

Accessibility allows us to tap into everyone's potential - Debra Ruh.



**October 2018, Volume 22**

**Transportation Options for Seniors and People  
with Disabilities to Maintain Independence in  
Their Community**

It is important for seniors and people with disabilities to remain mobile and keep involved in their community as well as maintaining good health by attending medical appointments. Keeping busy through social inclusion with family, friends, and other activities in the community helps reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness, and it brings many other life-prolonging benefits.

If you are not able to drive yourself, there are transportation options through state and local programs, non-profits and private businesses that

can assist you getting into your community.

Many seniors and people with disabilities need special transportation. Lack of special transportation resources limits their access to work, health care, independent living, and enjoyment in life. Finding transportation options will allow people to enhance community involvement.

One important law that has helped seniors and people with disabilities is the Americans with Disabilities (ADA). One of the main purposes of the ADA is to make sure that people with disabilities who also may be seniors have access to new and existing transportation systems. The ADA requires that public transportation systems do not exclude people of age or with disabilities.

If you have difficulties getting into your community due to a lack of transportation, it is important to research and find alternative ways of transportation that are the best options for you.

### **Assessing a Transportation Provider**

As you begin to research transportation options, the following are a few questions you may consider:

Are there any requirements to qualify for the service?

Are there rides for people who use wheelchairs or who have other disabilities?

Are family members able to serve as escorts? Is there an additional cost?

Is the service door-to-door or curb-to-curb?

What is the service area?

Will the driver assist with bags, wheelchairs, etc?

Are rides provided on the weekends, evenings, and holidays?

If others are riding at the same time, what is the maximum time for pick-up and drop-off?

What is the cost?

How are fees calculated?

Are there any discounts for seniors or people with disabilities?

Is there a membership fee?

Is a reservation needed? How far in advance?

Will my insurance pay for rides?

There are a variety of different transportation options you may want to consider within your community. These options may meet your needs without a significant cost.

**Book a Taxi** - Arrange for a cab, but we all know the drawbacks. Cab drivers will most likely not be able to handle any sort of challenges, aren't trained to specifically deal with seniors or people with disabilities, and may not be sensitive to individual needs. They are also unlikely to physically help a person to or from the cab and inside to an appointment. They also may not be able to accommodate a wheelchair.

**Use a Medical Transport Vehicle** - Medical vehicles are an option for seniors or people with disabilities who have some mobility but need assistance. If a person walks with a walker or a cane, for example, this can be a great choice. The benefit here is that they may be traveling with a trained medical

professional that will keep them company as well as respond appropriately if any situation arises. The medical car staff will wait on hand for the appointment to end, and will help out along the way. Having a driver with experience in dealing with mobility assistance techniques can make all the difference.

**Use a Wheelchair Van** - Especially for seniors or people with disabilities who use a wheelchair, wheelchair vans are an ideal solution. They can assist the person from inside the home, down the steps, and out into the vehicle. They will wait at the appointment and can also provide a wheelchair if necessary.

**Use an ambulance** - While not the most affordable option, some seniors and people with disabilities require an ambulance to get to and from the doctor. Unless the person meets certain criteria, Medicare, Medicaid, and most private insurance won't cover this service.

**Home Health Aide or Service Provider** - Many agencies require their employees to drive their own vehicles for work. It's possible that the employee will be able to drive them to and from the appointment. This will depend on the agency's policy. The employee is usually reimbursed for their mileage.

**Public Transportation/Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA) -**

The local bus system has wheelchair-equipped seats and tie-down capabilities. This can be an option for those with mobility issues, but those with more complex transportation challenges will probably want to utilize the Toledo Area Regional Paratransit Service (TARPS), the paratransit system operated by TARTA.

**Use Uber or Lyft** - Ridesharing apps are gaining popularity. However, you'll need a smart phone and the drivers will not be accustomed to meeting the specific needs of a senior or a person with disabilities. They really aren't geared towards people with special requirements.

**Check local churches and non-profits** - One may be able to find an organization that provides volunteer driver programs. Reservations are likely required, but these programs can be beneficial for those who need a one-way ride or have recurring transportation needs. Donations or membership fees typically support them. You'll probably need to book well in advance, and there may not be much flexibility.

The following are local organizations or agencies that can guide you to a few of the aforementioned transportation options:

Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc  
2155 Arlington Avenue  
Toledo, Ohio 43609  
419-382-0624  
[www.areaofficeonaging.com/services](http://www.areaofficeonaging.com/services)

Toledo Area Regional Transportation Authority (TARTA)  
1127 Central Avenue  
Toledo, Ohio 43610  
419-243-7433  
[www.tarta.com](http://www.tarta.com)

Toledo Area Regional Paratransit System (TARPS)  
(operated by TARTA)

130 Knapp Street  
Toledo, Ohio 43604  
419-382-9901

<http://tarta.com/services/tarps/>

TARTA Mobility Management  
419-725-5281

<http://tarta.com/services/mobility-management/>

Black and White Cab Company  
4665 West Bancroft Street  
Toledo, Ohio 43615  
419-861-4000

[www.bwtransportation.com/](http://www.bwtransportation.com/)

United Way of Greater Toledo  
424 Jackson Street  
Toledo, Ohio 43604  
419-248-2424

[www.unitedwaytoledo.org/](http://www.unitedwaytoledo.org/)

TLC Transit  
7710 Hill Avenue  
Holland, Ohio 43528

[www.tlctransit.com](http://www.tlctransit.com)



[www.uber.com](http://www.uber.com)



[www.lyft.com](http://www.lyft.com)

## **ORGANIZATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS**

### **Ability Center of Greater Toledo**

5605 Monroe Street

Sylvania, Ohio 43560

[www.abilitycenter.org](http://www.abilitycenter.org)

419-885-5733

The Ability Center, located in Sylvania, defines itself as "Making Independence Possible Since 1920". The Ability Center is a non-profit organization that helps individuals with disabilities gain and maintain independence in everyday living, and encourages them to become

active members of their communities. They offer a variety of programs and services, as well as promoting understanding of disabilities. They have been serving the area for many years, with many services. The website, [www.abilitycenter.org](http://www.abilitycenter.org) is easy to navigate and provides a variety of information. Here is a brief description of some of their services.

### **Life Skills**

Provides independent living skills training for youth with disabilities to prepare them for adulthood.

### **Assistance Dogs for Achieving Independence (ADA)**

Helps children and adults with disabilities achieve greater independence by training and placing service and therapy dogs.

### **Home Accessibility**

Builds ramps and constructs home modifications necessary for maintaining independent living.

### **Equipment Loan**

A platform for individuals seeking to buy or sell disability equipment, including used wheelchairs, wheelchair lifts, wheelchair ramps and accessible vehicles.

### **Information and Referral**

Dedicated Ability Center staff who inform, educate, and share



important information on disability-related topics.

In addition to some of the services mentioned, the Ability Center recruits, and values, volunteer participation. Here is their challenge:

*Roll up your sleeves and give us a hand. You can make a change in somebody's life, whether by helping us build ramps, fostering dogs, promoting our fundraising events or getting involved in our other programs.*

If you have never visited their spacious campus in Sylvania, it is definitely worth the investment of time. It is truly a vital part of the community that is active, exciting and of great value.



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