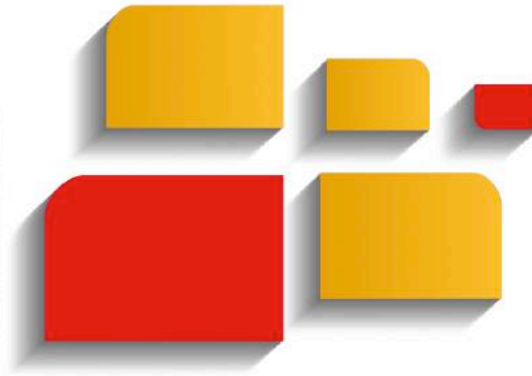
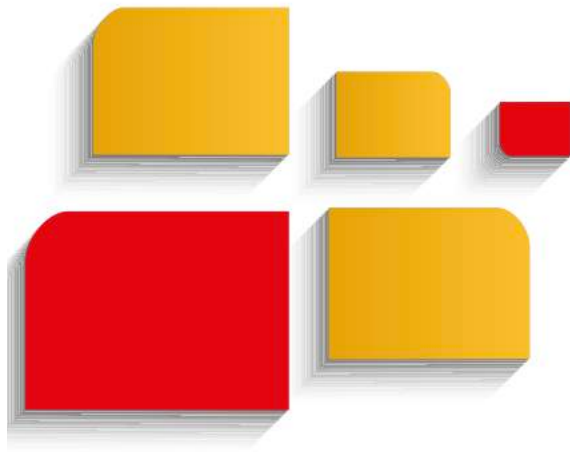


ROADBLOCKS

January 2017
POLICY REPORT

Transportation Barriers to Community Mobility & Independence





ROADBLOCKS

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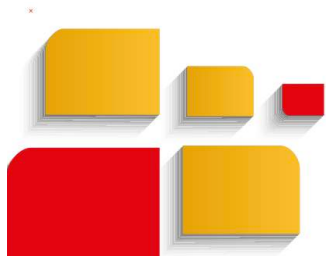
The Guinn Center team wishes to thank individuals, self-advocates, and representatives from the Nevada System of Higher Education, government agencies, and non-profit organizations who contributed their time and provided us with valuable input that shaped the findings of this report. Without your input this report would not have been possible.

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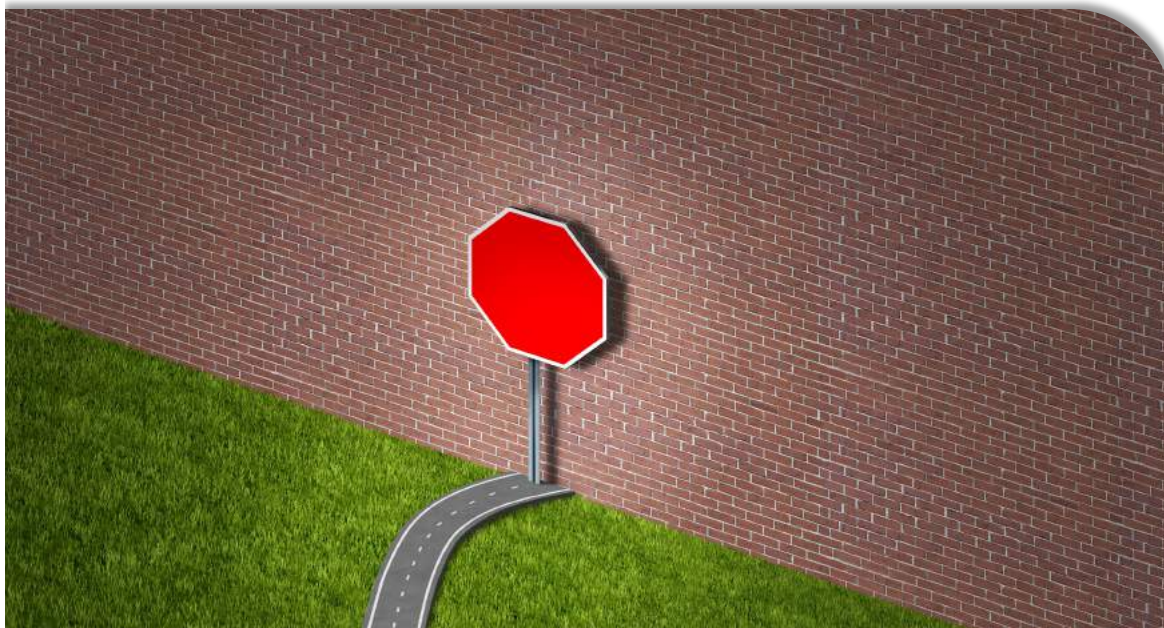
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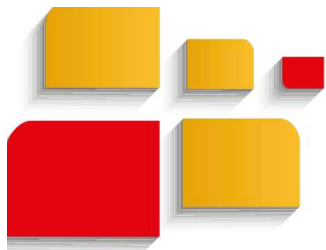
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Executive Summary

Across the United States, individuals with disabilities rely heavily on public transportation, particularly to access medical care. However, adults with disabilities are twice as likely as those without disabilities to have inadequate transportation (31 percent vs. 13 percent), reflecting an 18 percent gap. Of the nearly 2 million people with disabilities who never leave their homes, approximately one-fourth (560,000) never leave their residence because of transportation difficulties. The absence of accessible, reliable, and affordable transportation leaves individuals with disabilities socially isolated, and much less able to access social services and participate in competitive integrated employment.



Like their counterparts around the country, individuals with disabilities in Nevada face significant transportation barriers. Among these are availability and accessibility of transportation options, convenience, and cost. More importantly, limited transportation options make it difficult to take advantage of social services and employment opportunities. Nevadans with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities living in rural communities face an additional set of challenging circumstances in trying to access public (and private) transportation options.

While demand for quality transportation services and greater mobility has increased around the country and here in Nevada, transportation funding has not kept pace with population growth and demand. In many cases, funding has decreased. Federal transportation funds have decreased, including funds that support the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities locally. State and local governments struggle to adequately fund their transportation systems. This has resulted in the decision by transportation authorities around the country and in Nevada to reduce service areas and/or raise fares.

Non-profit service providers also face transportation challenges in trying to address the needs of individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and fill some of the gaps in the public transit system. Many providers, particularly those which maintain group homes for adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, do not have sufficient funds to provide transportation to their residents and maintain existing vehicles.

Meanwhile, disruptive innovations in technology are rapidly transforming transportation systems around the country and are forcing policy makers to think more creatively about how to deliver transit services in more efficient, cost-effective ways.

The goal of this policy report, *Roadblocks: Transportation Barriers to Community Mobility and Independence*, is to identify the transportation challenges or barriers faced by individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in Nevada and provide recommendations that may be taken under advisement by decision makers and elected officials in our State.

Recommendations

Based on research and interviews with stakeholders around the Silver State, the Guinn Center offers the following recommendations, which policy makers and legislative leaders may take under advisement.

For the State

There are several recommendations that require State action, working in collaboration with the Nevada State Legislature.

1. Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for providers of independent living, day habilitation, and job and day training programs that serve adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities

For years now, Nevada has not increased Medicaid reimbursement rates for many providers, even though the requirements for providing quality care and the costs of providing services have increased. The low and flat Medicaid reimbursement rates have impacted the budgets of entities that provide services to individuals with intellectual and/or disabilities, including supportive (independent) living arrangements and adult day and job training programs. Consequently, this has compromised the ability of some organizations to provide transportation services to the adults for whom they provide care, resulting in reduced independence and social mobility. For example, self-advocates and advocacy group representatives reported that group homes and job training facilities no longer maintain vehicles to provide transportation for their residents and clients with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities because they cannot afford to maintain the vehicles and/or repair them when they break down.

Policy officials should review the methodology used to calculate Medicaid reimbursement rates in Nevada. The Nevada Legislature, in collaboration with the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, should increase Medicaid reimbursement rates, particularly for providers of independent living, day habilitation, and job and day training programs that serve adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Policy makers should also consider including transportation costs in the rate calculation, as other states, including Alabama and California, do.

2. The Nevada Department of Health and Human Services should increase funding for programs that support the provision of transit services to adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities

Public and non-profit transit providers in Nevada receive Federal FTA funds (e.g., Section 5310 and 5311) to support the delivery of transportation services to adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in both the rural and urban areas. Locally, many transit providers – especially those in rural counties – receive Independent Living Grants, funded by the Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD) of the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services. These grants are designed to expand the availability of transportation services for seniors, particularly low-income seniors, in Nevada. However, most the recipients of Independent Living Grants (e.g. White Pine County Ely Bus, Retired Senior Volunteer Program-RSVP) serve the public, including adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. By supporting public transit in rural areas, these Independent Living Grants are helping to ensure that adults with disabilities, particularly those in rural Nevada, also have access to transportation.

Second, Clark County offers the Taxi Assistance Program (TAP), funded by the Taxicab Authority, that provides discounted taxi coupon books to eligible individuals. While this program is available to both seniors and adults with disabilities, only a handful of individuals with disabilities participate in this program. There is some concern that any increase in demand for this resource may compromise the agency's ability to fully fund this program. The ADSD should consider ways to fund any increases in demand for TAP following efforts to increase awareness about the program.

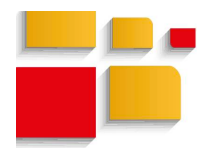
In short, the Department of Health and Human Services' Aging and Disability Services Division should increase funding for programs that support the provision of transit services to adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (e.g. Independent Living Grants, TAP). The State should explore ways to provide assistance to individuals with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities who are working, but who do not qualify or receive Medicaid supported transportation. The Nevada Legislature should consider funding these programs so that adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities can access services and participate in community life.

3. Identify new sources of State funding to fund transit services in urban and rural Nevada

Over the last few years, Federal funding for transportation services has remained relatively flat; funding for some programs has even declined. Given the national landscape, Nevada should identify ways to increase State-generated funding for transit services, including paratransit services.

A. Revise existing Nevada statute to allow revenues collected under the Fuel Revenue Indexing program to fund transit services

This year, most counties in Nevada had the opportunity to raise revenues for transportation projects by tying fuel taxes to the inflation rate (a policy known as Fuel Revenue Indexing or FRI). Washoe County began indexing all motor fuels subject to that county's fuels taxes, effective October 1, 2003, and pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 516. On November 8, 2016, voters in Clark County agreed to continue



tying fuel taxes to the inflation rate. In contrast, voters in Nevada's 15 rural counties failed to approve the of FRI in their respective counties.

As stated in the law (Assembly Bill 191), the revenues collected from FRI can be used "only to finance projects for the construction, maintenance and repair of state highways in the county in which the tax is collected." As such, the existing legislation prohibits Clark County and Washoe County from allocating any revenue obtained through FRI for transit services, including the bus system, paratransit, senior transportation, veteran transportation, and mobility training, amongst others.

The Nevada Legislature should consider revising existing legislation to allow some designated share of FRI revenues to be directed to the provision of transit services, including paratransit services.

B. Consider expanding the sales tax base to support transportation services around the state

Public mass transit officials around the State have noted the increasing challenge they face in providing expanded services to meet growing demand while confronting declining revenues. Many wondered whether transportation services might have to be scaled back should budget woes continue. Nevada's political leaders should consider options for increasing State revenues to support transit services. One option could be to expand the sales tax base. Briefly, Nevada's sales tax base is relatively limited. According to a 2015 Tax Foundation report on Nevada's tax structure, since 1970, "Nevada's sales tax breadth—a measure of the broadness of the tax base—has gone from 73 percent to just 49 percent in 2012." As the study's authors note, this trend reflects changes in consumption patterns: Nevadans consume more services than goods and many services in Nevada are excluded from taxation.

Nevada's political leaders should consider broadening the sales tax (to include services or goods not currently included) and should consider dedicating a share of additional revenues to maintain and expand, as needed, transportation services (including paratransit) around the State. More specifically, (some portion of) revenues collected from a broadening of the sales tax base could support a statewide transportation services fund aimed at ensuring the provision of adequate transportation services (particularly paratransit services) around the State.

