

Trends Report 2020



Photo: Township of Schaumburg, Illinois





The National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) is a program funded by the Federal Transit Administration and administered by Easterseals and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), with guidance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living.

NADTC's Mission is to increase accessible transportation options for older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers nationwide.

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Transportation for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)

Introduction

The passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act in 1990 increased physical accessibility to public transportation. For millions of individuals with disabilities, public transportation is their only option to maintain their independence and stay connected to their communities. However, even with the tremendous progress of the last thirty years, transportation remains a top barrier for people with disabilities. According to the [NADTC Transportation Needs and Assessment](#) report, 8 in 10 non-drivers with a disability cannot do the activities or chores they need or like to because of transportation barriers.

For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) accessing dependable and accessible transportation services in their communities continues to be a significant barrier to independence and opportunities. During their lifetime, persons with I/DD need access to an array of services that may include employment/vocational training, healthcare, education, socialization, and other activities of daily living. Transportation services provide access to these vital services and activities.

What is Intellectual and Developmental Disability?

According to the Family & Individual Needs for Disability Supports (FINDS) Community Report, an estimated [7.4 million](#) people with an intellectual or developmental disability live in the United States. Intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) are disorders that are usually present at birth and that negatively affect the trajectory of the individual's physical, intellectual, and/or emotional development. The American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) defines I/DD as follows:

- **The acronym IDD** is the abbreviation commonly used to reference intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **Intellectual Disability (ID)** is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem solving) and in adaptive behavior, which covers a range of everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18.
- **Developmental Disabilities (DD)** is an umbrella term that includes intellectual disability but also includes other disabilities that are apparent during childhood. Developmental disabilities are severe chronic disabilities that can be cognitive or physical or both. The disabilities appear before the age of 22 and are likely to be lifelong. Some developmental disabilities are largely physical issues, such as cerebral palsy or epilepsy. Some individuals may have a condition that includes a physical and intellectual disability, for example Down syndrome or fetal alcohol syndrome.

Barriers to Transportation

For Individuals with disabilities, transportation is one of the top barriers to inclusion in society and accessing opportunities. People with I/DD often have trouble with many of the skills that navigating transportation requires, such as comprehension, memory, attention, time management, literacy, multitasking, and problem solving (Davies, et al. 2010). The travel process can be complex, confusing, and inconsistent. Riders with intellectual and developmental disabilities need clear and understandable signage, stop announcements, fare payment and other policy information to support trip planning and travel.

In addition, people with I/DD also face systemic barriers to transportation which limit their options. Individuals with I/DD often rely on Medicaid nonemergency transportation as their only alternative to rides provided by family, friends and/or caregivers. Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services 1915(c) Waivers is the largest provider of long-term services and supports for people with IDD. Medicaid provides many in the I/DD community with non-emergency medical transportation but does not require transportation related to other aspects necessary for community living such as accessing work, errands, or recreational activities (Friedman & Rizzolo, 2016).



*MetroWest Regional Transit Authority,
Framingham, MA*

Another barrier is the need for coordination of transportation services and limited federal, state, and local funding to support transportation. People with I/DD and their caregivers also struggle to find out about the community transportation services that would meet their needs, since comprehensive information may not be readily available, especially in communities without a mobility manager.

Other factors that increase barriers to transportation for individuals with I/DD include:

- Limited transit travel training programs are targeted to individuals with I/DD.
- Individuals with I/DD often do not have driving privileges. Problems associated with I/DD, such as difficulty reading and processing information, problems with motor skills, executing problem solving and visual and spatial awareness are thought to impact the various skills required for safe driving.

Travel Training, Transportation and Coordination

Across the nation, federal, state, and local entities are working to increase the accessibility of transportation for people with disabilities through better coordination of transportation services and tailoring programs to educate individuals on transportation options. The following are examples of organizations providing transportation, travel training and enhancing coordination to increase mobility and improve access to transit.

Local Examples: Travel Training

[The Kennedy Center, Inc., Trumbull, Connecticut](#) teaches people with disabilities and older adults to use the local bus and rail system properly and safely on a one-to-one basis. The program also addresses how to safely cross the street, interacting with strangers, and self-advocacy. Since 1991, The Kennedy Center has successfully trained more than 3,000 people with cognitive, sensory, and physical disabilities. The program is funded by the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

[The Ride Share Education Program, Honeyman Services, LLC., Northglenn, Colorado](#) is an educational program designed to teach adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities how to safely access ride share services such as Uber and Lyft to meet their individual transportation needs. Students first participate in intense classroom study and then get first-hand experience with an instructor by taking a few test rides. Honeyman Services, LLC provides this service through its partnerships with the Developmental Pathways, Rocky Mountain Human Services and the Developmental Disabilities Resource Center. Honeyman Services, LLC. received funding from Rocky Mountain Human Services and Developmental Pathways.

Local Examples: Transportation Programs

[Providence Center, Glen Burnie, Maryland](#) is a non-profit organization supporting adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Anne Arundel County. Providence Center operates a fleet of 50 vans, trucks, and cars to transport the people they serve to jobs, residential programs, social activities, volunteer assignments and home to connect with family members. Transportation service is provided Monday – Friday from 6:00 am – 6:00 pm. Providence receives state and federal government funding. Additional funding is received from corporate and individual donations and fundraising.

[Ride Connection, Portland, Oregon](#) is a door-to-door non-profit organization based in Portland, Oregon, that has been linking people to transportation in their community for over 25 years. Currently Ride Connection provides door-to-door services for older adults (60+) and people with disabilities free of charge for any purpose, including medical, meals, shopping, recreation, and volunteering or work. Ride Connection also provides travel training through its RideWise

program which offers a variety of services that include: 1) personalized trip planning to provide customers with information on all available transportation options; 2) vehicle familiarization services for those with disabilities or others who may require specialized assistance while boarding the vehicle; and 3) specialized short-term individualized instruction with a staff travel trainer. Ride Connection has received funding from Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 and state grants. Additional funding is received from private foundation grants and both corporate and individual donations.

Local Examples: Coordination

[The Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities](#), a coalition of disability, aging and transportation experts, teamed up with legislative leaders to address better coordination with the goal of expanding and improving accessible transportation by introducing the [Tennessee Accessible Transportation and Mobility Act of 2020](#). The effort was led by the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities, which engaged people who use or need accessible transportation throughout Tennessee as key advisors. The legislation creates a new office within the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) that will focus solely on accessible transportation and offer a new and sustained level of support to localities across the state. The new statewide office will work with a diverse advisory group to identify the state's needs and solutions that can change over time. The law also advises government agencies to coordinate with TDOT toward the goal of expanding and improving accessible transportation and mobility across Tennessee.

Summary

Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities can have unique challenges in accessing employment, health care, instrumental activities of daily living (e.g., shopping and running errands) and community participation. Having access to safe, accessible, and reliable transportation can expand opportunities and allow people with I/DD to participate fully in society. To fully meet the needs of their customers, transportation providers must involve individuals with I/DD and their caregivers in the planning and implementation of coordinated transportation systems.

Resources

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Friedman, C., & Rizzolo, M. C. (2016). The state of transportation for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services 1915 (c) waivers. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 27(3), 168-177. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292401454_The_State_of_Transportation_for_People_With_Intellectual_and_Developmental_Disabilities_in_Medicaid_Home_and_Community-Based_Services_1915c_Waivers



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