaring Band provides support, builds awareness, and fosters genuine connection 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. All-inclusive, multi-day travel experiences provide real-world opportunities for individuals to practice independent living skills, build genuine relationships, and develop their capacity to make choices and self-advocate. Wayfaring Band is unique it's approach in that it targets 2 populations Adults experiencing intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Participants typically live at home with family caregivers, in host homes, or in group homes and neurotypical individuals who have a deep and genuine interest in learning more about people experiencing I/DD. Participants include parents, caregivers, educators, students, activists, and interested community members. An Artist in resident (AiR) also travels with the band each trip to provide an artistic ode-of-art for each participant post trip. 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. In Colorado, 10.3% of the total population identifies as a person with a disability. The importance of social inclusion and awareness is paramount. In 2019 The Wayfaring Band served 22 Individuals with I/DD between 9 different trips.

Outcomes realized in 2019:

- Leadership curriculum is being implemented as intended on each trip; 11 people participated in the curriculum
- 100% of survey respondents have noticed an increase in daily living skills, including food preparation, cleaning and organizing, money management, time management, and healthy choice making.
- 100% of survey respondents strongly agree that since joining the Wayfaring Band community, they (or their Band Member, if completed by a caregiver), have noticed an increased sense of belonging.

- 78% of survey respondents strongly agree that since joining the Wayfaring Band community, they (or their Band Member, if completed by a caregiver), have noticed an increase in health and wellbeing, including self-care and personal safety

The Wayfaring Band

Two childhood best friends – both now adults, and both experiencing I/DD – were able to travel with The Wayfaring Band together for the first time this year. Both participants engaged with trips individually in quarters 1 and 3, but during quarter 4, both participated in the Mountain Retreat. Not only was it a very positive experience for them to be on the trip together, but to experience a trip like that within a larger group of adults experiencing I/DD helped them form and strengthen a social group and identity. After the trip, the mother of one of the two friends passed away. The Wayfaring Band staff members attended the funeral and were able to provide support to both friends during this tragic time. Further, following the funeral, staff from The Wayfaring Band followed up with RMHS to ensure that the traveler whose mom passed had completed the eligibility process and would have ongoing support and services. The deep and long-lasting relationships that individuals form with staff and other program participants have proven, time and time again, to be irreplaceable.

The Wayfaring Band has developed a Podcast, which went live in January 2019. *Everybody In* represents the first opportunity for The Wayfaring Band to explore going “wider,” rather than going “deeper.” Through its programs and trips, The Wayfaring Band emphasizes depth of programming and depth of connection. The podcast is an opportunity to share the mission, vision and stories of The Wayfaring Band more broadly.

Priority: System Gaps

Respite (RMHS)

When an individual needs more care and support than is available through current funding programs, mill levy funding is used to address system gaps and program service limitations of other funding sources, such as Medicaid and state-funded services. In some cases, these gaps may be within the I/DD system; in other cases, the gaps are between this and other systems, such as mental health, foster care and homelessness. By far, the service deemed to be the most important from area stakeholders is respite care. During this reporting period, over \$1.2 million in respite funds was distributed. Significant literature demonstrates the positive effects that respite care brings to the life of a caregiver. Over time, without relief and assistance, caregiving can take a mental and physical toll. The Family Caregiver Alliance reports that 40 percent to 70 percent of caregivers show clinically significant symptoms of depression. The Center on Aging Society adds that one in 10 family caregivers report that their responsibilities have caused their physical health to worsen¹⁰.

Rise Music Therapy

The Rise School of Denver is an inclusive preschool serving children with and without disabilities ages 6 weeks through 5 years. The mission of the Rise School of Denver is to provide the highest quality early childhood education for all children, including children with developmental disabilities. Music therapy is not a service funded through other sources at the preschool, so Mill Levy funds were utilized to provide this important service. Music therapy uses the tool of music to engage children, and embed opportunities to work on their developmental goals, including motor, social-emotional, cognitive, and speech-language goals. Through the engagement of music and movement, the music therapist offers them choices of how and what to play (drums, piano or guitar?), how to move (tap

¹⁰ <http://www.comfortkeepers.com/home/info-center/respice-care/importance-of-respice-relief-for-family-caregivers>

knees, bounce or sway?), how to sing (loudly, quietly, fast, slow?), and embeds opportunities for cognitive advancement (show me the bigger one, play your maracas above/below your head.) By engaging, offering choices, and taking advantage of the child's natural interests, the music therapist empowers them to have some control over the session, while simultaneously allowing them to learn and grow, which will, in turn, make them more independent in school and life.

