TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS
for Older Adults and People with Disabilities

elderCare locator
Connecting You to Community Services

nadtc
National Aging and Disability Transportation Center
Choices for Mobility Independence

While driving in one’s personal vehicle is undoubtedly convenient, the best way to ensure continued transportation as we age is to become comfortable using a variety of options. People often look to family and friends to assist with transportation, but this may not always be possible. Community transportation can help you stay connected to essential services and other activities.

Access to reliable transportation is a key to health and quality of life.
This brochure introduces you to community transportation services and provides information to consider when making transportation decisions. It is intended to help you navigate transportation in your community. It is important to note that not all types of transportation are available in every community.

Local experts, such as mobility managers and information and referral specialists, can assist you in learning about the transportation options in your community. They are located in the public transit agency or helpful local organizations such as the Area Agency on Aging (AAA), Center for Independent Living (CIL), Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) or Indian Tribal Organization.

Contact the Eldercare Locator at (800) 677-1116 or eldercare.acl.gov to connect to resources in your area.

The Eldercare Locator’s Call Center operates Monday–Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET.
Transportation Options. The transportation options available in your community are likely to include some of the services listed below. Keep in mind that names of these services may vary depending on location.

- **Demand response**. Sometimes called Dial-a-ride, demand response transports multiple passengers who are picked up from different entry points and dropped off at separate destinations. This service often requires reservations to be made at least 24–48 hours in advance.
- **Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)** is available to persons with Medicaid to travel to and from medical appointments, to medical services. Eligibility criteria and types of destinations vary from state to state.
- **Public transit/fixed route transportation**. Public transit agencies provide fixed-route service by bus and rail along established routes with set stops and scheduled times. Limited fixed-route services may be available through other community agencies, such as trips to and from a senior center.
- **Shared Ride Services** (also known as Transportation Network Companies or TNCs) connect private pay passengers with drivers who provide transportation in their own vehicles. These services do not typically offer wheelchair accessible vehicles or rider assistance. Passengers connect with drivers via websites or mobile apps on a smartphone and pay for the service through a personal account on their phone. A growing number of communities offer access to shared ride services to older adults with disabilities through a transportation organization which is operated by a nonprofit organization.
- **Paratransit** must be offered by public transit agencies and may be available to persons with disabilities who are not able to use fixed route service. The primary purpose of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit is a complement to public transit, so must operate within the coverage area of the fixed route and is available during the same hours. It is an on-demand service. Paratransit includes fixed route service. A personal attendant can accompany passengers to and from the vehicle, at no cost. To qualify for paratransit, riders need to meet specific eligibility requirements established under ADA.
- **Travel Training**. The training generally includes classroom or online instruction provided by professionals or peers who have extensive knowledge and experience of public transit. Travel training often includes a classroom instruction plus a group trip training. The training includes classroom instruction plus a group trip training. The training is available to older adults and people with disabilities who meet certain eligibility criteria.
- **Travel Voucher Programs.** Voucher programs provide fare assistance or free rides to low-income older adults and people with disabilities. To meet the program’s eligibility requirements, eligible riders must purchase vouchers for specific types of transportation. Travel Voucher programs may offer rides only to certain destinations, such as medical appointments.
- **Trip Planning Assistance.** Trip planning assistance is available from different transportation services. In some states, transportation assistance may be provided by local nonprofit and public transit agencies to individuals who are blind and have low vision who are traveling in their own cars or agency-owned vehicles for reaching medical appointments or other important trips. Some communities offer door-to-door or door-through-door assistance. Some door-to-door trips may offer a small fee. Trains may offer free rides.
- **Taxi Services.** Taxi services offer on-demand service to and from medical appointments or other important destinations, such as trips to and from a senior center.
- **Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)** is available to persons with Medicaid to travel to and from medical appointments, to medical services. Eligibility criteria and types of destinations vary from state to state.

Service Area and Trip Type: Many transportation options have a defined service area and set hours and days of the week when rides are available. A transportation service may also limit services by type of trip, such as medical, or by type of destination.

Information you will need to provide:
- **Your destination and when you need to travel.**
- **What is the service area?**
- **What types of trips can I request?**
- **What are the requirements to qualify for the service?**
- **Cost:** This fee for transportation services will vary and may also require you to pay additional fees for missed trips or no-shows.

