



## **FLORIDA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL, INC.**

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

#### **The Council urges the Florida Legislature to provide resources 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.

The Council supports the Employment First policy that states that integrated employment is the first priority and preferred outcome for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. A primary barrier identified as an impediment to employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities is the lack of transportation for competitive employment according to the 2014 Commission Report, from the Commission on Jobs for Floridians with Disabilities

There are three major factors that should be considered to address this problem. The first is the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD). The CTD annual report indicates that employment trips are 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. For several years, extra funding has been allocated to CTD and community transportation coordinators to be used to provide transportation services to persons with disabilities, older adults, and people with low income to access health care, employment, education and other life-sustaining services. Each region decides how they want to prioritize the use of this funding. The Council wants to see more funding available for the Transportation Disadvantaged Program that will be prioritized for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who will use this funding to obtain and maintain their employment.

Another factor to consider is representation on Community Transportation Coordinating Boards. All individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities need to have representation on these boards. These individuals can help to prioritize rides for employment, especially for those with disabilities, set up vanpools, and coordinate volunteer drivers.

The last factor to consider is to gain resources for employment-related transportation by seeking a Waiver Amendment for the iBudget Waiver to redefine both Supported Employment and Transportation services as broadly as permissible by the Center for Medicaid Services (CMS), in order to give waiver recipients (and those on the waitlist) the opportunity to access transportation to maintain competitive employment.

Additional funding for transportation is part of the solution but access to transportation is important and can be facilitated by increasing the number of Mobility Managers and replicating best practices around the state. The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council is working to promote a mobility management system. Mobility Managers provide personalized services to individuals: trip and travel training, customer service, and advocacy. The coordination of transportation services is cost-effective and can lower costs to individuals and the system.

More funding for the Transportation Disadvantaged Program, expansion of transportation access through the iBudget Waiver, board representation by individuals with disabilities, and effective mobility management for reliable transportation are essential to obtain and retain employment.