

**FAMILIES HELPING FAMILIES
OF GREATER BATON ROUGE**

Proposal for the Transportation Needs and Barriers Study

Submitted to the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council

Applicant	Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge
Project Period	October 1, 2026 - September 30, 2027
Amount Requested	\$45,000
Required Match	\$15,000
Total Project Budget	\$60,000

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1. Executive Summary

Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge respectfully submits this proposal to conduct a statewide Transportation Needs and Barriers Study for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Louisiana.

The Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council is seeking an organization to collect information from individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, families, service providers, transportation representatives, and community partners across all nine regions of Louisiana. The study must examine transportation challenges, service gaps, differences among rural, suburban, and urban communities, and the effects transportation barriers have on employment, education, healthcare, daily living, and community participation. The selected organization must also provide practical recommendations, a final written report, and a plain-language public summary.

Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge, referred to throughout this proposal as FHFGBR, proposes a twelve-month, community-centered study that will prioritize the voices and lived experiences of individuals with disabilities and their families. The project will use accessible surveys, individual interviews, regional focus groups, stakeholder consultations, and a review of available transportation services and community resources.

FHFGBR will partner with Families Helping Families centers, disability organizations, transportation providers, advocacy organizations, state and local agencies, service providers, and community partners to reach participants in all nine regions of Louisiana. Special attention will be given to individuals who require significant support, individuals living in rural communities, people with limited access to technology, and individuals who may experience communication, mobility, sensory, or language barriers.

The final study will provide the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council with:

- A statewide assessment of transportation needs and barriers;
- Information comparing rural, suburban, and urban experiences;
- Documentation of how transportation barriers affect independence and community participation;
- Identification of gaps in existing transportation options;
- Regional and statewide findings;
- Practical, achievable recommendations;
- A comprehensive written report;
- A plain-language public summary; and
- Presentation materials for policymakers and community stakeholders.

2. Organizational Background

Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge is a nonprofit resource center organized and directed by family members of individuals with disabilities. For nearly three decades, FHFGBR has provided information, education, referrals, individualized assistance, peer support, training, advocacy, and community connections to individuals with disabilities and their families.

FHFGBR serves individuals and families throughout the Greater Baton Rouge region, including East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, West Feliciana, Pointe Coupee, Iberville, and Ascension parishes.

Mission

Families Helping Families strengthens and supports individuals with disabilities and their families by providing individualized services, resources, and education that empower them to achieve independence within their communities.

Vision

We envision a community where individuals with disabilities can live, learn, work, and thrive.

FHFGBR understands that transportation is directly connected to independence, self-advocacy, employment, healthcare, education, recreation, and full participation in community life. Transportation barriers can prevent an individual from obtaining or maintaining employment, attending medical appointments, participating in educational opportunities, visiting family and friends, accessing services, or taking part in civic and social activities.

Because FHFGBR works directly with individuals with disabilities, families, caregivers, providers, and community organizations, the organization is positioned to collect meaningful information in a respectful, accessible, and family-centered manner.

3. Summary of Qualifications

A. Commitment to Inclusion

FHFGBR is committed to ensuring that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are not simply subjects of the study but active participants in the planning, implementation, review, and interpretation of the project.

Nothing about people with disabilities without people with disabilities.

Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and family members will be invited to participate as:

- Study advisors;
- Survey reviewers;
- Focus group participants;
- Interview participants;
- Community outreach partners;
- Reviewers of preliminary findings; and
- Contributors to the final recommendations.

Reasonable accommodations will be provided to support participation. These may include plain-language materials, large-print documents, electronic and paper survey options, accessible meeting locations, virtual participation, American Sign Language interpretation, communication supports, support-person participation, transportation assistance when allowable, and additional time for participants to respond.

FHFGBR will partner with our Families Helping Families Network for each region. We are meeting with President Parishes and Mayors from each parish to inform about this initiative to get involvement and support. We have reached out to Capital Area Transits System (CATS) and Americans with Disabilities ADA Task Force to participate in the Transportation Study which they are elated about being a part of being that a transportation study has not been conducted with either entity. We will reach out to Disability Access Solutions to get them involved with the project initiative as well. Our goal is to partner with the LSUS Institute for Nonprofit Administration and Research to serve assist with the research and evaluation as the project consultant. This collaboration will definitely help with the findings from this study for future transportation planning, strengthen cross-sector collaboration, and improve access to opportunities that promote independence, inclusion, and quality of life for individuals with disabilities and their families.

