

BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE IMPLEMENTATION WORKING GROUP

THIRD SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT JULY 31, 2006

**To
Jeb Bush, Governor
State of Florida**

**Senator Tom Lee
President of the Florida Senate**

**The Honorable Allan G. Bense, Speaker
Florida House of Representatives**

*The BIWG is charged with
implementing the
recommendations of the*





Sponsored by

**The United States Department of Health and Human Services,
Administration on Developmental Disabilities
the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc.**

INTRODUCTION

The Blue Ribbon Task Force Implementation Working Group (BIWG) is pleased to submit its third semi-annual report of implementation activities.

The BIWG was designed to implement the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Inclusive Community Living, Transition, and Employment of Persons with Developmental Disabilities. Its members have committed considerable time and resources to the goals of this initiative. This report reflects the dedication of the agencies and organizations that comprise the BIWG. These agencies and organizations are united in their dedication to the realization of inclusive community living, effective transition services, and competitive integrated employment for individuals with developmental disabilities through both their collective, as well as independent activities and accomplishments.

The BIWG members gratefully acknowledge the support for individuals with developmental disabilities demonstrated by Governor Bush, Florida's legislative leaders, and other elected representatives. The BIWG Members include:

- ◆ Curtis Austin, Workforce Florida, Inc.
- ◆ Jay Barber, Workforce Florida, Inc.
- ◆ Nila Benito, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council & USF University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities
- ◆ Shelly Brantley, Agency for Persons with Disabilities
- ◆ Alex Brown, Self Advocate
- ◆ Guenevere Crum, Able Trust
- ◆ Susan Dickerson, Department of Children and Families
- ◆ John Irvine, Florida Commission on Transportation Disadvantaged
- ◆ Beth Kidder, Agency for Health Care Administration
- ◆ Bambi Lockman, Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
- ◆ Judy Meyer, Agency for Workforce Innovation
- ◆ Nancy Muller, Florida Housing Finance Corporation
- ◆ Bill Palmer, Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- ◆ Alex Penn-Williams, Ed.D., Department of Education, Office of Interagency Programs
- ◆ Susan Redmon, Department of Health
- ◆ Gary Weston, Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities
- ◆ Senator Stephen Wise, Florida Senate

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**FLORIDA'S BLUE RIBBON IMPLEMENTATION WORKING GROUP ON INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITY LIVING, TRANSITION, & EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

VISION

All people have the freedom and responsibility to decide where and how to live, work, and play.

CHARGE

The Governor defines the BIWG charge as aligning resources and eliminating all barriers in the way of:

- ✓ Expanding and improving inclusive community living options for individuals with disabilities;
- ✓ Coordinating the provision of effective transition services statewide for students with disabilities; and
- ✓ Expanding and improving competitive, integrated employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Blue Ribbon Task Force submitted its final report to the Governor and Florida Legislature on December 15, 2004. That report presented critical recommendations for improving inclusive community living options, transition outcomes, and employment for people with developmental disabilities. The Blue Ribbon Task Force Implementation Working Group (BIWG) was subsequently formed for the purpose of making the vision and mission of the Blue Ribbon Task Force a reality. As specified by the Blue Ribbon Task Force in its Final Report, the BIWG submitted its first semi-annual report to the Governor and Legislature on July 15, 2005 and its second semi-annual report on January 31, 2006. This document is presented as the third semi-annual report of the BIWG.

As reported in the first semi-annual report, on July 21, 2005, Florida was one of six states notified of their selection to participate in the National Governor's Association (NGA) Policy Academy on Improving Outcomes for Young Adults with Disabilities, a group designed to assist states to develop more integrated, comprehensive and cost-effective state administrative infrastructures to provide services for youth with disabilities. The Core Team members of the NGA Policy Academy, with only a couple of exceptions, were also members of the BIWG. Given the similarities in the goals and focus of the two initiatives and the need to maximize the efforts of the dually-serving member agencies and organizations, the NGA Policy Academy was merged with the BIWG initiative to focus the first phase of the BIWG implementation efforts on the transition-related recommendations in the Blue Ribbon Task Force's final report.

The agencies and organizations which comprise the BIWG continue to progress in implementation of plans for each agency's and organization's work to achieve the vision both initiatives established for transition services in the state of Florida. Each agency/organization's plan sets forth measures of success, objectives, action steps, responsible parties, timelines, and resources and/or partners needed for success.

Progress has been made on a number of the Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) recommendations, in addition to the Phase I effort, through on-going projects of the member agencies and organizations. The recommendations for inclusive community living and those not specifically addressed through Phase I or in the current member initiatives will become the focus of the BIWG as Phase II of the BIWG implementation.

This third semi-annual report will 1) outline the status of implementation of the BRTF recommendations through the work of the BIWG member organizations, 2) summarize key legislation that was passed in the 2006 session which positively impacts the goals/objectives of the BIWG, 3) highlight significant activities which have furthered the work of the BIWG in the past six months, and 4) report on a proposed three-tiered data system for measuring outcomes and success with regard to transition services across agency and organization lines.

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

A common Vision and Mission, with two (2) goals, was developed by the NGA Policy Academy Core Team and incorporates the driving focus of the BIWG/NGA implementation team as the Phase I initiative.

VISION: All individuals, with and without disabilities, live, learn, work, and participate together in all life experiences.

MISSION: To increase the number of Florida youth and young adults with disabilities who participate and demonstrate success in post-secondary education certification and obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment.

GOALS:

Goal 1: Florida youth and young adults with disabilities participate in work experiences and opportunities that ultimately lead to a living wage, work related skills development, income and benefits potential, and asset accumulation.

Goal 2: Florida youth and young adults with disabilities participate and demonstrate success in post-secondary educational opportunities and/or other employment related opportunities.

Each BIWG/NGA agency and organization developed its implementation plan for achieving this Vision, Mission and Goals, both with short term and long range activities. These implementation plans will move forward a number of the Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF)/BIWG recommendations, as well as address broader and related systems issues, for a comprehensive effort to improve a young adult's transition to the adult world and success in attaining employment and/or participating in post-secondary experiences.

Below are the BRTF/BIWG recommendations that are addressed through these efforts including an update on the progress accomplished since the inception of the BIWG with an emphasis on activities occurring within the last six months.

Short Term Recommendations (1 year)	Semi-Annual Update
1) Most Critical	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designate the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) to establish, facilitate, and coordinate a BRTF Implementation Working Group (BIWG), which will include participation from agency heads or their designated senior staff who can make policy and/or budget decisions and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accomplished and Ongoing – Currently, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities is considering full implementation of the Interagency Service Committee for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities whose charge it will be to establish goals to insure the

