

RTAP

BULLETIN

FLORIDA RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

SUMMER—VOL.8, No.3

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UNITED WE GUIDE

Innovative Approaches for Increasing Transportation Options for People with Disabilities in Florida

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. (FDDC) recognized the need for increased transportation options for people with disabilities. The FDDC formed a partnership with The Able Trust to perform research related to the feasibility of establishing alternative transportation options for people with disabilities in Florida, including transportation vouchers. A report, *Innovative Approaches for Increasing Transportation Options for People with Disabilities in Florida*, was prepared by the USF Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) and summarizes the research that was conducted for the Council and the corresponding recommendations on the strategies that could be taken to increase and improve the quality and quantity of transportation services available to people with disabilities.

Overview

Accessible, affordable, and reliable transportation is a critical component to community inclusion. Having access to the community is the key to many aspects of independence, self-sufficiency, and inclusion. Florida's transportation delivery system is very complex. Multiple funding streams from various federal, state, and local agencies, differences in providers, and issues related to provider jurisdiction are just a few of the things that make it difficult for people with disabilities to access and utilize available transportation services.

Alternative methods of providing transportation to people with disabilities are needed. Initial research conducted on the transportation

voucher model indicates that there are examples of successful implementation of this model within the United States. A voucher based transportation model may be a viable option to providing more consumer choice and control over individual transportation needs. This could be particularly true in rural areas of the state where transportation options are extremely limited.

The primary purpose of *Innovative Approaches for Increasing Transportation Options for People with Disabilities in Florida* is to analyze needed systemic reform that may stimulate provider competition, customer service, better accessibility, and safety while allowing improved consumer directed choice in public transportation systems and services. This report provides verifiable information on existing alternative transportation programs with a particular focus on transportation vouchers and volunteer programs that have been

continued on p.4

**“We know that equality
of individual ability does
not exist and never will
but we still must strive for
equality of opportunity...”**

Franklin Delano Roosevelt



New Drug and Alcohol Training Media Available Now

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) recently funded two new drug and alcohol training tools developed by the USF Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR).

The first new tool utilizes the employee drug awareness video *Clean, Sober and Safe* to create a self-paced, interactive web-based training module. Four segments of the video are shown to the employee. Following each of the video segments, the participant is prompted to respond to four questions referencing the material viewed. Participants that respond correctly to at least 75 percent of the questions (12 out of 16) will be able to print a certificate documenting their successful completion of the module. Employees that do not successfully complete the module are prompted to begin again.

This web-based training module is intended to be used in conjunction with additional drug awareness training tools available to meet the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) requirement to provide at least sixty minutes of drug awareness training to all safety-sensitive employees (49 CFR Part 655.14). Employee Drug Awareness training should be provided at time of hire with annual refresher training conducted as a best practice.

Web-based training is particularly beneficial to transit systems that may not have the resources to conduct classroom

style training. The only equipment necessary is a computer connected to the internet and a printer. To utilize the web-based training visit: sam.cutr.usf.edu. Click on "Training Tools" and then click the link for "Clean, Sober and Safe Web-Based Training."

The second tool is the FDOT funded *A Prescription for Safety*, a video produced by CUTR that addresses the safe and effective use of prescription and over the counter medications by safety-sensitive employees.

Recent statistics have demonstrated a marked increase in the use and abuse of prescription and over the counter medications. The message delivered in this video is a reminder for all covered employees to discuss their safety-sensitive functions with their physician, to heed all

warning labels on medications and to cease the performance of safety-sensitive functions when side effects cause impairment. This video is not a regulatory training requirement, but is a "best practice." The video will be highlighted in FTA's revised addition of the "Prescription and Over the Counter Medications Toolkit" due out later this year.

For a copy of this video in DVD format, please contact CUTR's Diana Byrnes at byrnes@cutr.usf.edu.



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RTAP BULLETIN

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OUR MISSION

The Florida RTAP provides training, continuing education, and technical assistance to those who provide or assist in the provision of public transportation services in rural and small urban communities in order to promote the coordinated delivery of safe, efficient, and effective transit services.

Editor: Yolanda Moore Designer: Stephanie Zavacki

SPOTLIGHT—Cathy Brown, Executive Director, St. Johns County Council on Aging

SPOTLIGHT highlights one of our many energetic Florida RTAP transit professionals and allows these individuals to introduce themselves in their own words. In this issue the SPOTLIGHT is on Cathy Brown, Executive Director, St Johns County Council on Aging.



Name: Cathy Brown

Title: Executive Director, St Johns County Council on Aging

Birthplace: 5th generation Floridian

Education: Bachelor of Social Welfare, Florida State University

Professional History: Red Cross Worker—South Vietnam; Disaster Relief Caseworker, Hurricane Camille; Personnel Assistant, Stanford Research Lab; Blood Donor Recruiter, American Red Cross, Atlanta; Real Estate broker and training executive, Jon Douglas Company, Los Angeles; Council on Aging, St. Augustine.