4. Support efforts to establish a State-sponsored matching fund program

As mentioned previously, the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) of Southern Nevada indicated that there were Section 5310 funds 'left on the table' in the last cycle of funding. Research suggests that some non-profits do not apply for Section 5310 funds because they are unable to meet the local matching fund requirement (50 percent for operations for Section 5310, for example). In fact, many non-profits and local and State government agencies around the State have identified several challenges in meeting Federal grant matching fund requirements, which consequently undermines Nevada's ability to apply for and receive Federal funds. The result, not surprisingly, is that "Nevada is 50th out of 50 states in securing federal formula and grant funding, ranking behind all other states [...] in competing for and obtaining competitive grants and formula funding."

In the 2015 78th Nevada Legislative Session, lawmakers codified the Nevada Advisory Council on Federal Assistance (Senate Bill 215). In partnership with the State Office of Grant Procurement, Coordination, and Management, the purpose of the Advisory Council is to “advise and assist state and local agencies with respect to obtaining and maximizing federal assistance.” One of the areas of focus identified by the Advisory Council is to “develop or expand opportunities for obtaining matching funds for federal assistance. Preliminary research suggests that the Advisory Council is in the process of identifying ways to obtain local funds that can be used to meet the matching fund requirement for federal grants.

Stakeholders should support efforts to establish a statewide funding mechanism that could help provide and/or leverage financial resources to meet the Federal matching fund requirement of Federal (transportation) grant programs. A State-sponsored matching fund program could provide much needed support to organizations that provide transportation services to adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

5. Require providers to include a transportation plan for enhancing mobility and independence of individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities

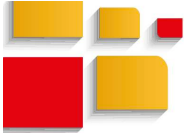
The Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities acknowledged the importance of the availability of and access to transportation services by individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in its Five Year Strategic Plan: 2011-2016. Specifically, Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan is to “develop and strengthen [transportation] systems that improve quality of services and access to quality services and supports in their local communities.”

Given the importance of high quality transportation systems in increasing independence, mobility, and even economic opportunity for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, Nevada should require entities that respond to state request-for-proposals (RFPs) to manage and operate group homes, job and day training programs, and/or supported living arrangements for individuals to explicitly articulate a transportation plan. This required transportation plan should state how the entity (vendor) will enhance or expand a client’s access to transportation, identify options (and funding) to provide transportation services, and describe how this plan will enhance the client’s mobility and independence.

6. Establish a statewide transportation services coordinating committee

Stakeholders around Nevada commented on the lack of coordination across agencies and counties and identified this as a missed opportunity to leverage existing resources to improve the provision of transit services, particularly in rural areas.

Currently, the Nevada Department of Transportation hosts and manages the Statewide Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (STTAC), “an advisory committee/public body which is comprised of members representing many interests and levels of government.” State policy makers should explore the value proposition in standing up a Statewide Transportation Services Coordinating Committee. This new committee could be a subcommittee within the STTAC, or (preferably) an entirely new body focused on address the quality and availability of transportation services, including paratransit services, around the State through greater collaboration and coordination. Rather than limiting representation to



government officials (as is the case with the Statewide Transportation Technical Advisory Committee), membership on a Statewide Transportation Services Coordinating Committee should include representatives from each county, public and non-profit transit providers, and from non-profit organizations, particularly those who provide services to individuals with disabilities. The collective purpose of this body would be to explore innovative solutions in the delivery of transportation services, share best practices, secure matching funds, and improve the coordination of the delivery of transportation services, particularly paratransit services, across the State. This recommendation seeks to address the widespread concern that there is a lack of coordination across agencies and geographic space.

7. Require disability awareness training for licensed drivers of taxi cab companies and transportation network companies

Self-advocates and agency representatives shared that drivers of taxi cabs were frequently discourteous, which limited their participation in taxi cab voucher programs. Currently, fixed route and paratransit operators must participate in disability awareness training. State policy makers should require that all licensed drivers of taxi cabs and transportation network companies (e.g., Lyft and Uber) complete a disability awareness training course. (These courses can be offered on-line, which makes them cost-effective).

8. Require businesses that receive Nevada development incentive packages to set aside funds to support transit services

To foster economic development in Nevada, the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) has the authority to approve abatements of sales, business, and property taxes for new and expanding businesses for 10 to 20 years (Nevada Revised Statute Chapter 360). Many large-scale developments (like Tesla Motors and Faraday Future) are likely to have an impact on the transit systems. For example, the Tesla Motors project approved in September 2014 is expected to bring an estimated 6,500 employees to Storey County. This increased flow of people to the area is likely to impact transit systems in the region as they prepare to respond to increased demand for services. GOED, working with the Nevada State Legislature, should consider exploring ways to link development incentives to public transit systems.

For Public Transit Providers

1. Explore innovative partnerships with school districts to reduce costs

Transit service providers should continue to explore innovative partnerships to reduce costs and potentially even preserve the lifespan of vehicles. As mentioned above, transit operators reported that due to limited funds, they were often not able to maintain and repair vehicles. The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, for example, did not have sufficient funds to maintain the vehicles donated to them by NDOT.

Elsewhere, however, local operators have addressed this challenge through collaborative and innovative partnerships. As an example, the Elko County GET My Ride program leadership embarked on an innovative partnership with the Elko County School District whereby it is using the school district's extensive and experienced maintenance staff (mechanics) to help maintain and repair GET My Ride's vehicles. As noted by Abby Wheeler, Transit Coordinator of Elko County GET My Ride, "this was the best maintenance those vehicles have had during their whole lives."

Specifically, transit operators in rural counties, including nonprofits, as well as Tribal Land operators should explore similar partnerships with their local school districts, who tend to have well train mechanics on staff, to help them maintain and repair their vehicles, thus extending their lifespan.

2. Explore carpool incentive programs

Mass public transit system operators, the Washoe County RTC and the RTC of Southern Nevada, should explore ways to collaborate with community organizations to pilot incentive programs to expand the availability of transportation options to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. One possible option is a carpool program. Specifically, an entity, like the RTC of Southern Nevada, could compensate drivers (using standard mileage rate set by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service) who provide rides to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. This program could be piloted around the State.

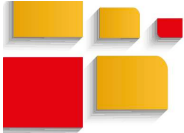
3. Establish regional Transportation Services Coordinating Committees

Around the state, stakeholders commented frequently that there was a lack of coordination across agencies (and organizations) and geographic boundaries. When asked, non-profit representatives revealed that despite widespread transportation challenges faced by all, no one had facilitated or sustained conversations with stakeholders and across time and physical boundary to explore possible solutions. Regional transportation authorities should facilitate and lead a standing committee – a Regional Transportation Services Coordinating Committee – to facilitate communication, greater collaboration, and improved coordination of service delivery. Representatives from the regional Transportation Services Coordinating Committee could sit on the Statewide Transportation Services Coordinating Committee.

In preliminary conversations, transit officials and nonprofit representatives expressed interest in convening a working group in 2017 to discuss transportation challenges and collectively explore solutions.

4. Continue to explore (and fund) innovative transportation solutions

Innovations in technology platforms are forcing transit officials to think more creatively about how to deliver transit services in more cost-effective ways. In Nevada, stakeholders should explore new ways of delivering transit services. Specifically, the arrival of transportation network companies (TNCs) provide an opportunity to explore new ways of providing transportation services. Around the country, public



and nonprofit transportation providers are piloting programs leveraging the existence of Lyft and Uber. For example, in September 2016, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority partnered with Uber and Lyft to offer paratransit passengers on-demand service. As reported in the *Washington Post*, “The partnership, a first of its kind in the United States, is likely to become a model for transit systems across a nation pressed to reduce costs of the multimillion-dollar, heavily subsidized services available to people with special needs.”

In Nevada, the Sierra Nevada Transportation Coalition received a grant from the Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities to pilot a project that would use transportation network companies in northern Nevada to provide transportation service to individuals, regardless of their disability status. The RTC of Southern Nevada is exploring transportation options with taxi companies and TNCs that would enhance the customer experience, while reducing costs in some areas, which could then be used to offset the costs of providing paratransit services.

Introduction



Across the United States, individuals with disabilities rely heavily on public transportation, particularly to access medical care. However, adults with disabilities are twice as likely as those without disabilities to have inadequate transportation (31 percent vs. 13 percent), reflecting an 18 percent gap.¹ Of the nearly 2 million people with disabilities who never leave their homes, approximately one-fourth (560,000) never leave their residence because of transportation difficulties.² The absence of

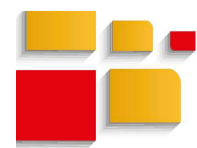
accessible and reliable transportation leaves individuals with disabilities socially isolated, and much less able to access social services and participate in competitive integrated employment.

Like their counterparts around the country, individuals with disabilities in Nevada face significant transportation barriers. Among these are availability and accessibility of transportation options, convenience, and cost. More importantly, limited transportation options make it difficult to take advantage of social services and employment opportunities. Several self-advocates and program administrators noted that the restricted area of service or limited service (hours and days) prevented individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities from participating in employment opportunities and training programs, and traveling to the community based assessment sites. Nevadans with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities living in rural communities face an additional set of challenging circumstances in trying to access public (and private) transportation options.^a

While demand for quality transportation services and greater mobility has increased around the country and here in Nevada, transportation funding has not kept pace with population growth and demand. In many cases, funding has decreased. Federal transportation funds have decreased, including funds that support the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities locally. State and local governments struggle to adequately fund transportation systems. This has resulted in the decision by transportation authorities around the country and in Nevada to reduce service areas and/or raise fares.

Non-profit service providers also face transportation challenges in trying to address the needs of individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and fill some of the gaps in the public transportation system. Many providers, particularly those which maintain group homes for adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, do not have sufficient funds to provide transportation to their residents and maintain existing vehicles.

^a Given the chronic transportation challenges faced by adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities identified transportation as one of the critical issues in the Council's Five Year Strategic Plan: 2011-2016. For more information, see <http://www.nevadadddcouncil.org/about/five-year-state-plan/>



Meanwhile, disruptive innovations in technology are rapidly transforming transportation systems around the country and are forcing policy makers to think more creatively about how to deliver transit services in more efficient and cost-effective ways.

The goal of this policy report, *Roadblocks: Transportation Barriers to Community Mobility and Independence*, is to identify the transportation challenges or barriers faced by individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in Nevada and provide recommendations that may be taken under advisement by decision makers and elected officials in our State.

Background

Approximately 12.0 percent of Nevada’s population has an identified disability and roughly 4.2 percent have an intellectual and/or developmental disability.^b Individuals with disabilities face significant transportation challenges. Adults with disabilities are twice as likely as those without disabilities to have inadequate transportation (34 percent vs. 16 percent), which reflects an 18 percent gap.³

The absence of accessible and reliable transportation leaves individuals with disabilities socially isolated and much less able to take advantage of much needed social services and participate in competitive integrated employment.

“Accessible transportation is critical to the ability of people both with and without disabilities to participate in all aspects of society, including work, education, socializing, and religious, civic, and political activities. Accommodations made in each of these venues are essentially meaningless if people are unable to reach them.”⁴

A 2015 survey found that of the individuals with disabilities searching for employment, 25.6 percent of them indicated that a “lack of transportation” was a barrier. Fortunately, in that same survey almost 42 percent of those individuals who identified transportation as a challenge were able to overcome the challenge.⁵ Additionally, 6.0 percent of individuals with disabilities who had jobs indicated that the lack of transportation was an issue, although 60.1 percent were able to overcome it.⁶

Ensuring that transportation is *both* accessible *and* affordable is critical given that individuals with disabilities tend to have lower incomes than the average population. In 2012, the median household income in Nevada was \$55,800. However, the median income of households that include any working-age people with disabilities was \$39,400, or 29.4 percent lower than households that did not include working-age people with disabilities (see Table 1). And the median income for households that include

^b Developmental disabilities are generally defined as chronic conditions that initially manifest in people aged 18 years or younger and result in impairment of physical health, mental health, cognition, speech, language or self-care.

working-age people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities was \$34,100, which is 38.9 percent lower than the median income for households that did not include working-age people with disabilities.