B. Experience Supporting Individuals and Families

FHFGBR has extensive experience working directly with individuals with disabilities and families to identify barriers, navigate systems, connect with resources, understand rights, and participate more fully in their communities.

- Individualized information and referral services;
- Peer-to-peer and family-to-family support;
- Community outreach;
- Educational workshops and training;
- Resource navigation;
- Transition and independent-living education;
- Disability advocacy;
- Stakeholder meetings;
- Community partnerships; and
- Accessible public information.

C. Understanding of Transportation and Community Access

FHFGBR recognizes that transportation barriers are rarely isolated. Transportation access is influenced by geographic location, availability of public transportation, paratransit eligibility and scheduling, service hours, distance to employment and healthcare, vehicle accessibility, cost, reliability, driver availability, safety, communication access, rural infrastructure, caregiver availability, Medicaid transportation policies, program eligibility requirements, and coordination among transportation and service systems.

D. Statewide Outreach Capacity

FHFGBR will use a collaborative statewide outreach structure to reach participants in all nine regions. Outreach will include coordination with Families Helping Families centers, disability advocacy organizations, human service districts and authorities, developmental disability service providers, Centers for Independent Living, local transportation providers, regional planning organizations, healthcare providers, schools and postsecondary institutions, vocational rehabilitation partners, employment service organizations, local governments, faith-based organizations, and community organizations.

E. Accessible Communication

All participant-facing materials will be written in plain language and reviewed for accessibility. FHFGBR will avoid unnecessary technical terms and will explain unfamiliar transportation and research terminology.

F. Fiscal Management

FHFGBR maintains organizational policies and financial controls to support responsible management of public and private funds. Project expenses will be tracked separately, reviewed regularly, and supported by appropriate documentation.

- A project-specific budget;
- Separate tracking of grant and match expenditures;
- Staff time documentation;
- Monthly budget-to-actual reviews;
- Documentation of in-kind contributions;
- Review and approval of expenditures;
- Maintenance of receipts, invoices, contracts, and supporting records; and
- Timely submission of required financial and program reports.

4. Project Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Identify Statewide Transportation Needs and Barriers

- Collect input from all nine regions of the state.
- Include participants from rural, suburban, and urban communities.
- Obtain information from individuals with disabilities, families, providers, transportation representatives, and community partners.
- Identify barriers related to availability, affordability, accessibility, reliability, safety, scheduling, eligibility, and service coordination.

Goal 2: Understand the Effects of Transportation Barriers

- Assess effects on employment, education, healthcare, behavioral health services, community services, shopping and essential errands, social and recreational activities, civic participation, family relationships, independent living, and emergency preparedness.

Goal 3: Identify Transportation Gaps and Regional Differences

- Compare rural, suburban, and urban transportation experiences.
- Identify communities with limited or unavailable services.
- Document barriers affecting individuals with significant support needs.
- Examine differences in service hours, geographic coverage, accessibility, affordability, and eligibility.

Goal 4: Develop Practical Recommendations

- Develop regional and statewide recommendations.
- Prioritize recommendations according to urgency, feasibility, and potential impact.
- Include short-term and long-term strategies.
- Ensure recommendations reflect the lived experiences of individuals with disabilities and families.

5. Proposed Project Approach

Phase 1: Project Planning and Advisory Engagement

FHFGBR will develop a detailed study protocol and establish a Statewide Transportation Study Advisory Group that includes individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, family members, disability advocates, service providers, transportation professionals, rural representatives, and urban and suburban representatives. The group will review study questions, survey design, accessibility, outreach methods, preliminary findings, and recommendations.

Phase 2: Background and Resource Review

FHFGBR will review available information concerning public transit, paratransit, Medicaid-funded transportation, human service transportation, nonprofit transportation, rural resources, service hours, geographic coverage, accessibility, eligibility requirements, and relevant transportation plans and studies.

Phase 3: Accessible Statewide Survey

FHFGBR will create an accessible survey available online, on paper, by telephone, through interview assistance, and in alternative formats upon request. The target is at least 450 completed surveys with outreach in every region.

Phase 4: Regional Focus Groups

FHFGBR will conduct at least nine regional focus groups, with at least one connected to each region, and expects to engage at least 90 individuals. Additional targeted sessions may be held for self-advocates, families, rural residents, providers, and transportation professionals.