Information you will need to provide:
- **Your income and the amount you can afford to pay for the trip.**
- **Whether you need one round-trip ride, or rides to multiple appointments at the same time.**

Special accommodations may be available for those who use a wheelchair or other mobility device. Some services require advance reservations while others offer same-day reservations. Ride requests may be prioritized by urgency or type of trip. Eligible riders can request a ride for medical appointments or other important trips. Some services only offer medical transportation and others may also offer social transportation. Some services have income criteria.

Eligibility: Some programs require riders to meet age, disability or income criteria.

Key Considerations. Safe, reliable transportation is critical. When discussing your needs, consider the following:

- **Who is eligible to ride?**
- **What are the requirements to qualify for the service?**
- **Cost:** The fees for transportation services will vary and may include a minimum fee for one or more rides. Travel requests may be prioritized by urgency or type of trip.

Information you will need to provide:
- **Your income and the amount you can afford to pay for the trip.**
- **Whether you need one round-trip ride, or rides to multiple appointments at the same time.**

Special accommodations: Consider any needs you may have that must be addressed to make transportation services accessible to you. Some services require advance reservations while others offer same-day reservations. Ride requests may be prioritized by urgency or type of trip. Some services only offer medical transportation and others may also offer social transportation. Some services have income criteria.

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- **Public transit/fixed route transportation.** Public transit agencies provide fixed route service by bus and rail along established routes with set schedules and types of destinations vary from state to state.

- **Paratransit.** Public transit agencies provide fixed route service by bus and rail along established routes with set schedules and types of destinations vary from state to state.

- **Volunteer Transportation Vouchers.** Voucher programs provide fare assistance or free rides to low-income older adults and people with disabilities. Riders meet the program’s eligibility requirements. Eligible riders request vouchers for specific destinations. Volunteer Transportation programs may also offer door-to-door service to the passenger at no cost. Some programs allow riders to pay for a small fee or other riders offer free rides.

- **Travel Training.** Public transit agencies and local aging and disability organizations provide free instruction to help new riders learn to travel safely on public transit. Travel training may be provided by professionals or peers who are experienced users of public transit. The training generally includes classroom instruction plus a group trip. Riders must be offered by public transit agencies and local agencies.

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- **Taxi Services.** Taxi services that offer on-demand services to passengers. Trips usually can be scheduled in advance or on the spot, and fees are charged per mile or per minute. Many taxi companies have to have accessible vehicles in their fleets. Some communities offer taxicab vouchers to older adults and people with disabilities who meet certain eligibility criteria.

- **Volunteer Transportation Programs.** Volunteer transportation programs may be offered by local nonprofit and faith-based organizations. Drivers provide rides in their own cars or agency-owned vehicles for passengers to reach medical appointments or other important destinations. Generally are pre-scheduled in advance or on the weekend. Volunteer transportation programs also may offer door-to-door service to the passenger at no cost. Some programs allow riders to pay for a small fee or other riders offer free rides.

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Resources

Transportation options vary from community to community, so it is possible that your community offers options that are not included in this brochure. As the need for transportation grows, new options continue to be developed and implemented. Find out as much as you can about the transportation services available in your community. If you are unable to find the information you need or you have additional questions, contact the Eldercare Locator or the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center. Contact information for both resources is provided below.

Eldercare Locator

Eldercare Locator is the only national information and referral resource to provide support to consumers across the spectrum of issues affecting older Americans. Established in 1991 and funded by the Administration for Community Living, it is administered by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. eldercare.acl.gov or (800) 677-1116

The mission of the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) is to promote the availability and accessibility of transportation options for older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers. NADTC is a program funded by the Federal Transit Administration and administered by Easterseals and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) with guidance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living. www.nadtc.org or (866) 983-3222

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) is a 501(c)(3) membership association representing America’s national network of 622 Area Agencies on Aging and more than 250 Title VI Native American aging programs. The mission of n4a is to build the capacity of its members so they can better help older adults and people with disabilities live with dignity and choices in their homes and communities for as long as possible. www.n4a.org

Easterseals

Easterseals is the leading non-profit provider of services for individuals with autism, developmental disabilities, physical disabilities and other special needs. For nearly 100 years, we have been offering help, hope, and answers to children and adults living with disabilities, and to the families who love them. Through therapy, training, education and support services, Easterseals creates life-changing solutions so that people with disabilities can live, learn, work and play. www.easterseals.com

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