Table 1. Median Household Income, by Disability Type, Nevada 2012

Disability Type	Median Household Income
No Disability	\$55,800
Any Disability	\$39,400
Visual	\$35,400
Hearing	\$51,400
Ambulatory	\$36,300
Intellectual	\$34,100
Self-Care	\$31,200
Independent Living	\$33,800

The same 2015 survey found that “although differences by disability status persist across all income levels, people with disabilities with annual household incomes of \$15,000 or less are much more likely to say transportation is a problem than are people with incomes of \$35,000 or more.”⁷ In short, *affordable* public transportation is critical to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in Nevada.

Additionally, poverty rates are higher among individuals with disabilities (see Table 2⁸). The poverty rate for working-age individuals without disabilities is 12.8 percent. In stark contrast, the poverty rate for working-age individuals with disabilities is 26.1 percent, and 31.9 percent for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The data presented in Table 2 echoes the findings of a University of Nevada, Reno *Path to Independence* study, which reported that “30 percent of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities live in poverty.”⁹ On average, these individuals make less than \$11,490 annually and \$957.50 monthly.¹⁰

The lack of transportation options in many communities is a major barrier to employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. In 2012, 54.1 percent of working-age people (ages 21 to 64) without disabilities worked full-time (and full-year) (see Table 3¹¹). In contrast, only 23.4 percent of working-age individuals with disabilities worked full-time in Nevada. And for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, only 16.3 percent of working-age people worked full-time (and full-year).

Table 2. Poverty Status of Working-age Individuals, by Disability Status, Nevada, 2012

Disability Type	%
No Disability	12.8
Any Disability	26.1
Visual	31.0
Hearing	17.8
Ambulatory	28.2
Intellectual	31.9
Self-Care	29.1
Independent Living	32.9

In addition, recent national research indicates that there is higher percentage of individuals with disabilities and seniors (ages 65 and older) living in rural communities.¹² A review of Nevada specific data indicates that national trends align with the Nevada landscape. Nationally, there is a slightly higher percentage of seniors and individuals living in rural communities than in urban communities (see Table 4, Rows 1 and 2). In Nevada, there is a higher percentage of seniors (16.5 percent) and individuals with disabilities (16.5 percent) living in Nevada's rural counties than in its two urban areas. There is a five percent gap in the percent of individuals with disabilities living in rural communities than in urban areas.

This data underscores the importance of providing transportation services in Nevada's rural areas to ensure that individuals with disabilities are not isolated. According to recent NDOT data, buses in rural Nevada provide more than 1 million rides and travel over 5 million miles per year.¹³

Table 3. Full-time Employment of Working-age Individuals, by Disability Status, Nevada, 2012

Disability Type	%
No Disability	54.1
Any Disability	23.4
Visual	23.1
Hearing	36.8
Ambulatory	15.7
Intellectual	16.3
Self-Care	7.3
Independent Living	7.7

Table 4. Demographic Profile, by County, 2010¹⁴

County	Population	Median Age	Percent 65 and older	Percent with Disabilities
U.S. Rural		40	13.8	13.3
U.S. Urban		36	12.6	11.6
Nevada Rural	327,875	42.7	16.5	16.5
Nevada Urban	2,372,676	36.3	11.7	11.3
Carson	55,274	41.7	16.4	15.4
Churchill	24,877	39.0	15.1	18.8
Clark	1,951,269	35.5	11.3	11.5
Douglas	46,997	47.4	20.0	15.1
Elko	48,818	33.4	8.5	11.5
Eureka	1,987	42.4	13.0	8.7
Esmeralda	783	52.9	25.9	16.8
Humboldt	16,528	36.2	10.2	10.9
Lander	5,775	37.1	11.8	10.4
Lincoln	5,345	39.9	18.1	14.2
Lyon	51,980	40.9	15.8	17.8
Mineral	4,772	49.2	22.5	27.5
Nye	43,946	48.4	23.4	24.3
Pershing	6,753	41.0	12.9	20.0
Storey	4,010	50.5	18.4	19.3
Washoe	421,407	37.0	12.0	11.1
White Pine	10,030	40.8	14.9	17.3

Public Transportation in Nevada

Public Transportation Utilization

Nevada's population has grown from 1.2 million in 1990, to 2.0 million in 2000, and to 2.8 million in 2014. As of 2012, approximately 12.0 percent (or 328,600 people) of Nevada's population has an identified disability and roughly 4.2 percent have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.¹⁵ Individuals with disabilities rely heavily on public transportation – almost twice as much as individuals without disabilities. Among working-age (16 and older) individuals with disabilities, 6.5 percent rely on public transportation (see Table 5). In contrast, only 3.4 percent of working age individuals without disabilities rely on public transportation. The primary modes of transportation for employed adults with disabilities are driving their own vehicle and carpooling.

Table 5. Workers Commuting to Work, Nevada¹⁶

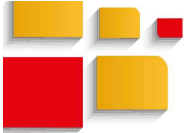
2010-2014	Workers with Disabilities Commuting to Work	Workers without Disabilities Commuting to Work
Worked at Home	3.8%	3.2%
Taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, or other means	2.8%	2.1%
Walked	3.1%	2.0%
Public Transportation (excluding taxicab)	6.5%	3.4%
Car, truck or van - carpooled	11.3%	10.9%
Car, truck or van - drove alone	72.4%	78.4%
Total	99.9%	100%

In Nevada, the reliance of individuals with disabilities on public transportation has increased over time. Over the period 2010-2014, 6.5 percent of working-age individuals with disabilities relied on public transportation to commute to work, an increase from 5.9 percent over the period 2008-2012 (see Table 6¹⁷).

A more recent survey conducted locally confirmed the significant reliance on paratransit service by individuals with intellectual disabilities. In Winter 2016, A-Team, a group of self-advocates with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities with chapters in Las Vegas and Reno, conducted a survey of its members. The survey found that the primary method of transportation for its members who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities was Clark County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) service.¹⁸

Table 6. Workers with Disabilities Commuting to Work, Nevada

	2010-2014	2008-2012
Worked at Home	3.8%	3.9%
Taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, or other means	2.8%	3.0%
Walked	3.1%	2.5%
Public Transportation (excluding taxicab)	6.5%	5.9%
Car, truck or van - carpooled	11.3%	11.7%
Car, truck or van - drove alone	72.4%	73.0%
Total	99.9%	100%



Specifically, 40.6 percent of self-advocates with intellectual disabilities reported that their primary method of transportation was RTC paratransit service (see Table 7). Approximately one-third (32.6 percent) of respondents relied on rides with parents, family and friends. Less than 10 percent use RTC via regular bus routes (or fixed routes).

Table 7. Method of Transportation Used by Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Nevada

Mode	Frequency	Percent
Drive Yourself	11	4.2%
Ride with Parents, Family, or Friends	85	32.6%
LogistiCare	10	3.8%
RTC via regular bus routes	25	9.6%
RTC via Paratransit service	106	40.6%
Other	22	8.4%
Don't Know	2	0.8%
Total	261	100.0%

The Transportation Landscape

There are dozens of transportation providers in the State of Nevada – including public providers (e.g., Washoe County RTC Access), non-profit and for-profit paratransit providers, and specialized transportation services. Table 8 on the following pages (20-25) provides an overview of the major transportation actors in the Silver State that provide services to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

Public transit operators in urban and rural Nevada offer several types of transportation systems. A fixed route system is one in which a bus (or van) operates along a prescribed route according to a fixed schedule. Fixed route systems may be difficult to navigate for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. The passenger's destination may not be located close to the bus stop and may require some walking. This can raise some concerns about getting lost, as was noted by several self-advocates in Nevada. Additionally, individuals with disabilities may require some assistance when using the fixed route system. This is not an insignificant concern and to address this, the RTC of Southern Nevada opened its "Mobility Training Center" in 2016 which "is designed to help Southern Nevadans, especially senior residents and persons with disabilities, move more independently throughout the community."¹⁹ Through different trainings and displays, residents "learn how to best utilize RTC fixed route transit services, as well as obtain Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit certification, providing them with independence and the freedom to travel to various destinations throughout Southern Nevada."²⁰

The Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires transit agencies that provide fixed route bus service to also provide complementary paratransit service to areas within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from any fixed route bus route.²¹ Paratransit (mini) bus and van service provide on demand, door-to-door (or curb) service for individuals with disabilities who are unable (or unwilling) to use the fixed route service. While paratransit service may more effectively meet the needs of individuals with intellectual and/or

developmental disabilities, it is a costly service to provide. For example, the base fare for the RTC in Southern Nevada for general fixed route is \$2 (\$1 reduced fare). While the base fare for paratransit is \$3, the real cost of the trip is closer to \$40 a trip.²²

Finally, some transit providers, particularly in rural areas (like Elko County), provide a deviated fixed route system of service. This means that the bus travels along a fixed route and maintains a schedule but the bus can deviate from the route to pick up (or drop off) a passenger at a specific location. Once that passenger has been picked up, the bus resumes travel along the fixed route. This option may also more effectively address the needs of individuals with disabilities than fixed route, but is more costly to provide.

Major Public Transportation Providers

The **Nevada Department of Transportation** (NDOT) manages and oversees Statewide Transportation Planning, and is responsible for helping in the creation and continuation of services to address the transportation needs of seniors, individuals with disabilities, and residents of rural areas. NDOT administers the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants that support the provision of transportation services to Nevada's senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, and rural residents.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOS) operate large transit systems in the large urban areas of Nevada. These include the **Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada** (RTC of Southern Nevada), the **Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County** (Washoe County RTC), and Carson City (Carson Area Metropolitan Planning Organization - CAMPO), and Lake Tahoe (Tahoe Transportation District).

Washoe County RTC provides paratransit service called RTC Access. Washoe RTC contracts with CitiCare to provide paratransit services outside of the federally required Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) service area. In Clark County, the RTC of Southern Nevada also provides paratransit services. All RTC of Southern Nevada transit services are operated under competitive contracts with private operating companies. The RTC of Southern Nevada partners with non-profits to provide paratransit services beyond the ADA service area.

Outside of the urbanized areas, many Nevada residents depend on rural transit systems for connection to the urbanized areas. In rural areas, most counties also provide transportation service, albeit more limited in scope than the State's two urban areas. Through Federal grants (Section 5310 and 5311), NDOT provides operating and capital assistance to several rural and small urban transit operations statewide, including County Transit Providers, Indian Reservation Transit Services, Non-Profit Transit Providers, Intercity Providers, Senior Centers, and Non-Profit Rehabilitation Facilities. Transportation services include general fixed route public transit, demand response paratransit services, intercity bus services, and daily rides for the elderly and individuals with disabilities.

County transit providers include Elko County GET My Ride and Southern Nevada Transit Coalition (SNTC), which services Mesquite and Laughlin outside of Las Vegas. Indian Reservation Transit Services would include the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe Tribal Transit.

Non-profit and For-profit Paratransit Service Providers

In addition to the public transportation fixed and paratransit service providers, there are dozens of non-profit and for-profit paratransit and ride services that provide transportation services to individuals with disabilities, seniors, and low-income passengers (see Table 8). Specialized transportation service providers include government agencies, non-profit organizations, and businesses providing and arranging for transportation services. Most non-profit specialized transportation providers charge minimal fees or accept donations. For-profit organizations charge for their services, often by the hour. Full-care facilities, assisted living facilities, and group homes often provide transportation as a way of ensuring adults are not isolated and maintain some independence and social engagement.

Finally, private sector companies – including taxicabs and transportation network companies – can complement public transportation services for individuals with disabilities and fill gaps in service. For example, the Washoe County RTC uses taxicabs to meet demand between the hours of 5 p.m. and 6 a.m. In 2015, the Nevada Legislature approved Assembly Bill 175, which authorized Lyft and Uber, two innovative transportation network companies (TNCs), to operate in Nevada.²³ Currently, Lyft and Uber both operate in northern and southern Nevada. Around the country, public transportation companies are exploring innovative partnerships with these TNCs to expand coverage in a cost-effective manner. Non-profit transportation companies in Nevada are also exploring these sorts of partnerships.