Phase 5: Key Informant Interviews

FHFGBR will conduct approximately 25 to 30 interviews with self-advocates, family leaders, transit administrators, rural transportation providers, healthcare representatives, employment service providers, school transition personnel, local government representatives, and community organizations.

Phase 6: Data Analysis

Survey data will be analyzed to identify statewide and regional patterns. Focus group and interview information will be organized into common themes, with attention to geography, community type, support needs, trip purpose, availability, accessibility, cost, and reliability.

Phase 7: Validation of Findings

Preliminary findings will be shared with the advisory group and selected participants to determine whether the results accurately reflect lived experience, regional differences, and practical recommendations.

Phase 8: Final Report and Public Summary

FHFGBR will prepare a comprehensive final report, plain-language public summary, executive summary for policymakers, regional profiles, presentation slide deck, and accessible electronic versions of all final products.

6. Accessibility and Participant Support Plan

FHFGBR will apply accessible practices throughout the project, including:

- Plain-language consent and information materials;
- Short, clearly worded survey questions;
- Large-print materials upon request;
- Screen-reader-compatible electronic documents when possible;
- Accessible meeting locations;
- Virtual and telephone participation;
- ASL interpretation upon request;
- Communication assistance and support-person participation;
- Breaks during focus groups;
- Multiple ways to answer questions; and
- Protection of privacy and confidentiality.

No individual will be excluded solely because the individual needs assistance to understand or respond to study questions.

7. Community Outreach and Recruitment

FHFGBR will implement a statewide outreach plan designed to reach individuals who may not typically participate in public meetings or online surveys. Recruitment will include direct outreach through disability organizations, email, social media, printed flyers, partner newsletters, provider networks, family support

networks, community meetings, telephone outreach, regional events, schools and transition programs, healthcare referrals, and local transportation partners.

Participation will be monitored throughout the project. When a region or population is underrepresented, outreach will be adjusted to increase participation.

8. Project Work Plan and Timeline

Period	Activities	Deliverables
October 2026	Contract initiation, staffing, advisory group recruitment, detailed project planning	Final project management plan
November 2026	Advisory meeting, background review, development of study tools	Draft instruments and outreach plan
December 2026	Accessibility review, pilot testing, revisions, partner recruitment	Final survey and discussion guides
January-March 2027	Statewide survey distribution, outreach, initial interviews	Monthly participation updates
February-May 2027	Regional focus groups, stakeholder interviews, targeted outreach	Focus group and interview documentation
June 2027	Close survey, organize data, conduct analysis	Preliminary findings
July 2027	Regional comparison, validation, recommendations	Validated findings and draft recommendations
August 2027	Draft report, summaries, and presentation	Draft final products
September 2027	Incorporate feedback, finalize deliverables, present findings	Final report, public summary, presentation, closeout

9. Performance Measures and Evaluation

Performance Area	Measure	Target
Statewide representation	Louisiana regions represented	9 of 9 regions
Geographic diversity	Rural, suburban, and urban participants	All three community types
Survey participation	Completed surveys	At least 450
Focus groups	Regional focus groups conducted	At least 9
Focus group participation	Individuals participating	At least 90
Interviews	Key informant interviews	25-30
Lived-experience involvement	Individuals with I/DD and families in advisory role	Throughout project
Accessibility	Materials reviewed for plain language and accessibility	100%
Reporting	Final comprehensive report completed	By September 30, 2027

Performance Area	Measure	Target
Public communication	Plain-language summary completed	By September 30, 2027

10. Project Management

The project will be directed by a designated FHFGBR Project Director, who will provide overall leadership, coordinate with the Council, monitor the budget, supervise project personnel, oversee data collection, and ensure timely completion of deliverables.

Project Director – Stefanie Ashford

Project oversight, Council communication, partnerships, quality assurance, budget monitoring, and final approval of deliverables.

Research and Evaluation Lead – Contract Consultant (TBA)

Methodology, survey design, data analysis, interpretation, and report development.

Outreach Coordinator – Michael A.V. Mitchell

Partner engagement, participant recruitment, regional coordination, accommodations, and focus group scheduling. Participant tracking, survey administration, data entry, record maintenance, scheduling, and documentation.

Individuals with Disabilities and Family Advisors

Review study materials, advise on accessibility, interpret findings, and help develop recommendations.

Final staff assignments and resumes will be included in the submitted application packet.

11. Data Protection and Ethical Practices

FHFGBR will use respectful and ethical data-collection practices. Participants will receive clear information about the purpose of the study, what participation involves, the voluntary nature of participation, their right to skip questions or stop, how information will be stored and used, and who to contact with questions.

