



**STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE**

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 20, 2008

TO: All DJJ State or Provider Operated Detention, Probation and Residential Programs

FROM: Darryl Olson, Assistant Secretary for Residential Services
Rex Uberman, Asst. Secretary Probation and Community Intervention
Julia Strange, Acting Assistant Secretary for Detention Services

SUBJECT: New transportation protocol for youth released from commitment

Attached please find the new transportation protocol for youth being released from residential commitment programs. These procedures will go into effect on December 15, 2008.

Each program area will keep data for an initial 90-day period to determine the impact this proposal had in each area. After that period, a workgroup will reconvene to review the data and make any corrections or changes that need to be made to the protocol.

Please work cooperatively with each other as we initiate this new process. Try to resolve issues by talking to each other and if a problem is identified, write it down and email it to headquarters. The program area contact's are:

Detention: Wanda Harper
Probation: Colleene Scott
Residential: Joan Wimmer

Once again, thanks for your cooperation as we initiate this new process!

DO/jw

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Charlie Crist, Governor

Frank Peterman, Jr., Secretary

The mission of the Department of Juvenile Justice is to increase public safety by reducing juvenile delinquency through effective prevention, intervention, and treatment services that strengthen families and turn around the lives of troubled youth.

Protocol for Youth Who Need Transportation Home From Commitment

A workgroup comprised of provider representatives, DJJ regional staff and DJJ headquarters personnel met over the last 30 days. This group recommends the following to resolve the transportation problem that arises when a parent is unable to pick up a youth upon completion of their commitment program.

Guiding Principles:

- 1) Every effort will be made for a released youth to be transported home by means other than secure transportation.
- 2) Programs will make every effort to accommodate release dates and times that are convenient for the family (guardians).
- 3) We, as an agency, have a responsibility to the youth we serve and ensuring that they arrive home safely.

Outstanding Issues:

- 1) Young mothers and their babies present a unique challenge. The committee requests that the Department sets as a priority for FJJF the raising of funds to purchase airline tickets for those mothers and infants returning over 300 miles home, whose parents are unable to provide transportation. These young mothers and their child, could then return home unescorted using common carrier (airlines).
- 2) Many youth transported on the ITN are foster children. We must engage DCF in this process. Even if we accept that secure transportation is the only option for these youth, we still need to make sure that a foster care worker or foster parent is present at the receiving detention center to pick up that child. Frequently youth sit for extended periods of time, unsupervised, while attempts are made to locate an appropriate person to come take responsibility.
- 3) JPO's who need a vehicle to provide transportation must be able to access available and appropriate vehicles. The expense and budget issues associated with this need to be clearly defined.
- 4) A determination needs to be made regarding the appropriateness of using volunteers, if available, to provide this transportation.

The Plan:

All attempts will be made to place youth within 300 miles of their home. If a decision is made to place a youth over 300 miles from home or a specialized placement is required and not available within 300 miles, prior approval must be obtained from the "sending" Residential Regional Director.

****Only for youth whose family or guardian cannot provide transport.**

- 1) Commitment programs will transport youth home if their residence is within 75 miles of the program. Once youth have completed a secure program, they should no longer be transported securely.
- 2) If the youth's residence is between 75-300 miles from the commitment program the youth's return is the joint responsibility of the commitment program and the JPO/Contracted Case Manager. An absolute mileage responsibility is not being identified, however, programs need to be flexible and base their "meeting point" on the fact that JPO needs to be able to complete the round trip and the home drop-off within an eight-hour workday.
- 3) If the youth's residence is over 300 miles from the commitment program, the youth's JPO Contracted Case Manager will register the youth with the ITN for transport. This option is not available for young mothers and infants.
- 4) If the plan for the parent to transport fails at the last minute, the steps identified in 1 and 2 must be followed. If there is clear documentation either in case-notes or email correspondence, that attempts to follow this plan have been made, but are unsuccessful, the ITN will provide transport.

****If the plan for the parent to transport fails because of financial resources, the Faith Network is offering last resort assistance. The JPO/Contracted Case Manager is to contact the Faith Network Coordinator who is coordinating gas cards and car rental vouchers for families who are willing but just not able to pick up their child.**