Table 8. Sample of Public and Non-Profit Transportation Providers, Nevada

Agency	Area of Service	Service	Fare	Comments
Public Transportation Providers				
RTC Clark County Fixed Route	Clark County	Fixed	\$1.00 one way	Free for registered paratransit riders
RTC Clark County Paratransit	Clark County	Paratransit	\$3.00 one way	System is reservation-based and is available to customers that have been deemed eligible through an evaluation process.
RTC Intercity	Wahoe County (Reno/Carson)	Fixed	\$2.50 one way	RTC Intercity is a connection route between Reno and Carson City. Operates Monday through Friday.
Washoe County RTC Ride	Washoe County (Reno/Sparks)	Fixed	\$2.00 one way	RTC has RTC Rapid, Intercity, Sierra Spirit service
Washoe County RTC Access	Washoe County (Reno/Sparks)	Paratransit	\$3.00 one way	Partners with Reno-Sparks Taxi Cab for rides between 5:00 pm to 6:00 am
Citicare	Washoe County (Reno/Sparks)	Provides paratransit outside of ADA	\$2.00 one way	CitiCare purchases paratransit rides from Washoe RTC, which creates increased transportation availability for people with disabilities without costly capital expenditures or administrative costs.
Carson City Jump Around Carson (JAC)	Carson City	Fixed	\$0.50 one way	JAC Assist provides curb-to-curb service for individuals with disabilities and seniors. Fares are \$2-\$4.
Tahoe Transportation District	Carson City, Douglas County, Washoe County	Fixed; Demand response, curb service	\$3.00 one way	The South Shore area's transit system includes local fixed-route bus service and commuter bus service connecting Carson City and Carson Valley. ADA Demand Response Service is available to seniors, veterans, and persons with disabilities who meet eligibility criteria.
Churchill Area Regional Transportation	Churchill County, Fallon	Paratransit bus and deviated fixed route	\$2.00 one way	Operating times: 7:00 am-4:00 pm, Monday-Friday
Douglas Area Rural Transportation (DART)	Douglas County (Minden & Gardnerville)	Fixed; Demand response, curb service	\$1.00 (suggested donation)	DART offers two options for passengers. For general public they offer DART Express Route, which includes transfers to Carson City and Lake Tahoe. DART Dial-A-Ride is eligibility based curb to curb service.
Elko County GET MY RIDE	Elko, Spring Creek, Ryndon, Osino	Fixed; Demand response, curb service	\$1.00 one way; \$2.00 for deviated trip	For demand response, fares are \$2-\$5 and service goes to Ryndon and Osino once a week.

Table 8. Sample of Public and Non-Profit Transportation Providers, continued

Agency	Area of Service	Service	Fare	Comments
Public Transportation Providers				
Esmeralda County Senior Transportation	Esmeralda County	Fixed; medical transit	Donation for fixed; \$20.00 for medical transport (Medicaid)	Esmeralda County Transportation offers bi-weekly trips from Goldfield to Tonopah, Fish Lake Valley to Tonopah and Bishop, CA and weekly trips from Silver Peak to Tonopah.
Lincoln County Transportation	Lincoln County (Panaca)	Fixed; medical transit	\$10.00-\$15.00 one way	Lincoln County Senior Center (funded through Lincoln County Social Services) offers transportation primarily to seniors for senior center meals, errands, medical appointments. Lincoln County provides bus services to various locations within Lincoln County as well as once a week trips to Las Vegas. Also provided are bi-monthly round trips from Lincoln County to St. George, Utah and Cedar City, Utah each month.
Nye Rider	Nye County	Demand response, curb service; deviated fixed route, paratransit	\$1.00-\$3.00	Provides transportation to residents of Nye County.
Ely Bus	White Pine County (Ely, Ruth, McGill)	Demand response, curb service; medical transit, paratransit	None	White Pine County operates Ely Bus Service for senior and disabled populations. Provides transportation to medical appointments, nutrition transportation, social events, shopping and Senior Center.
Tribal Communities				
Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe Tribal Transit	Pyramid Lake		\$1.00 regular fare	\$0.50 for individuals with disabilities; Wadsworth/Reno route; Nixon/Sutcliffe/Wadsworth/Fernley route
Washoe Tribe Elder Center	Carson and Douglas (near Gardnerville)	Fixed; Demand response, curb service	Donation requested	Washoe Tribe Elder Center offers transportation primarily to members to get to the center for meals, run errands, and get to medical appointments.
Reno Sparks Indian Colony Senior Center	Washoe County (Reno/Sparks)	Demand response, curb service; Medical transit	None	Reno-Sparks Indian Colony Senior Center offers transportation primarily to seniors to get to the center for meals, the ability to run errands and get to medical appointments.

Table 8. Sample of Public and Non-Profit Transportation Providers, continued

Agency	Area of Service	Service	Fare	Comments
Non-profit Providers				
Opportunity Village	Clark County	Demand response, curb service		Funding to provide transportation to and from work for clients with intellectual disabilities
Accessible Space (ASI)	Clark County	Demand response, curb service		Provides transportation to 84 senior and or clients with disabilities at three affordable building/group homes.
Jewish Federation of Las Vegas	Clark County	Demand response, curb service		Provide low income disabled seniors with taxi cab vouchers to transport them to medical appointments, social service agencies, and other service related appointments.
Jewish Federation of Las Vegas Nutrition Transportation Program	Clark County	Fixed		The programs brings elderly and individuals with disabilities to a meal program and provides a monthly shopping trip.
Lend A Hand of Boulder City	Clark County	Demand response, curb service; medical transit		Volunteer transportation for medical trips from Boulder City into the Las Vegas Valley. Serves the disabled, frail and the elderly who reside in Boulder City.
Silver Rider (Southern Nevada Transit Coalition)	Clark County (outside of Las Vegas)	Fixed and paratransit	\$1.00 one way	SNTC is a non-profit transportation provider servicing 11 communities in Southern Nevada: Mesquite, Laughlin, Indian Springs, Logandale, Overton, Moapa Valley, Glendale, Searchlight, Cal-Nev-Ari, Palm Gardens and Boulder City.
Southern Nevada Transit Coalition (SNTC) - Rural/ Urban Transit Partnership	Clark County (outside of Las Vegas)	Fixed; Demand response, curb service; Medical transit		Coordinated rural passenger trips for medical purposes will co-mingle with passengers from the Henderson area. Operating funds will be used to expand the days of service for the target population of elderly persons with disabilities.
SNTC Paratransit	Clark County (outside Las	Paratransit		Provide transportation to ADA certified seniors and individuals with disabilities who live outside the RTC service area.
SNTC Veterans Medical Transportation Network for Senior & Disabled Veterans	Clark County	Demand response, curb service; medical transit		Provides mobility management for medical transportation to senior and disabled veterans

Table 8. Sample of Public and Non-Profit Transportation Providers, continued

Agency	Area of Service	Service	Fare	Comments
Non-profit Providers				
United States Veterans Initiative (U.S. Vets)	Clark County	Demand response		Funding for the purchase of a new vehicle, to transport formerly homeless veterans with disabilities to services related to medical, work and housing.
Saint Rose Dominican Health Foundation	Clark County (Henderson)	Demand response,curb service		Provide seniors with disabilities transportation within the city of Henderson and develop the network of program volunteers.
The Senior Sage	Clark County (Las Vegas)	Medical transport	Retainer fee	Escort patients to medical appointments and provide written reports; Facilitate prescription, medical supply delivery, and set up.
United Seniors, Inc.	Clark County (Moapa area of Overton and Logandale)	Medical transport; Fixed		United Seniors, Inc. is a senior center that offers transportation to the center for meals and to surrounding areas for medical appointments.
Helping Hands of Vegas Valley	Clark County (North Las Vegas)	Demand Response,curb service; paratransit;		Provide transportation, in partnership with Helping Hands of North Las Vegas for, to and from medical appointments, shopping and other necessary appointments for seniors who are frail, disabled and wheelchair bound.
Searchlight Senior Center	Clark County (Searchlight)	Medical transport; Curb service	Donation requested	The Searchlight Senior offers transportation primarily to seniors to get to the center, run errands, and get to medical appointments. Hours of operation: 8:00 am to 1:00 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday & Friday 1:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP)	Douglas County and rurals	Demand response, curb service	None	Nevada Rural Counties Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) helps homebound, low-income seniors, and people with disabilities remain independent.
Elko Band Council Senior Center	Elko County	Fixed; demand response, curb service	None	Elko Band Council Senior Center offers transportation to members to get to the center, run errands and get to medical appointments.
Carlin Open Door Senior Citizen's Center	Elko County (Carlin)	Fixed; demand response, curb service	\$0.25 per ride	Provides a transportation program for clients going to the center for meals; they also take passengers to the bank, shopping and to appointments. Weekly trips are scheduled to Elko for shopping and medical appointments.

Table 8. Sample of Public and Non-Profit Transportation Providers, continued

Agency	Area of Service	Service	Fare	Comments
Non-profit Providers				
Wells Sage Senior Center	Elko County (Wells)	Fixed; demand response, curb service	Donation requested	Operates Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Hours are extended upon request for appointments and special events. Clients can ride the bus to and from the Center for meals and to businesses and facilities within the Wells city limits. Weekly trips are scheduled to Elko, Nevada to provide shopping and medical options for the clients.
Fannie Komp Senior Center	Eureka County (Crescent Valley)	Fixed	\$2.00 suggested donation	Provides transportation to and from the meal site on a daily basis. Trips to the post office, clinic and local store are also available. At least 1 monthly trip to Elko for shopping, doctor appointments and social activities. Special event trips are planned occasionally.
Pleasant Senior Center	Humboldt County (Winnemucca)	Fixed; Demand response, curb service; medical transit	Donation requested	Offers transportation primarily to seniors to get to the center for meals, the ability to run errands and get to medical appointments. They also offer some transportation to the general public.
George Schwin Senior Center	Lander County (Battle Mountain)	Fixed and paratransit; medical transit	None	Offers transportation to seniors to get to the center for meals, run errands, and get to medical appointments. Transportation available monthly to Winnemucca and Elko; local transportation available by appointment daily. Transportation is available to all, but is programmed to seniors.
Silver Springs Senior Center	Lyon County (Silver Springs)	Fixed	\$2.00 suggested donation	Offers transportation for seniors to and from the center for meals. Hours of operation: 8am-4pm Monday & Friday; 10:00 am - 6:00 pm, Tuesday-Thursday
Mineral County Care and Share Senior Services	Mineral County (Hawthorne)	Fixed; Demand Response Curb Service; Medical transit	Cost varies	Local transportation is provided to and from the Senior Center; as well as to/for medical appointments, shopping, Post Office, and other general errands such as paying bills. Provides weekly transportation to Hawthorne for shopping, medical appointments and general errands. Both Hawthorne and Mineral provide transportation to Bishop, California, Fallon, Carson City, and Reno for shopping and medical appointments as requested.

Table 8. Sample of Public and Non-Profit Transportation Providers, continued

Agency	Area of Service	Service	Fare	Comments
Non-profit Providers				
Beatty Senior Center	Nye County (Beatty)	Fixed	\$3.00 suggested donation	Provides transportation to clients 60+ or the general public on a space available basis, to senior center, post office, bank, and store. Every other week a trip is scheduled to Pahrump for shopping, medical appointments.
Tonopah Senior Center	Nye County (Tonopah)	Fixed; Medical transit	Varies	Provides transportation to clients 60+ or the general public on a space available basis. Provides rides to the senior center, post office, banks, medical appointments, and shopping at least once a week. The Senior Nutrition Program provides non-emergency medical transportation to Las Vegas, Reno, Carson City, Fallon, Hawthorne and Bishop, California.
Pershing County Senior Center	Pershing County (Lovelock)	Demand response, curb service; medical transit, paratransit	Varies	Offers transportation primarily to seniors to get to the center for meals, run errands, and get to medical appointments. They also offer some transportation to the general public.
Storey County Senior Center	Storey County (Virginia City)	Demand response, curb service; medical transit, paratransit	None	Offers transportation primarily to seniors to get to the center for meals, the ability to run errands and get to medical appointments.
Neighborhood Network of Northern Nevada	Washoe County	Demand response, curb service; medical transit	None	N4 provides fully inclusive (not just for seniors) programs aimed at providing supports for senior citizens and people with disabilities. The program uses time banks and volunteers to provided needed transportation and other services to elderly and disabled people in Northern Nevada.
Sierra Nevada Transportation Commission	Washoe County, Lyon County, Storey County, Carson City, Douglas County	Demand response, curb service; medical transit, paratransit	Varies	In 2014, Citicare with partners Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living and Northern Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities launched a new transportation coalition to service Washoe and adjacent counties and provide accessible, affordable transportation options for seniors, people with disabilities, veterans and people living in poverty.

