

Transportation for Workers with Disabilities: Widening Your Pool of Potential Talent

Every day, people with disabilities contribute to workplaces in communities across the United States. And in the coming years, the number of businesses benefiting from the skills and abilities of people with disabilities will increase, for a variety of reasons, including:

- **Demographic shifts:** A high rate of workers will retire over the next decade. Recruiting and retaining workers with disabilities is one strategy to counter the effects of an aging and shrinking workforce.
- **Bottom line benefits:** Employing people with disabilities makes good business sense. They are natural problem solvers who help businesses gain a competitive edge through innovative thinking. Furthermore, they mirror an important and increasingly expanding customer base.
- **Social responsibility:** A workplace inclusive of people with disabilities demonstrates a company's commitment to all residents of its community. Furthermore, consumers favor businesses that employ people with disabilities. In fact, 92 percent of consumers surveyed in the National Survey of Consumer Attitudes toward Companies that Hire Individuals with Disabilities felt more favorable toward companies that hire people with disabilities, and 87 percent preferred to give their business to those companies. (Siperstein et al., 2006)

Transportation for Workers with Disabilities

While employees with disabilities often use the same types of transportation options as their non-disabled peers, there are particular transportation programs available in communities to transport people with disabilities to work and other destinations. For those who cannot use regularly scheduled transit services, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires transit agencies to provide paratransit services that complement regular, federally funded public transportation services. In addition to complementary paratransit services, many communities offer demand-response, door-to-door transportation services for people with disabilities. To facilitate the commute to and from work for employees with disabilities, companies can:

- Understand the need for flexibility in setting work schedules for employees with disabilities who ride public transit to work.
- Encourage ridesharing via carpool or vanpool for employees who may not be able to use public transportation or whose work shifts do not correspond with public transportation schedules (see Fact Sheet #7).
- Whenever possible, provide preferential parking, located near entrances served by elevators, for employees with disabilities who share rides to work.
- If your company provides transportation to employees but uses vehicles that are not accessible to all employees, work with employees with disabilities and others with expertise to identify options for purchasing, leasing, or retrofitting vehicles that can be used by all employees.
- Partner with other local employers to encourage local transportation providers to increase schedules or extend routes that serve your business location (see Fact Sheet #2).

The "Transportation Toolkit for the Business Community" gives businesses the information they need now to assist their employees in achieving a timely, cost-efficient commute that promotes their productivity and job satisfaction. View other fact sheets and resources at www.ctaa.org/transportation_to_work for information on how to access transportation-related tax benefits, partner with local providers to find answers to employees' and customers' transportation needs, become part of a transportation management association, and more.

This toolkit was created by the Community Transportation Association of America's Joblinks Employment Transportation Initiative—serving communities since 1993 in solving employment transportation issues.



- Provide information about ADA paratransit eligibility and local services to employees with disabilities.

Tax Incentives for Improving Transportation Access to Your Facility

Two tax incentives encourage and assist businesses to adapt their facilities to be more accessible to customers and workers with disabilities. The Disabled Access Tax Credit (Title 26, Internal Revenue Code, Section 44) allows eligible small businesses (gross receipts of \$1 million or less or having 30 or fewer employees) to deduct up to 50 percent of “eligible access expenditures” (\$250 to \$10,250/year, maximum benefit of \$5,000) for a taxable year to remove architectural, communication, physical, or transportation barriers that prevent a business from being accessible to, or usable by, individuals with disabilities.

The Tax Deduction to Remove Architectural and Transportation Barriers to People with Disabilities and Elderly Individuals (Title 26, Internal Revenue Code, section 190) allows any size business to deduct from taxable income up to \$15,000 for expenditures to make a facility or public transportation vehicle owned or leased in connection with a trade or business more accessible to, and usable by, individuals who have disabilities or are elderly. Examples of deductions include:

- Providing accessible parking spaces, ramps, and curb cuts.
- Making telephones, water fountains, and restrooms accessible to people using wheelchairs.
- Making walkways at least 48 inches wide.
- Providing accessible entrances to buildings, including stairs and floors.

Helping Employees with Disabilities Access Transportation

While an employee’s transportation to and from work is not usually an employer’s responsibility, you can facilitate opportunities to support employees who face challenges in obtaining accessible, dependable, and cost-effective transportation. For instance, travel orientation and travel training can help them develop confidence to use public transit.

Many local transit agencies provide travel orientation for any rider. It is usually delivered in-person and shows a group of new riders, including riders with disabilities, how to navigate a particular agency’s system and informs them about any accommodations the system offers that may be useful for them. Check with your local transit agency for more information about travel orientation.

Travel training is intensive instruction designed to teach people to travel safely and independently using public transportation in their community, when appropriate. To locate a travel trainer, contact the Association of Travel Instruction (www.travelinstruction.org). Also note that Easter Seals Project ACTION teaches travel trainers how to train customers as well as other trainers (<http://www.projectaction.org>).

For More Information

- The American Public Transportation Association [www.apta.com/links/state_local/]
- Easter Seals Project ACTION [<http://www.projectaction.org>]
- The Federal Transit Administration [www.fta.dot.gov]

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