<p>recommendations and their staff needed to support planning and implementation. This working group should include, but not be limited to, the Department of Education (DOE), Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), Department of Education Vocational Rehabilitation (DOE-VR), Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA), Department of Health – Children’s Medical Services (DOH-CMS), Department of Children and Families (DCF), Workforce Florida, Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, and the Florida Housing Finance Corporation. The BIWG should meet at least quarterly to oversee, direct and coordinate the implementation of the BRFT recommendations.</p>	<p>successful transition to employment or further education of youth and young adults with disabilities and to eliminate barriers that impede educational opportunities leading to future employment. It is likely that this committee will take up the charge of the BIWG and include its current member agencies and organizations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The BIWG has met on the following dates since its last semi-annual report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ February 20, 2006 ➤ May 12, 2006 ➤ June 23, 2006 ➤ July 24, 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request the Agency/Department heads of the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council BIWG report the progress of implementation of recommendations in this report every six months to the Governor and annually to the Legislature with the first report due July 15, 2005. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accomplished and Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a Florida-based website with information that empowers people with developmental disabilities, and their families, to make informed decisions, and increase their full participation and inclusion in home, school work, and the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council is entering into a contract with the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at USF for this purpose. Project completion is anticipated to be July 31, 2007.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a process for ensuring that families are informed about the long-term impact of their decisions (e.g. FCAT, diploma options, course selection, and guardianship options) on their child’s access to school, post-secondary programs and employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children’s Medical Services (CMS) has published an additional 20,000 healthcare transition brochures, <i>Envisioning My Future</i>, for distribution among CMS enrollees between the ages of 12 and 21 and their families ▪ CMS is in the process of identifying a Transition Liaison in each of its area offices throughout the state to coordinate with CMS Central Office, within their communities, and with other agencies and organizations for transition activities and related issues.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FDDC is entering into a contract with the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at USF for development of a comprehensive transition website for students, families, and service providers. Project completion is anticipated to be July 31, 2007. ▪ DVR collaborated with BEESS to develop and distribute the newest transition brochure, <i>Checklist for Students with Disabilities Transitioning to Adult Life</i>, to transition stakeholders statewide for student and family use as a planning tool.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involve families of transition age students, and the communities, in which they live so that opportunities for employment, based on a person's interests and capabilities, can be identified early and the school system can work to help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ APD is in the process of commissioning a study through Delmarva, Inc. to determine the current level of involvement and knowledge of individuals and their families with regard to transition services, planning, and outcomes. ▪ CMS has contracted with the Family Resource Coalition to assemble a Young Adult Advisory Group with 9 CMS enrollees between the ages of 12 and 21 to provide input and insight to CMS about transition from a young adult's perspective.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All IEPs must consistently include evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Knowledge and understanding by the student and/or his/her legal guardian of what he/she is entitled to under the IDEA and ADA including assistive technology and transportation ➢ A statement of interagency responsibilities that should be, and that are, operative before a student exits school. ➢ Services provided by non-educational agencies. ➢ An outcome-oriented process that includes, but is not limited to, if and how the student will be involved in post-secondary education, career training, continued career development, integrated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At the 2006 Partners in Transition Summit, 25 local teams either began or continued work on their local level plans for implementing the Florida Strategic Plan for Transition. Technical assistance is being provided to the local teams and a 2007 summit is being planned to further the process. ▪ The Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS) is responsible for monitoring compliance with IDEA 2004, including the provision of procedural safeguards and the following transition IEP requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ During the student's eighth grade year or the school year of the student's 14th birthday,

employment, supported employment and/or adult education at the point of exit from high school.

- Individualized and meaningful vocational evaluations having been conducted.
- Meaningful experiences leading to post-school community participation and the realization of individualized employment, independent living and other post school objectives.
- Acquisition and utilization of transportation options.

whichever comes first, a statement of whether the student is pursuing a course of study leading to a standard diploma or a special diploma;

- Beginning by the student's 14th birthday (or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP team), including the student and the student's parents, and updated annually:
 - A statement of the student's desired post-school outcome which shall be developed through a student-centered process;
 - A statement of the student's transition service needs under the applicable component of the student's IEP that focuses on the student's IEP that focuses on the student's course of study, such as vocational education program;
 - Consideration of instruction or the provision of information in the area of self-determination to assist the student to actively and effectively participate in IEP meetings and self-advocate.
- Beginning by the student's 16th birthday (or younger, if determined appropriate as determined by the IEP team), including the student and the student's parent and updated annually and thereafter, a statement of needed transition services for the student including courses of study needed to assist the child in reaching those goals and, if appropriate, a statement of interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages;
- Development of appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to

	<p>training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Beginning not later than 1 year before the child reaches the age of majority under state law, a statement that the child has been informed of the child's rights under this title, if any, that will transfer to the child on reaching the age of majority.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Examine the possibility of allocating a portion of the Federal Workforce system funds including the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) state set aside (\$20 million for FY 03-04) for competitive, integrated employment, including self-employment and training to benefit people with developmental disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A \$1million appropriation was made during the 2006 legislative session for this purpose. The BIWG will be involved in planning for the use of these funds as well as measuring outcomes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Endorse the APD five-year initiative to enable 25% of people currently in segregated day programs to access and maintain employment as part of the performance measure to achieve employment of 50% of all people receiving day services to attain employment by 2009. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accomplished and ongoing. ▪ DVR has contracted with the Program for Rehabilitation Leadership at Georgia State University to conduct the Community Employment Capacity Initiative to assist in understanding the barriers to successful transition from day programs to community based employment and to make recommendations for the success of this initiative. ▪ The Able Trust continues to review and award grants to community based organizations implementing competitive employment for individuals transitioning out of segregated day programs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement procedures to identify employment aspirations of people with developmental disabilities (including employed, unemployed, and underemployed) and develop an implementation plan to reach their goals in a timely manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DVR as the lead agency for employment for individuals with disabilities continues to focus on each individual consumer's needs, desires, and individual issues impacting their successful, competitive, integrated employment outcome. ▪ Leon County Schools (LCS) in partnership with the Department of Education's Division of Vocational

	<p>Rehabilitation and Office of Interagency Programs (OIP); and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) is implementing an evidence-based pilot which utilizes the Transition Services Integration model in conjunction with Customized Employment and Discovery for career preparation and work-based learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Through FDDC funding the Statewide Competitive Integrated Employment Training Team is piloting two sites using evidence-based practices starting with the Discovery Vocational Profile process for individuals with the most significant disabilities to explore their employment aspirations and develop individualized plans for reaching their goals.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educate and inform all stakeholders regarding available housing resources and options in Florida including: How to blend and braid various options to maximize community living. How to increase the amount of affordable housing funds that are dedicated to assisting people with developmental disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Florida Housing Finance Corporation held a public forum in January on housing issues specific to people with disabilities in order to gather input for improvement and new directions. The Corporation's Multi-Family Department is working to insure that the recommendations are taken into consideration as planning and new initiatives are undertaken. In addition, HB1363 which passed in the 2006 legislative session made great strides in addressing some of the affordable housing challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. Highlights of the bill include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ \$108 million for Hurricane Housing Recovery Programs of which \$15 million is for farm worker and special needs housing ➤ \$30 million for Extremely Low Income (ELI) Housing (income at or below 30 % of area median income) ➤ Allows forgiveness of loans for ELI units ➤ Provides that rents fro ELI units are restricted to corresponding levels in the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DVR addresses community living arrangements as a related factor impacting an individual's desired employment outcome.
Short Term Recommendations (1 year)	Semi-Annual Update
2) Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage agency heads to incorporate BRTF recommendations into each agency's long-range program plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A number of member agencies have accomplished this by incorporating the recommendations into their five-year strategic plans.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop practical solutions to barriers in the creation and support of individual development accounts and self-directed accounts that allow the braiding of funds and embrace asset-building goals such as: Participating in the FDDC asset-building summit, Clarifying conflicting interpretations of current regulations, Recommending new policies or regulatory language, and Requesting federal waiver and/or interpretation of proposed policy or practice changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FDDC Asset Development Summit occurred in April 2006 at which a plan was developed to strengthen policy and infrastructure to support the asset development of individuals with disabilities. Some of the plans highlights include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Connecting IDA providers and micro-enterprise lenders with individuals with disabilities to meet asset goals without jeopardizing public benefits ○ Creating a web-based information source on statewide asset development and financial education programs ○ Providing targeted technical assistance to cross agency State Asset Development Work Groups to design policy and system solutions ○ Reform state policy so that the distribution of SHIP dollars are based on the 30/30 Initiative and people with disabilities on fixed income receive their share of funds for housing rental assistance and expanded home ownership opportunities; ▪ The Florida Freedom Initiative (FFI) has received a one-year no cost extension and has secured two banking partners for Individualized Development Accounts – the program component critical to asset development.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aggressively involve financial institutions and other private sector stakeholders to develop strategies to invest financial resources in IDAs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An Asset Building Conference was sponsored by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council in Spring 2006 which involved financial institutions and other stakeholders to develop strategies for building the assets of individuals with developmental disabilities. ▪ FFI has secured two banking partners (Premier Bank and Sun Trust Bank) for IDAs under the Florida Freedom Initiative.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council's Business Leadership Network (BLN) initiative to a statewide project including the involvement of the Able Trust as a funding partner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The BLN initiative has been expanded through the support of a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant obtained by APD. Currently, there are eight state supported BLNs. ▪ Two teams from the 2006 Partners in Transition (PIT) Summit requested to create BLNs and are being supported through the PIT technical assistance and training project which is funded through the FDDC.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a system for ensuring that students and their families and educators are informed about the acquisition, utilization and ongoing upgrades of assistive technology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BEESS disseminated a technical assistance paper (TAP) addressing the transfer of assistive technology. BEESS participated in the development of an interagency agreement addressing the transfer of assistive technology. Once finalized, the information will be disseminated to school districts to share with their students, parents, staff, and partner agencies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Direct APD employees to refer individuals on the waiting list who want employment and do not need long-term services to alternative, generic employment resources such as One-Stop Career Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DVR has contracted with the Program for Rehabilitation Leadership at Georgia State University to conduct the Community Employment Capacity Initiative to assist in understanding the barriers to successful transition from day programs to community based employment and to make recommendations for the success of this initiative. ▪ The One-Stop service system employs Disability Navigators in 14 of the 24 workforce areas to assist individuals with disabilities who require generic employment services to navigate the system.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a Governor's initiative to establish public/private 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With the support of the Governor, the Florida

