



Project Number

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Florida Department of Transportation Research Assessment of 5310 Program Utilization and Development of Strategies to Optimize Mobility Services for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

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Current Situation

Over seven million Floridians fall into at least one category that defines “transportation disadvantaged”: people with disabilities, people living in poverty, or those over 65 years of age. These individuals often have difficulty finding adequate transportation to meet daily needs. The federal Section 5310 Program aims to improve mobility for a segment of the transportation disadvantaged population. The program serves seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation service and expanding transportation mobility options. The 5310 Program provides federal funds to nonprofit agencies and public entities to support demand response transportation services for seniors and persons with disabilities. Funding under the 5310 Program might include capital to purchase vehicles, operating costs for transportation to life sustaining activities, including but not limited to healthcare, food, and recreation activities. The funds are intended to further reduce barriers in transportation services based on locally identified needs in an environment of increasing demand and increasing cost for transportation services.



Traditional services like paratransit can be being enhanced with innovations to improve transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities.

Research Objectives

University of South Florida researchers examined demographic conditions and transportation services in Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District 1 to document the demand for transit services, services for seniors and persons with disabilities, and new opportunities. Best practices were compiled from current services and a national review of innovative solutions.

Project Activities

FDOT District 1 includes twelve southwest Florida counties: Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Manatee, Okeechobee, Polk, and Sarasota. The researchers began with a survey of the district and each county, including relevant demographics and community features. District 1’s population of 2.8 million is very diverse socioeconomically; the counties range in population from under 15,000 (Glades) to over 700,000 (Polk).

In a series of case studies, the researchers examined how providers are addressing increased demand and costs with innovative practices such as volunteer driver initiatives, demand-response services, and travel and technology training for seniors. The types of partnerships that made services possible were also documented. The researchers emphasized a repeated message found in their study: the need to identify clear goals and objectives to provide a sound basis for planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of services.

The reviewers describe opportunities for providers to learn more about available funds, potential partners, the application process, and the grant evaluation process through workshops held at the FDOT district level throughout Florida. Final recommendations are given to promote adoption of best practices and further facilitate innovative solutions and application for 5310 Program funds.

Project Benefits

This project provides both inspiration and practical guidance to improve services for transportation disadvantaged seniors and persons with disabilities.

For more information, please see www.fdot.gov/research/.