2021 Trends Report

Photo: ButterFLI, Los Angeles, California
Introduction

Each year, the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) publishes a *Trends Report* highlighting emergent topics in transportation. The report provides overviews of transportation issues and challenges being faced within the transportation industry, including examples of how solutions are being implemented in communities across the United States. Individual topic spotlights from the full report will be released throughout the year and available for download on our website.

We recognize that our work must be grounded in, and respond to, the needs of the communities and organizations that we serve. It is critical for NADTC to highlight community efforts and innovative leaders in transportation who are developing accessible transportation programs and ensuring easy access to transportation information.

The topics selected for the 2021 report grew out of NADTC staff work over the past year, including a review of applied research and published reports, as well as numerous conversations and virtual interactions with transit providers and other professional organizations in the field of transportation for older adults and people with disabilities.

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This report highlights the importance of connecting with your riders and human service agencies to improve or enhance transportation for the community. This informational brief discusses challenges and potential strategies to engage the public and presents local examples of how to overcome the challenges of community engagement for more successful outcomes.

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It is important to understand the characteristics of all users being served, especially those who might be faced with memory loss, related to Alzheimer’s or dementia. This report highlights common barriers or challenges persons with Alzheimer’s or dementia might have when riding the bus and presents strategies for communicating with these riders.

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This report highlights the importance of volunteer driver programs in rural communities across the United States, especially those providing transportation services for riders going to vital medical appointments in neighboring towns or cities. This informational brief showcases local programs and their ability to recruit and retain volunteer drivers in rural communities.

If you have questions about any topic highlighted in this report or have a story to share from your community, please reach out to us at (866) 983-3222 or email contact@nadtc.org.
The National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC)
NADTC is a national program funded by the Federal Transit Administration and administered by Easterseals Inc. and USAging, with guidance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living.

Our Mission:
To promote the availability and accessibility of transportation options that meet the needs of older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers.

The mission of NADTC is to:

- **Serve** professionals in the fields of transportation, aging, disability, human services and caregiving.
- **Provide** resources and training through an information and referral hotline, website, as well as both distance and online training.
- **Empower** communities across the country to implement or improve innovative transportation programs at the local level.
- **Support** older adults, people with disabilities of all ages, and their families to help them find the best mobility options in their communities to reach their destination of choice.

For more information about NADTC and the services we provide, please visit [www.nadtc.org/](http://www.nadtc.org/)

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Marketing Your Transportation Program

Background

In a 2018 national survey of older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers conducted by the NADTC, the survey reported that most of the respondents turned to family, friends or neighbors for information about transportation services available in the community. Respondents further reported that there is no single “go-to” information resource for alternative transportation options and that very few are familiar with public transportation options with only a quarter or respondents saying they are very familiar. Outside of friends and family, most older adults and people with disabilities are not looking to other sources to find out about local information about transportation. The crux of the matter is that if information about transportation options is not being easily accessed then these transportation options are probably not being fully utilized by older adults and people with disabilities who need these services to remain independent and connected to the community.

Transportation providers often talk about needing to fill mobility gaps in situations when services like fixed route or specialized transportation only go so far, but what many providers sometimes neglect to consider is the need to fill communications gaps that prevent individuals in the community from knowing about the transportation service they provide in the first place. Accessible vehicles are important when serving older riders or riders who use assistive devices or have a disability. It is also important to consider the distance of transit stops from a person’s home or workplace or that the path to transit is comfortable and safe and accessible to bikes and pedestrians. However, accessibility should be thought about in a broader sense, ensuring that how a person receives information about transportation in their community is not only available, but “accessible” to them. For example, a rural provider should not put all their marketing eggs in a social media basket as it is common for rural areas to experience broadband and connectivity challenges and marketing about a service through channels that are internet dependent may not be as accessible to those they are trying to reach. Conversely, social media strategies could work much better in urban or suburban settings where internet connections are more reliable. Simply put, what works in one area may not work in another, therefore, when thinking about marketing transportation services, there are many components to consider when developing an effective plan.

Accessibility in the Broadest Sense

When the word “accessibility” is used, the first thing that typically comes to mind is the ADA. This is not just a common first thought, but an appropriate one as well. Providing accessible vehicles or accessible accommodations related to riding public transportation is critical to enable individuals with disabilities to access work, home and community. Yet, it is important to consider accessibility in the broadest sense in order to effectively market transportation
programs to every potential rider in the community, not just those with travel-limiting disabilities.

Information about transportation services should be accessible to all community members, despite their age, income, ability, race or ethnicity. When marketing a new or existing service, providers must consider who their target audience is and ensure outreach strategies meet the needs of the population they want to reach. Strategic marketing should not solely be about increasing ridership, but should be relevant, acceptable and accessible to current and future riders. For example, in “Transportation Barriers and Needs for Immigrants and Refugees: An Exploratory Needs Assessment,” Hopelink and King County Mobility Coalition stated that “Information/Language” as a major barrier to transportation access for their immigrant and refugee population, citing:

“Language, and the lack of translated transit information available as written materials, signage, and announcements are significant barriers among immigrant and refugee communities. Those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) can find it difficult to navigate the public transit system due to lack of information available in their native language and the inability to be able to communicate with bus drivers.”

When developing marketing strategies for a transportation program or service, keep in mind the “who” before the “how.” For some transportation providers, disseminating information and marketing materials in a variety of languages, including translation capabilities is a critical component to effective marketing and use of service by non-English speaking individuals or those with Limited English Proficiency, like those residing in King County. For other providers, marketing strategies may need to focus on additional groups, including (but not limited to) underrepresented racial and ethnic populations, individuals who are hearing or visually impaired or living with other physical and intellectual disabilities, those residing in rural or other remote areas and those who are unfamiliar or new to transit. If providers adopt a one size fits all ideology when it comes to marketing their transportation service to diverse audiences, they run the risk of preventing one or more of these groups from accessing transportation to get to the places they need and want to go.

**An Unrecognized Barrier**

In 2020, the NADTC conducted an annual survey of stakeholders to identify needs and gather input on NADTC products, priorities and activities. When asked, “What are your organization's top issues regarding transportation for older adults and people with disabilities?” several respondents mentioned, 1) marketing local transportation options, 2) lack of marketing their services to the aging community and 3) a focus on transportation options in rural and small urban areas including marketing. Additionally, the NADTC has received a number of technical assistance and information calls inquiring about ways to market transportation programs in the community. In NADTC’s recent national survey of diverse older adults, younger adults and caregivers, the top barriers to accessing transportation reported were: not enough public
transit or options in the community, concerns about wait time; no friends or family who drive regularly; transportation too expensive; and concerns about COVID-19. Most transportation providers have an acute awareness of the physical and environmental transportation barriers their communities face, but a critical barrier often overlooked is the lack of information about available transportation in the community. It is known that most older adults and persons with disabilities rely on friends and family for information, with some also turning to the internet, but what we also know is these same friend and family caregivers turn to their friends and family as well for transportation information. This presents a huge gap in service and access to mobility options when both the rider and those who have the responsibility of arranging rides don’t know how, or where to access information about transportation in their communities.

**Educating Communities to Encourage Engagement**

The fallacy of the phrase, “If you build it, they will come,” is widely known by many. Even if what you build is in direct response to what the community asked for, at a town hall meeting, through a survey or a focus group, the response to the product or service may not be as robust as the initial ask. The unfortunate occurrence is that very few, or sometimes no one in the community who asked for the service takes advantage of it once it is launched. This scenario is a familiar one to many transportation providers who have expressed frustration when they have created a service, whether adding a route or implementing a micro transit or on-demand service to only discover once these services are “launched,” very few chose to use them. Often the piece that’s missing when trying to market a transportation service is education. When providers lead with educating current and potential riders about the service, before promoting the service, members of the community are in a better position to understand what the service is about and how it will benefit them. Therefore, education can encourage a higher level of engagement of the service from the community.

The challenge with educating the community about a service before promoting the service is that it takes time and resources. Often time and resources that many organizations are not able to put towards an awareness or education campaign. However, education may be the critical step to ensure a positive response to marketing related to your service and in turn encourage a positive interest in using the service.

In addition to education, trust plays a considerable role in a community fully adopting a new or sometimes an already existing service. If your target audience is unable to look to friends or
family for a “green light” to use your service simply because they are unfamiliar with your service or with your organization, you may want to consider the steps that have been taken to educate the community before spending a great deal of time and money on a marketing campaign or launch a service.

**Partners in Promotion**

Getting the word out about a transportation service or program is typically the responsibility of the transportation provider, however marketing efforts don’t have to start and stop with the provider organization. Transportation providers can look to other organizations in the community to partner with them to help spur their marketing efforts to reach a target audience. For example, if a provider’s primary rider group are older adults, they could partner with local aging organizations (e.g., Area Agencies on Aging, senior centers) to help get the word out about the transportation service. If the provider is the lead aging organization themselves, they could consider partnering with local healthcare facilities, meal delivery or other critical services who could provide a flyer or other promotional material that talk about your service to their patients or customers. This example of cross marketing can be a great tool to increase the awareness of your service to a broader audience.

In addition to soliciting the assistance of other community agencies to help market your transportation service to their constituents, identifying transportation professionals, like mobility managers or travel trainers could also help spread the word about your transportation service.