Years Working with Current Agency: 11

Years Working in Transit Industry: 11

Biggest Surprise in Paratransit: Best System of the Year 2008—Community Transportation Association of America

Biggest Challenge in Paratransit: Capacity building—keeping our agreement to never deny a trip

Personal Benefit of Working in Paratransit: Removing barriers to independence—helping folks go where they need to go!

Community Involvement: Rotary, United Way Board, St. Augustine Code Enforcement Board, County Planning and Zoning Agency, Salvation Army, Inter Agency Council, President, National Steering Committee for Human Services Transportation Coordination, RTAP, St Johns Housing Partnership, Florida Association of Senior Centers, past president, Chamber of Commerce, 100 Women Who Care, St Augustine Historical Society, FSU Alumni Association, FACTS.

Personal Background: Husband Warren Butler; 5 adult daughters—Emily, Kate, Sara, Linda, Susan and sons in law Todd, Tommy & Chris and grandchildren Katie & Alex and 5 granddogs!

Childhood Ambition: to be a minister

Inspiration: I am continually inspired by simple acts of kindness, and doing the next right thing.

Favorite Book: *Creating the Movies of Your Mind*, Adelaide Bry

My Motto: 4 Rules: Show Up, Pay Attention, Tell the Truth and Don't Be Attached to the Outcome!



“Public Transportation – An Investment in our Future”

**Save the Date:
October 17 - 19, 2010**

36th Florida Public Transportation Association Annual Conference

**Hilton Miami Downtown Hotel
Miami, FL**

For more information or to register:

Wes Watson: (850) 878-0855 or fptamail@embargmail.com

<http://www.floridatransit.org/>

implemented in other states. In addition, it provides recommendations on the establishment of transportation voucher programs and other mobility strategies that will enable consumer directed choice in the selection of transportation services. These recommendations include the design elements and operating parameters for a transportation voucher demonstration project to be implemented in Florida.

Impacts of the Lack of Access to Transportation Options

The preliminary research conducted for this study confirmed that “access to transportation provides a vital lifeline for people with disabilities to access employment, education, healthcare, and community life. Yet, too often, people with disabilities lack accessible, affordable, reliable transportation options.”^{vi} The availability of an extensive system of accessible public transportation or other mobility options is one of the most prevalent indicators of independent living for persons with disabilities. The lack of these services severely restricts their ability to maintain an independent and inclusive life, “excluding” them from their rights and diminishing their “well-being.”^{vi}

People with disabilities must have transportation access, and this access must not be limited to the public transportation services that are currently available in the communities within which they reside. In areas where public transportation services are available, the services often are offered during confined operating hours and within identified service corridors and areas. Private services, such as those provided by taxis or other carriers, often are too expensive to be used on a regular basis or do not provide services with accessible vehicles. Dependable transportation options for people with disabilities must be available in every community and must be adequately funded. In the Florida Governor’s Commission on Disabilities 2009 Report, within the area of transportation it was noted:

“Transportation is about choices, options, employment, and the essential component for community-based services—the freedom of having full and quality access to the community. Having multiple systems in place to provide this access is essential. Without reliable and dependable mobility, the community-based service model for people with disabilities cannot work as intended. Transportation provides freedom. For persons with disabilities, transportation that

is cost-efficient, reliable, and accessible means independence.”ⁱⁱⁱ

In the “National Disability Policy: Progress Report,” published and presented to President Obama in March 2009, the National Council on Disability made the following recommendation:

“The Department of Transportation should evaluate the effectiveness of new pilot transportation initiatives for people with disabilities; develop permanent funding mechanisms to expand effective approaches across the country; and propose to Congress ongoing funding mechanisms to increase transportation options for the growing population of people who do not drive because of disabilities.”^{iv}

Closing Note

In April 2010, the USF Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) completed a project for the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. to address the need for increased transportation options for people with disabilities. This excerpt from the report’s Executive Summary provides an overview of the project, addresses the importance of access and mobility, and speaks to the impacts to individuals when transportation options are unavailable or are limited. . We hope to include additional excerpts from this report in future RTAP Bulletins.

The full *Innovative Approaches for Increasing Transportation Options for People with Disabilities in Florida* report can be accessed at www.cutr.usf.edu/programs/ttat/files/2010_FDDC_report_WEB.pdf

ⁱ Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, “Presidential Transition Recommendations,” 2008.