<p>partnerships (grocery companies, medical groups/sites, Business Leadership Networks, private foundations) that will enhance employment, transportation, housing and other support systems needed by people with developmental disabilities to live in their community.</p>	<p>Developmental Disabilities Council started the BLN network in the state, and established four BLNs under the scope of its project. APD has taken up the project and expanded the number of BLNs in the state to eight.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two teams from the 2006 Partners in Transition (PIT) Summit requested to created BLNs and are being supported through the PIT technical assistance and training project which is funded through the FDDC.
<p>Mid Term (2-3 years)</p>	<p>Semi-Annual Update</p>
<p>1) Most Critical</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State agencies must work collaboratively to identify and align policies, practices, and resources that: a) Facilitate the provision of comprehensive, person-centered services and supports, and b) Eliminate barriers that impede inclusive community living options, competitive, integrated employment, and smooth transition among and between programs and systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The strategic planning conducted by the state agencies and organizations in the BIWG have moved forward the collaborative identification of where policies, practices, and resources can be better aligned for greater inclusive opportunities. ▪ The Florida Partners in Transition continues to meet and provide support through technical assistance and planning resources to county school systems based on the Florida Strategic Plan for Transition. The third annual Partners in Transition Summit was held in April 2006. BIWG member agencies/organizations continue to play a leading role in PIT activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transition outcome measures, which incorporate the research-based Transition Guideposts for Success articulated in the partners in Transition Florida Strategic Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BIWG is working with FETPIP to develop a three-tiered data system for aligning and reporting performance measures relative to transition services in the state. ▪ A cross-agency work group has been developed to accomplish this recommendation and will begin meeting in August 2006.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing Florida Department of Education (DOE) data collection system (warehouse) is enhanced so that performance information, relative to the transition system, can be provided to each process and partner in order for all aspects of the system to be improved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BIWG is working with FETPIP to develop a three-tiered data system for aligning and reporting performance measures relative to transition services in the state.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement a method to provide appropriate, individualized employment training and services (including transportation services) beginning at an early age (middle school) as a method to develop and refine employability and technical skills ultimately resulting in integrated, competitive work for students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DVR continues to financially support and collaborate with High School/High Tech (HS/HT) programs statewide during SFY 2006-2007. Through a DVR contract the Able Trust, HS/Ht students ages 14-22 are provided opportunities to explore jobs or post secondary education leading to technology related careers. ▪ The DVR School-to-Work Transition Guidelines & Best Practices were revised April 2006 to better meet the needs of transition students. DVR now encourages 16 year old students to apply for VR service if they wish to participate in community work experiences. Because of this initiative, DVR has also expanded the roles and responsibilities of VR Technicians to insure VR representation in Florida high schools and to meet the increased demand for VR transition services. ▪ DVR initiated the first summer employment pilot project in Area 4 (Tampa/St. Petersburg) for transition students this year. This effort involves collaboration with school officials, local employers, and on the job training financial support from DVR. ▪ DVR is currently drafting new contractual agreements with school districts to help fund community based work experiences (CBWE) for VR students with an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) during SFY 2006-2007. Florida School for the Deaf and Blind and 51 school districts have applied for this new fiscal year funding support, compared to only 8 school districts under the original Third Party Cooperative Agreement (TPCA) with DVR. ▪ The National Governors' Association has provided the BIWG with information and support regarding evidence-based practices that are effective for improving outcomes for youth with disabilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise special diploma competencies and course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The FDDC and DOE are jointly sponsoring the Access

<p>requirements making all graduation options meaningful which, for example, include; Employment-related competencies and experiences, and Futures financial planning coursework.</p>	<p>and Opportunities Work Group which has been examining what school based preparatory experiences and lifelong learning opportunities are available to students earning a special diploma and developing recommendations for how to increase access and opportunities for students on the special diploma track.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Currently, 62 of the 67 school districts are offering Special Diploma Option II. DOE is finalizing a Guide on Option II which will be available to the public by the end of the summer. ▪ BEESS workgroup is drafting examples of major/minor areas of study leading to a special diploma as part of the K-12 initiative.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make necessary statutory, regulatory and/or policy changes at the state level to ensure that assistive technology follows the student (e.g., from school to home, school to school and school to post-school). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SB 2550 was passed by the 2005 Legislature and required interagency agreement to insure that assistive technology devices remain with young persons with disabilities as he or she transition from one program to another. ▪ BEESS disseminated a technical assistance paper (TAP) addressing the transfer of assistive technology. BEESS participated in the development of an interagency agreement addressing the transfer of assistive technology. Once finalized, the information will be disseminated to school districts to share with their students, parents, staff, and partner agencies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Require APD and Florida Workforce Development system to develop strategies together to employ people with developmental disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recent DVR Employment Initiatives Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coordinating employment efforts through 11 BLNs; ➤ Educating employers about the benefits of DVR funded on-the-job training which expands training options for consumers who earn wages as they acquire valuable work experience/skills from the employer; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promotion of self-employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leon County Schools (LCS) in partnership with the Department of Education's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Office of Interagency Programs (OIP); and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) will implement an evidence-based pilot which utilizes the Transition Services Integration model in conjunction with Customized Employment and Discovery for career preparation and work-based learning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish cross-agency performance management and quality improvement strategies that define accountability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BIWG is working with FETPIP to develop a three-tiered data system for aligning and reporting performance measures relative to transition services in the state.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek federal approval to expand the Florida Freedom Initiative that is currently approved on a pilot basis statewide for 1,500 people with developmental disabilities to all Individuals enrolled on any waiver programs, if the pilot proves successful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A one-year, no-cost extension has been granted for the Florida Freedom Initiative, and APD is in negotiations with the Social Security Administration to extend the waiver beyond that timeframe to insure adequate time for meaningful outcomes and data collection
Mid Term (2-3 years)	Semi-Annual Update
2) Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand the Florida Freedom Initiative, contingent on demonstration of effectiveness to promote employment and home ownership for people with developmental disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A one-year, no-cost extension has been granted for the Florida Freedom Initiative, and APD is in negotiations with the Social Security Administration to extend the waiver beyond that timeframe to insure adequate time for meaningful outcomes and data collection
Mid Term (2-3 years)	Semi-Annual Update
3) Important	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish on-going funding for training and certification of providers in the employment field. Develop and implement a competency-based curriculum for certification and on-going training of employment personnel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FDDC will fund year two (2006-07) of the Statewide Competitive Integrated Employment Training Team project to develop a training system that will build a network of qualified employment professionals throughout the state. ▪ Under the scope of the MIG, a total of 13 supported