**Mobility Managers**

According to the National Center for Mobility Management, two of the key functions of a mobility manager are to, 1) encourages innovation and flexibility to reach the "right fit" solution for customers and 2) strive for easy information and referral to assist customers in learning about and using services. Mobility managers look at the complete network of community transportation, from public transit to volunteer transportation, to bike and pedestrian options and more. Because their role includes knowing and educating customers about the full range of available travel options in the community, mobility managers could serve as excellent partners to help you market your specific transportation service.

**Ideas to Market Your Transportation Service:**

- Agency website
- Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)
- Setting up a booth at community fairs
- Direct marketing (e.g., sending information via snail mail)
- Print media (e.g., newsletters, newspaper)
- Broadcast media (e.g., radio or TV ads)
Travel Trainers

Travel trainers instruct individuals, typically older adults and people with disabilities who have little to no experience in using transportation, how to access and use public and private modes of transportation independently. Whether group training or one-on-one, those interested in familiarizing themselves with transportation options in their community can benefit from this type of instruction. Like mobility managers, travel trainers are usually familiar with local transportation options, how to access them and how to use them. They have a captive audience to educate about your transportation service and can be a valuable partner in your marketing efforts.

Every Ride Counts

To address the advertising concerns of smaller transportation providers who either lacked the staff or financial resources to effectively market their programs, the NADTC developed a comprehensive publicity campaign called Every Ride Counts to help providers promote the availability and accessibility of their services to older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers in communities around the country. The Every Ride Counts campaign is comprised of carefully crafted messages and materials like postcards, flyers, posters and social media images that can be customized with local contact information and that promote the use of varied transportation options by older adults and people with disabilities in the community.

NADTC has made these materials available and free of charge to transportation, aging and disability agencies around the country with the hope that they will be used to make older adults, people with disabilities and their caregivers aware of how, with just a bit of planning, local transportation options can help them get where they want and need to go.

Local Success Stories

In 2019, NADTC selected four transportation organizations to participate in a targeted Every Ride Counts pilot program to increase the awareness of local transportation options provided by these organizations: North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO) in Fort Collins, CO; the Dunn County Transit Commission in Dunn County, WI; the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Buffalo and Pepin Counties (ADRC) in Buffalo, WI; and Capacity Builders, in partnership with Lou Go’s Taxi in Farmington, NM.

NADTC partnered with The Hatcher Group, a strategic communications and marketing firm who designed and strategically placed advertisements across a variety of channels, with the support of local advertising agents and feedback from the grantees. These advertisements included billboards, bus ads, radio spots, movie theater commercials, taxi toppers, shuttle wraps, and Facebook Ads. Additionally, print materials including flyers and magnets, as well as social media toolkits were created for each organization.

This Every Ride Counts pilot successfully increased awareness, engagement, and ridership in the four targeted communities. In Fort Collins, users of the online Find My Ride tool increased by
1187 percent and the Facebook ads received 430,689 total impressions. In Dunn County, DCT website visitors increased by 216% and the Facebook ads received 25,323 impressions. In Buffalo and Pepin Counties, ridership increased by 75% and website visitors increased by 42 percent. In Farmington, ADA ridership increased by 65 percent and Lou Go’s received 200 more calls for rides than in the month prior to the campaign launch.

To learn more about how Every Ride Counts can work for your transportation program, visit the NADTC website at, www.nadtc.org/EveryRideCounts

Promising Practices and Strategies

HIRTA Public Transit
HIRTA Public Transit promotes an environment reflective of the communities they serve, ensuring all riders feel welcome and included. Through surveys and focus groups, HIRTA is identifying the needs of a wide range of demographics in their community to provide the most inclusive service. Some of their inclusive materials include an impaired vision brochure, large print brochures and documents translated to Spanish and other languages upon request. The HIRTA website is also available in multiple languages. Though their “Do You Have Transportation?” program, HIRTA is developing strategic partnerships with healthcare clinics and other local businesses to advertise and raise awareness about their transit service as well as employment opportunities. To learn more about HIRTA visit their website.

Rural Health Information Hub
The Rural Health Information Hub provides a brief overview of how to market a rural transportation programs, as well as some of the important steps to take in developing effective marketing strategies to reach riders in rural areas. To learn more about RHI Hub, visit their website.

National Rural Transportation Assistance Program, Marketing Toolkit
RTAP has developed a marketing toolkit designed to be a comprehensive and practical guide for rural and tribal public transportation agencies to develop and implement successful marketing programs for their systems. The toolkit includes a “how to” guide, steps to developing a marketing plan, strategies, templates and more.
Overcoming Barriers to Walking or Rolling

Introduction

Walking and rolling (for wheelchair or scooter users) allows people to move around their community to reach nearby stores, visit friends or family and enjoy time outside. Most importantly, walking is the easiest way to be active, and enables us to maintain a healthy lifestyle, reduce blood pressure and the risk of cardiovascular disease. Walking and rolling is safe for many of us, however, navigating a safe path of travel can be a struggle for many people. To improve pedestrian safety, we need to confront the risks of roadway use and pedestrian infrastructure.

According the Smarth Growth America, over 6,700 pedestrians were killed in the United States in 2020, happening while far fewer vehicles were on the road due to the pandemic. Between 2008 and 2017, 49,340 American pedestrians were killed on roadways, more than twice as likely to die than pedestrians in other industrialized countries. Pre-pandemic, the number of annual pedestrian deaths increased 53% since 2019. Older Americans are only 15% of the total population, yet, their risk is far higher. Smart Growth America’s Pedestrian Danger Index (PDI) for Americans overall is 14.8, but rises to 20 for those fifty and older; 20.7 at age 65; and 27 for those 75 years and older. Pedestrian deaths have risen by 46% in ten years; however, more pedestrians are injured by cars than statistics show because no incident report had been filed. The DC (District of Columbia) Policy Center reports that three times as many pedestrians and bicyclists are injured in traffic than are counted, due to under-reporting.

![Graph Source: DC Policy Center, “Percentage of Total Motor Vehicle Related Fatalities, 2006-2017”](image-url)
Pedestrian Infrastructure

Motorists generally use arterial and collector streets to navigate to destinations like retail stores, restaurants and healthcare, however, many states don’t require continuous pedestrian pathways along major roads. If choosing to walk or roll on the shoulder, these could be paved but are often covered in grass or mud. Even where sidewalks do exist, the pavement may be broken with noticeable gaps or barriers. Curb cuts along street corners are meant for ease of accessibility by wheelchair users but could be missing or broken. Snowplows may bury curb cuts and bus stops with snow, causing an additional barrier to safe crossing or use. Additional barriers include utility poles intruding into the sidewalk path, intersections lacking marked crosswalks or pedestrian signals, or no pedestrian refuge island in the middle of a busy intersection. Each of these factors impose safety concerns and may force pedestrians to use the street for a lack of pedestrian infrastructure.

For non-drivers, a lack of inaccessible street crossings effectively divides the community, causing neighborhoods to isolate from stores and other destinations. Those who attempt to cross busy intersections by foot or wheelchair, have an inherently higher risk to their overall safety. While those who do not venture out, risk social isolation or loneliness, unless they have the means to pay for public transportation.

Driving Environment

Both drivers and their vehicles have changed, with higher percentages of drivers today older (65+) and younger (18-24). Older drivers may struggle due to changes in their vision and reaction time, while younger drivers often lack experience and attuned judgement. All drivers may be distracted by cell phone use, driving under the influence of alcohol or other substances. Some drivers may also be accustomed to the lack of sidewalks or pedestrian pathways, and often struggle to see a pedestrian alongside a driveway or when making a right turn into or out of a parking lot.

Vehicles have changed too. The majority of personal vehicles sold before the pandemic (69%) were sport utility vehicles and light duty trucks and are now almost a third of personal vehicles on the road. SUVs and light duty trucks are heavier than sedans and have a higher front profile and center of gravity, so when an adult pedestrian is hit by an SUV or a truck the point of contact is to the body, rather than at the legs when hit by a lower profile sedan. 30% of pedestrians hit by SUVs or light duty trucks traveling under 40 mph are likely to be killed or
seriously injured, as opposed to 22% of those hit by sedans – this instance has increased 81% between 2009 and 2016.

Older pedestrians or individuals who move slower, have poorer balance and may be less aware of their surroundings are at higher risk of being hit by a vehicle. A study by the Health Survey of England found that the average walking speed for adults over age 65 is 2.6-3 feet per second, however, the Federal Highway Administrations’ Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices suggests that pedestrians can walk 4 feet per second – one-third faster than older adults surveyed in the Health Study of England.

Older people are at higher risk of death or severe injury from crashes. Often attributed to slower movement, poor balance and less bone density or other medical conditions.

We Can Reduce the Danger
The risk of SUVs is being mitigated, vehicle manufacturers have introduced newer models with lower profile front bumpers to avoid body impact, this change could be coming for light duty trucks as well. Main strategies to reduce the number of pedestrian injuries and deaths is clear:

1. Pedestrian Infrastructure and Education
   a. Provide continuous pedestrian pathways and safe crosswalks along arterial and collector roads, and to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, a sidewalk has to be at least 3 foot wide.
   b. Allow adequate time for pedestrian crossing, displaying the number of seconds available to cross the street. These times often assume a walking speed one-third higher than many older adults can achieve.
   c. Provide flashing beacons activated by pedestrians entering crosswalks.
   d. Older adults should be educated in defensive walking techniques, dressing in brightly visible clothing, and should be constantly aware of their surroundings and whereabouts of turning or backing vehicles.
   e. Adapt Safe Routes to Schools techniques to the needs of older adults reaching destinations.

