



SOCIAL SERVICES APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
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DSPD TRANSPORTATION SERVICE STUDY

ISSUE BRIEF

SUMMARY

The Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD), as part of its community services, provides reimbursement to community providers for transportation. The transportation needs of a person using DSPD's services are different than those of a typical Utah citizen "due to mobility, medical, and behavior needs." "Utah[']s . . . citizens with disabilities benefit from mobility in their community through employment opportunities, preventative services, supportive relationships, shopping, exercise and recreat[ion], religious services, volunteer work, and a simple change to static daily environments." The division views transportation as a "mission-critical component to a majority of services offered . . . around the community." During the 2014 General Session Legislative intent language was approved requesting a report [<http://le.utah.gov/interim/2014/pdf/00005239.pdf>] on current DSPD transportation funding and expenditures, current and historical transportation rates, comparisons with other similar rates paid in other agencies, and a review of options for improvement. The study points out that the "diminishing availability of transportation is a concern for disability stakeholders and policy makers. According to the 2012 'United We Ride Transportation Report', inadequate transportation reimbursement may indirectly force a higher cost to other beneficial Waivered services . . . When planned services are not met, people stay home instead of going to work, which leads to a reliance on costly alternative services." The report also points out that "urban and rural demands complicate transportation solutions." The report does suggest that the "accurate capture and reflection of transportation services is difficult due to a wide variance" of elements involved with each individual's transportation needs such as the need by some individuals to be assisted by mobility aids, trained medical or behavior support staff, and the necessity of increased load and unload times for some individuals. The report poses four policy questions for Legislators.

Questions

There are four main policy questions related to the study of DSPD Transportation Services:

1. Does the Legislature want to increase ongoing funding for FY 2016 DSPD transportation services?

- If the Legislature wants to increase ongoing funding for transportation services, what basis would it like to use to increase rates?
- Rates could be increased based upon:
 - estimates on cost
 - a Legislatively appointed rate study
 - examples from other states
 - increases (decreases) in measures such as the Consumer price index (CPI)
 - distinctions or enhancements based upon rural and urban locations

2. Does the Legislature want to direct the Department of Human Services to develop a new rate methodology or update its current methodology?

- Developing a new rate methodology or updating current methodology does not automatically lead to increased rates. Rates are typically only raised when the Legislature provides additional funding. A new rate study or updated information would have the effect

of adding background information regarding current costs associated with transporting individuals with disabilities.

3. Does the Legislature want to consider a pilot program regarding transportation services for individuals with disabilities?

- For example, the study suggests the possible creation of a private/public partnership to provide 'one-call centers' to direct transportation services from a pool.

4. Does the Legislature want to maintain its current system and methodology?

- The current system relies on the Legislature prioritizing funding requests among competing interests and providing either ongoing or one-time rate adjustments to specified rate categories.