	<p>employment and benefits management trainings for people working in the disability field have been scheduled in the four pilot sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FDDC has funded the Micro-Enterprise Training and Technical Assistance project for individuals with developmental disabilities to create small self-employment business opportunities ▪ The Supported Employment Web-Based Training Initiative was expanded from the pilots funded by the FDDC to an on-going training opportunity funded by APD.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A statewide assessment system which measures year-to-year progress, that is, whether every student is learning; and their progress is included in school grades. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HB7087 requires that DOE implement an alternate assessment tool that accurately measures the skills and competencies established in the SSS for students with disabilities for students seeking a special diploma. Furthermore, it requires the learning gains of exceptional students seeking a special diploma, as measured by an alternate assessment, to be included in each school's grade calculation by the 2009-2010 school year.
Long Term (3-5 years)	Semi-Annual Update
1) Most Critical	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand transportation opportunities for people to gain timely, responsive and affordable rides to workplaces, including evenings and weekends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Under the scope of the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG), APD has conducted five transportation forums throughout the state during the spring of 2006 to solicit public input and recommendations for transportation that is timely, responsive, and affordable in the state. ▪ The FDDC is currently soliciting proposals through competitive RFP to find a provider to create a guidebook that teaches methods of accessing public transportation to people with developmental disabilities.

KEY LEGISLATION FROM THE 2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The following is a list and summary of key legislation from the 2006 legislative session which furthers the work of the BIWG. The BIWG would like to take this opportunity to extend a special thanks to Senator Steve Wise for his ongoing advocacy for students with disabilities and the removal of barriers to their employment and full community integration.

SB 1278 - Relating to Youth/Young Adults with Disabilities

- Senate Bill 1278 provides that the Agency for Persons with Disabilities may create the Interagency Services Committee for Persons with Disabilities to develop and implement a coordinated, multidisciplinary, and interagency intervention service system for youth with disabilities who are between three years and 30 years of age. The service system is to eliminate barriers to educational opportunities and enhance educational opportunities that will lead to future employment of these youth.
- The bill requires that the committee consist of state agency heads, or designees of agencies and bureaus or divisions and agencies including:
 - The Department of Education
 - Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services;
 - Division of Vocational Rehabilitation;
 - Division of Blind Services;
 - Division of Community Colleges;
 - Workforce Education;
 - Office of Interagency Programs
 - The Agency for Persons with Disabilities
 - The Agency for Health Care Administration
 - The Department of Health, Division of Children's Medical Services
 - The Department of Children and Family Services, Children's Mental Health
 - The Department of Juvenile Justice
 - The Department of Corrections
 - The Commission on Transportation Disadvantaged
 - The Florida Housing Finance Corporation.
- The bill requires the committee to invite representation from the following public and private parties:
 - The Able Trust
 - The Governor's Americans with Disabilities Act Working Group
 - The Florida Association for Center for Independent Living
 - The Business Leadership Network
 - The Florida Advocacy Center
 - An Individual with a Disability
 - A Parent or Guardian of an Individual with a Disability.
- The committee is charged with carrying out a variety of activities that will encourage the educational, vocational, and social development of young persons with disabilities. These activities relate to educational and vocational training opportunities, workforce development, community participation and housing. The bill requires the committee to present a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor, President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives by March 1, 2007 and January 1, 2008, and it abolishes the committee on June 1, 2008.

- APD is considering full implementation of this bill and for the newly established committee to take up the charge of the BIWG including its current member agencies and organizations. APD legal counsel is currently reviewing the provisions of the bill to insure that it is inclusive of all existing BIWG members and verifying the procedural requirements for conducting committee meetings (i.e. Roberts Rules of Order).

HB795: Relating to Cost of Attendance/Adult Norm-Reference Testing Language

- Directs public or private postsecondary institutions to include in their cost of attendance adult norm-referenced testing that they require for eligible students to qualify for accommodations for disabilities.
- Defines eligibility as a student who is a legal resident of this state, as defined in s. 1009.21; must be enrolled in at least 6 semester hours, or the equivalent, per term in a degree, certificate, or diploma program; and must have documented learning disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 or the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 4.
- Has an effective date of July 1, 2006.

HB1503: Summary of Language Relating to Accessible Electronic Information and Information Technology (AeIT)

- Requires that the executive, legislative and judicial branches of state government provide to individuals with disabilities access to and use of information and data that is comparable to the information and data provided to individuals who do not have disabilities.
- Requires that each state agency use accessible electronic information and information technology that conforms with specified provisions of federal 508 law.
- Requires the Department of Management Services to adopt rules.
- Provides an exception for electronic information and information technology involving military activities or criminal intelligence activities.
- Specifies that the act apply to developing, competitively procuring, maintaining and using electronic information or information technology on or after July 1, 2006.
- Provides legislative intent that due consideration be given to the interpretation of the federal courts relating to comparable provisions of s. 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and 29 U.S.C. 794(d), including the regulations set forth under C.F.R. part 1194 as of July 1, 2006.
- Provides definitions and exceptions.
- Has an effective date of July 1, 2006.

HB7087: Summary of language regarding accommodations, alternate assessment and accountability requirements related to exceptional education students and those seeking special diplomas

- Requires the DOE to implement an alternate assessment for measuring the competency of students seeking a special diploma.
- Requires the learning gains of exceptional students seeking a special diploma to be included in each school's school grade calculation by the 2009-2010 school year.
- Specifies that accommodations that are not allowed during administration of the FCAT may be used during classroom instruction if use of the accommodation is included in the student's IEP. However, students using instructional accommodations in the classroom that are not allowable as accommodations on the FCAT may have the

FCAT requirement waived pursuant to the requirements of s. 1003.428(8)(b) or s. 1003.43(11)(b) (i.e. the 10th grade FCAT requirement).

- Requires a Uniform Electronic Individualized Education Plan.
- Authorizes the Commissioner to develop additional assessments for general use in measuring the competency of exceptional students.
- Has an effective date of July 1, 2006

HIGHLIGHTS OF SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES WHICH HAVE FURTHERED THE WORK OF THE BIWG

Over the course of the last year, the BIWG member agencies/organizations have launched numerous program initiatives and studies which directly relate to and further the goals and objectives of the BIWG. This section highlights several of the key activities which are currently underway as a direct result of the vision of the BIWG. Subsequent semi-annual reports will reflect the outcomes of these initiatives.

Delmarva Transition Study Overview

The Blue Ribbon Implementation Work Group (BIWP) and National Governor's Association (NGA) have recently given a directive to the Agency for Persons With Disabilities (APD) to examine the nature of the transition process of persons with disabilities from high school to post secondary education and/or integrated work environments. Currently, Federal IDEA mandates the schools to conduct transition planning to enhance the transition of students to work or to higher education. To date, no work has been done by Delmarva to explore the implementation, utilization or benefit of the planning processes or programs that may be included within the transition process. In order to examine this, we propose a study to take place in two phases, over a two year period. The purpose of study is twofold:

1. In the first phase, to explore the degree to which individuals with developmental disabilities (DD), receiving services on the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS), Family and Supported Living (FSL) or CDC+ Medicaid Waivers, are fully participating in the school based transition programs. To the extent possible, the family knowledge of these programs and potential influence on the outcomes will also be explored.
2. In the second phase, to determine if participation in these programs improves an individual's opportunities to transition into integrated work or higher education.

Evidence Based Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning Pilot Project

Leon County Schools (LCS) in partnership with the Department of Education's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Office of Interagency Programs (OIP); and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) will implement an evidence-based pilot which utilizes the Transition Services Integration model in conjunction with Customized Employment and Discovery for career preparation and work-based learning.