2. Slower Speeds
   a. Reducing roadway speeds through design. Lanes on arterial and residential streets are often 12 foot wide and are required to accommodate interstate highway speeds, while a city bus only requires a 10.5-foot-wide lane. Narrowing lanes encourage slower driving and can accommodate more room for sidewalks and protected bike lanes along the corridor.
   b. Traffic calming techniques, besides narrowing travel lanes include:
      • curb extensions, or bulb-outs, to reduce crossing distances.
• pedestrian refuge island, to reduce crossing distances on busy multi-lane intersections.
• planting street trees and installing benches, creating a welcoming affect rather than miles of pavement.
• installing marked and visible speed humps.
• establishing signed or marked crosswalks, including visible and audible indicators and a flashing beacon.
• installing traffic circles at intersections.

Communities can also consider implementing Complete Streets concepts. As defined by US DOT, Complete Streets are designed to enable safe use by people of all ages and abilities, including drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation users. Well-connected walking (and bicycling) trail networks are necessary for livable communities, providing mobility for people who are too young to drive, cannot drive, or choose not to drive.

Communities like St. Louis, Missouri have begun improvements to their pedestrian infrastructure, by reducing traffic lane widths and adding bicycle lanes along South Grand Avenue, for enhanced pedestrian safety, as depicted in the photo to the right.

Summary
An increasing number of pedestrians have been killed and/or injured in traffic crashes over the past decade. The pandemic saw an increase in the rate of these crashes, despite a reduction in both traffic and vehicle miles travelled. Older adults are particularly at risk due to slower walking and movement, sometimes reduced awareness of surroundings increasing the risk of being involved in an incident. Reduced bone density and pre-existing health conditions among older adults increase the rate of injury, but at the same time reduce their ability to survive traffic injuries.
An increasing number of communities, prompted by heightened awareness and advocacy, are responding by improved pedestrian infrastructure including enhanced pathways and crosswalks, as well as, slowing traffic with a variety of traffic calming techniques and Complete Streets policies.

References and Resources


Federal Highway Administration Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, in https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/


New Study Suggests Today's SUVs are More Lethal to Pedestrians than Cars, Insurance Institute

Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State: 2020 Preliminary Data, Governor’s Highway Safety Association, in https://www.ghsa.org/resources/Pedestrians21


Project Sidewalk: A Web-based Crowdsourcing Tool for Collecting Sidewalk Accessibility Data at Scale, at https://sidewalk-sea.cs.washington.edu/


Serving People with Autism on Transportation

Background
According to the Autism Society of America, “Autism, or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is a complex, lifelong developmental disability that typically appears during early childhood and can impact a person’s social skills, communication, relationships, and self-regulation. Autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a ‘spectrum condition’ that affects people differently and to varying degrees.” According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V), the characteristics of Autism can include differences in communication skills, interpersonal relationships, restricted and repetitive behaviors, activities, and interests. Persons with Autism may be verbal or non-verbal; have atypical speech patterns; have trouble understanding non-verbal communication such as body language; have difficulty maintaining typical conversation flow; repeat sounds, phrases, or movements; prefer routine; and/or have either increased or decreased sensitivity to sensory stimuli.

People with Autism are individualized and may experience many or few of the characteristics described above. This creates a situation where transit personnel may not be able to easily recognize that a person has Autism or determine what types of assistance people with Autism may need. This brief will provide you the basic requirements for transit personnel assistance for people with disabilities, additional Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements that may affect the services provided to people with Autism, transportation challenges, tips, and promising practices for serving people with Autism, and additional resources.

Requirements for Assisting Passengers with Disabilities
Transit agency personnel, including vehicle operators, rail conductors, and bus/rail station attendants are required to provide assistance to people with disabilities, including individuals with Autism, when accessing transit agency services. According to U.S. DOT regulations implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), “Where necessary or upon request, the entity’s personnel shall assist individuals with disabilities with the use of securement systems, ramps and lifts. If it is necessary for the personnel to leave their seats to provide this assistance, they shall do so” (49 CFR § 37.165(f)). Personnel should assist with deploying lifts/ramps, securing passengers’ wheelchairs, the proper use of seat belts and shoulder harnesses, and persons using wheelchairs when navigating on and off lift platforms or up/down ramps.”
While transit personnel are not required to provide services typically provided by a personal care attendant (PCA), they are required to provide a “reasonable level of assistance to customers with and without disabilities as a part of their routine job of serving the public and in the interest of customer service.” This general assistance includes, but is not limited to, assistance with fare handling. For example, assisting passengers that cannot reach or insert a fare into the fare box should be provided. However, transit personnel would not be required to reach into pockets, backpacks, or other personal items to retrieve fare payments. It could be the case that a person with Autism might have difficulty following instructions on how to pay the bus fare and may need the instructions provided in a different way, which could include simplified written directions, verbal directions, or to have directions repeated several times.

Transit agencies are not required to provide passengers with PCAs. Transit agencies should follow their stated policies on luggage and packages but are not required to provide services above and beyond those policies. Apart from an emergency situation, transit personnel are not required to lift a passenger into or out of a mobility device, otherwise called hand-carrying.

**Additional ADA Requirements**

Additional ADA requirements for people with disabilities riding public transportation include, but are not limited to accessible signage, adequate boarding time, and operator training.

- **Accessible Signage**: Transit signage in stations and on vehicles must comply with all ADA standards.
- **Adequate Boarding Time**: Transit operators must allow adequate time for people with disabilities to board and alight transit vehicles.
- **Operator Training**: Transit operators are required to be trained to proficiency in the use of all vehicle equipment, ADA requirements, passenger assistance techniques, and any other aspect of their job requirements.

**Transportation Challenges**

Many people with Autism are very individualized, transit personnel may experience a range of challenges in providing assistance. Some individuals may need no assistance at all. Others may need assistance, but the type of assistance may not be apparent. This presents a challenge for transit staff. There are challenges specific to the common characteristics that many people with autism experience.
Common challenges include, but are not limited to:

- **Social Phobia**: Social phobias affect a person’s ability to interact in standard ways with others. As public transportation is a shared ride service, issues with interacting with transit personnel and the public could cause challenges and may create situations where communication is very difficult or even impossible.

- **Excessive Worry/Anxiety**: Excessive anxiety, which can be experienced even in ordinary circumstances, can cause an increased heart rate, breathing rapidly, sweating, and trouble concentrating. A passenger exhibiting these symptoms may seem in need of immediate, emergency attention.

- **Obsessive Compulsive Behaviors**: Recurring, unwanted thoughts or sensations cause people to conduct repetitive behaviors such as checking whether tasks have been completed such as scanning a fare card multiple times, counting items or people, and repeating actions or phrases. On public transportation, this may cause the passenger to be distracted by exhibiting such behaviors instead of focusing on what is needed for a successful trip.

- **Avoidance Behaviors**: These behaviors occur when a person is trying to escape from difficult thoughts and feelings. If a person with Autism traveling on public transit becomes overly anxious, they may feel the need to avoid other people which could cause issues as the vehicles are confined spaces. This may further escalate their feelings of anxiety.

- **Rigid Routines**: Keeping rigid routines is often essential in the daily life of people with Autism. Anxiety will often increase when routines are not able to be kept. If a route, driver, person, or other action that is a part of the routine changes, the person with Autism’s anxiety could be increased.

- **Self-injurious Behavior**: This behavior involves the occurrence of physical injury to one’s own body. Common forms include head-hitting/banging and hand biting, and these behaviors may be exhibited by a person with Autism. This could be very unsettling for other passengers and may present an emergency situation on the vehicle.

- **Stimming**: This is a self-stimulating behavior that involves repetitive or unusual body movement or noises and can include hand-flapping, rocking back and forth, chewing on objects, listening to sounds over and over, and more. This behavior may concern other passengers but would generally not rise to the level of having transit personnel intervention.
• **Oppositional Defiance**: People with Autism may display angry and irritable symptoms, argumentative and defiant behavior, and vindictiveness as a part of oppositional defiance. These behaviors may present a problem if transit personnel requested something of the person that they did not want to give or do, or if it would change the individual’s routine, and may present a considerable challenge on a transit vehicle in an emergency situation.

• **Meltdowns**: Autistic meltdowns are generally bigger, more emotional, last longer, and are more difficult to manage than a typical temper tantrum. They are not limited to children but can also occur in adults. They are often preceded by signs of distress. Depending on the behaviors exhibited during a meltdown, transit personnel may need to intervene.

• **Shut Down**: When a person with Autism shuts down, they are not able to respond and react in ways they typically would. They may not seem themselves, as their focus generally shifts to only basic functions. This may affect their ability to communicate and react. This would generally not be a situation requiring transit personnel intervention depending on when it occurred. If, however, it occurs during an emergency situation, the passenger may require additional assistance.

