



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 access their communities, work, vote, socialize, shop, attend medical and other appointments, or participate in community-based activities and services. Therefore, Missouri should enact and implement legislation, policies, and practices that expand transportation options and opportunities for all.

The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council's Reasons:

Research has consistently documented the benefits of public and private transportation for people with and without disabilities. For example, 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 wellbeing.¹ Studies have also found that people with disabilities and older adults with access to transportation have a better quality of life.² Research has also linked the quality of life of people living in rural areas to their opportunities to access transportation.³

Conversely, studies show that lack of access to transportation keeps people with disabilities from finding and maintaining employment⁴ and taking part in social and community activities⁵, decreasing their income and quality of life. Unfortunately, up to 25,000,000 Americans have disabilities that limit their ability to travel and millions struggle to access reliable, accessible transportation.⁶ Worse, Missouri ranks 47th in the United States in spending on transportation and spends far less per capita on transportation than neighboring states. For example, Missouri spends 11% of what Kansas and Nebraska spend per capita on transportation, 7% of what Iowa spends, and less than one-tenth of 1% of Illinois' spending.⁷ In our most recent statewide Comprehensive Review and Analysis, respondents identified lack of transportation as a major barrier to living the life they would like to lead, negatively impacting their ability to work, live independently, and take part in community activities.⁸

Organizations and states have successfully implemented programs that increased access to transportation for people with and without disabilities.⁹ 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.¹⁰

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 explore and implement legislation, policies, and practices that increase access to public and private transportation and consult with organizations and states, including Michigan, that have done so.
- Public and private agencies that provide transportation services – including the Missouri Departments of Transportation, Mental Health, and Vocational Rehabilitation, as well as Medicaid providers – should coordinate their efforts to increase efficiency and improve performance in scheduling and service provision.
- The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, through its Vocational Rehabilitation program, should encourage and empower people with disabilities to gain employment and/or create self-employment enterprises as transportation providers, including through ride-hailing companies such as Uber and Lyft, especially in areas that do not have public transportation.
- The Missouri Department of Transportation should promote coordination and “sharing” resources on all vehicles funded through taxpayer dollars and seek federal grants to fund transportation projects.
- 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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- ⁷ Cole, E. (October 30, 2019). Missouri study shows impact of public transit, lack of state funding. Available at <https://www.newstribune.com/news/2019/oct/31/missouri-study-shows-impact-public-transit-lack-st/#:~:text=Sections%20Contests%20Jobs-,%20Missouri%20study%20shows%20impact%20of%20public%20transit%2C%20lack%20of%20state,2019%20at%201%3A37%20p.m.&text=The%20study%20found%20a%20total,capital%20improvements%20and%20labor%20compensation>.
- ⁸ Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council (2021). Comprehensive Review and Analysis, February 28, 2021.
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- ¹⁰ Samuel, et al, 2013.