



**STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE**

**INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

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**DATE:** October 12, 2008  
**TO:** State Operated and Contracted Residential Program Providers  
**FROM:** Darryl Olson, Assistant Secretary for Residential Services  
**SUBJECT:** Transportation Guidelines

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A workgroup chaired by Joan Wimmer from DJJ Headquarters was convened to establish guidelines for transporting youth home from a residential commitment facility when their parent or guardian is unable or unwilling to do so. Workgroup members included Jeff Kaplan, Peter Plant, Sean Golder, Melissa McBride, Barbara Manakas, Wanda Harper, Colleene Scott, Greg Chinault, Marcus Smith, Moses Bennett and Lytha Belrose. These individuals represented our contracted residential providers as well as all areas of DJJ operation and the Florida Juvenile Justice Foundation.

Attached you will find a draft proposal from the workgroup. The plan provides a safe way for youth to return home through shared responsibility. Providing safe and cost effective transportation for youth returning home from their residential program will require a collaborative effort.

Please review this proposal and provide any comments you may have to Joan Wimmer by C.O.B. on Friday, October 17, 2008. The workgroup will be particularly interested in knowing about any best practices that have already been established in a collaborative effort among our various program entities. That said, I expect the final document to provide technical assistance as well as general guidelines for effectively addressing the transportation issue.

After reviewing your comments and making any necessary changes in the draft document, the guidelines will be implemented for a ninety (90) day period followed by an assessment of the impact on all areas of operation. Revisions will then be made as necessary before incorporating the final guidelines into policy or rule.

I sincerely appreciate the time and effort of our workgroup members in addressing this important issue.

Please email your comments to Ms. Wimmer at [joan.wimmer@djj.state.fl.us](mailto:joan.wimmer@djj.state.fl.us).

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**Charlie Crist, Governor**

**Frank Peterman, Jr., Secretary**

## Proposal

### Guidelines For Transporting Youth Home From Residential Facilities

A workgroup including representatives from contracted residential program providers, DJJ headquarters and regional staff convened to establish guidelines for resolving the problem that is created when a parent or guardian is unable to transport their child home from a residential commitment facility.

#### *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 establish release dates and times that are convenient for the parent or guardian.
- 3) As an agency, we are responsible for ensuring that youth return home safely from a residential facility
- 4) Every effort must be made by the Department to place youth as close to their home community as possible without compromising the services they need.

#### *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. These young mothers and their child, could then return home unescorted using common carrier (airlines).
- 2) Most 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 the child. Frequently youth sit for extended periods of time, unsupervised, while attempts are made to locate an appropriate person to come take responsibility.
- 3) Juvenile Probation Officers who assist in providing 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 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" 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. Youth who have completed a secure program should not 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 has not been identified. However, programs must be flexible and base their "meeting point" on the fact that JPOs must be able to complete the round trip 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, steps identified in 1 and 2 must be followed. If there is clear documentation that attempts to follow this plan have been made, but are unsuccessful, the ITN will 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.**