It is difficult to quantitatively measure engagement strictly through music therapy. However, at the final checkpoints for the 2018-2019 school year, 87% of students served had met or exceeded the goals that were set for them at the start of the school year. Music therapy remains a critical part of our curriculum, as it incorporates all developmental domains in its sessions, and thus, facilitates the mastery of goals.

One student, "M," who has Kabuki syndrome recently had double hip surgery. Because she was going to be immobile for 6 weeks post-operation, and thus, not able to tolerate or navigate the full school day, her mother brought her up to school on days when she had music therapy for the twice-weekly 30-minute sessions. You should have seen the joy in her face when she saw Ms. Laura, our music therapist, and realized she would get to participate in the sessions!

-Meghan Klassen, Rise School of Denver

Anchor Center for Blind Children

The Family Respite Care Program at Anchor Center provides families with the all too uncommon opportunity to enjoy a short break from their many caregiving duties, all while feeling confident that their child with special needs is being well-cared for by skilled and trained staff members, volunteers, and students from the Denver School of Nursing. During each five-hour session, children may participate in structured games, arts/crafts, snack making, outdoor play, and fun sensory activities, such as playing musical instruments and dancing. This year Guided by Humanity provided a specialized yoga class for blind children during a respite school break camp.

In 2019, the Family Respite Care Program served 23 Denver participants with I/DD and achieved the following outcomes based on parent surveys:

100% of parents surveyed report:

- They have an overall satisfaction in the services offered.
- They felt Anchor Center's facility, equipment, and respite care activities are safe and age appropriate.
- They feel refreshed and better able to care for their child's special needs.
- They feel increased support after receiving respite services.

Many parents also report positive feedback on the surveys:

- "I'm just so appreciative that you provided a safe and fun place for our kids so we can spend time as a couple. We often have important conversations during this time and really appreciate how much it helps us make important decisions like schooling, therapy, doctors, etc."
- "It has helped me tremendously. I am a single mother with medically complex children, so it makes it impossible to find anyone to watch my kids and for me to get a break. It's truly been a life saver."
- "We got to go out to lunch together as a couple. It was the first time in years that we have been able to do this. The respite program at Anchor Center is a life line for us. I have a difficult time finding qualified caregivers for my children and have no family in the state."



RMHS Initiatives

In addition to the above external initiatives, there are multiple initiatives administered by RMHS to meet needs across the various priority areas, which include:

Family Autism Resources (Training and Support)