• **Difficulty in Transitions**: Many people with Autism, have difficulty in transitioning from one activity to another. This difficulty could present itself in the form of distraction, avoidance, or even meltdown. A person may exhibit these behaviors when boarding the bus if they did not want to transition from an activity they were involved in prior to boarding, or as they are preparing to deboard if they do not want the trip to end.

**Tips and Promising Practices**

There are many ways in which passengers with Autism can better prepare themselves for taking public transportation. Should you encounter a passenger that seems to be having difficulty in one or more of the areas mentioned above, and if you believe the tip would be useful to the passenger, suggest one of the actions below to either the passenger or their caregiver, if present.

• Block out noise by wearing headphones or another noise reduction product
• Travel at quieter, less busy times if possible
• Select a seat in an empty row, if available, and sit by the window (This will allow the person the ability to look out the window while traveling and may reduce stress.)
• Carry a familiar item with you (A favorite book, piece of clothing, or other item may reduce stress.)
The following are tips and promising practices for transit personnel when dealing with difficult situations with people with Autism.

- Ask what, if any, assistance is needed and provide it if reasonable and possible.
- If the passenger is a regular rider, take the time to learn how they communicate best. Always carry a pen and paper with you in case it is needed for effective communication.
- If a visual set of rules is not displaced in the station or on the transit vehicle, have copies to share if needed. If it is displayed, it may be necessary to briefly review the rules with the passenger.
- Briefly describe the steps of the transit trip to the passenger. Letting them know the next step, approximately how many stops before you reach their destination, or approximately how much time will elapse, could alleviate anxiety.
- Assure the passenger that you are there to help them and to keep them safe.
- Always stay calm.
- If you’re aware of a change in what the passenger would consider a routine, let them know in advance, if possible.
- Have sensory items (squishy buses or other transit marketing items) available on the bus to provide to passengers if needed and appropriate.
- If a passenger is using a communication device, take the time to participate fully in the conversation even if it takes longer than usual.

Summary
Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that presents differently in each person; therefore, providing safe and reliable transportation to people with Autism can be a challenge. Taking the time to learn more about Autism, the ADA requirements, and your passengers will increase your compliance, improve customer service, and increase the quality of life of persons with Autism using your public transportation system.

Resources
Safety for all: Autism Training for Transportation Staff (designed for school transportation personnel but has a lot of useful information for public transportation)

The Arc’s Autism Now Center

TCRP Synthesis 37: Communicating with Persons with Disabilities in a Multimodal Transit Environment

Detour to the Right Place: A Study with Recommendations for Addressing the Transportation Needs and Barriers of Adults on the Autism Spectrum in New Jersey (Executive Summary) (Technical Report)
Travel Training During a Global Pandemic

Background
Across the country, transportation agencies are approaching services in unique ways; one of these methods of delivery is Travel Training. This service is often developed by a Mobility Manager or agency staff and used as an educational tool to assist passengers individually or in a group setting. This type of service is an eligible expense under FTA Section 5310, and can support staff time, marketing efforts, bus fare or whatever the program might need to assist in training passengers. The primary focus of Travel Training is to implement a training program or curriculum to assist riders, including older adults and persons with disabilities, with the end goal of giving them the tools to travel independently within their community.

A Transit Cooperative Research Program publication (TCRP, Report 168), *Travel Training for Older Adults*, indicated that the main reason for not riding the bus was an unfamiliarity with public transportation or available options, and a general lack of confidence in using its services. Navigating transportation can be intimidating to new customers, especially for the aging and disability communities. Riders may have trouble understanding and navigating system route maps and schedules and may be overwhelmed by transit options. This is where adopting a formal Travel Training program can be beneficial for your riders.

There are several opportunities to assist transit staff in the implementation of a Travel Training program; one of the primary options is the Certified Travel Training Instructor program managed by Easterseals Project Action Consulting. This is a 60-credit hour course, to be completed within 2 years, and certified through the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of South Florida. As a way to continue learning and gain additional resources, Travel Trainers can become members of the Association of Travel Instruction (ATI). Membership also facilitates connection with peers in travel training programs across the country and helps travel trainers further develop their skills.

Travel Training during COVID has presented many challenges and has proven that even during a global pandemic, people still need to get to work or access critical medical appointments. Many travel training programs shut down or limited their services due to local health measures and an inability to appropriately keep riders healthy and safe. However, several transit agencies were able to develop methods to deliver the training needed.
What is Travel Training?
Travel Trainers demonstrate the skills needed for people with disabilities, older adults, and other interested travelers to access and use public transportation independently. By becoming a certified travel instructor, you can ensure partner agencies that you can confidently assist individuals learn the skills needed to ride the bus, access transportation options and navigate the community in both rural and urban settings. Professional skills developed through formalized Travel Training coursework include:

- Knowledge of human development and social behavior
- An understanding of community transportation services and options
- Developing individualized trip planning tools
- Identifying concepts of both natural and built environments along paths of travel

Trip Planning

Scheduling a trip applies to rural Demand Response and Complementary Paratransit services in urban areas. Guidelines vary by system, but typically require calling at least 24 hours in advance of the trip, and many also allow customers to schedule multiple trips or standing reservations months in advance. When scheduling a trip, transit agencies will ask for the home address, phone number and the destination to which the passenger will be traveling for work, school, social or medical purposes. Giving information to transit agencies is safe and secure and is only used by agencies to learn about passengers’ travel preferences, use of a wheelchair or walker, notifying the driver of a service animal, or traveling with a personal care attendant or companion.

Travel Training instructs riders how to schedule a ride; catch the bus; when to be ready for a scheduled pick-up; what to expect while riding the bus; finding the correct bus stop; a timeframe for the bus to arrive (Demand Response); how to pay for the trip; what to expect when using the bus lift or having a wheelchair secured; and how to call for a return trip home.

Trip planning on an urban fixed route system can look rather different than on Demand Response. Riders need to be aware of the route number, closest fixed route stop, and how to navigate to their desired end destination. There are many tools available for the rider, including mobile applications or online planning tools to discover appropriate routes and run through scenarios for the trip. If technology is a barrier, the Travel Trainer can meet with

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*Photo: Examples of Trip Planning Mobile Applications*
the rider to work through each step of the process – reading a route map, locating the nearest bus stop, how to pay the fare, and how to notify the driver when you have reached your desired stop.

Path of Travel

After the trainer has collected information about where the rider is going and for what purpose, they will perform a walking audit, assess the path of travel, and tailor a trip for individual riders. A Travel Trainer has the ability to assess the built environment and sidewalk infrastructure along the path of travel before meeting with the rider. Trainers are looking for obstructions or barriers along the path of travel; low hanging tree branches or shrubs that encroach across the sidewalk; cracks and bumps in the sidewalk or street; clearly marked and safe crosswalks; curb cuts; traffic signals; and landmarks to assist in a seamless and stress-free trip.

Local Examples

Travel Training has the ability to be as simple as providing transportation resources and information through a call center or presenting to community groups. Travel Training programs can also be an extensive team of trainers providing hands-on education, including path of travel and route planning assessments.

The Kennedy Center, Inc., Trumbull, Connecticut

Funded by the Connecticut Department of Transportation, The Kennedy Center 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 Travel Training program addresses safe street crossing, how to interact with bus drivers and other passengers, and self-advocacy for traveling independently. Since 1991, The Kennedy Center has successfully trained more than 3,000 people with cognitive, sensory, and physical disabilities within their service area.

Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART), Des Moines, Iowa

DART is the designated transit agency serving the Des Moines urbanized area, offering fixed route, Complementary Paratransit, Demand Response, vanpool and a newly developed microtransit option. They have access to a full-time team of marketing and planning staff, giving the Mobility Coordinator the ability to promote and educate the public on the services offered. Prior to the pandemic, DART’s Mobility Coordinator was regularly out in the community promoting the use of transportation and conducting Travel Training for individuals and groups seeking information about DARTS’s available services. Trainings typically consisted of meeting with a group at an agency or conducting Travel Trainings by meeting at an established stop and providing a quick orientation and bus ride to their desired destination.
However, in March of 2020, regular bus service was reduced to essential trips only. This eliminated face-to-face trainings, which focused DART’s outreach and Travel Training programs to phone call check-ins with existing clients. After a few months, DART staff started preparing ways to approach virtual trainings, as well as incorporating many of the changes implemented due to the pandemic; social distancing, federal mask mandates, rear boarding, and providing fare-free service. A large majority of DART’s Travel Training clients are refugees or individuals new to the community, so the local resettlement agency has formed a partnership with DART to provide free training within the first few weeks of arriving to the Des Moines metro area. Considering many of the riders needed to get to work, even during the pandemic, the initial plan was to conduct live virtual trainings focused on basic orientation to DART services. However, it was quickly realized that many of the trainees did not have immediate access to a computer or internet, which was previously accessed through a community center or group home setting and now, due to the pandemic, were closed to public use.

