



Advancing Families &
Individuals Needing Services

Welcome to The Villages,

Moving can be stressful for anyone but even more so for someone with special needs and their family. This checklist is designed to help newcomers to The Villages with intellectual and developmental disabilities get the supports and services you need. It guides you through connecting with the appropriate Florida agencies, medical and healthcare professionals, legal professionals, vocational and transportation services, and socialization opportunities having consideration for individuals with intellectual and developmental special needs.

We cannot stress enough the importance of completing this checklist promptly. Doing so will provide medical, financial, and safety benefits to all family members. It is crucial to start the process early, even if it feels overwhelming. We are parents of intellectual and developmental special needs adult children too and want you to know we are here to help you. ***No-one needs to do this alone.***

The checklist is divided into 12 sections to make completion more manageable. We tried to order the sections in order of importance and recommend that the first 2 sections take priority in the order listed. You should then complete the remaining sections in order of importance to you. Focus on one section at a time to reduce the stress of being overwhelmed. Be persistent and it will all come together.

Before you start, gather all essential documents proving Florida residency and intellectual or developmental disability. They are often required when applying for services. Having these documents readily available will help streamline your application processes:

- Birth certificate,
- Diagnostic testing confirming the disability before age 18,
- At least one IEP (Individualized Education Plan) from before age 18,
- Doctor's letter stating the disability,
- Letter from your previous state agency confirming the disability and services received,
- Letter from the Social Security Administration verifying SSI or SSDI benefits.

You can read more details about many topics in this Newcomers Checklist by reading our [Newcomers](#) web series.

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Your AFINS Team

 (314) 805-8182

 [Contact Us](#)

 www.afins.group

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A Guide for New Villages Residents
With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Section 1: Florida Identification

- Driver's License & ID Card:** Many special needs assistance programs and services you will be applying for require the applicant and caregiver to have a current Florida drivers license or identification card. You can apply for your license or identification card at your local Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) location. Click [here](#) for a list of what to bring when applying for a Florida drivers license or ID.

If you qualify, you may also get your disabled parking permit or wheelchair license plate from DMV. Here are the required forms that you and your doctor must complete to get a disabled parking or wheelchair permit::

Physician's Certification of Disability: floridarevenue.com/property/Documents/dr416.pdf

Disabled Parking Permit Application: www.flhsmv.gov/pdf/forms/83039.pdf

Wheelchair License Plate Application: www.flhsmv.gov/pdf/forms/83007.pdf

Lake County DMV Location: [1720 Citrus Blvd, Leesburg, FL 34748](#)

Phone: [\(352\) 343-9602](tel:(352)343-9602)

Drivers License & ID Card Information: laketax.com/driver-license-id-cards

Appointments: Appointments are required for driving skills tests and hazardous materials tests and are exclusively available for Lake County residents. Make your appointment online at ctcappt.cxmflow.com/GetByKey/47603147-656a-4182-816a-aad5d7499dd0/LCTC/Book.

Marion County DMV Location: [503 SE 25th Avenue Ocala, FL 34471](#)

Phone: [\(352\) 368-8200](tel:(352)368-8200)

Drivers License & ID Card Information: www.mariontax.com/driver-licenses

Appointments: Appointments are not offered.

The Villages DMV Sumter Service Center: [7375 Powell Road, Wildwood, FL 34785](#)

Phone: [\(352\) 689-4540](tel:(352)689-4540)

The Villages Sumter County DMV Annex: [8033 East CR 466, The Villages, FL 32162](#)

Phone: [\(352\) 689-4645](tel:(352)689-4645)

Drivers License & ID Card Information: sumtertaxcollector.com/driv.html

Appointments: Appointments are required for all written test, road test, and concealed weapons permits, and are only available to Sumter County residents. You are required to arrive 10 minutes early for your appointment. If you arrive 5 or more minutes after your scheduled appointment time, your appointment will be cancelled. You may call to make your appointment, or make your appointment online at sumtertaxcollector.com/road-test.html.