This local demonstration of the Transition Services Integration Model in Florida will attempt to develop a seamless transition from school to adult life for 10 to 12 youth with disabilities who need continuing employment and community participation support. The project will take place in the Leon County School System. This new transition opportunity for students with developmental disabilities will be housed at Lively Technical Center beginning in the 2006/07 school year. It is expected that as new policies and approaches develop, the students will have real jobs in the community prior to graduation, spend non-work time in integrated environments with non-disabled peers, and, through collaborative funding, have the same job coaches and the same agency supporting these activities when they exit the public school system.

FYI Transition Website Project

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) is funding a project to develop a Florida specific web portal for youths with disabilities, their families, and service

providers on information about transition and employment. The purpose of this project is to educate youth, families, and service providers about transition issues, roles, responsibilities, services, and resources specific to the state of Florida. It is the intent of this project to address these issues through utilization of the internet to provide needed information for Florida student with disabilities and their families so that they may become aware of effective practices, learn about laws, policies, and issues, receive training and develop other needed skills to participate more meaningfully in the decisions and planning for exiting the public school system.

The website will consist of three information modules targeted to a specific transition stakeholder: students with disabilities, families and other interested individuals, and service providers. Each module will provide both information and links to transition resources that will include both state and national resources for the following content areas: Transition Planning, Transition Resources, Rights and Responsibilities, Assistive Technology, Transition and Cultural Diversity, Best Practices, Diploma Options, Person-Centered Planning, Community Resources, and Self-Determination. Content for each module will be written in appropriate language specific to the module audiences: Students, Families, and Service Providers.

Medicaid Infrastructure Grant

The latest development to occur within the Agency for Persons with Disabilities' (APD) Five-year Employment Initiative is the receipt of a federal Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) for the 2006 calendar year from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid under the Department of Health and Human Services. The overall goal of this grant complements the Agency's FFI initiative to improve the competitive employment opportunities for Floridians with disabilities in their communities.

The MIG initiative includes:

- Administrative Assistance with Enrollment and Implementation of FFI,
- Creation of Additional Business Leadership Networks,
- Transportation Forums – Specific Problems and Compilation of Suggested Resolutions,
- Study of Personal Care Assistance as Related to Employment Issues; and
- Analysis of Medicaid Buy-In Programs.
- Extensive Training in Supported Employment
- Technical Assistance

The Agency is working with Wilson Resources, Inc., The National Disability Institute, Vocational Rehabilitation, the Able Trust, TRN, Inc., the FDDC, AWI, among others in order to make employment of choice a reality for persons with disabilities in Florida.

The Florida Freedom Initiative

The Florida Freedom Initiative (FFI) has been designed to demonstrate that by removing real and perceived disincentives to earning income, participants can lead more self-determined and personally meaningful lives while needing less support from dwindling state and federal resources. The project is made possible through a \$500,000 Real Choice Systems Change grant from the Center for Medicaid Services (CMS) combined with special waivers from the Social Security Administration (SSA) and CMS. The Florida Freedom Initiative has been coined the "System of the Future" and is based on working from a Self-Determination paradigm to:

- Expand educational opportunities

- Promote homeownership
- Integrate people into the workforce
- Expand transportation options
- Promote full access to community life
- Increase access to assistive and universally designed technologies

Components of the program include:

- A Social Security Waiver that allows enrollees to not count the first \$280 of earned income (normally only \$65 is protected)
- Ability to use Medicaid dollars in unique ways that enhance an individual's ability to work
- Individual development bank accounts (IDAs), called Freedom Accounts, that permit earned income up to \$10,000 per year to be saved towards specified asset-development goals without negatively impacting eligibility for Medicaid and SSI benefits
- Enhanced support (including training opportunities) for employment and micro-enterprise development.

APD is also focusing on developing an infrastructure to ensure sustainability of the FFI once the federal project funds have been exhausted. CMS recently approved a project extension through September 30, 2007, and an additional six-month extension through March 2008 is possible.

Micro-Enterprise Training and Technical Assistance Project

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council recently entered into a second year partnership with the University of South Florida in order to provide training to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families on micro enterprise development. In 2005, approximately 160 people attended a total 14 educational workshops on micro enterprise throughout the state of Florida. Attendees learned the technical definition of micro-enterprises, the benefits of starting one and potential ways to finance them.

During the first year of the project individuals were supported to form a team, explore and determine their interests and develop a viable business plan around their interests and capacities. In addition to making general information about small business development available to the public, this project also provides one-on-one technical assistance in writing a business plan to a limited number of individuals with developmental disabilities.

Owning and operating a profitable business is a dream for any citizens. The micro enterprise project helps turn dreams into a reality by successfully guiding individuals with developmental disabilities through the process of what it takes to own operate and develop their own business. A series of similar workshops was provided in the spring.

Supported, Competitive, Integrated, Employment Training Team (SCIETT)

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council is completing its first year of the SCIETT contract with the University of South Florida. This is a five-year project to develop a statewide training team to deliver supported employment training and technical assistance to local level pilot sites in twenty Florida districts. Key to this project has been the development of a statewide training team consisting of recognized experts in the field of supported employment, individuals with disabilities, employers, rehabilitation agency representatives, family members, and other stakeholders. Over the course of

the five year project, the team will work together to provide the training and technical assistance aimed at removing the barriers which prevent youth with disabilities from fully realizing their employment goals and aspirations.

Year one of the project has focused on providing training to the pilot sites in the following subject areas and providing on-going technical assistance:

- ◆ Orientation to Supported Employment & Natural Supports
- ◆ Assessment & Career Planning, Working with Families and Organizational Change
- ◆ Benefits Planning & Social Security Work Incentives
- ◆ Marketing & Job Development
- ◆ On the Job Supports.

2006 Partners in Transition Summit

The Partners in Transition State Strategic Plan was developed as a cross-agency collaborative effort over the course of two years. A broad representation of state and local agencies, both private and public, as well as family members, self-advocates, and students participated in focused planning, which was aligned with national transition initiatives. The national initiative of particular focus was the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth's "National Guideposts for Success." The Summit was jointly funded by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Department of Education Bureau of Exceptional Student Education and Student Services, the Able Trust, and the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council.

The 2006 Summit hosted 25 leadership teams with the following objectives:

1. Build or enhance local level, cross disciplinary Leadership Teams for improving post school results for students with disabilities;
2. Develop goals and action steps for local implementation of the Statewide Strategic Plan; and
3. Identify technical assistance needs of Leadership Teams.

General sessions were conducted by national experts in the field of transition for youth with disabilities, and the local leadership teams had facilitated planning time to develop their local strategic plans. The content experts presented on the goals of the state strategic plan and other pertinent issues that were identified by teams in a pre-summit assessment. The goals of both the state and local plans are based on the following content areas:

1. Preparatory Experiences;
2. Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning;
3. Youth Development and Leadership;
4. Connecting Activities; and
5. Families of Youth with Disabilities.

At the completion of the 2006 PIT Summit, the leadership teams left with local level action plans based on the State Strategic Plan. Follow-up technical assistance is being provided to the teams through a contract with the University of South Florida which is funded by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council.

Partners in Transition Technical Assistance Project

As mentioned above, through a grant from the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, the University of South Florida is providing follow-up technical assistance to the 25 school districts that participated in the 2006 Partners in Transition Summit. In addition, USF is providing technical assistance to the district that participated in the 2005 PIT Summit for a total of 40+ school districts throughout the state.

Although many of the training and technical assistance needs are very specific to the district Leadership Teams, there are four areas that have been consistent across several of the teams and are addressed through group training and planning followed by individual team technical assistance. These areas are as follows:

1. Third-party cooperative agreements with DOE/Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to support transition related staff (Transition Specialists, Employment Specialists, etc.),
2. Facilitated planning to address transportation issues in rural counties,
3. Training and information on connecting activities/services, including who and what; and
4. Grant opportunities to address staffing and implementation of action plans.

This grant has offered the opportunity to provide the ongoing and frequent technical assistance required for the leadership teams to remain actively engaged in the initiative.