Public Transportation Funding for Individuals with Disabilities

Most state transportation programs for transit programs (and even transportation projects) receive a significant portion of their funding from Federal sources. The current transit funding programs in the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are now under the 2013 Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) which ushered in new requirements. Now, MAP-21 requires that the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310), “be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan,” which should focus on the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities. Per the requirements of MAP-21, this coordinated plan and the Regional Transportation Plan must be submitted prior to applying for funding under these FTA programs that provide transit services to individuals with disabilities (and seniors). In addition to Federal DOT programs, local, state, county, and city revenue funds are used to support rural transit systems.

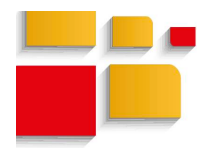
Typically, Federal funds are provided to cities, counties, transit authorities, and transit providers on a reimbursement basis. Most Federal grants are accompanied by a match requirement, which can be met by using local funds or flexible Federal funds. There are two types of Federal funding programs: (1) Formula grant programs, which provide funding based on a pre-determined formula (which are usually based on population and/or need) for distribution among the different states; (2) Discretionary grant programs, which are awarded competitively based on specific criteria depending on the program.

Using information from the 2010 U.S. Census which informs formula based grants, the Federal government has designated Nevada as having one urban area with a population of 50,000 to 199,000 (Carson City); one urban area with a population of less than 50,000 (Lake Tahoe), “although this designation does not apply to FTA funding programs;” and two urban areas over 200,000 (Las Vegas and Reno). These four areas support both a public fixed-route system and an “on demand response” system for individuals with disabilities. In contrast, the rural counties of Nevada have limited services. Even when they support both fixed-route and a demand response system, the temporal and spatial service is limited. For example, Elko County’s GET My Ride demand fixed and demand response service runs from 6:30 am to 5:30 pm Monday through Friday.²⁴

The most common programs for funding transportation services to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in Nevada in urban and rural areas are:

- Section 5310 – Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities
- Section 5311 – Rural and Small Urban Area Formula Grant
- Section 5316 – Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC), and
- Section 5317 – New Freedom Initiative.

An additional source of funding for some communities in Nevada, – specifically the tribal communities – is the Tribal Transportation Program (TTP), which is jointly administered by Federal Highway



Administration and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Division of Transportation. The TTP program funds transportation and public road access to tribal lands.²⁵

Below we summarize the major funds that support transit services for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in Nevada.

Section 5310 Funds: Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) are formula funds that can be used for the special transportation needs of seniors and persons with disabilities. Funds are apportioned for urbanized and rural areas based on the number of seniors and individuals with disabilities.²⁶ The Section 5310 funding allocations are as follows: 60 percent to urbanized areas with a population over 200,000, 20 percent to states for small urbanized areas, and 20 percent to states for rural areas. Section 5310 funds to Nevada have not varied significantly in recent years. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2014, the RTC of Southern Nevada received \$1.43 million in Section 5310 funds.

These funds may be used for capital expenses including the purchase of vehicles, vehicle rehabilitation and for the purchase of contracted transportation services.^c The Federal share for capital projects (including acquisition of public transportation services) is 80 percent, and operating assistance is 50 percent.

Eligible sub-recipients include:

- Private non-profit corporations and associations
- Governmental authorities that certify to the state that no non-profits corporations or organizations are readily available in the area where the services are provided, and
- Governmental authorities approved by the State to coordinate services for elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities (e.g., county agencies on aging or a public transit provider identified by the State as the lead agency to coordinate transportation services).²⁷

Many of the organizations that receive Section 5310 funds provide services to senior citizens (who may or may not have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities). With respect to guidelines around implementation, NDOT allows sub-recipients to use the Section 5310 funds to provide meal delivery services for homebound persons on a regular basis provided that the meal delivery service does not conflict with normal transportation services for the elderly and persons with disabilities. However, sub-recipients cannot request Section 5310 funds to purchase special vehicles to be used solely for meal delivery or to purchase specialized equipment such as heating racks or refrigeration units.²⁸

NDOT notes that “with the implementation of Map-21, the Section 5310 funding that NDOT receives annually was reduced significantly.”²⁹ Metropolitan Planning Organizations (e.g., RTC of Southern Nevada and Washoe County RTC) are now the designated direct recipient for most of the 5310 funds in Nevada and they have their own project selection and prioritization process for sub-recipients.

^c Traditional Section 5310 project examples include: buses and vans; wheelchair lifts, ramps, and securement devices; transit-related information technology systems, including scheduling/routing/one-call systems; mobility management programs; and acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease, or other arrangement. Nontraditional Section 5310 project examples include: travel training; volunteer driver programs; building an accessible path to a bus stop, including curb-cuts, sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals or other accessible features; improving signage, or way-finding technology; incremental cost of providing same day service or door-to-door service; purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, rides sharing and/or vanpooling programs; and mobility management programs.

NDOT receives and administers Section 5310 funds for the rural areas of the state, for the small urbanized areas (i.e., population between 50,000 and 199,000) (e.g., Carson Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO)), and for the tribal lands.³⁰ NDOT uses its limited share of Section 5310 funds primarily for the purchase of paratransit vehicles.³¹

While each MPO (RTC of Southern Nevada and Washoe County RTC) and NDOT have their own project selection process, there are Federal criteria. First, at least 55 percent of 5310 program funds must be used on capital projects that are: (1) Public transportation projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable. (2) The remaining 45 percent may be used for: (a) Public transportation projects that exceed the requirements of the ADA; and/or (b) Public transportation projects that improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance by individuals with disabilities on complementary paratransit.³²

Section 5310 funds have a local match requirement. The local match for capital projects and contracted services is 20 percent, and for operating assistance projects the local match is 50 percent.

Section 5307 funds: Section 5307 (Urban Area) formula funds are provided to urbanized areas (with a population of at least 50,000) with the objective of enhancing the “access of the people in non-urbanized areas to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services and recreation; to assist in the maintenance, development, improvement and the use of public transportation systems in the rural and small urban areas; to encourage and facilitate the most efficient use of all Federal funds used to provide passenger transportation in non-urbanized areas through the coordination of programs and services; to assist the development and support of the intercity bus transportation; encourage mobility management, employment-related transportation alternatives, and to provide for the participation of private transportation providers in non-urbanized transportation to the maximum extent feasible.”^{33,d} NDOT is the agency which oversees and coordinates all 5307 funds for the State in rural and small urbanized areas (50,000-199,000 residents). Metropolitan Planning Organizations (RTC of Southern Nevada and Washoe County RTC) coordinate funds in the urban areas. During FY2014, approximately \$32.6 million was apportioned to the Las Vegas urbanized area in 5307 formula grants.

Section 5311 funds: Section 5311 funds are coordinated by NDOT with assistance from the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (RTC of Southern Nevada and Washoe County RTC).³⁴ Section 5311 funds support “public transportation in areas of less than 50,000 in population” including tribal lands.³⁵ Funding may be used for capital, operating, state administration, and project administration expenses.

The Federal Transit Administration requires NDOT to spend 15 percent of its total Section 5311 allocation on a **Rural Intercity Bus Program** to support the development and support of an intercity bus transportation program which will enhance rural and small urban intercity transportation.³⁶ Supported programs must facilitate connectivity between rural and urbanized areas. During FY2014, approximately \$6.5 million was apportioned to NDOT for rural areas through the 5311 program.³⁷

^d Eligible activities include: planning, engineering, design and evaluation of transit projects and other technical transportation-related studies; capital investments in bus and bus-related activities such as replacement and rebuilding of buses; and capital investments in new and existing fixed guideway systems. Also, relevant transit improvements and certain expenses associated with mobility management programs are eligible.

Section 5311 funds also have a local match requirement. The local share for capital assistance projects is five percent of the net expense and the local match for operating assistance projects is 40 percent, of which “twenty five percent must be derived from sources other than Federal funds or revenues of the system.”³⁸ Table 9 presents the disbursement of FTA funds (Section 5310, 5307, and 5311) over time. As illustrated, most funds have increased over time, with the exception of the Section 5310 funds for small urbanized areas.

Table 9. FTA funds (Section 5310, 5307, and 5311) over time, Nevada

	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	Change over time
Section 5310								
Nevada	\$ 1,029,467	\$ 1,025,236	\$ 1,026,948					
Las Vegas RTC of Southern Nevada				\$ 1,233,764	\$ 1,428,716	\$ 1,426,185	\$ 1,511,346	22.5%
RTC of Washoe County				\$ 287,719	\$ 315,579	\$ 315,020	\$ 330,190	14.8%
NDOT for small urbanized areas (50,000-199,000)				\$ 122,852	\$ 108,488	\$ 108,296	\$ 106,956	-12.9%
NDOT for Rural Areas				\$ 178,364	\$ 212,239	\$ 211,863	\$ 195,290	9.5%
Section 5307								
Las Vegas		\$ 24,307,117	\$ 24,609,513	\$ 28,692,272	\$32,600,029	\$ 33,220,033	\$ 33,489,732	37.8%
Reno		\$ 5,078,826	\$ 4,836,934	\$ 5,470,939	\$ 5,782,863	\$ 5,775,722	\$ 6,120,839	20.5%
Carson City		\$ 819,150	\$ 821,455	\$ 926,879	\$ 940,528	\$ 939,583	\$ 960,398	17.2%
Section 5311								
Nevada	\$ 4,970,199	\$ 4,979,908	\$ 4,982,926	\$ 6,386,148	\$ 6,520,381	\$ 6,523,002	\$ 6,281,410	26.4%

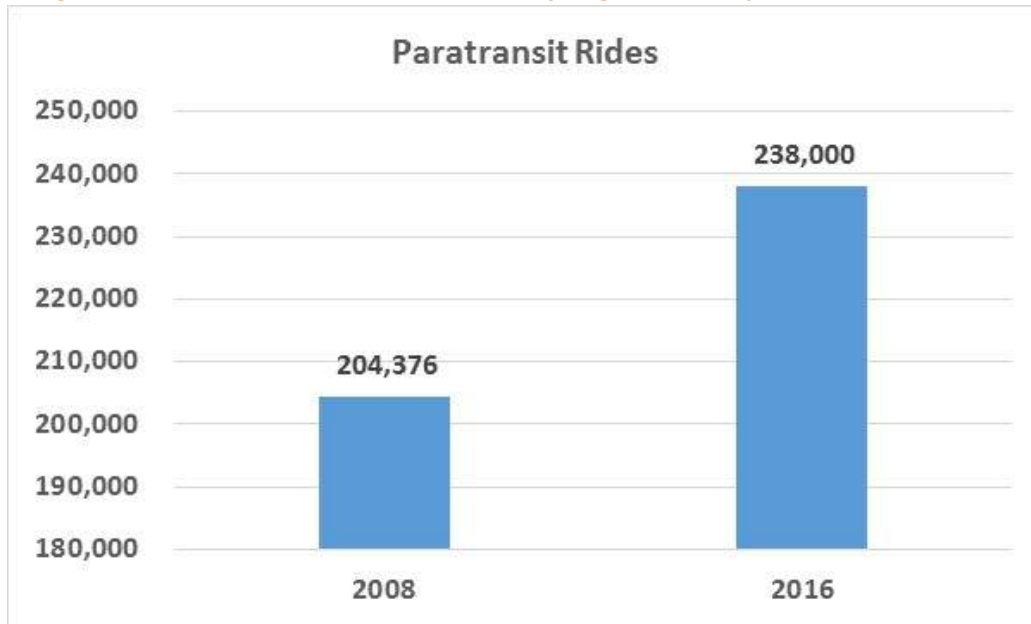
Other Funds

Locally, many transit providers – especially those in rural counties – receive Independent Living Grants, funded by the Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD) of the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services. These grants are designed to expand the availability of transportation services for seniors, particularly low-income seniors, in Nevada. However, most the recipients of Independent Living Grants (e.g. White Pine County Ely Bus, Retired Senior Volunteer Program-RSVP) serve the public, including adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. By supporting public transit in rural areas, these Independent Living Grants are helping to ensure that adults with disabilities, particularly those in rural Nevada, have access to transportation.