You can read more about Florida driver's license and ID card in our [Why Does My Special Needs Child Need A Florida Driver's License or ID Card?](#) web post.

- The Villages Resident IDs:** All residents of The Villages must have a Villagers ID participate in events and activities at recreation centers and their facilities. Because many activities offered to the Intellectual and Developmental Disabled (IDD) community, like STAR, are in The Villages a Villages ID will be necessary.

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- Non-owner Resident IDs:** Please be reminded that any Villages resident whose name is not on the deed is required to renew their Non-Owner Resident ID every three (3) years. The current renewal fee is \$15.00. The homeowner must complete an Application for [Non-Owner Resident Identification Card](#) and accompany the applicant for signature **OR** submit a notarized copy of the completed application to Customer Service at CustomerService@Districtgov.org. A new application and proof of residency are required for each renewal. Previous documents are NOT retained.

You may renew your Non-Owner Resident ID in person Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00pm at one of two Villages Community Development District (VCCD) offices:

- [984 Old Mill Run, The Villages](#) or
- [4856 South Morse Boulevard, The Villages](#)

Section 2: Federal & State Special Needs Assistance Programs

There are many special needs programs available in Florida. We cannot list them all here, but we have compiled a list of many such agencies, advocates and services your fellow special needs residents and families are associated with and recommend. Go to the [AFINS Services page](#) on our [website](#) and search the table for an agency, advocate or service that meets your needs. You can read more details about the agencies in this section in [Federal & State Special Needs Assistance Programs](#) web post.

- Social Security Administration:** If you are currently receiving Social Security benefits, you must update your address, telephone number, and bank account for direct deposit. If you have a Social Security Administration logon account, you can make these changes [online](#) using the **My Profile** tab in your personal my Social Security account. Offices are busiest Mondays, the morning after a Federal holiday, and the first week of the month.

General Information Website: www.ssa.gov

Read their publication [Identity Theft and Your Social Security Number](#).

Lake & Sumter County Office: [900 N. 14th Street, Suite 100, Leesburg, FL 34748](#)

Phone: [\(866\) 836-3623](tel:(866)836-3623)

Marion County Office: [933 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala, FL 34470](#)

Phone: [\(877\) 626-9911](tel:(877)626-9911)

- Medicare:** Medicare is federal health insurance for people 65 or older, and some people under 65 with certain disabilities or conditions. A federal agency called the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services runs Medicare. Because it's a federal program, Medicare has set standards for costs and coverage. This means a person's Medicare coverage will be the same no matter what state they live in.

If you currently have Medicare, your basic coverage will stay the same when you relocate to The Villages. It will not end or change, but you will need to find new healthcare providers who participate in Medicare. Please refer to the [Medical Referrals](#) page on our website for a

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list of healthcare providers recommended by fellow special needs Villages residents and their families.

Learn how to apply for Medicare at www.usa.gov/medicare#item-36837. Talk to a live agent Monday through Friday between 8:00am and 8:00pm Eastern Time (except federal holidays) at [\(844\) 872-4681](tel:8448724681).

- Medicaid/Florida Department of Children & Families (DCF):** Applications for Medicaid are made through DCF. Medicaid offers assistance for food (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)), health coverage (Medicaid), Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), Optional State Supplementation (OSS), and more.

General Information Website: www.myflfamilies.com

Lake County Office: [1300 Duncan Drive, Tavares, FL, 32778](#)

Phone: [\(352\) 742-6330](tel:3527426330)

Marion County Office: [3895 SW 13th St, Ocala, FL 34474](#)

Phone: [\(866\) 762-2237](tel:8667622237)

Sumter County Office: [901 Industrial Drive, Suite #110, Wildwood, FL 34785](#)

Phone: [\(352\) 330-2162](tel:3523302162)

You can learn more about Medicaid by reading our [Florida Medicaid](#) blog post.

- Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD):** In Florida APD is the agency that funds services for all intellectual and developmental disabilities. To be eligible for their services the applicant must be a Florida resident and have one of the following seven (7) developmental disabilities: autism, cerebral palsy, intellectual disabilities, Down syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, Phelan Mcdermid syndrome, or spina bifida. The intellectual or developmental disability must have manifested itself before the age of 18 and be a substantial handicap that can reasonably be expected to continue indefinitely.

APD maintains a Wait List of individuals requesting services under the Medicaid Developmental Disabilities Home and Community-Based Services Waiver (known as “iBudget”). The Wait List includes seven (7) categories of crisis level. Category 1 is the highest priority and category 7 is the lowest priority. You can review the Wait List category crisis levels and qualifications [here](#).

You must apply for APD services even if you received services elsewhere. You will initially need to provide documented proof of intellectual or developmental disability, such as school records, testing, or medical records. In completing the application describe the worst day as an every day occurrence to help push your case into the priority crisis level. You should also write your personal story to submit with the application.

As part of their eligibility evaluation APD will perform a Questionnaire for Situational Information (QSI) test to assess the applicant’s abilities, behaviors, self-care, life safety and so on. The information provided in your application, along with the provided documentation, and the QSI test results determine if the applicant is eligible for APD services and which Wait List category the applicant will be placed. You can review the Pre-enrollment Prioritization Tool ADP uses to determine eligibility and Wait List placement [here](#).

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Once on the Wait List, the applicant can receive limited services with state-funded programs. Clinical eligibility has been determined so that when funding becomes available, or the applicant or family encounter a crisis event, a full array of services can be made available.

You can learn more about APD by attending AFINS meetings every other Tuesday. See the calendar at afins.group for details. For complete details on how to apply for the iBudget Waiver you may also want to read our series [Navigating The Medicaid iBudget Waiver](#).

General Information Website: apd.myflorida.com

APD applications are now available for download online. You can drop off your completed application at the APD Field Office 13, listed below, or mail it directly to the Central Region Office at 400 West Robinson Street, Suite S430, Orlando, FL 32801.

Application Available for Download: [apd.myflorida.com/forms/Attachment-D-Application%20for%20Services%20\(REV%20231026\).pdf](http://apd.myflorida.com/forms/Attachment-D-Application%20for%20Services%20(REV%20231026).pdf)

APD Field Office 13 services Lake, Marion and Sumter counties.

Location: [901 Industrial Drive, Suite 100, Wildwood, FL 34785](#)

Phone: [\(407\) 245-0440](tel:(407)245-0440)

You can learn more about the Agency for Persons with Disabilities by reading our [iBudget Waiver](#) web series.

Section 3: The Villages Special Needs Community

- Special Needs Community:** Special needs residents living in The Villages are not alone. There are several support groups, social groups, and activities to get involved with. If you do not find something in the links below you are encouraged to start a group that excites you.

The AFINS website hosts a calendar of various types of events dedicated to The Villages special need residents, ranging from social events, sports, advocate meetings, and local meeting with Florida leadership. You will find the calendar on the left side of our front page at afins.group.

You will also find on the [AFINS Resources page](#) a downloadable [Special Needs Community](#) document, prepared by Robert Hamblin, that lists several social events, sports, and advocate meetings.

The Villages Recreation Department maintains a list of Resident Lifestyles Clubs and Contacts. You can search or download the list at www.districtgov.org/images/documents/Clubs-Listing.pdf.

You can learn more by reading our [The Villages Special Needs Community](#) web post.

Section 4: Safety & Emergency Management

- Florida Special Needs Registry:** The Florida Department of Health, in coordination with its county health departments and each local emergency management agency in the

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state, developed a registry for persons with special needs to register with their local emergency management agency to receive assistance during a disaster. The statewide registry provides first responders with valuable information to prepare for disasters or other emergencies. You can register for the Special Needs Registry at snr.flhealthresponse.com.