PROPOSED THREE TIERED DATA SYSTEM

One of the long-term recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Task Force is to develop a quality improvement strategy based on performance outcomes. In order to accomplish this goal, the BIWG requires a system for gathering and comparing program outcome data across agency and organizational lines. The BIWG has enlisted the help of the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) to design a three tiered data system for this purpose.

The BIWG along with FETPIP is establishing a sub-work group to design a logical framework within which to present data relative the transition system within Florida. The concept of the “tiers” is to provide an organizing framework for data so that it can be viewed, understood, and acted upon by managers at all levels.

BIWG will focus on three tiers for gathering and reporting performance data:

- Level I: Governor/Legislature
- Level II: Senior Management
- Level III: Program Managers/Specialists

The same organization of the data will be maintained throughout the tiers, but the detail and granularity will increase through the levels from the top down in order to provide data users the necessary information to manage programs and make adjustments based on the performance data.

The BIWG has accepted the following Guiding Principles (as defined by FETPIP) around which the data measurement will be based:

1. Performance Measures Must Focus on Consumer Success;
2. Performance Measures Must be Actionable (i.e. the BIWG and member agencies/organizations must be able to take action based on the information derived from each measure);
3. Measures Must be Efficient and of High Quality;
4. Data Must be Measurable Over Time (i.e. users of the data must be able to see success building upon success);
5. Performance Measures Must be Simple (i.e. users of the data must be able to discern what the measures mean); and
6. Performance Measures Must be Aligned (i.e. between organization and programs).

The data work group will begin meeting in July 2006, and all BIWG member agencies/organizations will have representation on the work group. FETPIP will assist the work group in the development of performance measures that capture the essence of transition services in the state, are comprehensive in nature, and meet the guiding principles as outlined above.

The data system will allow the BIWG to provide performance information, relative to the transition system and each process and partner, in order for all aspects of the system to be improved. Ultimately, it is the goal of the BRTF and the BIWG to integrate data systems across member agencies and organizations. The three-tiered data system is a first step toward accomplishing this goal.

APPENDIX I
FLORIDA'S BLUE RIBBON IMPLEMENTATION WORKING GROUP ON INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITY LIVING, TRANSITION, & EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
STATEMENT OF VALUES POLICY AND PRINCIPLES

The State of Florida shall design, implement, and evaluate systems, programs, projects, and activities in accordance with the principles and policies described below. These principles and policies are consistent with Federal law, including the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Developmental Disabilities Assistance, Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, No Child Left Behind, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Bill of Rights Act.

1. Disability is a natural part of the human experience that does not diminish the right of people with developmental disabilities to live independently, to work in competitive, integrated settings, to exert control and choice over their own lives, and to fully participate in and contribute to their communities through full integration and inclusion in the economic, political, social, recreational, cultural, and educational mainstream of society.
2. The outcomes of the State of Florida shall include providing people with developmental disabilities with equality of opportunity and the information, skills, and support to:
 - Make informed choices and decisions about their lives;
 - Live in homes and communities in which such people can exercise their full rights and responsibilities as citizens;
 - Pursue meaningful and productive lives, including employment in integrated, competitive settings;
 - Contribute to their families, communities, the state, and the nation;
 - Enjoy interdependent friendships and relationships with other persons;
 - Receive supports and services that are based on personally determined goals, outcomes, and choice of providers;
 - Live free of abuse, neglect, financial and sexual exploitation, and violations of their legal and human rights; and
 - Achieve full integration and inclusion in society, in an individualized manner, consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and capabilities of each individual.
 - Promote accessibility to health care services, including services for physical, oral, emotional, and behavioral health.

3. The State of Florida shall recognize in its policy framework that people with developmental disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, are capable of self-determination, independence, employment in competitive, integrated settings, community service and volunteerism, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life, but often require the provision of community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance to achieve this capability.
4. People with developmental disabilities and their families have competencies, capabilities, and personal goals that shall be recognized, supported, and encouraged. Assistance shall be provided in an individualized manner, consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and capabilities.
5. People with developmental disabilities and/or their families are actively involved and serve as the primary decision makers regarding the services and supports they receive, including informed choices about inclusive community living. In addition they shall participate in making decisions about policies and programs that affect the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families.
6. Services, supports, and other assistance shall be provided in a manner that demonstrates respect for individual dignity, personal preferences, and cultural differences.
7. Specific efforts shall be made to ensure that people with developmental disabilities from religious and racial and ethnic minority backgrounds and their families enjoy increased and meaningful opportunities to access and use community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance available to other people with developmental disabilities and their families provided in a culturally competent fashion.
8. Efforts undertaken to maintain or expand community-based living options for people with developmental disabilities shall be effectively and efficiently monitored in order to determine and report, to all stakeholders, the outcomes including the extent of access and availability for people with developmental disabilities. Providers of community living supports will be effectively and efficiently monitored to ensure compliance with quality assurance standards.
9. All providers of community-based supports and services shall provide quality outcomes for the people served and stakeholders. The collection, sharing and analysis of information on the provider's performance to meet the needs of the people served and the implementation of collective action to improve services are essential to an effective quality management system. Onsite performance reviews will be conducted on a regular basis.
10. All providers of community-based supports and services shall deliver services in a manner that promotes universal access for all persons. The provider of supports and services will address the removal of all identified barriers that include architectural, environmental, communication, attitudinal, employment, transportation and all other barriers identified by the persons served.

11. Federal, state and local agencies and programs must work collaboratively to identify and align resources and eliminate all barriers that stand in the way of:

- Expanding and improving inclusive community living options for people with developmental disabilities;
- Coordinating the provision of transition services statewide for students with developmental disabilities as they prepare to leave school and access post-school outcomes, including employment, post-secondary education, vocational training, programs, and inclusive, meaningful adult community services;
- Expanding and improving competitive, integrated employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities; and
- Expanding and facilitating market and private sector solutions and inclusive options for the workforce.

**APPENDIX II
 FLORIDA'S BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE ON INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY LIVING,
 TRANSITION, & EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL
 DISABILITIES
 FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Short Term Recommendations (1 year)
1) Most Critical
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designate the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) to establish, facilitate, and coordinate a BRTF Implementation Working Group (BIWG), which will include participation from agency heads or their designated senior staff who can make policy and/or budget decisions and recommendations and their staff needed to support planning and implementation. This working group should include, but not be limited to, the Department of Education (DOE), Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), Department of Education Vocational Rehabilitation (DOE-VR), Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA), Department of Health – Children’s Medical Services (DOH-CMS), Department of Children and Families (DCF), Workforce Florida, Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, and the Florida Housing Finance Corporation. The BIWG should meet at least quarterly to oversee, direct and coordinate the implementation of the BRFT recommendations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request the Agency/Department heads of the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council BIWG report the progress of implementation of recommendations in this report every six months to the Governor and annually to the Legislature with the first report due July 15, 2005.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a Florida-based website with information that empowers people with developmental disabilities, and their families, to make informed decisions, and increase their full participation and inclusion in home, school work, and the community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a process for ensuring that families are informed about the long-term impact of their decisions (e.g. FCAT, diploma options, course selection, and guardianship options) on their child's access to school, post-secondary programs and employment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involve families of transition age students, and the communities, in which they live so that opportunities for employment, based on a person’s interests and capabilities, can be identified early and the school system can work to help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All IEPs must consistently include evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Knowledge and understanding by the student and/or his/her legal guardian of what he/she is entitled to under the IDEA and ADA including assistive technology and transportation ➤ A statement of interagency responsibilities that should be, and that are, operative before a student exits school. ➤ Services provided by non-educational agencies. ➤ An outcome-oriented process that includes, but is not limited to, if and how the student will be involved in post-secondary education, career training, continued career development, integrated employment, supported employment and/or adult education at the point of exit from high school. ➤ Individualized and meaningful vocational evaluations having been conducted. ➤ Meaningful experiences leading to post-school community participation and the realization of individualized employment, independent living and

