



Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council
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Transportation

The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council's Position:

Without accessible, reliable public and private transportation, hundreds of thousands of Missourians – with and without disabilities – cannot work, socialize, or access community-based supports and services. Therefore, Missouri should enact and implement legislation, policies, and practices that expand public and private transportation options and opportunities for all including the coordination of existing resources, with an emphasis on sharing resources with all Missourians.

The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council's Reasons:

Research has consistently documented the benefits of public and private transportation for people with and without disabilities. Several studies have found that people with developmental disabilities who have access to public transportation are more likely to be employed, live independently, be socially active, and have better health and well-being.¹ Another study found that older adults with access to transportation had a higher quality of life and better mental health.² Research has also linked the quality of life of people living in rural areas to their opportunities to access transportation.³

Unfortunately, Missourians and up to 6,000,000 people with disabilities across the country struggle to access reliable, accessible transportation.⁴ One study found that 500,000 people do not leave their homes due to a lack of transportation, essentially preventing them from working, socializing, practicing their religion, and accessing community-based supports and services.⁵ In our most recent statewide Needs Assessment Survey, 72% of respondents stated that options for transportation are inadequate or only fair, with a lack of available transportation, especially in rural communities, being the most frequently cited concern.⁶

Organizations and states have successfully implemented programs that increased access to transportation for people with and without disabilities.⁷ For example, Michigan implemented a transportation voucher system empowering people with disabilities to schedule and pay for public and private transportation, including paying friends to serve as drivers. The majority of program participants stated that the program met all their transportation needs and reported increased community integration, autonomy, and wellbeing.⁸

The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council's Recommendations:

- As a state and society, we must acknowledge that accessible, reliable transportation is a crucial component of community integration, impacting people with and without disabilities' opportunity to work, socialize, access health care, and take part in community-based activities.
- Missouri should consult with organizations and states, including Michigan, that implemented programs increasing access to public and private transportation.
- Public and private agencies that provide transportation services – including the Missouri Departments of Transportation, Mental Health, and Vocational Rehabilitation, and Medicaid providers – should collaborate and coordinate their efforts to increase efficiency and improve performance in scheduling and service provision.⁹
- The Missouri Department of Transportation should promote coordination and “sharing” resources on all vehicles funded through taxpayer dollars.
- Missouri should invest in and encourage nontraditional transportation options, including carpooling, car and bicycle sharing services, dedicated bicycle lanes, and accessible sidewalks.
- Missouri should invest in and encourage transportation technology such as autonomous vehicles and advocate for the expansion of private, on-demand transportation businesses.
- Missouri should research and consider “Good Samaritan” legislation limiting the liability of citizens who volunteer to provide transportation for people with disabilities.

References

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6. See, <http://moddcouncil.org/pageDownload.php?docID=455>
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9. See, <http://nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org>

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