First In Families of North Carolina

Helping people with disabilities and their families to Believe in their dreams, Achieve their goals, Connect in their communities and Give Back to others since 1995

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MEMORANDUM ON COVID-19 RESPONSE BY FIRST IN FAMLIES OF NC
4/9/2020

Since 1995, First In Families of North Carolina has supported individuals with disabilities and their families to meet their self-defined needs. FIF provides direct support to help individuals throughout all 100 counties of North Carolina to meet crucial wellness needs for of those who do not receive waiver services or for needs not covered by formal services. Many of the requests we meet are for transportation assistance (vehicle repair, bus passes), home repairs or modifications, medical or therapeutic equipment, respite, technology, household items and furniture, and basic needs.

Our staff and volunteers continue to provide that same level of support, and more, as our state and communities face the physiological, psychological and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to evolving needs due to the COVID-19 Pandemic; and in accordance with the direction the state has issued encouraging providers and LME/MCOs to increase flexibility in supporting people, FIFNC is making the following changes to policy and protocol for family support.

We have shared the following guidance with our 14 Chapters and Lifeline Project staff effective immediately through June 30, 2020 or whenever FY 1920 individual program funding is exhausted (otherwise referenced as the COVID-19 Relief Period):

1) Special Funding is available to support individuals of any age who have experienced a Traumatic Brain Injury.
    a. These funds can be accessed through our FIF Chapters and Programs; contact information is available by county of residence at http://fifnc.org/programs/local.html
2) During the COVID-19 Relief Period:
    a. Families who have already received support through a FIFNC Chapter within the past 12 months may apply again. The one time per year provision is being waived.
    b. FIFNC Chapters and programs can assist with non-emergency requests for assistance with rent and utilities.
        i. Please note FIF is NOT an emergency assistance provider. We cannot meet immediate requests pending disconnect or eviction (however, the governor has provided for relief from such events through Executive Order)

As always, FIF staff can also assist individuals and families to navigate formal services systems and access local resources.

Eligibility Guidelines for FIF family support:

- An individual in the household (of any age) is living with an intellectual/developmental disability or Traumatic Brain Injury, including those who are medically fragile and/or have a dual diagnosis of mental health or substance use disorder.
- Household income does not exceed 65K after taxes.
- The individual lives in their own home, or with family, and not in a licensed setting.

How can FIF help?

- There is no specific menu of services for support. Examples of support include; basic needs, technology, vehicle repairs, assistance with home repairs/modifications, respite, therapies or medical devices, and in some cases (through 6/30/2020) assistance with non-emergency assistance with rent/utility payments.
- FIF Resource Navigators can also assist families to connect to other community resources and to understand the formal service system better.

How do families access FIF family support?

1) Visit http://fifnc.org/programs/local.html and click on your county of residence.
2) Contact your local FIF Chapter or Program and request an application.
3) A FIF Resource Navigator will work with the family to meet their request within the community and/or connect them with another resource.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or suggestions as we work together to ensure all North Carolinians have the resources and support needed during this uncertain time.

Sincerely,

Betsy MacMichael

Betsy MacMichael, Executive Director
First In Families of North Carolina