



## Position Paper on Transportation

Transportation and mobility play an important part in providing equal opportunity in the disability community. Affordable and reliable transportation makes it possible for people with disabilities to access important opportunities in education, employment, health care, housing, and recreation/community life. People with disabilities are often unable to afford cars or do not drive and they lack other transportation choices that are affordable and accessible. Of the nearly 2 million people with disabilities who never leave their homes, 560,000 don't leave home because of transportation difficulties ("Opportunities for Creating Livable Communities," Mia R. Oberlink, April 2008 at [http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/2008\\_02\\_communities.pdf](http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/2008_02_communities.pdf)). When people with disabilities are left at home, they are left out of jobs, kept away from shopping, and left out of their communities. It prevents them from making valuable contributions to our society as individuals, employees, consumers and taxpayers. The CT Council on Developmental Disabilities believes that, to achieve full integration of people with disabilities, livable communities require transportation that is:

- 1. Appropriate.** Transportation should include a variety of transportation options that address the unique needs of people with disabilities in urban, suburban and rural communities across the state. This includes transportation that addresses the needs of people with an array of disabilities and needs, including parents with disabilities who have children, and people who use wheelchairs. The transportation should be compliant with regulations, with drivers appropriately trained to use any needed equipment.
- 2. Affordable.** Currently, transportation through licensed vendors is very costly, both to individuals and to agencies who may arrange such transportation for their constituents. Accessible cab fares can also be expensive. There is a need to develop more affordable transportation systems with universal and consistent rates across the state.

- 3. Comprehensive.** In order for people with disabilities to access employment, housing in the community, education and the full array of community activities, a transportation system needs to be accessible to people with disabilities regardless of where they live in the state. The system should offer flexible hours, including evenings and weekends. Transportation should be dependable and timely, offering direct and reasonable routes.
- 4. Easy to Use.** The process of accessing transportation should be easy to understand. People with disabilities who need assistance in planning their routes or determining eligibility for subsidies need a one-stop process, with support staff that are knowledgeable about the system.
- 5. Respectful.** Drivers and office staff at transportation companies should receive training about disabilities, person directed services, safety concerns, proper use of equipment and communication. Respect for personal choice, differences and unique needs are a critical component of safe and reliable transportation services.

**Manage Existing Resources.** The State of Connecticut Department of Transportation has three mobility managers, as do several other organizations. Access to the supports available through these resources needs to be coordinated and well publicized, so that the public is aware of their availability and can access needed assistance.

**For more information, contact:**

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