Growing Demand for Public Transit Services

Not surprisingly, the demand for public transit services in Nevada has increased as the State’s population has grown. For example, in Reno, the Washoe County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) logged 204,376 ADA rides in 2008.³⁹ In 2016, the Washoe County RTC estimated “that RTC ACCESS provides 238,000 rides per year at a cost of over \$4 million. Yet, there is an unmet demand of approximately 13,000 rides” (see Figure 1).⁴⁰ This suggests the Washoe County RTC has experienced a 16.5 percent increase in ADA ridership over the last eight years (2008-2016).

Figure 1. Paratransit Rides, Washoe County Regional Transportation Commission

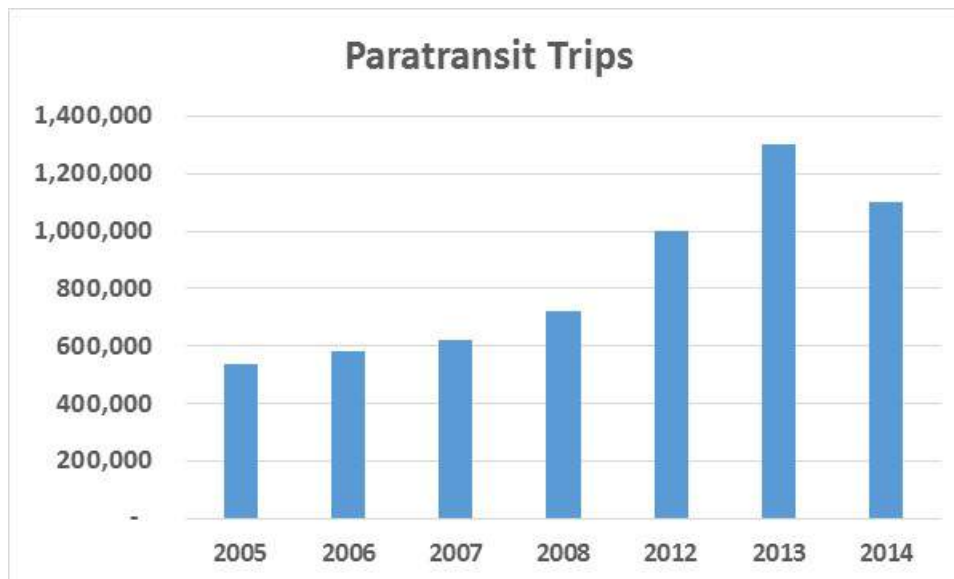


The Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada has also witnessed similar growth trends. For example, the RTC of Southern Nevada provided roughly 530,000 paratransit rides in FY 2005, and 1.1 million rides in 2014 (see Table 10). According to the RTC of Southern Nevada, it provided 4,000 daily paratransit rides in 2015, and more than 100,000 rides each month, which amounts to an annualized figure of 1.4 million rides.⁴¹ This indicates that demand for RTC of Southern Nevada paratransit rides has more than doubled over the last decade (see Figure 2).⁴² The RTC of Southern Nevada has over 14,000 certified riders.⁴³

Table 10. Passengers of RTC of Southern Nevada, 2005-2007, 2015⁴⁴

	2005	2006	2007	2015
Paratransit Passengers	590,000	620,000	700,000	1,400,000
Transit Passengers	55,816,051	61,002,741	63,816,261	60,000,000

Figure 2. Paratransit Rides, Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada



In Elko County, the Elko County Transit Office reported that they provide an average of 3,000 rides per month and that approximately 1,200 of these rides are for individuals with disabilities, amounting to roughly 40 percent of total rides.⁴⁵ The Sierra Nevada Transportation Coalition reported that of the 9,600 annual rides provided, 600-1,000 were one-way paratransit rides. In general, in the rural counties and small urban areas, ridership by individuals with disabilities accounts for 10-40 percent of all rides.⁴⁶

Transportation Challenges for Individuals with Disabilities

Even though demand for paratransit services has increased in Nevada, individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities continue to face considerable barriers when using paratransit services in both the State's urban and rural areas.

Interviews with individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, as well as representatives from public and non-private transit providers, and advocacy groups identified the following concerns related to the experience of riding public transportation, the overall transit system, and some of the impacts.

- Paratransit and fixed route buses are late (or never come)

- Trips are long (some trips are more than 2 hours long) because drivers pick up other passengers (“inserts”) along the route
- Drivers on buses are not courteous
- System telephone operators are not courteous
- The quality of the ride was poor (air conditioning broken, passengers were yelling)
- There are concerns about personal safety and/or getting lost, which prevent many individuals with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities from taking fixed route service
- Many self-advocates do not own smart phones and thus cannot take advantage of the mobile phone applications and technology that are used by transit providers
- Scheduling paratransit rides is difficult and time-consuming for self-advocates and their guardians
- Paratransit riders are penalized when they cancel their scheduled paratransit rides without sufficient notice
- Public transit authorities fail to respond to complaints
- Limited geographic and temporal service (many transportation providers do not provide service after 4 p.m. or on the weekends)
- The absence of service on the weekends or after 4 p.m. limits employment opportunities and participation in training activities
 - Transit services from Virginia City and Dayton into Carson City are unavailable, which limits participation in training programs and employment opportunities
- Clients must schedule some transit services in advance, which makes it difficult to engage in last-minute social activities
- Bus routes do not provide frequent or regular service near employment or community based assessment sites (e.g., Walmart in some counties)
- The ADA service area is not large enough (and in some cases, is becoming smaller)
- Limited intercity service (e.g., there is no state/local intercity bus service between Reno and Elko), buses will not cross county lines, and there are no transfer stations that allow passengers to move safely and efficiently from one service area to another
- Fares are high and keep increasing
- Many transportation programs/services provided by non-profits have restrictive eligibility requirements, and many focus on senior citizens, and there are long waiting lists to receive services
- Assisted living centers (e.g. group homes) do not provide transportation
- LogistiCare is expensive, does not provide high quality service, and drivers are not courteous^e
- Insufficient funds for public transportation; transit providers often find it difficult to meet local matching requirements
- Transportation challenges make it difficult to secure and retain employment, particularly over the long-term
- Transportation challenges made it difficult to access supported employment services and social services, particularly from rural areas

^e As of July 1, 2016, MTM replaced Logisticare as the State’s provider of transportation services to Medicaid-eligible recipients who need a reliable way to get to and from covered healthcare services.

Empirical data provided by the RTC of Southern Nevada and drawn from reported complaints (which are publicly available) echo the many concerns raised in focus groups. The Guinn Center research team randomly sampled two monthly reports, July 2015 and July 2016, and summarized the complaints. In

Table 11. Filed Complaints, RTC of Southern Nevada Paratransit Service, July 2015 & July 2016

Complaint	July 2015	July 2016
ADA complaint	1.2%	3.3%
Comfort	4.8%	1.6%
Dipatch	0.0%	0.0%
Equipment Failure	0.0%	0.0%
Fare Dispute	0.0%	0.0%
General	7.1%	5.7%
General System	0.0%	0.0%
Inquiry	4.8%	0.0%
None	0.0%	0.0%
No Show Dispute	4.8%	5.7%
Operator Attitude	13.1%	12.3%
Operator Driving	9.5%	15.6%
Operator Rules	4.8%	7.4%
Operator Arrived Early	2.4%	0.8%
Operator Arrived Late	42.9%	42.6%
Other	0.0%	0.0%
Scheduling	2.4%	4.1%
Scheduling Error	2.4%	0.8%
Total Complaints	84	122

both time periods, the majority (more than 40 percent) of complaints were directed at the operator arriving later than the scheduled time (see Table 11).

While the specific concerns expressed by individuals with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities warrant consideration, it is important to consider the following. In July 2016, there were only 122 formal complaints out of a total of 92,869 paratransit trips, which equates to a complaint rate of 0.13 percent. And while there were 122 complaints, there were 52 compliments.⁴⁷

To underscore this point, a survey administered to members of the A-Team, a self-advocacy group in Nevada, found that almost two-thirds (61.3 percent) of respondents reported that they were 'very satisfied' with their method of transportation (see Table 12). (Recall that Table 7 indicated that the primary method of transportation for the A-Team survey respondents was RTC paratransit service.) Non-profit advocates also commented that

transportation services (and the attitudes of the drivers) have improved considerably over time.

That said, there are several barriers that warrant further discussion. Among these are informational barriers, program restrictions, lack of coordination, lack of systems thinking about transportation, lack of transit service providers, and funding challenges.

Table 12. Satisfaction with Method of Transportation, 2016

Mode	Frequency	Percent
Very Satisfied	11	4.2%
Somewhat Satisfied	85	32.6%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	10	3.8%
Very Dissatisfied	25	9.6%
Don't Know/Refused	106	40.6%
Total	261	100.0%

Informational Barriers

One of the biggest barriers to improving community mobility and independence is information gaps. Individuals and organizations face challenges regarding the efficient and wide-spread distribution of information about programs and services that could help individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. There are at least two instances of information gaps about programs or resources that could help meet the transportation needs of individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

5310 Funds

As stated above, Section 5310 funds are formula based grants awarded to states by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Metropolitan Planning Organizations and NDOT distribute these funds in the urban areas, small, urbanized areas, and rural areas of the Silver State, respectively. Section 5310 funds can be used to purchase buses and vans, and support mobility management programs and volunteer driver programs. In FY 2014, the RTC of Southern Nevada received \$1.43 million in 5310 funds. One example of a transit operations project funded by Section 5310 funds is the St. Rose Dominican Health Foundation, which provides seniors with disabilities transportation within the city of Henderson and facilitates a network of program volunteers.⁴⁸

The RTC of Southern Nevada reported that they received a low number of applications for 5310 funds in the last fiscal year. In theory, low participation could have resulted in Federal funds, designed to support the transportation needs of individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, remaining ‘unused.’ While several non-profit transit service providers have noted the challenge of meeting the local matching fund requirement, it is unclear why there were fewer organizations applying for Section 5310 funds in southern Nevada.⁴⁹

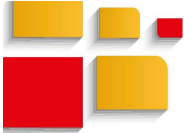
Taxi Assistance Program (TAP) in Clark County

Around Nevada (and the country), state agencies and non-profit organizations frequently offer taxi voucher programs to address the transportation needs of individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (as well as seniors and low-income individuals). For example, the Jewish Federation of Las Vegas’ Las Vegas Senior Lifeline (LVSL) Program provides low-income seniors with disabilities with taxi cab vouchers to transport them to medical appointments.⁵⁰ And the RTC in Washoe County has a Taxi Bucks program that provides discounted coupons or vouchers to low-income seniors for taxicab fares. Registered participants can only purchase up to 2 coupon books, which offer a 50 percent discount, each month.

Clark County also has a Taxi Assistance Program (TAP), which provides discounted taxi coupon books to low-income “qualified individuals, age 60 and older, and persons of any age with a permanent disability.” The value of the discount is 50 or 75 percent, depending on the individual’s income. This program is funded by the Taxicab Authority. Unlike the Washoe County RTC Taxi Bucks program that is limited to low-income seniors, the Clark County Taxi Assistance Program serves both seniors and individuals with disabilities, whose income does not exceed a certain amount.

While the Clark County Taxi Assistance Program is available to *both* seniors and individuals with disabilities who qualify, the lion’s share (more than 99 percent) of coupon books are purchased by eligible seniors. Agency officials shared that previously, a few individuals with disabilities who had participated in TAP later reported that the taxi driver was not courteous. When asked, self-advocates and advocacy organizations revealed that they had no knowledge of the Taxi Assistance Program. But when given information about the TAP, many indicated that they would be interested in participating.

