

Transportation & Getting Around



- Many self-advocates need or rely on public transportation to get to work, school, church, shopping, social activities, medical appointments, and self-advocacy meetings.
- Transportation is not always readily available for self-advocates, particularly for people who do not live in larger urban areas.
- Self-advocates have decreased independence when they are not able to find their own transportation or cannot get places they want to go.
- Often times existing transportation facilities are inaccessible in many different ways.
- The costs of transportation can be very high, especially as gas prices rise.
- Sometimes understanding bus schedules and learning routes can be complicated and people need support on learning these skills.
- Self-advocates can individually speak with others and with the people they get transportation from on these issues.
- Self-advocates can work together to fight for better transportation systems in their local communities.
- Self-advocates can work and dialogue with local transportation providers.

- Self-advocates can work across the state and nationally to spread awareness about issues surrounding transportation.
- Self-advocates use a variety of transportation systems including cars, buses, planes, trains, subways and transit systems, walkways and sidewalks, boats, and others. All of these should be available to people with disabilities as readily as they are for others.

Article: A self-advocate speaks out

People with disabilities need buses on nights and weekends

By **ROBERTA GALLANT**
For The Monitor

I am the secretary of the Concord Area Self-Advocacy Group. The purpose of this group is to advocate for ourselves and others with disabilities. All of our members have disabilities.

One issue we have in common is a need for public transportation. Concord is fortunate to have a bus system, but CAT needs to be more available than it is now.



The Concord Area Transit recently conducted a survey of its riders. Among other facts, the survey found out that 24 percent of



could run on weekends.

What does this mean?

For those of us who use the bus and are looking for work, our job choices are limited. We can't take night or weekend work, and we can't take a job in a place to which the bus doesn't go.

For those of us who are church-goers, we have to get rides to Sunday services. This can be difficult in bad weather or if we're in a new neighborhood or church.

For us, shopping is a problem as well.

Gallant the people who use the regular bus system own cars; nearly half use the system to get to work or to go shopping. Many others (42 percent) use the system to go to doctors' offices.

The Concord Area Self-Advocacy Group conducted its own survey on the problem of transportation. Here is what we learned:

- Two-thirds of us use the regular bus system. Only one of us uses the para-transit.

- One out of three members has a driver's license or access to a vehicle.

- One out of three members is working. Nearly half of us are looking for jobs.

- We all do our own shopping, and half of us use a laundromat to wash our clothes.

- A third of us have to get to places that aren't on the Concord Area Transit bus line.

- Two-thirds of us wish the bus could run at night, to 10 or 11 p.m.

- Three-quarters of us wish the bus

for us, shopping is a problem on weekends or after work hours during the week. Washing and drying our clothes at the laundromat in time to get the last bus home is very difficult.

We need a transportation system that will give people with disabilities as much access to the community as drivers enjoy. We need a regular system that can be used by people in wheelchairs.

We need route maps, schedules and bus signs that are understandable, even if we have visual impairments or are non-readers. We need the bus drivers to assist us if we ask for help.

The bus system is good, but it could be much better than it is now for people with disabilities. It's not that we want special service from the transportation system. It's just that we want the same results that people without disabilities get.

(Roberta Gallant, a member of the Monitor's board of contributors, lives in Concord.)

Source: Gallant, R. (1993). "People with Disabilities Need Buses on Nights and Weekends." *The Concord Monitor*, April 13, p. B6.

A bit of history: ADAPT



- Originally ADAPT stood for American Disabled for Accessible Public Transit (now it stands for American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today).

- Founded by Reverend Wade Blank who passed away in 1993. He carried over ideas and energy from the 1960s black civil rights movement.
- Started by taking on discrimination in Denver, Colorado’s bus systems—and then onto the nation’s bus systems.
- In 1975 a group of people using wheelchairs surrounded a bus—and they received national attention and held up the bus.
- Organization has helped increase much awareness and sparked a great deal of change and empowerment into the disability rights and People First movements.
- Today ADAPT continues to use the same tactics—but has moved on beyond transportation issues to fighting against all types of discrimination for disabled people, another major focus has been against institutions and today nursing homes.

Information adapted from article in the *Ragged Edge*
http://www.disabledrightsaction.org/new_page_1.htm

Possibilities under Obama’s Plan:



“The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act”: This is the recent stimulus bill, providing an array of funds and programs to jumpstart the economy. Under this act, the stimulus projects must meet federal access standards as stated by the

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) and the Rehabilitation Act.

Transportation systems:

- The Recovery Act supports projects to improve and expand public transportation throughout the nation.
- The ADA talks about how access needs to be met for public transportation.
- New and changed transportation systems will include; railroads, buses and bus stops, airports and airplanes, vans, and other modes of public transportation.

Streets and sidewalks:

- Many projects will also focus on improving public streets and sidewalks. These projects will have to be up to ADA code and meet access standards. This will include street crossings, sidewalks, on street parking, and curb cuts.

