



Inclusion of People with Diverse Abilities – Funding Category Summary

In 2020, The Miami Foundation established the Inclusion of People with Diverse Abilities funding category within the Community Grants program. This summary is provided as supplementary context for the 2021 program. Through the Inclusion Fund, the Foundation seeks to expand the availability of and access to community resources so people with intellectual and developmental, physical, sensory, and mental health disabilities can thrive in productive, purposeful lives and are increasingly integrated into all aspects of community life.

We are grateful to the many experts who engaged in conversations with staff to help us define this starting point. We will continue to listen and learn. The summary below reflects how the Foundation initially defined the new focus area in 2020. We also offered examples of strategies that surfaced during our community conversations; please note that they are intended to exemplify – but not limit – potential approaches.

- **Early Childhood:** Enhance early identification and intervention efforts before kindergarten to increase the development and readiness of children to pursue education and participate in integrated environments. Strategies might include evaluation services in hard-to-reach communities, health provider trainings, and education and outreach initiatives.
- **Empowerment and Independence:** Empower youth with disabilities to successfully bridge toward their transition to adulthood and their full potential for meaningful, productive lives. Strategies might include opportunities to live in appropriate residential settings, develop skills that maximize individual capacity for personal pursuits or independence, or voice priorities through peer support and self-advocacy.
- **Employment:** Develop opportunities for individuals who seek to work and earn income to access skills development, competitive employment and career growth. Strategies might include vocational and employment skills training, development of inclusive job opportunities, and employer trainings to improve their capacity to hire, retain and promote employees with disabilities.
- **Community Inclusion:** Expand programs or services that pursue integrated participation of people with disabilities in community and social life. Strategies might include trainings, infrastructure updates, certifications for ability-inclusive programs, or other approaches that increase access to social, cultural, recreational, and civic opportunities, out-of-school programs, health care or other services.
- **Caregiver Support:** Strengthen resources for primary caregivers of people with disabilities. Strategies might include practical daily-life solutions, systems navigation, self-care or financial support opportunities.

Across all of these areas, the Foundation has a strong interest in fostering efforts that reflect cross-disability community collaborations toward mutual goals, expand access to integrated settings, reach historically underserved residents or areas of Greater Miami and advance leadership of people with disabilities.