ⁱⁱ Stanley, J., and Vella-Broderick, D., “The Usefulness of Social Exclusion as a Theoretical Concept to Inform Social Policy in Transport,” Proceedings, Thredbo 10 Workshop on “Social Exclusion: What Can Public Transport Offer?” 10th International Conference on Competition and Ownership in Land Passenger Transport, Hamilton Island, Australia, August 2007.

ⁱⁱⁱ Florida Governor’s Commission on Disabilities, “2009 Report.”

^{iv} National Council on Disability, “National Disability Policy: Progress Report,” March 2009.

2010 TD Conference a Success

The 18th Annual Transportation Training and Technology Conference held at the Renaissance Orlando at SeaWorld Hotel in Orlando, Florida, July 13-14, 2010 was a huge success!

Conference attendees participated in several power breakout and general sessions to learn about Keeping Your Gas Tank Full, Mobility Management, Curbing Distracted Driving, and Customer Sensitivity and Dealing with Difficult Passengers. JR Harding, CTD Chairperson, and Bobby Jernigan, CTD Executive Director, kicked off the opening breakfast. The breakfast also gave vendors an opportunity to showcase their products. Following the breakfast, conference attendees had an opportunity to visit the vendor booths in the exhibit hall.

As tradition, the highlight of the conference was the annual Awards Banquet. The 2010 award winners included:

- Safety Award of the Year—Wakulla County Transportation
- Volunteer of the Year Award—David Dixon, Volusia County
- Operator of the Year Award—Southeastern Christian Assembly, Polk County
- Innovation of the Year Award—Medical Transportation Management, Martin County
- Dispatcher/Scheduler of the Year Award—Hector Betancourt, Polk County
- Driver of the Year Award—Charlene Gray, Citrus County
- Outstanding Coordinating Board of the Year—Palm Beach County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board
- Designated Planning Agency of the Year—Indian River County MPO
- Rural CTC of the Year Award—Citrus County Transit
- Urban CTC of the Year Award—LYNX, Orange, Osceola and Seminole
- Sheila Winitzer Shining Star of the Year Award—Mildred A. Crawford, Alachua County
- William G. & Budd Bell Lifetime Achievement Award—Marcia Staszko, Central Florida Regional Planning Council

The 2010 Annual TD Conference proved to be fun, informative, and educational. Thanks to all the attendees, speakers, exhibitors, and staff for making this year such a huge success!

For more information regarding the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged please contact Karen Somerset, Assistant Director Program Administration and Oversight (850) 410-5701 or (850) 410-5700, karen.somerset@dot.state.fl.us



2010 TD Conference Award Recipients

2010 UPCOMING EVENTS

The classes and conferences listed below are sponsored by the Florida Department of Transportation and the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida in Tampa. If you would like to attend any of the courses, you will find a course announcement and registration form for each course at www.floridartap.org in the Training Calendar section. Click on course name to download or view training class details. If you have an idea for a training course or would like to host a course, please contact Amber Reep (813) 974-9823.

September 14-15, 2010

Non-Emergency Stretcher Training Workshop—Marianna, FL

September 22-23, 2010

The Runcutter Course™—Pompano Beach, FL

October 17-19, 2010

36th Florida Public Transportation Association Annual Conference—Miami Hilton, Miami, FL

November, 2, 2010

Disability Etiquette—Tampa, FL

United We Guide Mobility Manager Pilot Project Receives 2010 Davis Productivity Award

The United We Guide Mobility Management Pilot Project in St. Johns and Putnam Counties won a Certificate of Commendation in the 2010 Prudential-Davis Productivity Awards.

This year's competition for the Davis Productivity Awards attracted 587 nominations for innovation and productivity improvements worth \$415 million in cost savings, cost avoidances and increased revenue for state government.

The United We Guide Mobility Manager project goal was to provide and improve transportation services by working with local agencies to help coordinate the travel and trip planning needs of individuals who receive human service program assistance or are seeking alternative transportation services.

Representatives from the Florida Departments of Transportation, Elder Affairs, Health, Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Florida Highway Patrol and Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged joined together to implement this program

where they trained the Community Transportation Coordinators in both St. Johns and Putnam counties to be true mobility managers.

St. Johns Council on Aging and Ride Solution are the Mobility Managers for St. Johns and Putnam Counties, respectively. Both agencies were trained by the team to provide one-on-one assistance to seniors in their counties who need help with transportation, safety or mobility issues. The Mobility Manager works with citizens' transportation needs and matches them with the appropriate resource.

This pilot project was a success and both counties will continue using this mobility manager program. The United We Guide Team is currently evaluating the best method to bring this concept to other counties in Florida.

Any questions or comments about this mobility manager concept program can be sent to: Gail Holley at gail.holley@dot.state.fl.us or John Irvine at john.irvine@dot.state.fl.us

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