Admittedly, program funds are limited and agency officials are currently able to fund and meet current demand for the program. Any significant surge in demand could prompt agency officials to revisit the program design and take measures to restrict the eligibility or the size of the program. Regardless, non-



profit organizations and stakeholders should share information about the Taxi Assistance Program with individuals who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

Program Restrictions

While Section 5310 funds provide transit providers with much-needed critical financial resources so they can deliver service to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, there are some challenges with the ability of individuals to access these services. Specifically, some agencies only provide services to program clients, thereby preventing individuals who are not clients from accessing those services. And often, there are waiting lists to become a registered client. For example, Helping Hands of Southern Nevada serves its clients and has several hundred people on the waiting list for transportation services.⁵¹ Additionally, some agencies provide transportation to and from agency activities (e.g., senior centers) or for a specific purpose (e.g., hospital or medical appointments).

Lack of Coordination

Organizations and agencies that serve individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities note that transportation is a challenge, particularly as demand for transit services is growing, fueled by new Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) policies that support competitive, integrated employment for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Specifically, a shortage of transportation vehicles was identified by stakeholders in southern Nevada.⁵² Even organizations that do not directly serve individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities frequently report that transportation is a challenge for them and/or for their clients.

At the same time, non-profit representatives observe transportation vehicles not being used continuously, meaning that vehicles are sitting idle during certain hours of the day and on certain days of the week. Collectively, this suggests that there is ‘spare capacity’ or existing resources that could be leveraged to expand and/or enhance transit services to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

The challenge is that there is a lack of coordination among non-profits and the absence of a coordinating entity to focus attention on the issue of transportation among non-profits and engaging in some brainstorming around solutions. The absence of coordination exacerbates existing gaps in service.

The lack of coordination also extends across agencies and geographic spaces. One rural transit administrator noted that the agency had paid to transport a client to another county (for medical reasons), and the vehicle returned empty. “With greater coordination across agencies, that vehicle could have returned with passengers,” remarked the administrator. Greater coordination across agencies and geographic boundaries could disproportionately help rural communities, where resources are limited and roads are vast.

In a 2015 RTC of Southern Nevada Coordinated Transportation Plan, participants who had convened to collectively brainstorm solutions to transportation system challenges, listed “Collaboration” as one of the highest priorities (#4 out of the top 15 priorities) and stated that the identified “is to develop a program to refer clients to a transportation provider that would meet their needs.”⁵³

Lack of Systems Thinking around Transportation

A related challenge is the lack of systems thinking around transportation by stakeholders across the broad landscape of transportation, social service delivery, workforce development, and even education. For example, a non-profit organization that supports individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities by providing them job training, job coaching, and employment recently assessed the barriers that prevent its clients from retaining employment over the long-term. Their clients reported that transportation was the one of the biggest challenge in securing and retaining employment. Upon further internal analysis, the non-profit organization acknowledged that when finding a job for its clients, the organization does not sufficiently take transportation constraints into account. Consequently, the southern Nevada non-profit is currently putting in place a new job counseling process where it will collect and use data (related to a client's transportation challenges) to inform possible employment opportunities for the individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities serves. As one staff member shared, "If we know transportation is a challenge and there is a job opening at Lowe's, why not try to find a Lowe's within one or two miles of the client's house rather than sending him to a Lowe's on the other side of town."⁵⁴

Interviews with other service providers also indicated that they do not take transportation barriers into account beyond whether an individual has a car. This lack of systems thinking undermines efforts to improve the mobility (and economic security) of individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

Limited Numbers of Service Providers

As stated previously, a significant number of organizations that receive 5310 funds restrict their transportation and mobility services to seniors (who may or may not have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities). "Nonprofits are geared toward seniors," commented a senior RTC of Southern Nevada administrator.⁵⁵ There are fewer organizations that serve individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, particularly in the rural areas. And many that do, such as Transition Services, Inc. or Goodwill Industries of Southern Nevada, do not provide transportation services, because it is so expensive. The acquisition and maintenance of vehicles and insurance requirements are often cost prohibitive to organizations who are focused on addressing a different set of needs of individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (e.g., health, education, and workforce development).

Funding Challenges

While the challenges or barriers discussed above warrant attention, the biggest challenge facing individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities is related to inadequate funding and the subsequent impacts this has on these individuals and many of the organizations that support them.

Briefly, transportation agencies rely on a combination of Federal, state, and local funds, as well as revenues for services. Table 13 summarizes the primary sources of funds for the two Metropolitan Planning Organizations, the Washoe County RTC and the RTC of Southern Nevada.

Table 13. Primary Funding Sources for RTCs in Nevada, FY 2015 (millions)^f

FY 2015	Washoe County RTC	Clark County RTC
Passenger Fares/Revenues	\$6.90	\$67.50
Sales Tax	\$20.00	\$168.75
Motor Vehicle Fuel Revenue		\$114.75
Bond Proceeds		\$229.50
CitiCare and Other	\$0.60	
Advertising/Lease	\$0.70	
State Funds	\$1.10	
Federal FTA Funds (Grants)	\$18.80	\$87.75
TOTAL (millions)	\$48.10	\$675.00

Transportation providers around the state express concern that transportation funds are limited and cannot keep pace with the growing demand for public transit services by individuals, regardless of their disability status.⁵⁶

The 2015 RTC of Southern Nevada Coordinated Plan referenced a 2008 survey in which “almost all service providers reported needs they were unable to meet. Almost three-quarters of them reported cost as a barrier to providing service, even though only 35 percent provided their services at no cost. Eighty-three percent received government funding of some sort with 42 percent reporting Federal funding.”⁵⁷

Senior Washoe County RTC officials noted that transportation agencies (e.g., RTC) are required to maintain a reserve fund but the RTC has been using the reserve fund given that revenues are not keeping pace with expenditures. Officials noted that Washoe County RTC may have to cut services by 2019 unless expenditures and revenues align, or additional funding is secured.⁵⁸

To their credit, transit companies around the State have been trying to control costs without resorting to reduced geographic or temporal service. For example, in 2015, Washoe County RTC implemented trip eligibility screening and moved up the time (from 8 p.m. to 5 p.m.) that RTC Access switches to taxi cab service, acknowledging that “taxicabs are more cost effective for short trips than maintain the whole system.”⁵⁹

To save costs, the RTC of Southern Nevada now allows certified paratransit clients to ride the RTC Transit fixed route service free of charge. As of late 2015, there were roughly 17,396 individuals eligible for paratransit service and 11,065 active paratransit riders using the RTC of Southern Nevada.⁶⁰ Only one-fifth (21 percent) of active paratransit riders use fixed route service. Recall that while the base fare for paratransit is \$3, the real cost of the service is closer to \$40 a trip.⁶¹ This policy change of offering free fares to paratransit clients has had significant impacts. Following the policy change, “it may be assumed that 2,000 to 3,000 of certified clients are choosing to use the RTC Transit fixed route service each month. This results in an increase in capacity to the paratransit system, which is a benefit the

^f Note: Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax Revenue and Bond Proceeds cannot be used to provide transit/paratransit services.

remaining pool of clients.”^{62,63} The potential cost savings is significant given the cost of providing paratransit.

Higher Fares

However, despite efforts of transportation providers, these funding challenges have led transit providers to raise fares ultimately. In 2012, the RTC of Southern Nevada eliminated the \$80 unlimited ride monthly pass and replaced it with a \$80 coupon book containing 46 single rides.⁶⁴

In rural areas, non-profit representatives and advocates raise concerns that the paratransit fare for rural residents is too high, particularly given that many adults who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities have limited incomes. Advocates and representatives from community organizations note that paratransit fares are higher in rural areas, namely Elko, than they are in the State’s urban communities. For example, the paratransit fare in the area served by the RTC in Southern Nevada is \$3.00, and it is \$3.00 in area served by Washoe County RTC. In Elko, the fare to take the GET My Ride Demand Line varies from \$2.00-\$5.00 depending on the zones traveled.⁶⁵ Additionally, Elko County’s GET My Ride demand response service is relatively expensive compared to free options provided by Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), which provides several services, including transportation, for seniors, Veterans, and most recently individuals with disabilities.⁶⁶

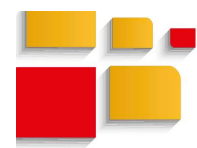
Higher fares in rural areas reflect some of the challenges that rural transportation providers face. Specifically, rural transit authorities must provide service to a large geographic area (70 plus square miles in Elko County, for example) with fewer residents and limited sources of (tax) revenue to support the service. These challenges underscore the need to explore ways to provide additional assistance to rural transit authorities.

Equipment Maintenance

Insufficient resources also present a challenge in the ability to maintain transportation vehicles. For example, a Tribal Land representative shared that NDOT had given several Tribal Communities (e.g., Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe) transportation vehicles. However, the tribal community representative shared that many tribal communities have found it difficult to maintain the vehicles and pay for liability insurance. In many cases, the donated vehicles sit abandoned in need of repair. Non-profit service providers in urban areas also share that vehicles previously used to transport individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities sit in driveways of group homes because providers cannot afford to repair the broken vehicle.

Medicaid Rates

With respect to financial constraints, one of the biggest challenges is Medicaid reimbursement rates for providers of independent living, day habilitation, and job and day training programs that serve adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. While it may not appear that Medicaid rates are



directly related to transportation, there are two ways that the reimbursement rates affect the ability to provide transportation services to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

Provider rate reimbursement has been underfunded in the Silver State for more than a decade, even as the requirements for providing quality care and the costs of providing services, administration, compliance, and documentation have increased. In the 2015 legislative session, the Legislature did approve minimal reimbursement rate increases for a limited number of providers.⁶⁷ However, Medicaid reimbursement rates for the provision of health services, including the care of adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities have not been raised since 2001.⁶⁸ Stakeholders around the state stress the critical importance of revisiting the formula and raising rates.

Underscoring our interviews, in March 2016, several non-profit organizations testified before the Nevada Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults with Special Needs and shared that Medicaid reimbursement rates for day habilitation, and job and day training programs for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities are “woefully underfunded.”⁶⁹ Specifically, providers for these services have had “only a 3.4 percent increase in 13 years.”⁷⁰

Inadequately low Medicaid reimbursement rates have impacted the budgets of organizations that provide various services to and care for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Not surprisingly, this has had an impact on the provision of transportation services offered by some of those agencies. Repeatedly, stakeholders shared stories of broken vans sitting in the drive-way of adult group homes because providers could not afford to maintain adequate delivery of primary care and vehicles. Alternatively, even when group home vehicles functioned, they were minimally used knowing that the provider could not afford the costs of repair and maintenance.

Additionally, stakeholders and advocates suggest that when the Legislature does consider revising the reimbursement rates, policy makers should consider transportation in the formula. Currently, the Medicaid rate “does not include transportation.”⁷¹ (Here we note that rates are based on several factors. For example, reimbursement rates for nursing facilities are based on the “relative acuity of the mix of patients in each facility.”)⁷² Reimbursement rates for supported living arrangements that serve individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and provide day and training programs and care to adults should consider transportation, given the importance of insuring individuals with disabilities do not remain isolated.

Recommendations

Based on research and interviews with stakeholders around the Silver State, the Guinn Center offers the following recommendations, which policy makers and legislative leaders may take under advisement.


For the State

There are several recommendations that require State action, working in collaboration with the Nevada State Legislature.

1. Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for providers of independent living, day habilitation, and job and day training programs that serve adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities

For years now, Nevada has not increased Medicaid reimbursement rates for many providers, even though the requirements for providing quality care and the costs of providing services have increased. The low and flat Medicaid reimbursement rates have impacted the budgets of entities that provide services to individuals with intellectual and/or disabilities, including supportive (independent) living arrangements and adult day and job training programs. Consequently, this has compromised the ability of some organizations to provide transportation services to the adults for whom they provide care, resulting in reduced independence and social mobility. For example, self-advocates and advocacy group representatives reported that group homes and job training facilities no longer maintain vehicles to provide transportation for their residents and clients with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities because they cannot afford to maintain the vehicles and/or repair them when they break down.