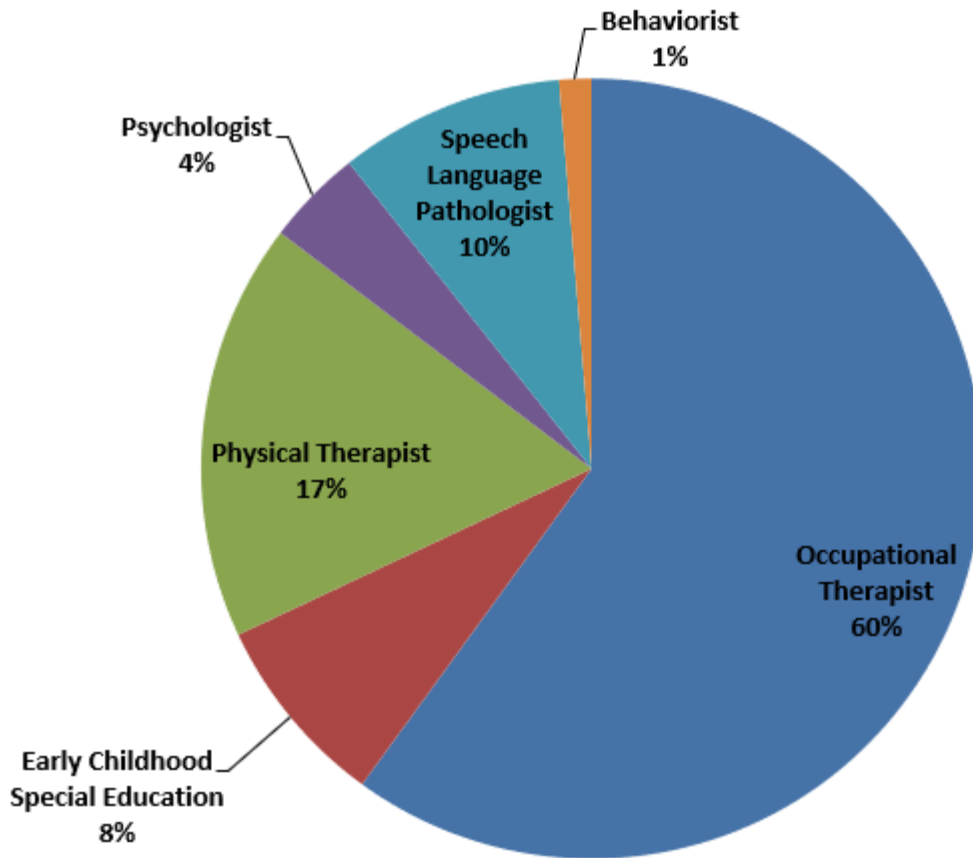
RMHS provides diagnostic evaluations for children in order to assess and potentially give a diagnosis of autism. After the diagnosis is given, parents oftentimes want to research autism and look for ways to support their children. This often leads to internet searches that result in an overwhelming amount of, and sometimes inaccurate, information. The Family Autism Resources are now given out at the time of diagnosis to help with emotional support, trouble-shooting advice, support organizations, care tips, potential problem management, family and sibling discussions, and the definition of autism. The family then has access to appropriate tools and simple behavior techniques to use immediately and increase positive behaviors. During 2019, 51 families received resources through this program. Satisfaction surveys are sent to families after the receipt of the resources, and on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being very useful, parents rated the materials an average of 4.58.

Play & Learn Library (Client Education/Increasing Independence)

RMHS maintains an inventory of therapeutic equipment for therapists to borrow to support their therapy work with children. This enables clinicians and families to have the opportunity to try equipment and ensure it works for individuals before purchasing the items themselves. In 2019, 198 items were loaned to clinicians to use in their therapy work with children (see Graph 4 for a breakdown by clinician discipline). In surveying the clinicians who have been using the equipment, RMHS has received the following positive feedback:

- On a scale of one to five (strongly disagree to strongly agree), clinicians rated the following:
 - Did the item help improve the child’s skills? Average score: 4.7
 - Will you access the Play & Learn Library again in the future? Average score: 4.9

Graph 4
Play & Learn Library Use by Clinician Discipline
(n=198 items)