- Special Needs Safety Programs:** Lake, Marion, and Sumter counties all have emergency management programs for their special needs residents. Some of the programs include Human Scent Preservation Kit, SafeID, SafetyNet, Senior Watch, and Vial of Life To provide your family with assurance and awareness, register your residence with your county Sheriff as a home with special a needs resident.

Lake County Safety Program Information: www.lcso.org/seniors

Phone: [\(352\) 343-9500](tel:3523439500)

Marion County Safety Program Information: www.marionso.com/special-needs-program

Phone: [\(352\) 369-8136](tel:3523698136)

Sumter County Safety Program Information: www.sumtercountysheriff.org/services

Phone: [\(352\) 569-1600](tel:3525691600)

- Medically Essential Program:** The term “medically essential” means the electric-powered medical equipment must be operated continuously or, as circumstances require, to avoid the loss of life or immediate hospitalization of a permanent resident at the service address. If a resident at your home requires electric service to maintain life via medically essential equipment, apply for this program with your electric company. **Eligibility must be renewed annually.**

!! In the event of loss of power, it is the customer's responsibility to have a power backup system for their medical equipment, as well as an action plan for proceeding to the nearest medical facility !! .

Duke Energy Application: www.duke-energy.com/home/billing/special-assistance/medically-essential

Phone: [\(800\) 700-8744](tel:8007008744)

SECO Energy Application: secoenergy.com/medically-necessary-service

Phone: [\(352\) 793 -3801](tel:3527933801)

- Emergency Operations Centers:** Visit the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) website for your county to sign up for county-specific emergency alerts/notifications on weather, shelters, hurricane preparedness and more. Create a plan today to keep your family safe in an emergency.

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Lake County EOC: www.lakecountyfl.gov/emergency-management

Phone: (352) 343-9420

Marion County EOC: www.marionso.com/emergency-management/?rq=emergency

Phone: (352) 369-8100

Sumter County EOC: <https://www.sumtercountyfl.gov/718/Emergency-Management>

Phone: (352) 689-4400

- Florida Division of Emergency Management:** Visit the Florida Division of Emergency Management for important information about disaster preparedness at www.floridadisaster.org.

- Smart911:** When you call 911 the information received by the call center may be limited based on the type of phone you are calling on. Smart911 is a free service that helps 9-1-1 protect your family by providing more information to first responders during an emergency. You provide details in advance about your household, address and visual location information, health information, and any other details that first responders should know about. The information you provide will only be seen if you ever have to call 911 and it travels with you so it will be displayed to the call taker. You can also download the free mobile app.

Registration Website: www.smart911.com

- Smartphone Emergency Medical Identification (SEMID):** SEMID is another tool that allows you to store important medical information on your mobile phone and, if needed, provide easy access for emergency care teams and first responders without giving them full access to your phone.

Apple introduced Medical ID to its Health app, as its SEMID tool, on its mobile phones with iOS 8. You can now synchronize your Medical ID information on your Apple iPad and watch, and share it with family members who have mobile Apple devices.

Set up your Medical ID in the Health app: support.apple.com/en-us/105072

There are many **Android** models, and all differ slightly in how to set up a medical ID. You should consult the instructions for your specific make and model of Android phone to set up your Medical ID.

You can learn more by reading our [Learn About Safety Programs That Benefit All Residents of The Villages](#) web post.

Section 5: Property Tax Exemptions

- Property Tax Exemptions:** Some Florida homeowners may qualify for one or more property tax exemptions. You do not need to be disabled to qualify for all property tax exemptions. You can apply for property tax exemptions with your county property appraiser.