DART’s Mobility Coordinator quickly started working with its External Affairs Department to develop a series of short videos that could be available on its YouTube channel. The videos would be short clips of how to board, how to pay, where to sit, and how to notify the driver when the passenger was ready to get off. Access to the internet remained a barrier, however, the videos were accessible wherever the rider could access the internet, and available 24/7. When training riders who use English as a second language, an interpreter is needed to ensure a better understanding of the skills being taught. During the pandemic, DART started using video chat with an interpreter while training new riders, and when returning to in-person trainings, they maintained that relationship with the same interpreters, allowing DART to adapt its new ways of conducting trainings, post-pandemic, and avoiding large groups of trainees. Another program shift occurred when nursing, long term care and residential facilities closed their doors to outside visitors, and DART was able to utilize its training videos for a broader audience. One such care facility has several sites around the Des Moines
metro area and recognized that residents could use their quarantine time to educate themselves on public transportation, so they made DART’s videos readily available for anyone to watch. The videos proved to be popular with residents, and once they were allowed to navigate away from the facility, they were eager to try out their newly developed skills by riding the bus to their favorite destinations and getting back into the community.

Ridership from these facilities continued to grow in early 2021; so much so, that the company added transportation as a benefit to the residents and became an Unlimited Access Parter with DART. This partnership allows the company to pay for transportation costs, and then pass along free bus passes to their residents. This type of partnership is typically geared towards businesses for its employees, but this is a unique example of a care facility offering transportation as a benefit to its residents.

Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA), Bellingham, Washington

Just before the pandemic, WTA’s Travel Trainer was tasked with building a program that would be open to people of all ages and abilities, geared toward anyone who wanted to learn how to ride the fixed route bus independently. This program assists with online trip planning; how to read and understand route maps and schedules; identifying bus stops and landmarks; purchasing bus fares; and safely transferring between bus routes. The ultimate goal is to transfer Complementary Paratransit users to the fixed route system: for those who have conditional eligibility; for people whose rides vary by season due to extreme hot or cold weather; for individuals with a short-term injury enabling the passenger to navigate the fixed route safely; or for passengers who may be ambulatory but need an extra boost of confidence to ride independently. Prior to COVID, the Travel Trainer had successfully transitioned 86 individual paratransit riders onto fixed route services, and at $45 per ride, this created an estimated $3,870 monthly savings for WTA.

At the onset of COVID, WTA’s Travel Trainer was left with no trainees nor had the ability to provide community outreach, due to closed businesses and restricted community guidelines, thankfully, WTA was able to retain their Travel Trainer and put them to work on other tasks. It provided an opportunity for the trainer to take Certified Travel Training Instructor coursework to better understand the community and its passengers. As part of the ongoing community
effort, the Travel Trainer also assisted with meal delivery from the local food banks, getting vital commodities to those who could not leave their homes and were sheltering in place.

Another big project, as part of their grant with Washington State DOT, was to inventory every WTA bus stop and assess the ADA accessibility and compliance with local and federal regulations. This project has allowed both the Travel Trainer and WTA to understand future project work, and the accessibility of their stops for passengers to navigate safely around the community.

**Summary**

Travel Training Instruction can be a method to enhance the knowledge and skills of older adults, persons with disabilities, and the public, allowing riders to travel safely and independently throughout their community. Programs developed by the Mobility Manager or Travel Trainer are eligible under the FTA Section 5310 program, as a way to enhance services for the aging and disability communities but remain open to general riders, too. Public transportation can be challenging for those who have not ridden a bus in their lifetime, often relying on friends or family for a ride to their vital medical appointments, essential trips, grocery shopping or social outings. Travel Training can enhance a rider’s confidence in riding on their own and broadening their ability to independently access the services they need.

**Resources**

“Travel Training for Older Adults.” Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP, Report 168)  
[https://www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/171323.aspx](https://www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/171323.aspx)

Easterseals Project Action Consulting; Travel Trainer Certification  

Association for Travel Instruction  
[https://www.travelinstruction.org](https://www.travelinstruction.org)

The Kennedy Center  
[https://www.thekennedycenterinc.org](https://www.thekennedycenterinc.org)

Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART)  
[https://www.ridedart.com/](https://www.ridedart.com/)

Whatcom Transportation Authority; Travel Training  
Rural Community Engagement

Background
Our lives have no doubt been affected in some way by the COVID-19 virus. For many, work, education, and entertainment look very different now compared to before the pandemic, as are the ways public transportation programs reach out to their customers and community.

As transportation programs continue to adjust to different operating circumstances and needs, it is important, and often required, that the public be allowed input into how transportation services are provided. Public participation can be difficult for any system; however, participation from rural areas can be particularly challenging.

An intentional participation plan which identifies the target audience and purpose for the outreach needs to be in place, as well as the key messages and best method of getting that message across to the community. The continuum of public participation ranges from hosting public comment periods to inform the community, to true engagement that empowers the community in the planning and decision-making process.

Public Comment to Community Engagement
Public comment periods are typically one-way communication designed to inform, rather than to engage. They are often late in the process when changes are not always able to be made. The continuum of public participation goes from informing, to consulting and involving, to collaborating and finally to empowerment. Beyond just informing is where the public is asked to take action such as filling out a survey or participating in community mapping. Such efforts are designed to involve the public in decision-making to receive their feedback on the proposed project or service. Engagement occurs when the community is involved throughout the entire process. The community is actively helping identify issues, planning for changes in service or starting a new service altogether. Engagement is about partnerships and making joint decisions and leads to empowerment of the community in how their public transportation will operate.

Regulations
The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) shared planning regulation, found at 23 CFR 450 outlines federal expectations for “statewide and metropolitan planning agencies in effectively engaging the public, including low-income and minority communities.” Even for non-planning agencies, these guidelines are good practices when planning projects and engagement.
For meaningful public engagement, an agency should:

- Eliminate participation barriers and engage minority and low-income populations in transportation decision making.
- Develop and implement strategies for meaningful engagement of the community.
- Identify and understand the needs of the community as a whole and incorporate those needs into transportation plans and programs.
- Produce outreach strategies for transportation plans that “describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for” public engagement, which includes low-income and minority populations.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of these outreach strategies.
- Go beyond the traditional methods of public outreach to incorporate innovative approaches that leverage the ever-changing communications environment in which we live.
- Implement varying communication methods including distributing flyers at the local community center, churches, or grocery stores, and posting information on vehicles, at bus stops, transit stations, and other locations frequented by riders. Materials also should be prepared for persons with limited-English proficiency.

“Meaningful public engagement does not mean that every issue or concern raised by the community must be resolved. However, it does require agencies to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the communities impacted by the proposed action, listen to what they have to say, respond to their comments and concerns, and incorporate their comments into the transportation decision-making process where practicable.”

(FTA, “What do we Mean by Meaningful Public Engagement”).

It is important to recognize the grant under which your program operates may require specific public engagement activities. This is true for Section 5310, Enhanced Mobility of Seniors, and Individuals with Disabilities formula grantees. The Section 5310 guidance requires projects to be included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. That plan must be developed and approved through a process that includes participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit
transportation and human services providers, and other members of the public. This guidance identifies tools and strategies for developing a coordinated plan including hosting community planning sessions, using a self-assessment tool, holding focus groups, conducting a survey and completing a detailed study and analysis. The quality of input received, and the amount of engagement will depend on the plan for public participation and the methods used to hear from those most impacted by these services.

Challenges and Opportunities of Rural Community Engagement

Even before the pandemic, many systems struggled to engage the public in decision making. Systems often reported that no one attended the meetings set up for public comment or didn’t respond to the print ads requesting comments or input on programs. In rural areas, these activities can be more difficult as people are dispersed, and those who need the service, may struggle to learn about and participate in these meetings. While there were increases in technology use and virtual meetings to gain input during COVID, those methods also present issues for individuals in rural areas.

Opportunities

A well-planned engagement plan provides an opportunity to honor the lived experience, and knowledge of residents in order to co-create solutions that are practical and effective. Community engagement can also have other benefits as highlighted below.

- Increase the likelihood that projects or solutions will be widely accepted.
- Improve citizens’ knowledge by learning about the issues in-depth. Greater knowledge allows them to see multiple sides of the problem.
- Empower and integrate people from different backgrounds.
- Create local networks of community members. The more people who know what is going on and who are willing to work toward a goal, the more likely a community is to be successful in reaching its goals.
- Create several opportunities for discussing concerns.
- Increase trust in community organizations and governance. Working together improves communication and understanding.

In addition, a well-designed engagement effort allows you to identify and understand:

- Differing values and priorities

U.S. DOT created the Every Place Counts: Leadership Academy, and was developed to provide the background information and tools for community members to Learn – Engage – Make a Difference. The toolkit and facilitator guide can be used to help those with limited experience in transportation decision-making become more familiar with the processes and understand how they can make a difference in their community.
• Differing ways citizens view the community or a particular project
• Alternatives and consequences of changes
• Perceptions of and real benefits and risks
• Different ideas and potential solutions and actions

Challenges
Engagement in rural areas was already challenging prior to the pandemic, but when more processes and meetings went virtual and online, existing barriers were exacerbated, and additional barriers were identified that could limit the full inclusion of all community members in the planning process. Lack of knowledge about and interest or ability to be involved in planning processes can stem from a variety of circumstances. These include insufficient outreach and advertising, inadequate messaging about involvement, transportation and mobility challenges, and mismatch of time and place of meetings to members of the community.