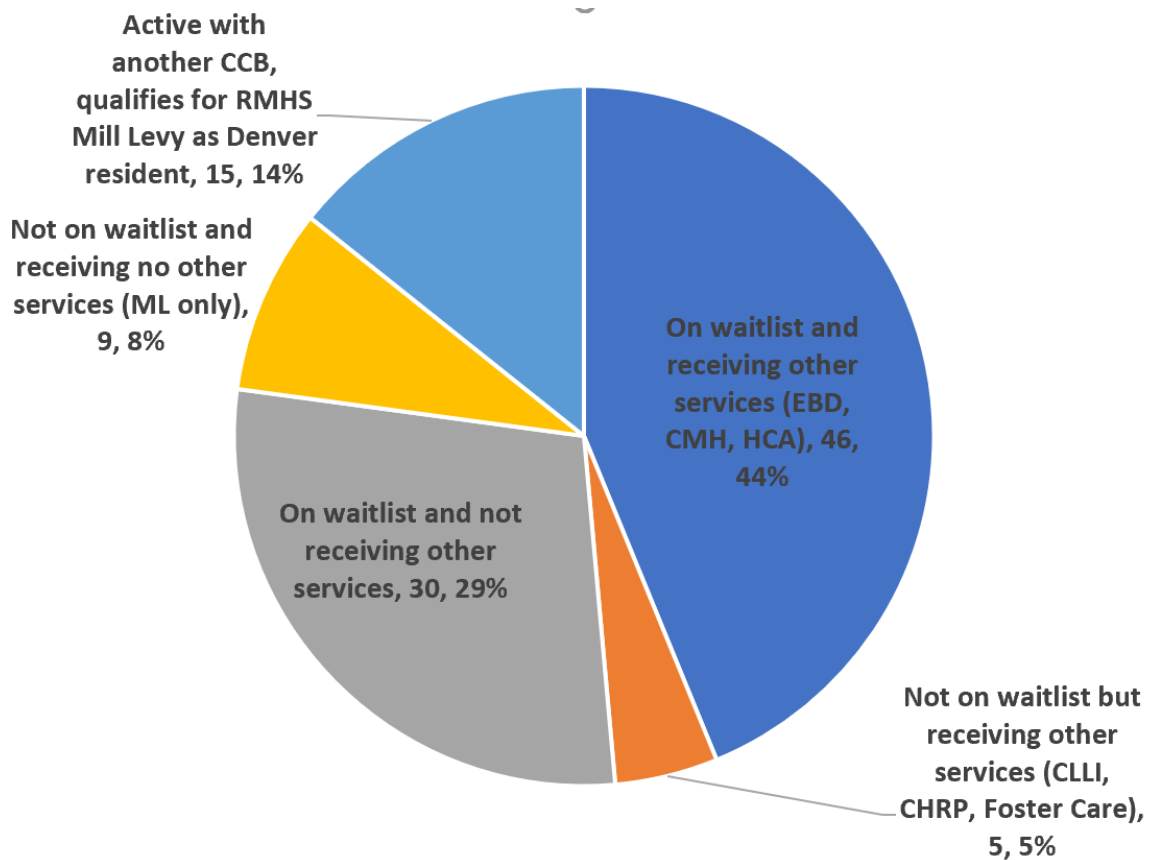
Waitlist Coordination

Due to State funding limitations, there are two RMHS programs that have waitlists: the FSSP or Family Services & Supports Program and the HCBS-DD Waiver within Service Coordination (see page 14 for more information about these programs). RMHS uses Mill Levy funds to provide case management and direct services to all individuals eligible for FSSP so that no one is waiting for that program.

Most of the people waiting for services through the HCBS-DD Waiver are actively receiving services through the Supported Living Services (SLS) Waiver and are receiving case management in that program. The individuals who are not already receiving case management from an RMHS program but are eligible for Mill Levy services (meeting I/DD eligibility criteria and residing in Denver) can receive mill levy-funded case management through our Waitlist Coordinator. This ensures that people can access funding through individual requests (see page 4) and through Mill Levy Service Plans (see next section) even if they are not choosing to be enrolled in SLS while waiting for the HCBS-DD

Waiver to become available. The Waitlist Coordinator also works with people who are enrolled with another CCB but reside in Denver (and therefore qualify for RMHS’s mill levy services) or not receiving services with any CCB that meet the requirements for Mill Levy eligibility to access services and supports to meet their needs. In 2019, the Waitlist Coordinator supported a total of 105 individuals. Graph 5 provides additional information about their circumstances. All 105 individuals were offered mill levy service plans in order to access those services. Twenty percent of those individuals (21 people) are accepting services through a mill levy service plan.

Graph 5
Individuals supported by Waitlist Coordinator
(n=105)



Mill Levy Service Plans – Service Coordination (System Gaps)

Individuals with I/DD who reside in Denver can access additional services through the RMHS Mill Levy Service Plan process. RMHS offers this option for customers in the following waiver programs whether they receive case management from RMHS or another CCB: HCBS-DD (Comp), Supported Living Services (SLS) and Children’s Extensive Services (CES). When state funds for SLS are exhausted, individuals in state SLS are also able to access these additional services. Individuals who are not enrolled in one of these programs but meet I/DD and residential criteria for accessing mill levy can also accept services through a mill levy service plan (see above section on Waitlist Coordination). Table 4 shows the services accessed through mill levy service plans by percent of total dollars spent for services authorized in 2019.