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Lake County Tax Exemption Information: floridarevenue.com/property/Pages/Taxpayers_Exemptions.aspx

Lake County Online Tax Exemption Application: www.lakecopropappr.com/exemptions_application.aspx

Lake County Taxpayer Assistance: (850) 717-6570

Marion County Tax Exemption Information and Application: www.pa.marion.fl.us/HXeFile.aspx

Marion County Taxpayer Assistance: (352) 368-8300

Sumter County Tax Exemption Information: www.sumterpa.com/tax-and-exemptions

Sumter County Online Tax Exemption Application: scpaproduction.wpengine.com/download-forms

Sumter County Taxpayer Assistance: (352) 569-6800

Section 6: Special Needs Attorney

- Special Needs Attorney:** There are a few special needs attorneys available near The Villages that can assist with things like Social Security Disability, Medicare and Medicaid, and special needs wills and trusts. We have compiled a list recommended by your fellow special needs residents and caretakers. Go to the [AFINS Services](#) webpage and search the table for “attorney” to find a recommended special needs attorney that meets your needs.

Section 7: Special Needs Medical Professionals

- Special Needs Medical Professionals:** There are special needs medical professionals available near The Villages. We have compiled a list recommended by your fellow special needs residents and caretakers. Go to the [AFINS Medical Referrals](#) webpage and search the table for the type of medical professional you need.

Section 8: Home Healthcare Assistance

- Home Healthcare Assistance:** There are some healthcare professionals available near The Villages. We have compiled a list recommended by your fellow special needs residents and caretakers. Go to the [AFINS Medical Referrals](#) webpage and search the table for the type of medical professional you need.
- Helping Hands:** Helping Hands is a non-profit, Neighbor-Helping-Neighbor volunteer-run program operated by The Villages Homeowners Advocates. They loan free durable medical equipment exclusively to The Villages residents and their guests. You can pick-up, return, and donate equipment Monday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

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Location: [1104 Main Street, Lady Lake, FL \(at Spanish Springs Square, behind Kilwins\)](#)

Phone: [\(352\) 973-2284](#)

Website: www.thevha.net/helping-hands-3

Section 9: Healthcare Advocate

- Healthcare Advocate:** A healthcare advocate is a “second responder” who helps caregivers and family quickly get on track with a plan and the right resources. They provide the strength you need for urgent decisions during crisis management. But, they also help you plan your estate before emergencies happen so all family members know what plans are made and where important documents are located. Go to the [AFINS Services](#) webpage and search the table for “healthcare advocate” to find a recommended healthcare advocate.
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Section 10: Money Management

- ABLE United:** An ABLE United account gives Floridians with a disability a tax-free way to save, without losing public benefits. To learn more, determine if you are eligible, and open an account visit the ABLE United website.

General Information: www.ableunited.com.

Eligibility Wizard: www.ableunited.com/learn/eligibility/eligibility-wizard

Section 11: Transportation

- Fixed Route and Paratransit:** Lake, Marion, and Sumter counties all have fixed bus routes and paratransit transportation services available for special needs residents. Visit the paratransit webpage for your county to learn the requirements and apply for paratransit services.

Lake County Paratransit: ridelakexpress.com/paratransit

Phone: [\(352\) 742-2612](tel:(352)742-2612)

Marion County Paratransit: www.mariontransit.org/about

Phone: [\(352\) 620-3071](tel:(352)620-3071)

Sumter County Paratransit: sumtercountyfl.gov/770/Transit-Applications

Phone: [\(352\) 568-6683](tel:(352)568-6683)

- Non-Emergency Medical Transportation:** The following companies offer fee based non-emergency transportation for the mobility impaired.

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Medical Transportation Management: You can schedule rides online or via mobile app.

Website: www.mtm-inc.net

Phone: [844-239-5974](tel:844-239-5974)

Section 12: Vocational Rehabilitation

Florida Department of Education Vocational Rehabilitation Program:

Special needs residents desiring meaningful employment that makes a difference can get support for employment evaluation, job placement, and job coaching.

Lake & Sumter County Location: [8112 Centralia Court, Suite 102, Leesburg, FL 34748](#)

Phone: [\(352\) 630-6200](tel:(352)630-6200)

Marion County Location: [1601 NE 25th Ave #702, Ocala, FL 34470](#)

Phone: [\(352\) 732-1290](tel:(352)732-1290)

General Information Website: rehabworks.org