



Developing Transportation Options for People with Disabilities

Section Purpose

Provide information on development of transportation options for people with disabilities who do not have access to a private automobile. The ability to access transportation resources is essential in assisting people with disabilities to obtain employment.

Section Contents

- A) **Transportation for People with Disabilities:** An overview of issues related to transportation for people with disabilities, along with a list of suggestions for One-Stops in dealing with this issue, and a list of resources
- B) **Finding Transportation Solutions - Questions to Consider:** A step-by-step list of questions to assist individuals in identifying transportation options
- C) **Using Social Security Work Incentives to Pay for Transportation:** A summary of how individuals receiving social security disability benefits can utilize the social security work incentives to pay for transportation

Transportation for People with Disabilities

Lack of transportation is often identified as one of the most significant barriers to employment for people with disabilities who don't drive. There is no one "magic" solution to the transportation problem. However, there are lots of possible solutions, and as with any problem, it is a matter of developing lots of ideas and investigating to see which works. Start by investigating options that are typically used by the general population (mass transit, car pooling, etc.). Additionally, many communities maintain specialized transportation services for people with disabilities, such as paratransit (under the Americans with Disabilities Act, public transit providers must provide equivalent service to individuals who cannot utilize the public transit system). However, given the limited resources and flexibility of specialized transportation, it is recommended that other alternatives be initially considered.

- If One-Stop staff are unaware of local disability-specific transportation resources, contact Vocational Rehabilitation (a One-Stop partner), the local independent living center, and other local disability agencies. For information on Independent Living Centers, see the Resource section at the end of the manual.
- It is also recommended that you contact your local and state transportation departments and authorities. Local One-Stop systems may wish to consider formally partnering with transportation agencies to provide a more comprehensive approach to meeting the transportation needs of One-Stop customers.
- Transportation to work is an issue not only for people with disabilities, but also for many low-income individuals, such as those participating in Welfare-to-Work programs (a One-Stop partner). One-Stop staff may wish to find out what transportation resources are being utilized to meet the needs of low-income individuals, and determine if these might be used by job seekers with disabilities.
- Since transportation is an issue for many non-disabled job seekers as well, the One-Stop system may find it helpful to maintain a comprehensive listing of local transportation resources and/or work with local transportation officials on an easily accessible transportation data base which can assist individuals with route planning.

Finding Transportation Solutions: Questions to Consider

When assisting a job seeker with a disability to find transportation, the following questions can help identify possible solutions.

Own Vehicle

Do you have a driver's license?

- If not, could you obtain a driver's license?
- Do you have a vehicle or have access to a vehicle?
- Could you buy a vehicle (possibly using a PASS Social Security Work Incentive to cover the cost)?

Mass Transit

Is there mass transit that can take you to your job?

- Could you learn how to take mass transit?

Note: some agencies, such as Independent Living Centers, Community Rehabilitation Providers, and others, teach people with disabilities to use mass transit via "travel training". Orientation and Mobility (O & M) classes can help people who have visual impairments. The state blind and visually impaired agency should have information on O & M services.

Cab

Could you take a cab to work?

Walking & Biking

Is the job within walking distance? Biking distance? Moped distance?

Car Pooling & Employer Resources

- How do your co-workers get to work? Could you car pool with them?
- Does your employer have any ideas or resources for transportation?
- Are there other employers nearby whose employees take a similar route? Might a car pool or shuttle bus be arranged?

Someone who could drive you

Who might be available to drive you to and from work?

- People you live with?
- Family?
- Residential program staff?
- Neighbors?
- Others?

If you can identify a driver but no vehicle, could a vehicle be purchased (possibly using a PASS-Plan for Achieving Self-Support, to cover the down payment) for someone else to drive you? [See information elsewhere in this section on using PASS's for transportation.]

Finding a driver

If you don't know anyone who could drive you, could you find a driver?

- Where would you advertise?

Newspaper? Local colleges? Stores? Senior centers? Civic groups? Church bulletins?

Transportation services

- Is there paratransit (special transportation services for people with disabilities) available?
- Are there other transportation services available?

Brainstorming other ideas

Who could help you come up with ideas for transportation?