Policy officials should review the methodology used to calculate Medicaid reimbursement rates in Nevada. The Nevada Legislature, in collaboration with the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, should increase Medicaid reimbursement rates, particularly for providers of independent living, day habilitation, and job and day training programs that serve adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Policy makers should also consider including transportation costs in the rate calculation, as other states, including Alabama and California, do.



2. The Nevada Department of Health and Human Services should increase funding for programs that support the provision of transit services to adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities

Public and non-profit transit providers in Nevada receive Federal FTA funds (e.g., Section 5310 and 5311) to support the delivery of transportation services to adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in both the rural and urban areas. Locally, many transit providers – especially those in rural counties – receive Independent Living Grants, funded by the Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD) of the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services. These grants are designed to expand the availability of transportation services for seniors, particularly low-income seniors, in Nevada. However, most the recipients of Independent Living Grants (e.g. White Pine County Ely Bus, Retired Senior Volunteer Program-RSVP) serve the public, including adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. By supporting public transit in rural areas, these Independent Living Grants are helping to ensure that adults with disabilities, particularly those in rural Nevada, also have access to transportation.

Second, Clark County offers the Taxi Assistance Program (TAP), funded by the Taxicab Authority, that provides discounted taxi coupon books to eligible individuals. While this program is available to both seniors and adults with disabilities, only a handful of individuals with disabilities participate in this program. There is some concern that any increase in demand for this resource may compromise the agency's ability to fully fund this program. The ADSD should consider ways to fund any increases in demand for TAP following efforts to increase awareness about the program.

In short, the Department of Health and Human Services' Aging and Disability Services Division should increase funding for programs that support the provision of transit services to adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (e.g. Independent Living Grants, TAP). The State should explore ways to provide assistance to individuals with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities who are working, but who do not qualify or receive Medicaid supported transportation. The Nevada Legislature should consider funding these programs so that adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities can access services and participate in community life.

3. Identify new sources of State funding to fund transit services in urban and rural Nevada

Over the last few years, Federal funding for transportation services has remained relatively flat; funding for some programs has even declined. Given the national landscape, Nevada should identify ways to increase State-generated funding for transit services, including paratransit services.

A. Revise existing Nevada statute to allow revenues collected under the Fuel Revenue Indexing program to fund transit services

This year, most counties in Nevada had the opportunity to raise revenues for transportation projects by tying fuel taxes to the inflation rate (a policy known as Fuel Revenue Indexing or FRI). Washoe County began indexing all motor fuels subject to that county's fuels taxes, effective October 1, 2003, and pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 516. On November 8, 2016, voters in Clark County agreed to continue

tying fuel taxes to the inflation rate. In contrast, voters in Nevada's 15 rural counties failed to approve the of FRI in their respective counties.

As stated in the law (Assembly Bill 191), the revenues collected from FRI can be used "only to finance projects for the construction, maintenance and repair of state highways in the county in which the tax is collected." As such, the existing legislation prohibits Clark County and Washoe County from allocating any revenue obtained through FRI for transit services, including the bus system, paratransit, senior transportation, veteran transportation, and mobility training, amongst others.

The Nevada Legislature should consider revising existing legislation to allow some designated share of FRI revenues to be directed to the provision of transit services, including paratransit services.

B. Consider expanding the sales tax base to support transportation services around the state


Public mass transit officials around the State have noted the increasing challenge they face in providing expanded services to meet growing demand while confronting declining revenues. Many wondered whether transportation services might have to be scaled back should budget woes continue. Nevada's political leaders should consider options for increasing State revenues to support transit services. One option could be to expand the sales tax base. Briefly, Nevada's sales tax base is relatively limited. According to a 2015 Tax Foundation report on Nevada's tax structure, since 1970, "Nevada's sales tax breadth—a measure of the broadness of the tax base—has gone from 73 percent to just 49 percent in 2012." As the study's authors note, this trend reflects changes in consumption patterns: Nevadans consume more services than goods and many services in Nevada are excluded from taxation.

Nevada's political leaders should consider broadening the sales tax (to include services or goods not currently included) and should consider dedicating a share of additional revenues to maintain and expand, as needed, transportation services (including paratransit) around the State. More specifically, (some portion of) revenues collected from a broadening of the sales tax base could support a statewide transportation services fund aimed at ensuring the provision of adequate transportation services (particularly paratransit services) around the State.

4. Support efforts to establish a State-sponsored matching fund program

As mentioned previously, the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) of Southern Nevada indicated that there were Section 5310 funds 'left on the table' in the last cycle of funding. Research suggests that some non-profits do not apply for Section 5310 funds because they are unable to meet the local matching fund requirement (50 percent for operations for Section 5310, for example). In fact, many non-profits and local and State government agencies around the State have identified several challenges in meeting Federal grant matching fund requirements, which consequently undermines Nevada's ability to apply for and receive Federal funds. The result, not surprisingly, is that "Nevada is 50th out of 50 states in securing federal formula and grant funding, ranking behind all other states [...] in competing for and obtaining competitive grants and formula funding."

In the 2015 78th Nevada Legislative Session, lawmakers codified the Nevada Advisory Council on Federal Assistance (Senate Bill 215). In partnership with the State Office of Grant Procurement, Coordination,



and Management, the purpose of the Advisory Council is to “advise and assist state and local agencies with respect to obtaining and maximizing federal assistance.” One of the areas of focus identified by the Advisory Council is to “develop or expand opportunities for obtaining matching funds for federal assistance. Preliminary research suggests that the Advisory Council is in the process of identifying ways to obtain local funds that can be used to meet the matching fund requirement for federal grants.

Stakeholders should support efforts to establish a statewide funding mechanism that could help provide and/or leverage financial resources to meet the Federal matching fund requirement of Federal (transportation) grant programs. A State-sponsored matching fund program could provide much needed support to organizations that provide transportation services to adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

5. Require providers to include a transportation plan for enhancing mobility and independence of individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities

The Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities acknowledged the importance of the availability of and access to transportation services by individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in its Five Year Strategic Plan: 2011-2016. Specifically, Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan is to “develop and strengthen [transportation] systems that improve quality of services and access to quality services and supports in their local communities.”

Given the importance of high quality transportation systems in increasing independence, mobility, and even economic opportunity for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, Nevada should require entities that respond to state request-for-proposals (RFPs) to manage and operate group homes, job and day training programs, and/or supported living arrangements for individuals to explicitly articulate a transportation plan. This required transportation plan should state how the entity (vendor) will enhance or expand a client’s access to transportation, identify options (and funding) to provide transportation services, and describe how this plan will enhance the client’s mobility and independence.

6. Establish a statewide transportation services coordinating committee

Stakeholders around Nevada commented on the lack of coordination across agencies and counties and identified this as a missed opportunity to leverage existing resources to improve the provision of transit services, particularly in rural areas.

Currently, the Nevada Department of Transportation hosts and manages the Statewide Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (STTAC), “an advisory committee/public body which is comprised of members representing many interests and levels of government.” State policy makers should explore the value proposition in standing up a Statewide Transportation Services Coordinating Committee. This new committee could be a subcommittee within the STTAC, or (preferably) an entirely new body focused on address the quality and availability of transportation services, including paratransit services, around the State through greater collaboration and coordination. Rather than limiting representation to government officials (as is the case with the Statewide Transportation Technical Advisory Committee), membership on a Statewide Transportation Services Coordinating Committee should include

representatives from each county, public and non-profit transit providers, and from non-profit organizations, particularly those who provide services to individuals with disabilities. The collective purpose of this body would be to explore innovative solutions in the delivery of transportation services, share best practices, secure matching funds, and improve the coordination of the delivery of transportation services, particularly paratransit services, across the State. This recommendation seeks to address the widespread concern that there is a lack of coordination across agencies and geographic space.

7. Require disability awareness training for licensed drivers of taxi cab companies and transportation network companies

Self-advocates and agency representatives shared that drivers of taxi cabs were frequently discourteous, which limited their participation in taxi cab voucher programs. Currently, fixed route and paratransit operators must participate in disability awareness training. State policy makers should require that all licensed drivers of taxi cabs and transportation network companies (e.g., Lyft and Uber) complete a disability awareness training course. (These courses can be offered on-line, which makes them cost-effective).

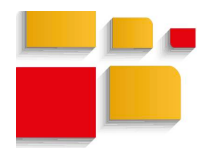
8. Require businesses that receive Nevada development incentive packages to set aside funds to support transit services

To foster economic development in Nevada, the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) has the authority to approve abatements of sales, business, and property taxes for new and expanding businesses for 10 to 20 years (Nevada Revised Statute Chapter 360). Many large-scale developments (like Tesla Motors and Faraday Future) are likely to have an impact on the transit systems. For example, the Tesla Motors project approved in September 2014 is expected to bring an estimated 6,500 employees to Storey County. This increased flow of people to the area is likely to impact transit systems in the region as they prepare to respond to increased demand for services. GOED, working with the Nevada State Legislature, should consider exploring ways to link development incentives to public transit systems.

For Public Transit Providers

1. Explore innovative partnerships with school districts to reduce costs

Transit service providers should continue to explore innovative partnerships to reduce costs and potentially even preserve the lifespan of vehicles. As mentioned above, transit operators reported that due to limited funds, they were often not able to maintain and repair vehicles. The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, for example, did not have sufficient funds to maintain the vehicles donated to them by NDOT. Elsewhere, however, local operators have addressed this challenge through collaborative and innovative partnerships. As an example, the Elko County GET My Ride program leadership embarked on an



innovative partnership with the Elko County School District whereby it is using the school district's extensive and experienced maintenance staff (mechanics) to help maintain and repair GET My Ride's vehicles. As noted by Abby Wheeler, Transit Coordinator of Elko County GET My Ride, "this was the best maintenance those vehicles have had during their whole lives."

Specifically, transit operators in rural counties, including nonprofits, as well as Tribal Land operators should explore similar partnerships with their local school districts, who tend to have well train mechanics on staff, to help them maintain and repair their vehicles, thus extending their lifespan.

2. Explore carpool incentive programs

Mass public transit system operators, the Washoe County RTC and the RTC of Southern Nevada, should explore ways to collaborate with community organizations to pilot incentive programs to expand the availability of transportation options to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. One possible option is a carpool program. Specifically, an entity, like the RTC of Southern Nevada, could compensate drivers (using standard mileage rate set by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service) who provide rides to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. This program could be piloted around the State.

3. Establish regional Transportation Services Coordinating Committees

Around the state, stakeholders commented frequently that there was a lack of coordination across agencies (and organizations) and geographic boundaries. When asked, non-profit representatives revealed that despite widespread transportation challenges faced by all, no one had facilitated or sustained conversations with stakeholders and across time and physical boundary to explore possible solutions. Regional transportation authorities should facilitate and lead a standing committee – a Regional Transportation Services Coordinating Committee – to facilitate communication, greater collaboration, and improved coordination of service delivery. Representatives from the regional Transportation Services Coordinating Committee could sit on the Statewide Transportation Services Coordinating Committee.

In preliminary conversations, transit officials and nonprofit representatives expressed interest in convening a working group in 2017 to discuss transportation challenges and collectively explore solutions.

4. Continue to explore (and fund) innovative transportation solutions

Innovations in technology platforms are forcing transit officials to think more creatively about how to deliver transit services in more cost-effective ways. In Nevada, stakeholders should explore new ways of delivering transit services. Specifically, the arrival of transportation network companies (TNCs) provide an opportunity to explore new ways of providing transportation services. Around the country, public and nonprofit transportation providers are piloting programs leveraging the existence of Lyft and Uber. For example, in September 2016, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority partnered with Uber

and Lyft to offer paratransit passengers on-demand service. As reported in the *Washington Post*, “The partnership, a first of its kind in the United States, is likely to become a model for transit systems across a nation pressed to reduce costs of the multimillion-dollar, heavily subsidized services available to people with special needs.”

In Nevada, the Sierra Nevada Transportation Coalition received a grant from the Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities to pilot a project that would use transportation network companies in northern Nevada to provide transportation service to individuals, regardless of their disability status. The RTC of Southern Nevada is exploring transportation options with taxi companies and TNCs that would enhance the customer experience, while reducing costs in some areas, which could then be used to offset the costs of providing paratransit services.

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