<p>other post school objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Acquisition and utilization of transportation options.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Examine the possibility of allocating a portion of the Federal Workforce system funds including the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) state set aside (\$20 million for FY 03-04) for competitive, integrated employment, including self-employment and training to benefit people with developmental disabilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Endorse the APD five-year initiative to enable 25% of people currently in segregated day programs to access and maintain employment as part of the performance measure to achieve employment of 50% of all people receiving day services to attain employment by 2009.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement procedures to identify employment aspirations of people with developmental disabilities (including employed, unemployed, and underemployed) and develop an implementation plan to reach their goals in a timely manner.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and implement individual transition plans for people in segregated settings based upon their employment aspirations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage local Public Housing Authority's (PHAs), to: (a) Include in their local plans a percentage of Section 8 vouchers for people with developmental disabilities, (b) Continue to fund those vouchers currently used for people with developmental disabilities in the future, and (c) To include in their plans the option of Section 8 for homeownership.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create new housing non-profits or establish partnerships with existing nonprofit housing organizations so that at least one non-profit organization exists in each county that provides affordable housing options for Individuals with developmental disabilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educate and inform all stakeholders regarding available housing resources and options in Florida including: How to blend and braid various options to maximize community living. How to increase the amount of affordable housing funds that are dedicated to assisting people with developmental disabilities.
<p>Short Term Recommendations (1 year)</p>
<p>2) Essential</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage agency heads to incorporate BRTF recommendations into each agency's long-range program plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop practical solutions to barriers in the creation and support of individual development accounts and self-directed accounts that allow the braiding of funds and embrace asset-building goals such as: Participating in the FDDC asset-building summit, Clarifying conflicting interpretations of current regulations, Recommending new policies or regulatory language, and Requesting federal waiver and/or interpretation of proposed policy or practice changes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aggressively involve financial institutions and other private sector stakeholders to develop strategies to invest financial resources in IDAs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide user-friendly, accessible information to people with disabilities and their families regarding employment, self-employment and the creation of personal wealth.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure through oversight and monitoring that providers are using person-centered, self-determination approaches to achieve individual employment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council's Business Leadership Network (BLN) initiative to a statewide project including the involvement of the Able Trust as a funding partner.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include the achievement of employment goals/outcomes in the performance evaluation of agency heads.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that individual employment outcomes are achieved through person-

centered self-directed service approaches.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Direct APD employees to refer individuals on the waiting list who want employment and do not need long-term services to alternative, generic employment resources such as One-Stop Career Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a system for ensuring that students and their families and educators are informed about the acquisition, utilization and ongoing upgrades of assistive technology.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a Governor's initiative to establish public/private partnerships (grocery companies, medical groups/sites, Business Leadership Networks, private foundations) that will enhance employment, transportation, housing and other support systems needed by people with developmental disabilities to live in their community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the Agency for Persons with Disabilities quality management grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, entitled "Consumer Approach to Quality Management."
Short Term Recommendations (1 year)
3) Important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish standards for people-centered planning that will be implemented by employment providers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Require annual reports and presentations to the Governor and legislators regarding employment outcomes for people with disabilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council's statewide inclusion alliance and public awareness campaign.
Mid Term (2-3 years)
1) Most Critical
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State agencies must enable and empower people with developmental disabilities to: a) Pursue economic self-sufficiency, as well as meaningful and productive lives, particularly work in competitive, integrated settings; b) Live in inclusive environments in the community; c) Receive services and supports that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ••Consumer-driven and directed, with strong involvement of family and others, when requested by the person with a disability, ••Based on individual needs, informed choice, and personally determined goals, outcomes, and choice of providers, and ••Consistent with each person's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and capabilities; and d) Live free of abuse, neglect, financial and sexual exploitation, as well as violations of human, legal and civil rights.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State agencies must work collaboratively to identify and align policies, practices, and resources that: a) Facilitate the provision of comprehensive, person-centered services and supports, and b) Eliminate barriers that impede inclusive community living options, competitive, integrated employment, and smooth transition among and between programs and systems.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An individual profile of all people with developmental disabilities receiving and requesting services including information on transition services, employment, housing, and health care.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Person-specific information used to monitor outcomes and drive quality improvement for people with developmental disabilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transition outcome measures, which incorporate the research-based Transition Guideposts for Success articulated in the partners in Transition Florida Strategic Plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A statewide assessment system which measures year-to-year progress, that is,

<p>whether every student is learning; and their progress is included in school grades.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An incentive system, which rewards schools for students achieving integrated, competitive employment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing Florida Department of Education (DOE) data collection system (warehouse) is enhanced so that performance information, relative to the transition system, can be provided to each process and partner in order for all aspects of the system to be improved.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement a method to provide appropriate, individualized employment training and services (including transportation services) beginning at an early age (middle school) as a method to develop and refine employability and technical skills ultimately resulting in integrated, competitive work for students.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop alternative approaches to funding practices and formulas, which would ensure choice for families and funding which follows the student, (e.g., expand use of McKay Scholarships to include community rehabilitation providers and other creative approaches).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise special diploma competencies and course requirements making all graduation options meaningful which, for example, include; Employment-related competencies and experiences, and Futures financial planning coursework.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make necessary statutory, regulatory and/or policy changes at the state level to ensure that assistive technology follows the student (e.g., from school to home, school to school and school to post-school).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create strategies for teachers to become educated and/or certified in “transition”.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A coordinated set of school to post-school transition services, activities and outcomes as envisioned in the Partners in Transition Florida Strategic Plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Require APD and Florida Workforce Development system to develop strategies together to employ people with developmental disabilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create strategies to assist providers in the conversion / transition from segregated services to community employment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruit providers who demonstrate BRTF values and principles to meet the demands of people seeking competitive employment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish cross-agency performance management and quality improvement strategies that define accountability.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amend Chapter 393, F.S., to make employment the primary service objective for people with disabilities. If people of working age do not have an employment goal on their support plan, other day services can only be received by exception or prior approval process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek federal approval to expand the Florida Freedom Initiative that is currently approved on a pilot basis statewide for 1,500 people with developmental disabilities to all Individuals enrolled on any waiver programs, if the pilot proves successful.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Require peer support and circle of support opportunities for each person with developmental disabilities to be included in support plans and individual education plans to facilitate ongoing and meaningful relationships, natural supports and community membership.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with the Florida Housing Finance corporation (FHFC) to amend its housing development applications in a manner that will optimize resources dedicated to providing affordable and accessible community-based housing for people with developmental disabilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand school systems’ life skill curriculum and transition planning to include all housing options, housing market options, and financial planning for each of those options.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand the existing role of community colleges and other inclusive educational institutions to provide outreach to and lifelong educational opportunities for people with developmental disabilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish public/private partnerships, including universities, community colleges, and vocational/technical schools, to expand the availability of training resources to all providers in order to promote best practices and quality outcomes, including but not limited to competency-based curriculums.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify potential resources to provide technical assistance to other providers specifically to assist in transitioning from adult day training to employment services and from group living arrangements to supported living models.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider incorporating 2003 Legislative proviso language in Chapter 393, F.S., directing the AHCA in collaboration with the APD to expand the consumer-directed option to all Individuals who are currently enrolled in the Developmental Services' Home and Community-Based Services Waiver and the Family ad Supported Living Waiver.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a two year Governor's initiative to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Establish a statewide inclusive community living education and resource program through a university or other educational institution. This resource would provide ongoing education, training and assistance for people with disabilities and their families about community living opportunities (including such topics as asset-building, self-determination, employment, housing options, social security benefits, work incentives, etc); and ➢ Obtain resources to establish an inclusive community living education and training network available to people with disabilities and their families by blending state agency resources, grant funding, and private banks and corporate contributions. State agencies' participants include representatives from Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Blind Services, Department of Education (especially community colleges), and the Association for Individuals in Supported Employment (APSE), etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Require all state agencies providing services to people with disabilities to adopt regulations and polices that encompass self-determination principles, as well as a plan to add training and technical assistance for provider personnel.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess the feasibility of expanding the requirement of statewide universal design codes to all state/federally-funded multi-family (3 units or less) and single-family housing for people with developmental disabilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish interagency agreements to assure full implementation of recommendations in community living with clear goals, targets and performance measures for each agency.
<p>Mid Term (2-3 years)</p>
<p>2) Essential</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement a simple, streamlined, web-based application for eligibility and for referral to all possible services and programs in Florida.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An evaluation of services received in terms of accessibility and appropriateness, as well as efficiency and cost-effectiveness;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop new and enhance existing instructional programs which support professional and industry standards and create opportunities for youth to demonstrate self-determination, social interaction, and skills necessary to achieve and maintain physical and emotional health.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a system for qualifying new and existing personnel responsible for