Using new technology has greatly expanded online public participation in some situations. Some agencies received feedback from a larger cross-section of the community and more first-time participants. Online engagement can help address time constraints resulting from childcare, shift work or other commitments and can allow participants to remain anonymous which can increase participation. Being able to participate on one’s own schedule and not needing to travel are benefits; however, the lack of broadband in rural areas, lack of a computer or necessary technology to participate, and unfamiliarity with how to use new technology remain significant barriers.

Internally, an agency may lack the expertise to shift to online engagement, new tools may be cost prohibitive, and platform accessibility can vary. It is important to manage your team’s expectations for engagement and ensure the methods chosen can be properly implemented. It takes time to learn new platforms and staff roles and duties within the online engagement process need to be assigned to ensure a good experience for the participants.

Strategies for Impactful Rural Community Engagement
Extensive public participation plans written and implemented by consultants or high-tech options for engagement are often out of reach for smaller agencies due to cost and/or staff capacity and knowledge. Traditional lower-tech outreach methods include social media messaging through targeted content and ads, using school system parent notification system, surveys, direct mailing, and printed notices such as flyers or door hangers.
One of the most successful engagement strategies is to work through existing networks of community organizations and identify trusted leaders and community champions from those groups to assist with community engagement planning and outreach.

*Other strategies include:*

- Attend community meetings to learn about the priorities of different groups. Assess the environment. It may not be *if* the community is ready to talk about transportation, but *how* best to address it.
- Translate materials to other languages spoken in the community.
- Provide interpretation for those who are deaf and hard of hearing or speak a different language.
- Provide handouts in accessible formats to accommodate the needs of people with vision loss and other disabilities.
- Provide childcare, meals and compensation for people who participate.
- Identify barriers to engagement by each community group. It could be the time of day or location of meetings. Find a neutral site for meetings or places where people feel comfortable.
- If doing virtual engagement, partner with a library or school to provide access to computers for those who do not have them at home.
- Host listening sessions, town halls or focus groups to surface priorities and concerns. These can be done in-person, virtually or by telephone.
- Understand past efforts to learn what has been done previously and to uncover pre-existing beliefs that may create issues during the process.
- Create a formal advisory committee to oversee and provide direction.
- Host a walking or bus tour of the community with community members, elected officials, and business leaders.

The question agencies ask themselves is, “How do we know we are reaching everyone?” This is a difficult question to answer, but agencies should work into their planning process performance measures and targets to measure the effectiveness of their outreach efforts. Reaching out to community partners and providing several ways for voices to be heard and as many entry points for feedback as possible are important parts of a community engagement strategy.
Local Examples

Regional Transit Service, Rochester, New York

Regional Transit Service (RTS) has done extensive outreach in both their urban area and surrounding seven more rural counties in advance of facility projects and their system redesign. They learned that the traditional meetings, even pre-COVID, were not attracting the number of people or the cross-section of the community they wanted to hear from. They hired a planning agency to conduct the outreach and worked with elected officials and community leaders to create a Community Advisory Group.

Another key component was getting the meetings in the right places at the right times. A concern over a Wednesday night meeting, when most Black churches in that community also met, lead to the involvement of a pastor who joined their advisory committee. Meetings were also held at local community centers, rather than a convention center, to solicit more feedback from impacted populations. The consultants helped facilitate meetings. The involvement of an outside and neutral entity helped defuse contentious situations. The consultants also attended baseball games and festivals to go where the people were already gathering.

In one county, they placed a kiosk, which was a computer set up with the transit survey, at a social services office where people were already going to get their benefits and other assistance. The number of completed surveys from that community was higher than others in part due to this outreach method. Another innovative technique the consultant used was to present the top eight options and give participants ten dollars in “fake” money. Participants were asked to vote with their dollars for the project they wanted to invest in. This allowed the team to determine the priorities of the group.

Not only was outreach conducted prior to the system redesign, but once the final decisions had been made and changes were being implemented, RTS ambassadors were stationed at bus stops and hubs to speak with customers about the upcoming changes and help them navigate the new system. Their award-winning outreach started during the planning stage and continued throughout the implementation of their system changes.

Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency, Urbandale, Iowa

Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTA) significantly increased their online engagement by hiring a Community Outreach Coordinator during the pandemic. This staff member is dedicated to engagement through social media, the website, and using other tools. While making connections virtually is hard, HIRTA uses its social media channels to generate interest and excitement about their system. While building their engagement methods, consideration was given to the target audience, branding to ensure consistency, and the content. The
platform they used, and content created was determined by the purpose of the engagement and the intended audience. A system does not need to be present on all social media platforms.

One example of driving engagement is on the HIRTA Facebook page. Different challenges ran monthly including a Wellness Challenge and a Kindness Challenge. These challenges offered suggested activities followers could do and post about. Every comment to a specific post was given an entry to win a prize. Drivers were interviewed on Facebook Live; a new event, Beyond the Bus, was started virtually in 2021, is posted on their YouTube channel, and will be continued as an online event only. Outreach opportunities are intentionally planned to ensure the audience understands the topic and the message HIRTA is sending.

Summary
Any type of public engagement can be challenging, but by partnering with trusted leaders and stakeholders, understanding the community, and reducing barriers to participation. By using these strategies, transportation providers can increase the amount and quality of the feedback received. In rural areas, there are longer distances to travel, technology and broadband deserts, and building relationships to engage people can be challenging when residents are dispersed. These issues are exacerbated in the time of COVID and social distancing.

When entering the engagement process, do so with a sense of humility that you are not the expert, but that the community members have expertise and knowledge which can improve the process and outcome. Community engagement and public participation do not just begin and end with a new project or service change. It is about building relationships and trust and empowering the community to shape a system that meets their needs.

Resources
Shared Practices for Engagement in Virtual Meetings, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Massachusetts


Community Engagement during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond: A Guide for Community-Based Organizations, The Urban Institute,

International Association for Public Participation, IAP² https://iap2usa.org/
Virtual Public Involvement, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Facilitative Leadership Online Tool Talks, Michigan State University
https://mediaspace.msu.edu/playlist/details/1_eonnyaej

Virtual Engagement Guidebook – National Center for Applied Transit Technology N-CATT,

Additional case studies of public participation from Minnesota DOT.
http://www.dot.state.mn.us/publicengagement/case-studies.html

References

Federal Transit Administration, What do we mean by “meaningful public engagement”?

Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program Guidance and Application Instructions, Section5310 Circular 9070.1G, July 14, 2014 Chapter V

https://www.rural.palegislature.us/Effective_Citizen_Engagement.pdf

Why Community Engagement Matters. Penn State University.
https://aese.psu.edu/research/centers/cecd/engagement-toolbox/engagement/why-community-engagement-matters

Adapted from the Sustainable Communities Initiative, PolicyLink, Kirwan Institute
https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/COMMUNITYENGAGEMENTGUIDE_LY_FINAL%20%281%29.pdf
Background
There are more than six million people in the United States living with dementia and that number is expected to increase to nearly 13 million by 2050. Currently, 70% of people with a dementia diagnosis are living in the community and 25% are living alone. Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias have symptoms that affect a person’s ability to drive causing them to rely on other forms of transportation to get where they need to go.

With support, people with Alzheimer’s and dementia can remain in their own homes and communities and have fulfilling lives. The availability of accessible transportation is a vital factor to make that happen. Public transit providers should build programs that meet the unique needs of individuals living with dementia to ensure they can stay active in their communities for as long as they are able. Transportation providers should incorporate accommodations for individuals with dementia during their planning process. Education and training, communication techniques, travel training and bus buddy programs can all be impactful in providing accessible transportation to people living with dementia.

What is Alzheimer’s and Dementia?
Dementia is a generalized term that describes a group of symptoms that affect a person's ability to remember, think clearly and make decisions. It is caused by damage to brain cells and is not a normal part of aging. Alzheimer’s disease is the most common type of dementia, accounting for 60%-80% of all dementia cases.

According to the Alzheimer’s Association, symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease include: memory loss; difficulty solving problems and completing familiar tasks; confusion with time or place; problems with communication; decreased judgement; and mood and behavior changes. These symptoms impact an individual’s ability to use public transportation, including scheduling the ride, getting to the vehicle, paying for the ride, remembering where they are going and how to get back. In the early stages of the disease, symptoms can be mild, and a person may function independently. They will need more help as symptoms become more severe and additional symptoms appear. Accommodations to enable people living with dementia to use public transportation will be needed as their need for support changes over time.
Impact on Public Transportation

As the number of people living at home in their communities who have Alzheimer’s or dementia continues to grow, public transit will likely need to expand to serve an increasing number of people potentially eligible for, and using, ADA complementary paratransit services and demand-response transportation. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires transit agencies to modify their existing policies and practices, if reasonable and if needed by the person with a disability, for a person with a disability (including people with Alzheimer’s or dementia) to take a trip. One possible modification is to provide door-to-door service. An agency may have a curb-to-curb policy; however, if a person with memory loss needs door-to-door service to successfully take a trip, the transit system must modify their policies to accommodate this need. Transit agencies are not required to provide door-through-door service.

Another example might be an accommodation when collecting fares. If a transit agency’s policy does not allow bus drivers to assist passengers with fare payment, but a passenger has difficulty figuring out their fare payment, it is reasonable for the driver to assist that passenger by, for example, showing them how to use their ticket or which bills or coins to use. In addition, the transit system could change the payment method.

