



## FLORIDA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL, INC.

124 Marriott Drive, Suite 203, Tallahassee, Florida 32301-2981

Phone (850) 488-4180 • Toll-Free (800) 580-7801

Fax (850) 922-6702 • TDD (850) 488-0956/(888) 488-8633

### **Transportation Availability for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

**The Council urges the Florida Legislature to explore alternative approaches for transportation for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.**

**The Council supports the creation of transportation options for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities that optimize an individual's choice of provider and route. Options could include a voucher or "smart card."**

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. Differences in local providers, and issues related to provider jurisdiction, are just a few of the things that make it difficult for individuals with disabilities to access and utilize available transportation services.

According to the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD), in fiscal year 2012, the Commission provided 47,741,494 trips statewide which is down about three million trips from 2011. At least 101,536 trips were denied. While the individual may need two trips every day to attend work, the denial is counted as "one" unmet need. Moreover, 20% of Florida's counties report no provisions of transportation for employment and 10% reflect no provisions of transportation for education or training. Also, the cost of accessing transportation needs to be explored. There are huge disparities in the cost for transportation services that can be accessed under the umbrella of CTD.

For persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, reliable transportation is essential to obtain and retain employment. In fact, a survey of the individuals on the Developmental Disabilities Home and Community Based Services (DD/HCBS) Waiver waitlist showed that transportation services are the most needed service funded through the waiver. 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 Council and the Able Trust commissioned a transportation feasibility study, *Innovative Approaches for Increasing Transportation Options for People with Disabilities in Florida*. This study indicated that there are examples of successfully implemented transportation voucher program models in the United States. Recommendations generated from this study included the development and implementation of a transportation voucher pilot project to explore the use of vouchers in Florida. A voucher-based transportation program can be a cost-effective option to provide more consumer choice and control over individual transportation needs. The Council is currently funding an interagency collaboration initiative with the Florida Department of Transportation to implement a transportation voucher demonstration project.

Alternative methods of providing transportation might include use of transportation vouchers for paying an existing transportation provider, co-worker, family member or friend; expansion of door-to-door services through CTD for the purposes of employment and education and training; and reconfiguration of existing routes to better support transportation needs within each community based on their unique needs.