- People you live with?
- Friends?
- Family members?
- Neighbors?
- Counselors?
- Other professionals?
- Other community members?
- Members of groups you are part of?

Paying for transportation

- Are you eligible for reduced fare programs?
- If you're on Social Security, have you investigated using the PASS or IRWE Work Incentives to help cover the costs?

Using Social Security Work Incentives To Pay for Transportation

PASS (PLAN FOR ACHIEVING SELF-SUPPORT) & IRWE (IMPAIRMENT RELATED WORK EXPENSE)

These Social Security Work Incentives can be used to help offset the costs of transportation.

Who Can Use Them

- PASS's can only be used by people who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). However, PASS's can sometimes be used to qualify individuals for SSI by reducing the income that Social Security "counts".
- IRWE's can be used by people who receive either SSI or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

For details on the SSI and SSDI programs, see Section 9, "Social Security Disability Benefits".

Time Limits

- PASS's are time-limited. Although there is no specific time limit on PASS's, they are typically approved in 18 month increments, and subject to regular review.
- IRWE's have no time limit.

Reimbursement Rate

- PASS's reimburse the individual for the entire expense.
- For people on SSI, an IRWE will cover only half the cost of an expense. The rest of the expense will have to be paid by the individual. However, for individuals on SSDI, transportation expenses may reduce an individual's income below the substantial gainful activity limit of \$740 [2001 figure] (this level is higher for individuals who are blind) and allowing them to maintain their SSDI check.

BLIND WORK EXPENSES (BWE)

A person who is blind can deduct the full cost of expenses related to work, including transportation. In essence, they will receive full reimbursement for transportation expenses.

For additional information on PASS, IRWE, or BWE, see Section 9, "One-Stop Centers and Social Security Disability Benefits" or contact your local Social Security office.

Transportation expenses for which a PASS can be used:

- Hire of private or commercial carriers
- Lease, rental, or purchase of a private vehicle plus registration fees and cost of insurance premiums
- Public transportation and common carriers (private transportation companies which run regularly scheduled service available to the general public)

Transportation expenses for which an IRWE can be used:

- The cost of structural or operational modifications to a vehicle which the person needs in order to drive to work, even if the vehicle is also used for non-work purposes.
- The cost of driver assistance or taxicabs where such special transportation is not generally required by unimpaired individuals in the community.
- Mileage expenses for an approved vehicle at a rate determined by the Social Security Administration. Only travel related to employment can be reimbursed.

Transportation expenses for which an IRWE cannot be used

- The cost of a vehicle, whether modified or not.
- The cost of a modification to a vehicle that is not directly related to the impairment or critical to the operation of the vehicle (e.g. paint or decor preferences).
- The cost of travel necessary to obtain medical items or services.

Note: This information is directly from documents provided by Social Security. These are just examples and guidelines. Ideas on how PASS's and IRWE's can be used for transportation expenses should not be limited to the examples given here.

Transportation Resources

Community Transportation Association

1341 G St., NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
Voice: (202) 628.1480
Fax: (202) 737.9197
Web site: www.ctaa.org

This national advocacy organization focuses on transportation for individuals who do not have access to mass transit or private automobiles

Federal Transit Administration

TCR-1, Room 7412
Office of Civil Rights
400 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590
Voice: (202) 366-366-0153 or
(888) 446-4511
TTY/FIRS: (800) 877-8339
Web site: www.fta.dot.gov

A good source for determining the rights of people with disabilities concerning public transportation, including the regulations concerning paratransit systems.

Note: FTA has information on grants for assisting people with low incomes (including people with disabilities) with transportation. This information is available at: www.fta.dot.gov/wtw/uoft.html

Project Action

700 Thirteenth Street, N.W., Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005
Voice: (800) 659-6428
Fax: (202) 347-3066
Web site: www.projectaction.org
e-mail: nsmith@easter-sealsdc.org

This is a national program that fosters accessible transportation services for people with disabilities. It is administered by the National Easter Seal Society and funded by the Federal Transit Administration

U.S. Department of Transportation

400 Seventh Street SW
Washington, DC 20590
Voice: (202) 366-4011
TTY: (202) 366-2979
Fax: (202) 366-7951
Web site: www.dot.gov/accessibility

A variety of information on regulations and resources concerning transportation for people with disabilities.