In 2017, NADTC worked with Dementia Friendly Prince George’s County, MD to educate their local transportation network about transportation for individuals with dementia. Focus groups were held to discuss transportation utilization, needs, and recommendations for improving the system for people with dementia. Some of the findings from these focus groups are provided below.

- Place information about transportation services in a central location and broadly disseminate this information in the community and to support groups and senior centers.
- Provide aides to assist drivers in providing door-to-door services.
- Train transportation workers on how to provide dementia friendly services.
- Develop a backup system to family and friends who provide transportation.
- Reduce trip time in scheduling and have frequent communication updates.
- Increase the availability of more affordable transportation options.

NADTC Dementia Caregiving Transportation Panel
Strategies for Providing Transportation for Persons with Dementia

Understanding Dementia
As a first step in providing accessible transportation to people with dementia, all program staff, including but not limited to drivers, should have a basic understanding of what dementia is, the symptoms of the disease, and what it is like to live with dementia. The Alzheimer’s Association offers free, self-paced education programs that can be accessed online, or in-person workshops can be arranged with staff from the Association. Another educational tool is Dementia Friends, which is a one-hour information session, delivered by volunteer Dementia Champions. The Dementia Friends program teaches participants the five key messages of dementia, what it’s like to live with the disease, and how to better communicate with someone who has dementia. Staff who are aware of the challenges faced by individuals with dementia are better able to ensure these riders have a successful experience.

With the growing number of people with dementia, there is an increasing need for drivers to be educated on how to recognize signs of the disease in their passengers. The NADTC Dementia, Caregiving and Transportation brochure points out that since drivers sometimes see individuals every day or week, their observations can be critically important in assuring the safety of passengers. Changes in behavior such as forgetting to signal a stop or pay the bus fare, asking the same question over and over, or becoming confused about time, people and places are clues that an individual is confused and may need extra assistance.

Communicating with a Person who has Memory Loss
It is essential for transit personnel to learn how to effectively communicate and assist individuals with memory loss. Transit agencies (bus drivers and dispatchers) must ensure effective communication with people with disabilities which includes people who have Alzheimer’s disease or dementia. Steps transit agencies might take include:

- providing simplified versions of printed materials, bus routes and fare structure;
- using plain language in conversation;
- teaching all staff to use person-first language – emphasizing the person and not the disability (i.e., person with Alzheimer’s; person with Dementia).
Effective Communication When Assisting Passengers with Alzheimer’s and Dementia

- Make information available in various formats including print, visual, and auditory
- Provide simplified versions of materials or use simplified language in conversations
- Allow extra time for communication/conversations
- Provide additional customer service assistance, when needed, for better understanding
- Identify the needs of the passenger and how best to serve them by asking
- Speak directly to passengers, not companions or personal care attendants
- Smile, listen, and show respect
- Emphasize the person, not the disability, by using person-first language
- Have a pen and paper handy to assist with communication
- Speak clearly with a normal tone and speed unless requested otherwise

Brochure: NADTC: Assisting Passengers with Alzheimer’s and Dementia

Additional tips for effective communication from the Assisting Passengers with Alzheimer’s and Dementia brochure can be found in the corresponding text box.

NADTC held Office Hours on October 28, 2021 with Heather Comstock, Dementia Care Educator at the HUB on Smith, who presented on innovative approaches to communicate with individuals with dementia. Comstock explains that to help an individual with dementia use public transportation, there must be an understanding of the cognitive challenges the person faces. Just as physical ramps are provided to people who use wheelchairs, “cognitive ramps” should be utilized when serving individuals with memory impairment. By understanding how to effectively communicate with individuals who live with dementia, transportation providers can provide accessible transportation to them.

Challenges
Collaborating with community partners is important when creating a plan for accommodating the needs of people with dementia. Good partners to bring to the table include the Alzheimer’s Association, Aging & Disability Resource Centers, Area Agencies on Aging, and Centers for Independent Living. Since the implementation of the National Alzheimer’s Project Act in 2011, a number of organizations and coalitions across the country are working to make communities more livable for individuals living with dementia and their caregivers. These dementia friendly community initiatives are seeking partnership with local organizations that serve people with dementia (such as transit systems) in order to accomplish their mission.

Dementia Friendly America (DFA) offers support for local coalitions and maintains a list of communities who have joined the Dementia Friendly America movement. According to DFA,
one of the key goals for creating dementia friendly communities is to improve the physical environment in public places and systems, including transportation. A partnership between transportation providers and a local dementia friendly coalition can help achieve this goal. Not only can the coalition share insights on the specific challenges someone with dementia faces when utilizing transportation systems, they can also provide dementia training to staff and volunteers who provide the transportation.

People with dementia are at particular risk for being isolated, making accessible transportation of utmost importance. When people are isolated and lonely, their physical and mental health is negatively affected. Researchers warn that social isolation increases the likelihood of mortality by 25%. The Alzheimer’s Association stresses the importance of staying socially active as a possible way to delay the onset of dementia as well as helping individuals with the disease have a higher quality of life. Recognizing the damage social isolation has on individuals prompted a partnership between the Campaign to End Loneliness and the TransPennine Express, an express train in Great Britain. TransPennine Express deigned selected benches at their stations as “chatty benches” to encourage conversation between travelers as they wait for their trains. Building social connections where people gather, including on transit, is important in tackling loneliness.

**Travel Training and Bus Buddy Programs**

Travel training and bus buddy programs are two methods transit providers use to help new riders learn the skills needed to successfully navigate a transportation system. People who have recently retired from driving may have never used public transportation and might be unsure how to get started. Others might not feel confident in their ability to navigate the system due to memory or other physical or cognitive changes. Offering extra assistance can alleviate these stressors and encourage people with dementia to use available transportation services.

Travel training programs teach new riders the skills necessary to use the transit system such as how to read route maps and schedules, locate bus and train stops, calculate, and pay fares, recognize when the desired stop has been reached and use mobility devices safely on vehicles. Travel Training can be offered by paid employees, volunteers or both and are usually provided free to anyone who needs the training to successfully use the transportation service. Bus buddy
programs go one step further by providing an experienced transit user to ride along with new riders to offer one-one-one assistance during the trip.

Local Examples

Training

Rock County, Wisconsin provides an example of collaboration between two transit systems and their dementia friendly community initiative. Members of the dementia coalition provided training to transit staff and volunteers about the signs and symptoms of dementia, how to approach and interact with an individual with dementia, and how to maintain a dementia friendly environment. After managers, staff and volunteers were trained, the transit systems received a “dementia friendly” certification which lets people with dementia and their caregivers know staff have been trained to accommodate the needs of riders with dementia. New staff are educated by transit management using materials provided by the coalition until they can participate in the coalition’s annual training.

In Oklahoma, Dementia Friendly Tulsa teamed up with the Tulsa International Airport (TUL) to become the first dementia friendly airport in the United States. The effort started by requiring all TUL employees participate in the Dementia Friendly Tulsa (DFTulsa) program. First responder dementia friendly training was provided to airport police officers, and DFTulsa materials were distributed to airport ambassadors and tenants to enhance their awareness of dementia characteristics and ways to interact with passengers. They are also increasing awareness of family-care designated restrooms and their Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard program. This program, launched in London in 2016, designates a lanyard with sunflowers on a green background to indicate that the wearer has a hidden disability. The lanyard is available to travelers who wish to wear it to discreetly let airport personnel know that they may need additional support, help or a little more time. All these strategies used by the airport could be used by a transit system to enhance the user experience for their customers with dementia.
Travel Training and Bus Buddy

Intercity Transit in Olympia, Washington offers a good example of a Travel Training and Bus Buddy Program. They provide free travel training to anyone who wants to increase their confidence in riding the bus. The program is tailored to meet the specific needs of each rider, teaching them skills such as planning the trip, reading route maps and schedules, making transfers, and ensuring appropriate transit etiquette and safety. Training is provided classroom style or one-on-one while navigating the transit system. A “phase out” method is used in which trainers shadow passengers and follow up with them along the route to track their progress until the rider is comfortable riding alone.

Intercity Transit also offers a Bus Buddy program. Bus Buddies are experienced transit users who ride along with new riders to offer one-one-one, peer assistance, and help them become comfortable using the bus. The Bus Buddy answers questions, shows how to plan a route and make transfers, and helps with online tools. Bus Buddies also organize group trips to participate in community events and other activities. Intercity Transit provides six hours of training to Bus Buddy volunteers before matching them with a rider.

