Supporting Accessible Transportation and Transit System Careers

National RTAP's Employment-Focused Transit Manager Peer Roundtable | March 13, 2025

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OFFICE OF DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT POLICY
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

ODEP Advances Employment Opportunities

- ODEP develops and promotes policies and coordinates with employers and all levels of government to increase workplace success for people with disabilities and those with mental health conditions.

- ODEP also assists individuals and helps businesses and states adopt policies and practices that increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities and meet business workforce needs.

- ODEP thinks broadly about disability employment, recognizing that a person's career is not driven simply by education or training opportunities.

Disability Has This Meaning…

- A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity (e.g., thinking, walking, standing, seeing, hearing, learning, breathing, lifting, etc.)

- Several types of disabilities:
  - Physical and Mobility Disabilities
  - Cognitive Disabilities
  - Sensory Disabilities
  - Mental Health Conditions
  - Chronic Health Conditions



- Examples of disabilities:
  - Spinal Cord Injury, Cerebral Palsy
  - Autism, Brain Injury
  - Blindness and Deafness
  - PTSD, Depression
  - HIV/AIDS, Diabetes
  - Substance Use Disorder

Transportation Connections

Transit Access TO Jobs

People with Disabilities

Access TO Transit Jobs

Transit Access TO Jobs



Transportation Barriers for People with Disabilities

- 10 million adults aged 18-64 who self-report travel-limiting (TL) disabilities[1]:
  - Just 33.9% of people with TL disabilities who hold employment—full-time or part-time jobs
  - 34.9% of people with TL disabilities living in households that earn <$25,000

- Less access to accessible personal vehicles for meeting transit needs of people with TL disabilities in America[1]:
  - More likely to be non-drivers (34.1%) than non-disabled people (6.6%)
  - More likely to live in a zero-vehicle household (14.3%) than non-disabled people (4.8%)

- Less frequent trips in rural areas[2], including for work
  - 29% fewer work trips by non-drivers with TL disabilities in rural areas vs. urban areas[2]

Alternative Mobility Strategies For Transit Use

- Limiting travel to daytime hours with greater public transit availability[1]
- Requesting rides from others, including family members and friends[1]
- Using rideshare services and specialized transit services, such as Dial-A-Ride[1]
- Using a patchwork mix of fixed route services, paratransit, rides from others, taxis, and other transportation services[3]

Roundtable Discussion for Transit Access

- How do you currently support transit access for people with disabilities at your transportation agency and what are your current needs (scheduling, logistics, etc.)?
- What has been your experience in transporting people with disabilities out to job sites in your region?
- What, if any, adjustments to scheduling, logistics and operations, and driver training have you found to improve accessibility for passengers with disabilities?
- Which obstacles have you encountered in supporting transit accessibility?
- Are there any additional resources or solutions that could be helpful to enhance accessible transportation to job sites in rural areas?

Access TO Transit Jobs



Transit System Careers for People with Disabilities

- Lower labor force participation rate of people with disabilities aged 16-64 (40.7%) than people without disabilities aged 16-64 (77.9%)[4] and lower employment rate[4]

- Need for promoting transit system careers to disability service providers (e.g., Vocational Rehabilitation agencies) and forming partnerships

- Value of accessible job training and apprenticeship programs
  - Accommodations and supports for job training and classroom instruction
  - Adoption of Universal Design/Universal Design for Learning
  - Low cost of the average work accommodation

Workplace Accommodation Scenarios

- A bus driver with sleep apnea affecting life activities:
  - Primary work accommodation: A flexible work schedule
  - Additional work accommodations: time off for treatment of sleep apnea and temporary assignment to shorter bus runs



- An automotive repair technician with fetal alcohol syndrome who experiences challenges in distraction and shifting attention:
  - Primary work accommodation: daily checklist
  - Additional work accommodations: mechanic's stool with color-colored shelves and assistance for loading the shelf with regularly used tools



ODEP Technical Assistance Resources

- Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability (EARN):
  - Reasonable Accommodations Guide
  - Work Accommodations and Retention Guide
  - Work Accommodations and Career Advancement Guide
  - Workplace Mental Health Toolkit and Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guide
  - Supporting Employees with Substance Use Disorder Guide
  - Small Business Toolkit and Community Partnerships Guide

EARN
Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability

- Job Accommodation Network (JAN):
  - A to Z Library of Disabilities and Accommodations (by type, limitation, and topic)
  - Situations and Solutions Finder (by disability, occupation, and limitations)
  - Universal Design in the Workplace Guide
  - Disability Disclosure Guide

JAN
Job Accommodation Network

Roundtable Discussion for Transit Careers

- What is your current situation for hiring and recruiting workers into your workforce, including people with disabilities, and what are your talent needs?
- Can you share about any experiences in hiring and recruiting skilled job candidates with disabilities from your local region for open positions?
- Do you have any recent success stories to highlight about supporting workplace accessibility for your worker(s) with disabilities?
- Which obstacles do you face in supporting workplace access and success for your worker(s) with disabilities?
- What types of partnerships or collaborations with local, regional, or national organizations have been helpful in recruiting and hiring people with disabilities?

References

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4. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2025). Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics Summary. https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm

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