



FLORIDA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL, INC.

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Transportation Availability for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The Council urges the Florida Legislature to designate funding specifically for employment related transportation for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Safe, affordable, and reliable transportation is a critical component to community inclusion for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Research has shown that having access to the community is the key to employment, education and training, independence, and self-sufficiency. Florida's transportation delivery system is very complex. In addition to a lack of subsidies for public transportation, differences in local providers, and provider availability, are examples of issues that make it difficult for individuals with disabilities to access and utilize available transportation services.

The Governor's Executive Order for Employment First requires that the state prioritize employment as the first option for individuals with disabilities. Therefore, funding must be available for individuals with disabilities who need transportation to find employment and maintain their employment. The Governor's Commission on Jobs for Floridians with Disabilities 2014 Report included recommendations for improving employment. The first recommendation is to improve transportation to employment, throughout the Commission's work, transportation was found to be the most significant barrier for many individuals with disabilities to both obtain and maintain employment,

One of the major sources of funding for transportation is the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD). In their Annual Performance Report for fiscal year 2013, it states that the Commission provided 49.6 million trips statewide. Individuals with disabilities accounted for almost 10 million of these trips. There was \$394 million dollars available and \$3.1 million dollars were used for employment-related trips. At least 188,311 trips were denied and 53,419 of these requests were for employment trips. Moreover, 20% of Florida's counties report no provisions of transportation for employment. The report indicates that employment is not as high a priority in many counties and that lack of funding is the reason most often given for the denial of an employment trip request.

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) is the other major state program that provides funding for transportation. In fact, a survey of the individuals on the Developmental Disabilities Individual Budgeting waiver waitlist showed that transportation services are the most needed service funded through the waiver. Families and self-advocates emphasized the need for transportation in the sixteen local forums the APD sponsored last year. Under the iBudget, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are able to choose services, but often funds are not left for transportation after more pressing services are funded. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities provided a statewide total of \$1.6 million dollars to CTD. This figure is down by two thirds from three years ago.

However, while other transportation systems are being developed, there needs to be a designated amount of funding for employment-related transportation for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Reliable transportation is essential to obtain and retain employment.