Summary

Alzheimer’s disease and dementia affect many individuals, forcing them to stop driving and leaving them at risk of social isolation. Public transit can play a role in helping individuals with dementia to continue to have a high quality of life, avoid social isolation, and maintain as much independence as possible by implementing strategies to accommodate their unique needs. Training staff and volunteers about dementia and how to effectively communicate with people who have dementia is one important step in providing access to transit services. Collaborating with local partners who participate in dementia friendly community initiatives might be the key to accomplishing this goal. Creating travel training and bus buddy programs will also make public transportation more accessible to individuals living with dementia, especially in the early stages of the disease. Providing easy to read materials and clear signage is another step towards accommodating the needs of people with dementia. Just as transit accommodates people with physical disabilities, individuals with dementia should also be provided the tools and accommodations necessary to utilize public transportation.
References

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Alzheimer’s Association: Stay Mentally and Socially Active https://www.alz.org/help-support/brain_health/stay_mentally_and_socially_active
Transpennine Express: Our Partnership with The Campaign to End Loneliness https://www.tpexpress.co.uk/explore-the-north-and-scotland/our-partnership-with-campaign-to-end-loneliness
Alzheimer’s Association: Educational Programs and Dementia Care Resources https://www.alz.org/help-support/resources/care-education-resources
Dementia Friends USA https://dementiafriendsusa.org/
NADTC: Office Hours: Innovative Approaches to Communicate with Individuals with Dementia https://www.nadtc.org/event/office-hours-innovative-approaches-to-communicate-with-individuals-with-dementia/
National Plans to Address Alzheimer’s Disease - https://aspe.hhs.gov/collaborations-committees-advisory-groups/napa/napa-documents/napa-national-plans
Dementia Friendly America https://www.dfamerica.org/
Hidden Disabilities https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/
Bus Buddy program, Intercity Transit - https://www.intercitytransit.com/how-to-ride/bus-buddies
Resources

Alzheimer’s Association  https://www.alz.org/
Administration for Community Living:  Aging & Disability Resource Centers
Eldercare Locator:  Area Agencies on Aging
https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/About/Aging_Network/AAA.aspx
U.S Department of Health and Human Services and the National Institutes of Health: Alzheimer’s.gov  https://www.alzheimers.gov/
Rural Volunteer Transportation Programs

Background
Volunteer transportation programs are an important option in meeting the needs of older adults and people with disabilities. More than 800 volunteer drivers programs operate across the country. These programs are especially important for older adults and people with disabilities who are unable to use public transportation or live in rural communities where public transportation may not be available and other options are cost-prohibitive. For many older adults and people with disabilities in rural communities, volunteer transportation programs are their only option for accessing health care services, food, social activities, and other essential services.

What are Volunteer Transportation Programs
Volunteer driver programs provide an alternative to driving or public transportation for many individuals unable to access such options. Most volunteer transportation programs predominantly serve older adults, people with disabilities and veterans. The National Volunteer Transportation Center defines volunteer transportation as a program of service that includes volunteer drivers and/or volunteer escorts in providing transportation. These programs and services may also include volunteer vehicles as well as paid drivers and vehicles that are owned or leased by the organization providing volunteer transportation. Volunteer transportation programs vary based on their size, type of trip destination covered, level of services offered, target population, and funding. Volunteer transportation programs operate out of faith-based organizations, non-profits, human service and transit agencies.

Challenges and Opportunities in Rural Communities
As the United States population ages, many Americans 65 and older reside in rural communities. According to 2012 to 2016 American Community Survey (ACS) data, there were 46.2 million older people in the United States, with 10.6 million living in areas designated as rural by the U.S. Census Bureau. As this demographic grows in rural areas, the demand for transportation will increase for older adults who give up the keys, they may need to rely on alternative transportation options that exist in urban settings but that might not be provided, might be less accessible, or might be available in a different form in their communities.
In rural communities, the private automobile is the primary mode of transportation for more than 90% of trips. Several factors, such as the health effects of aging, can restrict or eliminate someone’s ability to independently meet transportation needs with their automobile. This in turn makes it difficult for older adults in rural areas to access essential services that most likely are cross county lines that enable older adults and people with disabilities to live independently. For this reason, volunteer transportation programs serving rural areas are a viable option to meet the needs unique needs of this population.

In the Grantmakers in Aging article Volunteer Driver Programs, Helen Kerschner notes that although volunteer driver programs often are created because services are not available (especially in rural America) or because they can be inexpensive to operate, a more compelling reason appears to be that they can meet the transportation needs of older adults.

Volunteer transportation programs offer time and assistance which is critical to residents living in rural areas. Older adults and people with disabilities often have to travel long distances to access health care services. Volunteer drivers have the ability to travel to another city, county and sometimes state boundaries and provide assistance such as door-to-door or door-through-door during the trip. Traditional transportation services usually cannot provide these types of assistance and services because they weren’t designed to provide them.

While volunteer transportation programs provide a vital service, they are not without their challenges. Recruiting volunteer drivers is a consistent challenge as well as retaining volunteers. Rural volunteer transportation programs need volunteers to meet the demands of their community as the population of older adults and people with disabilities continues to grow in rural areas. Some examples of recruitment challenges include:

- Increased demand for transportation services
- Conflict with personal and work schedules
- Reluctance to use personal vehicle
- Lack of information about the program
- Safety concerns during COVID-19

Local Examples
The following are examples of volunteer driver programs that have continued to meet the needs of their rural community and the strategies they use to recruit volunteer drivers.
Drive a Senior Northwest, Faith in Action Program, Austin, Texas

Drive a Senior Northwest is a non-profit organization serving older adults in Northwest Austin, Cedar Park and Leander since 1986. Volunteers (20 and over) provide free rides to medical appointments, grocery stores and essential services to clients aged 60 years and older. All clients are mobile (using a cane or walker is fine but volunteer drivers can't transport wheelchairs). Clients arrange all their ride requests through the Northwest office. Volunteers choose rides based on the time, day and location that best fits them using Assisted Rides online scheduler. Drive a Senior Northwest has provided 5,070 rides as of 10/31/21 and has driven 71,784 miles to date in 2021. Drive a Senior Northwest receives support through fundraising and grants.

Senior Miles (SMiles), Blount County, Tennessee

SMiles transportation program was developed by the Blount County Office on Aging. As a membership program, SMiles provide door-through-door transportation to Blount County residents over age 60, ambulatory, and in need of rides for essential trips like medical visits or picking up groceries. Individuals that cannot be accommodated (e.g., require a wheelchair) through the SMiles transportation program are referred to the East Tennessee Human Resource Agency (ETHRA), which provides services for persons over the age of 60, family caregivers, or adults with disabilities.

The annual membership fee is $25.00 In addition to the cost of membership, the advance purchase of four $6 round trip rides is required. Drivers must be at least 21 years of age, pass a criminal background check, hold a valid driver’s license and have a safe driving record. Volunteers receive four hours of training, which includes information on program policies and procedures as well as senior sensitivity training. SMiles received funding from the Federal Transit Administration and the Tennessee Department of Transportation. Additional funding comes from the local United Way, memberships, rider fees, annual fundraisers, and donations.
Foothills Caring Corps, Carefree, Arizona

Foothills Caring Corps is a non-profit that provides a wide variety of services to older adults throughout the community through volunteers. The program offers services such as friendly visiting, van transportation for social outings, mobile meals and medical transportation. Foothills Caring Corps volunteers provide door-to-door transportation for older adults or “Neighbors,” the term commonly used in the program. The transportation program provides free round-trip rides for social outings and medical appointments. Medical transportation is most often provided in the volunteer’s personal vehicle and includes door-to-door service. However, Foothills Caring Corps also use their wheelchair-accessible vans to transport people with disabilities to medical appointments.

Older adults or caregivers in the community that want to register for the transportation program can sign up by phone or submit an online application. A staff member will then visit the individual’s home and provide an overview of all the services offered and what best fits their needs. Between 2019-2020, Foothills Caring Corps provided 6,040 medical trips and 4,795 trips through their van program. Foothill Caring Corps’ operational costs are fully covered through fundraising events, individual donations, corporate gifts, and grants. Foothills Caring Corps’ vans for their van transportation program are funded through the section 5310 program.

Volunteer Recruitment and Retention

Drive a Senior Northwest
Volunteers are recruited through their Faith in Action network, different community events, newsletters, social media and traditional media. Volunteer drivers also spread the word about volunteer opportunities. Volunteer orientations are currently held on ZOOM twice weekly on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Drive a Senior Northwest has around 350 volunteers who provide rides.

The SMiles Program
Staffed with a full-time manager and a director who assists with marketing through events, presentations, social media and traditional media. Word of mouth is the key to the program’s success and area partners such as the Chamber of Commerce, retirement communities and physicians’ offices help spread the word. However, seniors themselves are Best Practice 3 the program’s biggest advocates. Seniors spread the word about SMiles at doctor’s offices and other places they frequent. Volunteers are also great ambassadors of the SMiles program. SMiles has 130 volunteers.

Foothills Caring Corps
In addition, Foothills Caring Corps have set up displays and booths at many local events with information to sign up potential volunteers. The organization utilizes local papers, social media and magazines to advertise. However, they have discovered that word of mouth in small communities is the most successful recruitment method. Foothills Caring Corps holds a general
volunteer orientation every second Thursday of the month to give an overview of the program, as well as policies and procedures. Foothills Caring Corps has 1,724 Registered Volunteers and 512 Active Volunteers.

**Summary**
Rural volunteer transportation programs are filling gaps when there are limited options available for older adults and people with disabilities to stay connected to essential services and other activities. Volunteer drivers are not only getting people to where they need to go, but they also provide social interaction to prevent social isolation. Healthcare, employment, community organizations, and local agencies are encouraged to connect with volunteer transportation programs as these programs are a viable transportation option for older adults and people with disabilities to access their community.

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Promising Practices for Increasing Access to Transportation in Rural Communities

The Older Population in Rural America: 2012-2016

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The National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) is a program funded by the Federal Transit Administration and administered by Easterseals Inc. and USAGing with guidance from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living.