Although these programs are required by law to meet accessibility standard—if your local area is going to be adding or changing transportation systems or sidewalks, be sure you are part of the conversation to assure accessibility, and even seek Universal Design and Beyond Compliance standards!

Get Creative with transportation: Ideas to Help Self-Advocates Get Around



Self-advocates often “get creative” when they need to get somewhere—keep in mind some possible options when you really need to get some place. Keep in mind this doesn’t change the need for transportation systems to get better!

1. Carpool—See if you know anyone going somewhere you are, or nearby. This can help the environment too!
2. Vans—If you use a wheelchair look into possibilities for getting a van, including donations, etc.
3. Mobility, or navigation support/ training: Depending on your needs and purposes for transportation you may be able to have services which will help you learn to get around your community independently, particularly when using public transit.
4. Taking airplanes and going on vacations are also your right; work with airlines to support you and to assure that they are meeting ADA requirements.
5. Learning to drive: even if you have never thought it was a possibility the amount of people learning and being able to drive with various technologies and supports are increasing; look into these options and see if this may be a possibility for you.

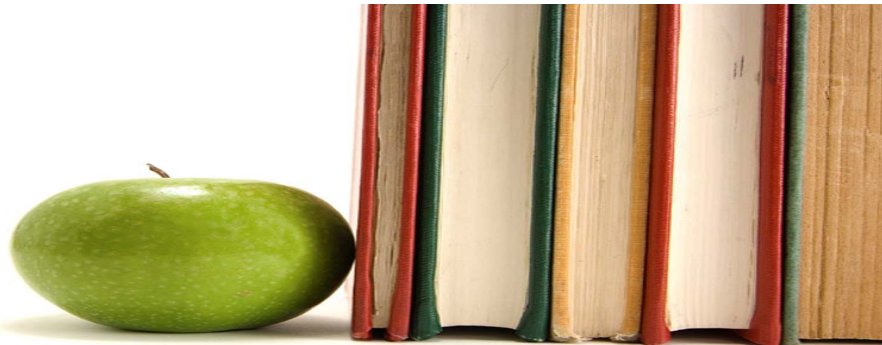
Group Action: What can your group do about transportation?



- ✓ Work together with group members to help each other find the best options for them to get around.
- ✓ Support each other in planning and giving rides to self-advocacy meetings.

- ✓ Meet with local officials, and key players in transportation companies to explain the importance of this issue.
- ✓ Reach out to the community about issues.
- ✓ Write newspaper articles, letters, and position statements about transportation.
- ✓ Secure equal rights to being able to drive.
- ✓ Stage protests.
- ✓ Think about all aspects of mobility from walking around your neighborhood, to getting to work, to traveling on airplanes.

References



Access-Able: <http://www.access-able.com/>

The premier website for access information and resources for travelers with special needs since 1996, worldwide. Information about disability travel, wheelchair travel, accessible travel, vacations for people with disabilities, etc.

Access Travel-Airports: <http://www.empowermentzone.com/airports.txt>

How to make travel easier for persons with disabilities. Lists facilities and services at 553 airport terminals worldwide.

Action Online:

<http://www.unitedspinal.org/publications/action/category/traveltransportation/>

Many stories and information for people with mobility impairments and information about how to travel internationally, and nationally.

ADAPT: <http://www.adapt.org/>

ADAPT is a national grass-roots community that organizes disability rights activists to engage in nonviolent direct action, including civil disobedience, to assure the civil and human rights of people with disabilities to live in freedom.

Capital District Coalition for Accessible transportation:

<http://www.mobilityfreedom.org/aboutus.htm>

Capital District Coalition for Accessible Transportation is a volunteer group that formed in late May of 2002. We are a multi-cultural organization comprised of agencies, independent advocates and representatives from the disabled community who rely on accessible transportation for their independence, quality of life and necessities. Our goals are equal safe, accessible and affordable transportation, especially public transit, for the disabled community of the Capital District in New York.

Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee:

<http://www.dptac.gov.uk/index.htm>

Advisory committee in the United Kingdom, with substantial information and resources regarding all transportation issues facing people with disabilities.

Dreaming about Driving: <http://www.fvkasa.org/reports/driving.html>

A story of one persons journey to driving, from the Kids As Self-Advocates Website (KASA).

United States Department of Transportation: <http://www.fta.dot.gov/>

Investment on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, as well as information on access codes, etc. This is the official government transportation website.

US Access Board:

http://www.ite.org/accessible/curbramp/Barker_WhitePaper.pdf

Information on considering accessible street crossings.

The Access Board: <http://www.access-board.gov/>

U.S. Access Board, also known as the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board. The Board, created in 1973, has served the nation as the only independent federal agency whose primary mission is accessibility for people with disabilities.

Travel Training for Youth with Disabilities: <http://www.nichcy.org/InformationResources/Documents/NICHCY%20PUBS/ts9.pdf>

This publication discusses the essential components of a successful travel training program, the specific skills that travelers need to have in place to assure safe and independent travel, and the issues that arise with specific disabilities such as physical, cognitive, and visual impairment.