ACCESSING COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION

It Could Be Our Biggest Challenge Yet...
FIRST...

The bad news.
PUBLIC TRANSIT – THE FACTS ARE NOT ALWAYS PRETTY

- Is not always available when and where we need it for access to basic services and employment opportunities.
- Local governments and nonprofits are given limited funds by the State and Federal governments to administer public transportation programs.
- Lack of transportation could doom a great job before it gets started.
WHAT IS AVAILABLE DEPENDS ON WHERE YOU LIVE!

- Urban areas have more options... and the farther east you travel in NC the better your options.
  - Mass Transit – Asheville and points east (urban)
  - Local Rural Transit – on “demand” – scheduled transportation
  - ParaTransit – specifically for persons with disabilities
WHAT IS PARATRANSLIT

- Specialized door to door transport for persons with disability who are unable to ride fixed-route PT
- Demand – responsive system – person has to schedule the service.
- Meet eligibility requirements – to be reviewed
- Is part of the requirements of ADA – transit systems must provide comparable services to persons with disabilities as a complement to fixed transit routes.
- Rural areas provide it as part of their “demand-response system but it is competitive because they have limited resources.
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR PARATRANSIT SERVICE

- **Category 1**
  - Unable to board, ride or disembark independently or navigate a fixed route system – physical or intellectual
- **Category 2**
  - Person could use fixed route system, but it is not available
- **Category 3**
  - Person is unable to access the boarding or disembarking location due to impairment
IMPORTANT TO KNOW FUNDING STREAMS

- Most transportation systems in NC are funded by a combination of federal, state, and local dollars.
- Need to know the various programs so that when you approach a transit system and request assistance you will be well informed and know when you are being stonewalled.
- Keep in mind... need far outweighs the funding and it could get worse.
URBAN PROGRAMS

- Funding is primarily to fund
  - Infrastructure
  - Capital expenditures (Buses and Rail Service)
  - Intercity buses – typically in Triad area of State
  - Operating funds to subsidize cost for users
  - Systems are fee based
  - Focused on fixed route systems
  - Provides for paratransit operations
RURAL AND URBAN PROGRAMS

- Job Access and Reverse Commute – assists low income with transportation to jobs (FTA Section 5316)

- New Freedom Program – funds alternatives beyond requirements of ADA for persons with disabilities (FTA Section 5317)
RURAL FUNDING

- Community Transportation Program (FTA Section 5311)
  - Funds capital, operating, and administrative functions
  - Allows rural areas to provide generalized “demand-response system”
- EDTAP (FTA Section 5310)
  - Elderly and Disabled Individuals Transportation Program
  - Provides operating and capital funds for accessibility for the elderly and disabled.
  - Expanded for 2012-13 and 2013-14 to provide one on one assistance for persons with disabilities, if needed.
RURAL FUNDING

- Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP)
  - State funds
  - EDTAP expansion – no local match
- Rural General Public Program (RGP)
- Employment Transportation Assistance Program
  - Services for low income individuals
  - Supports NC Van-Pooling
  - No local match
HOW TO FIND OUT WHAT IS AVAILABLE...

- Contact local transit authority
  - Maleek and Anna – Asheville Regional Transit
    - Mariate Escheverry – Transportation Planning Manager
    - 828-253-5691
    - iride@ashevillenc.gov
    - [http://www.ashevillenc.gov/Departments/Transit.aspx](http://www.ashevillenc.gov/Departments/Transit.aspx)
  - Transit Commission meets first Tuesday of each month at City Hall from 3:30-5:30 pm
  - Mass transit and paratransit – fee based
HOW TO FIND OUT WHAT IS AVAILABLE...

- Lexie
  - Clay County Transportation
  - Rebecca Smith – Director
  - 828-389-0644
  - transportation@dnet.net
  - http://www.clayconc.com/services
  - Rural demand response and paratransit
HOW TO FIND OUT WHAT IS AVAILABLE

- Kenneth
  - Paratransit available through Wake County Human Services TRACS system (demand response)
  - 919-212-7005
  - http://www.wakegov.com/humanservices/social/transporation/Pages/default.aspx
  - Capital Area Transit – mass transit – Accessible Raleigh Transportation (ART)
  - http://www.raleighnc.gov/services/content/PWksTransit/Articles/CapitalAreaTransit.html
HOW TO FIND OUT WHAT IS AVAILABLE

- **Austin**
  - Winston Salem Transit Authority
    - Toneq McCullough, Director
    - 336-727-8000
    - [http://www.cityofws.org/Home/Departments/Transportation/Articles/Transportation](http://www.cityofws.org/Home/Departments/Transportation/Articles/Transportation)

- **Forsyth County**
  - Contact County Administration to inquire about services –
  - 336-703-2020
UNDERSTAND CHALLENGES OF FUNDING

- Funds are limited to provide a broad array of services – funds are capped – no blank check
- Competition between needs
  - Elderly – doctor appointments and shopping
  - Dialysis patients
  - Transport of medicaid patients to dr. appts.
  - Workfirst recipients employment transport
  - Contracted out by sheltered workshops
HOW WE CAN GET A VOICE...

- Start by be-friending the local transit director, meet with them and explain need
- Find out about your transportation advisory board and attend meetings – open, public meetings which invite public comment
- Attend county commissioner meetings and find out and educate them to needs through public comment
OTHER OPTIONS

- Chances are good, especially in rural areas that the ability of the demand response system to serve needs will fall short of your needs.
- Develop an alternative action plan
Community Mapping

Do not be bashful about asking friends, family and other natural supports to lend a hand. It takes a village.

Educate employer to need and see if employer has a rideshare program or can assist in linkages with other employees who will assist with the commute – be willing to pay for gas.

Ask for accommodations in the work schedule to permit the demand response system to help with the commute.

Be willing to assist yourself... 😊
ALTERNATIVES

- Think about the “impossible” – could the person be able to learn to drive themselves?
- NCDMV provides accommodations for those who have difficulty reading.
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Fact Sheet – Paratransit
  - [http://www.amputee-coalition.org/fact_sheets/paratransit.html](http://www.amputee-coalition.org/fact_sheets/paratransit.html)
QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?
Next meeting – Saturday, March 16 at 2:30 pm via Go to Meeting

Topic will be “Round Table Discussion – How do we get things put in place for community transition. We are going to invite Charlotte Pritchett and Elizabeth and Aaron Hoefs to share their journey into independent living and ask the hard questions about safety, roommates, and other hot topics!