<p>providing employment-related services and supports, including on-the-job training, supported employment and other approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand the Florida Freedom Initiative, contingent on demonstration of effectiveness to promote employment and home ownership for people with developmental disabilities. ▪ Eliminate state-imposed work disincentives. An example includes people with disabilities not being declared a “minority” for minority business purchase priority. ▪ Create asset developmental strategies (individual development accounts).
<p>Mid Term (2-3 years)</p>
<p>3) Important</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish on-going funding for training and certification of providers in the employment field. Develop and implement a competency-based curriculum for certification and on-going training of employment personnel. ▪ Adopt and implement a uniform set of quality indicators for employment outcomes that are consistent with leading-edge policy and practice nationwide.
<p>Long Term (3-5 years)</p>
<p>1) Most Critical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider options as part of Florida’s Medicaid modernization that significantly reduce or eliminate disincentives associated with income from employment and other asset-building activities, which may affect eligibility for Medicaid. ▪ Expand transportation opportunities for people to gain timely, responsive and affordable rides to workplaces, including evenings and weekends. ▪ Increase and maximize funding to expand the number of people who can receive services under the Developmental Services Home and Community-Based Services Waiver, Consumer Directed Care Plus Waiver, and/or the Family and Supported Living Waiver.
<p>Long Term (3-5 years)</p>
<p>2) Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider implementing the “Interim Report on Best Practices for the Employment of People with Disabilities in State Government, October 29, 2004.” As a result state agencies can serve as model employers to the business community for the hiring of people with disabilities.
<p>Long Term (3-5 years)</p>
<p>3) Important</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand employment options by simplifying the procurement process and vendor qualifications. ▪ Create tax credits that encourage the hiring of people with disabilities and assist in real costs that may be necessary for employing some people with disabilities. ▪ Provider preferences in the state procurement process to businesses that employ people with disabilities, especially people with significant disabilities. ▪ Integrate data systems across agencies. ▪ Develop a quality improvement strategy based on performance outcomes.

APPENDIX III
FLORIDA'S BLUE RIBBON IMPLEMENTATION WORK GROUP ON INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITY LIVING, TRANSITION, & EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS' PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Agency for Health Care Administration:

- Waiver services are as flexible as possible to attain employment and post-secondary education.
 - Waivers are amended to include transportation vouchers.
 - Waivers are amended to allow employers to be supported employment providers.

Workforce Investment Board/Workforce

- 1,000- paid internships or part time employment for students ages 14-18.
- Career academics established with district partners for students ages 14 -18

Protection & Advocacy:

- Increase by 15%, legal information provided, legal issues resolved and legal rights protected relating to employment and education (working with all key agencies and other stakeholders).

The Able Trust Measures of Success:

- Continue to annually host a leadership training conference for 50 high school students with disabilities, ages 16-19, to provide them with information and resources about careers, academics, self-advocacy, personal leadership development, independent living, community resources, recreation and social experiences.
- Continue to connect YLF participants with adult mentors with disabilities to share discussions about career goals/expectations.
- Continue to connect YLF participants with other youth with disabilities to enable them to share similar experiences, challenges, social opportunities to help boost self-esteem.
- Continue to annually host Disability Mentoring Day (DMD), an on-site job shadowing experience with a business mentor for students and job seekers with disabilities across the state.
- Continue to provide resource and information to DMD community liaisons who are responsible for organizing mentor/mentee matches in the local communities.
- Continue to bring visibility to disability employment issues by promoting DMD throughout the state.
- Continue to sponsor and manage extensive disability hiring resources for employments through the Florida Business Leadership Network through print and web-based materials, a Speaker's Bureau and in-person meetings.
- Continue to utilize the 950+ statewide membership network to promote youth-related transition programs of The Able Trust (YLF, HSHT, DMD).
- Continue to connect local chapter BLN leaders/members with High School/ High Tech project directors and DMD community liaisons to increase participation in these transition activities.
- Continue to provide funding for 20 High School /High Tech sites across Florida providing students with disabilities with identifying high tech careers, successful

futures, and drop-out prevention through community partnerships, employment awareness, workplace shadowing, and summer internship/employment experience.

- The Able Trust Grant program will continue to fund pilot employment programs and expansion of existing employment programs for community based organizations (CBO) to assist individuals gain employment including ADT-to-community-based employment, supported employment and other innovative programs designed by CBO's, to meet their local needs.

Agency for Persons with Disabilities:

- Increase # of work related opportunities (internships).
- Increase # of students with developmental disabilities obtaining and maintaining integrated competitive employment (part-time jobs).
- Increased # (25% of APD clients) of individuals with developmental disabilities transitioning to post-secondary education.
- Decrease # of individuals participating/transitioning to segregated work settings.

Advocacy Center:

- Increased by 15%, legal information provided, legal issues resolved and legal rights protected relating to employment and education (working with all key agencies and other stakeholders).

Department of Children & Families:

- Children and adults with or at risk of substance abuse and for mental illness live, work, learn and participate fully in their community.

Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education & Student Services:

- Pre-vocational/community based instructional opportunities are increased by 2.5% in each of the school districts for students ages 14-18.
- Graduation rate and ultimately post secondary outcomes are increased by 5% for students ages 18-22.
- Participation and completion in adult education programs for individuals with disabilities are increased by 10% per district ages 23-30.

Department of Juvenile Justice:

- Youth will have integrated education and treatment plans in partnership with academic, career and technical education partners with support from mental health and substance abuse providers.
- Juvenile Justice involved youth, their educators and service providers will have exposure to adult education, GED preparation, post-secondary education, career and technical education and independent living resources and opportunities.

Vocational Rehabilitation:

- Increase # of students at age 16 and 17 on VR caseload by 30% over two years.
- Increase work experience of students at age 16-18 by 30% over two years.
- Increase successful competitive, integrated employment outcomes of students at age 18-22 by 10%.
- Increase # of VR cases with an IPE that include post-secondary education of students at age 18-22 by 10%.

- Improve successful competitive successful competitive integrated employment outcomes of people with disabilities age 23-30 by 10% (2 years).

Children’s Medical Services:

- Ensure all Children’s Medical Services enrollees receive health care and other transition related information.
- Facilitate Department of Health/ Children’s Medical Services contracts that support Adolescent and Young Adult Clinic Programs.
- Facilitate the statewide development of health care transition programs for youth and young adults with special health care needs.
- Identify private and public funded health insurance resources for transitioning referral resources for youth and young adults with special health care needs.
- Identify and maintain statewide healthcare transition referral resources for youth and young adults with and without health care coverage.
- Assist post-secondary and vocational programs to incorporate health care benefits education to promote comprehensive competitive employment for youth and young adults with special health care needs and disabilities.

All Agencies

- Legislation will be adopted that supports cross agency accountability transition, employment and post secondary education (ages 14-21).
- All stakeholders will receive cross training with ongoing technical assistance relative to how the pieces of transition work together.