Personally identifying information will be limited to information necessary for project administration. Findings will be reported in summary form. Electronic files will be maintained in password-protected systems, and access will be restricted to authorized project personnel.

12. Proposed Budget

FHFGBR proposes a total project budget of \$60,000, consisting of a \$45,000 Council request and a \$15,000 organizational match. Indirect and administrative costs are approximately 7.5% of the total project budget, remaining below the RFP limitation of 8%.

Budget Category	Council Funds	Match/In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$19,500	\$8,000	\$27,500
Contracted Research/Evaluation	\$8,500	\$1,000	\$9,500
Travel	\$4,500	\$1,500	\$6,000
Participant Access and Accommodations	\$3,250	\$1,250	\$4,500
Survey, Printing, and Outreach	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$3,500

Budget Category	Council Funds	Match/In-Kind	Total
Data Management and Technology	\$1,500	\$500	\$2,000
Final Report and Dissemination	\$750	\$750	\$1,500
Indirect/Administrative Costs	\$4,500	\$1,000	\$5,500
Total	\$45,000	\$15,000	\$60,000

13. Budget Narrative

Personnel - \$27,500

Supports project management, statewide outreach, participant recruitment, focus group coordination, survey administration, data organization, partner communication, financial documentation, and preparation of deliverables. The match portion includes eligible staff time devoted to planning, supervision, outreach, material development, and administration.

Contracted Research and Evaluation - \$9,500

Supports qualified research or evaluation assistance for study design, survey development, data analysis, interpretation of qualitative and quantitative findings, and preparation or review of the final report.

Travel - \$6,000

Supports mileage, lodging when necessary, and other approved travel associated with focus groups, interviews, partner meetings, and community outreach.

Participant Access and Accommodations - \$4,500

Supports ASL interpretation, communication supports, accessible meeting arrangements, alternative formats, participant transportation support when allowable, virtual-access support, and other approved accessibility expenses.

Survey, Printing, and Outreach - \$3,500

Supports paper surveys, plain-language outreach materials, postage, regional recruitment materials, community distribution, and accessible document preparation.

Data Management and Technology - \$2,000

Supports secure survey administration, virtual meeting platforms, data storage, transcription or note-processing assistance, and related technology.

Final Report and Dissemination - \$1,500

Supports editing, formatting, accessibility review, limited printing, plain-language design, and distribution of final products.

Indirect and Administrative Costs - \$5,500

Supports financial oversight, office operations, communications, insurance, and administrative infrastructure. Total indirect and administrative costs remain below 8% of the total project budget.

14. Sustainability and Use of Findings

The value of this project will extend beyond the contract period. Findings may support future transportation policy discussions, legislative education, regional transportation planning, advocacy, grant development, coordination among transportation and disability systems, improvements to provider practices, community awareness, local transportation partnerships, and continued engagement of self-advocates and families.

The final recommendations will distinguish among immediate actions that may be implemented with existing resources, short-term actions requiring coordination or policy changes, long-term transportation-system improvements, and opportunities for additional research or pilot projects.

15. Conclusion

Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge is prepared to lead an inclusive, accessible, and community-centered study of transportation needs and barriers affecting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities across Louisiana.

Our organization understands that reliable and accessible transportation is more than a service. It is a pathway to employment, education, healthcare, independence, relationships, and full participation in community life.

Through meaningful involvement of individuals with disabilities and families, statewide partnerships, accessible data-collection methods, careful analysis, and practical recommendations, FHFGBR will provide the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council with a useful and actionable picture of transportation needs throughout the state.

FHFGBR respectfully requests \$45,000 to complete the Transportation Needs and Barriers Study from October 1, 2026, through September 30, 2027. The organization will provide the required \$15,000 match contribution, resulting in a total project value of \$60,000.

Required Application Attachments

- Application Cover Sheet;
- Completed W-9;
- Documentation identifying organizational ownership or a board resolution;
- Summary of Qualifications, limited to five pages;
- Proposal and Work Plan;
- Activities and timelines;
- Performance measures;
- Detailed budget;
- At least two letters of support;
- Staff resumes or biographies;
- Organizational chart, if appropriate; and
- Any additional documentation required by the Council funding guidelines.

Submission deadline: 4:00 p.m. on Friday, June 26, 2026. Submit by email to Stephanie.Carmona@la.gov.