

# **DDPC Transportation and Employment**

The Transportation and Employment initiative was designed to improve access to transportation, increase the knowledge and awareness of transportation options, and provide the supports and coordination between transportation providers and community based organizations. A major project goal was to link people's access to employers, the community, local One Stop Employment Centers and other essential services and supports. Through a competitive Request For Proposal (RFP), the DDPC funded three very diverse approaches to coordination transportation and employment for people with developmental and other disabilities.

## **Franklin County Public Transportation**

To open up job opportunities for those without other means of transportation, Franklin County Public Transportation created the new Adirondack Route in June 2008. The new route carries passengers to jobs and other destinations between Malone, Lake Placid, Paul Smith and Tupper Lake. What was intended as one shift has grown by necessity and demand to accommodate three work shifts. A new Saranac Lake on-demand bus service is planned, and they are coordinating activities with Essex County Transportation to link additional routes to existing shuttles and regions north. Seven new accessible public buses have been added to the fleet to meet this goal, ridership has increased from 6,000 to 12,000 riders, and \$47,000 in outside funding has been secured to ensure the continued success of this program.

## **Oswego County Opportunities**

Recognizing that accessible public transportation is key to quality of life and inclusion within society, Oswego County Opportunities has aimed to improve knowledge and perception of public transportation to persons with disabilities. In an effort to make access to employment "barrier free" OCO has been working to develop and monitor a travel training program to establish best practice in that field. This travel training is designed to give people, and particularly those with developmental and other disabilities, the confidence to use public transportation independently. The training includes ways of assisting people with using public transportation safely and with ease. Heavy publicity and advertising has garnered interest from outside parties who have been requesting the training tools for use in their own agencies. The project has also established a county wide color coded bus schedule system to facilitate ridership. A travel training video and train-the-trainer curriculum have been developed to educate people on how to access and use various means of transportation. OCO will soon be offering free travel training for those who wish to train others on the use of the public transportation system. All of this information will be accessible on their upcoming web site, *Happy Travels*.

## **Developmental Disability Alliance of Western NY**

The Developmental Disability Alliance of Western New York (DDAWNY) has established a central dispatching system for use by the 30+ agency alliance members. The intent is to avoid transportation duplication, cut travel costs, reduce the time of commutes and improve user satisfaction with transportation services and supports. DDAWNY, in collaboration with the Center for Transportation Excellence (CTENY), has formed a Driver Sensitivity Program, which educates drivers in best customer service practices and how to effectively provide assistance to riders in need or distress. The Center was established "to convene and create a standard of best practices for organizations in the health and human services transportation industry through the provision of comprehensive training, state of the art fleet maintenance, mobility management and advocacy for integrated human-centered transportation systems." DDAWNY and CTENY are also working together to develop strategies to increase and simplify opportunities for small business transportation providers to expand their services.