

**Virginia Disability Commission Report**  
**July 8, 2005**

**Inter-Agency Transportation Council Update**  
**United We Ride Grant**

*Neil Sherman, Department of Rail and Public Transportation*

**Background:** The benefits of coordinated transportation across human service agencies have been discussed with interest at federal, state, and local levels since the mid-seventies. States and localities engaged in transportation coordination report that such efforts hold promise for:

- Improved transportation to jobs, medical assistance, and life sustaining trips;
- Increased services and reduced overhead costs;
- Avoidance of duplicated services/Lower overall costs (with less cost shifting);
- Better trained drivers and staff who are able to handle all consumers – general public, aging, MH/MR, and physical disabilities; and
- Better support from all levels of government.

In 2004, the VA Department for Rail and Public Transit received a FTA *United We Ride* (UWR) State Coordination Grant to assist in development of an Action Plan for Coordinating Human Service Transportation for Virginia. Based upon the lack of comprehensive information on human service transportation needs, the Interagency Transportation Council determined that the UWR project should be used to establish a clear baseline of the Commonwealth's human service transportation resources, the unmet needs, and current level of coordination, or lack thereof, in communities across the state. DRPT has collaborated with the VCU Commonwealth Institute for Child and Family Studies to assist in the inventory development, analyses, and final report development.

**Method:** The availability of human service transportation services in VA is dependent not only on the number and type of vehicles and service providers operating within the state but also on the amount of "funded" human service transportation. The DRPT inventory will determine the availability of *funded transportation services* within each community and the capacity of community including the number and type of vehicles, per program eligibility requirements, and operating policies. Primary destinations of funded transportation within each service area will be identified and mapped by type of human service agency. Opportunities for agencies to better coordinate transportation to their primary destinations will be examined. Each community's current coordination efforts, the barriers and factors which contribute to successful coordination will be identified and summarized.

The DRPT inventory will also analyze and compare expenses and revenue collection efforts within each system and across agencies which may assist in coordination planning and maximizing equitable in the distribution of resources in the future.

**Next Steps:** The DRPT Inventory, developed with review and input from agencies and stakeholders, will be distributed to the following community service agencies throughout the state in August 2005 (with introductory letters from agency heads asking for the maximum cooperation):

- All Community Services Boards (CSBs)
- All Area Associations on Aging (AAAs)

- All non-profits or for profit programs serving human service system populations not identified by the above two entities (e.g., Employment Support Organizations, private schools, etc.)
- Department of Social Services and Department of Medical Assistance Services
- Public Transit systems

**Results:** Data will be verified, analyzed, and summarized during the Fall 2005. A final report will be prepared including tables and graphic displays of data (bar charts, pie charts, mapping of services provided by CSBs vs. AAAs vs. other transportation services during like time frames per service area). Other inquires of interest will attempt to identify the impact of coordination activities, if any, on the costs and availability of services. It is anticipated that the report will provide recommendations that seek to limit duplicative services which could produce a more robust transportation system than now exists.

The final report will be used by the Interagency Council and other stakeholders in the future development of an Action Plan for Coordinating Human Service Transportation for Virginia. DRPT will share preliminary results with state and local agencies through forums throughout the fall 2005 and winter 2006 in preparation of state action planning.

Questions and interests may be forwarded to Neil I. Sherman, DRPT (804) 786-1154 ([Neil.Sherman@drpt.virginia.gov](mailto:Neil.Sherman@drpt.virginia.gov)) or Janet Hill, DRPT research consultant, VCU Commonwealth Institute (804) 213-0092 ([jhill@hsc.vcu.edu](mailto:jhill@hsc.vcu.edu)).