

*July 14, 2004*

***Florida's Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) on Inclusive Community Living, Transition, & Employment of Persons with Developmental Disabilities***

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Florida's Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) on Inclusive Community Living, Lifelong Transition, and Employment of Persons with Developmental Disabilities is to propose strategies (including policies, practices, and procedures) to state policy makers (executive and legislative branches) designed to expand and improve competitive, integrated employment, transition services, and community living opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities through the provision of consumer-directed services and supports and enhanced community participation.

The population of persons with developmental disabilities targeted by the BRTF includes but is not limited to persons with developmental disabilities currently:

- Receiving services and supports in integrated settings that are not consumer-directed;
- Receiving services and supports in unnecessarily isolated or segregated settings;
- On waiting lists for services;
- In the community;
- Attending all schools; and/or
- Transitioning from school to work.

The BRTF will carry out its mission consistent with the following statement of policy and principle.

**STATEMENT OF POLICY AND PRINCIPLE**

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 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 individuals 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 individuals 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 individuals 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.

(3) The State of Florida shall recognize in its policy framework that individuals 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) Individuals with developmental disabilities and their families have competencies, capabilities, and personal goals that shall be recognized, supported, and encouraged, and any assistance to such individuals shall be provided in an individualized manner, consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and capabilities of such individuals.

(5) Individuals 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 individuals 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 individuals 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 individuals with developmental disabilities and their families provided in a culturally competent fashion.

(8) Efforts undertaken to maintain or expand community-based living options for individuals 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 individuals 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 persons served and their respective stakeholders. The collection, sharing and analysis of information on the provider's performance to meet the needs of the persons served and the implementation of collective action to improve services are essential to an effective quality management system. On site 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 individuals 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, postsecondary education, vocational training, programs, and inclusive, meaningful adult community services; and
- Expanding and improving competitive, integrated employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Expanding and facilitating market and private sector solutions and inclusive options for the workforce.