Table 4
Mill Levy Service Plans for Service Coordination Customers
January 2019 – December 2019

Service Category	% of dollars spent
Behavioral	21.28%
Day Habilitation	16.13%
Homemaker	1.74%
Mentorship	2.87%
Personal Care	1.50%
Professional Services (massage, movement)	3.07%
Residential	6.71%
Respite	11.95%
SCC	29.14%
Supported Employment	4.76%
Transportation	0.87%
Grand Total	100.00%

RMHS has invited all PASAs providing one or more of the above services to Denver residents to contract with us to provide additional services with mill levy funds. In 2019, the program had 82 contracted providers. The program saw moderate growth in 2019, with 413 individuals opting in to one or more services through the mill levy service plan process

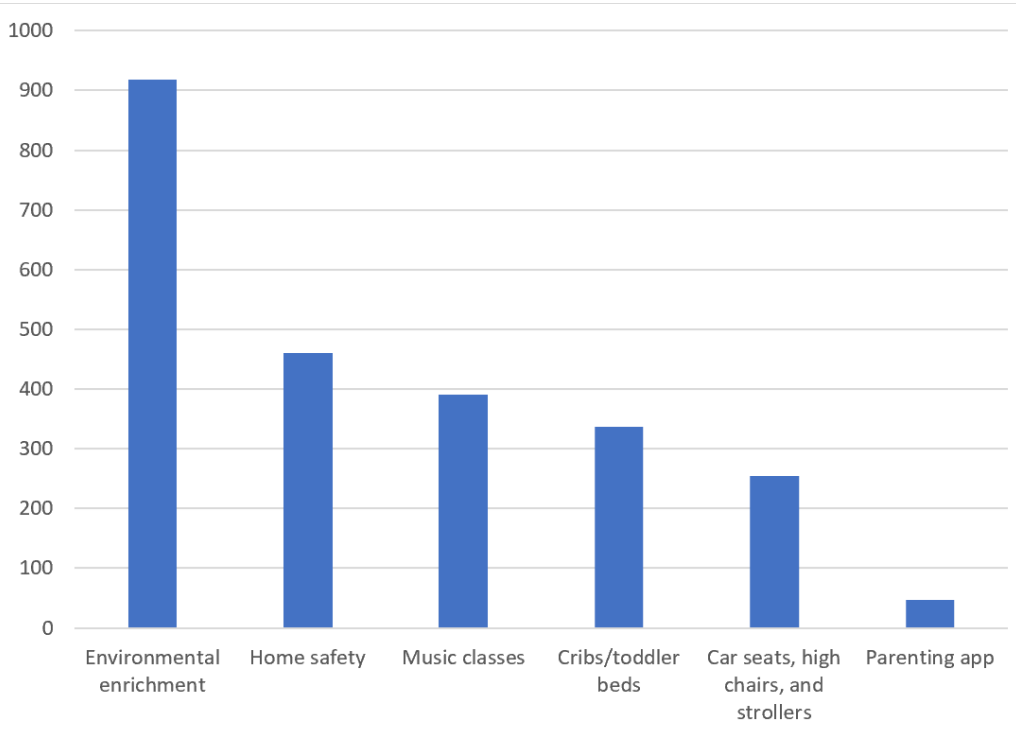
Mill Levy Service Plans – Ages 0-3 (System Gaps)

Children accepting services in the EI program who reside in Denver have access to a menu of items that are identified needs not currently offered through the EI program. EI uses a combination of public and private insurance, along with state general fund dollars, to address the developmental needs of children birth to age 3. Service coordinators conduct assessments during the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting, process individual requests and listen to stakeholder feedback. Families receive access to services at the time of the child’s IFSP and will work with their primary providers to ensure services and supports address the child’s developmental and basic needs. The menu is utilized at the time of the IFSP meetings to provide access to resources not available through EI funding.

In 2019, 2,454 mill levy service plans were completed for children in services with EI. The team works together to determine the need for the items and 1,373 of the families had an identified need. Service plan offerings, all based on the needs of the family, available through the EI Unmet Needs project include the following (see Graph 6 for number of families obtaining each through this process):

- Music therapy/classes
- Environmental enrichment items, such as board books, blocks, and other items to support therapeutic play
- Home safety items
- Toddler beds or cribs
- Car seats, highchairs, and strollers
- Access to a parenting app with tips and activities to guide parents in promoting their child’s development in a variety of areas. (Additional information about this resource can be found at www.playfullyapp.com/about-playfully.)

Graph 6
Number of families selecting service options
available through EI Unmet Needs
(n=2,406 options for 1,373 families)



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