



Office of Administration
GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
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Governor's Council on Disability Transportation Position Paper

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) advances and supports the policies that fund, plan, and support all transportation needs for individuals with disabilities. GCD recognizes that transportation options are very important not only for people with disabilities, but for the entire state at-large. All people should be able to get where they need to go when they want to get there.

- **Support/ Background:**

- Transportation is crucial for the independence of any citizen, disability or not. Individuals need transportation in whatever mode they can access, from vanpooling/carpooling to owning or renting private vehicles to public transportation, in order to access employment, healthcare, and recreation. In addition, the ancillary components of transportation, such as curb cuts, accessible websites, and well-trained driver personnel, are necessary for access to employment, healthcare, and recreation.
- 5310 Project (elderly and disabled funding for transit where it is not traditionally available: rural, suburban, etc.) funding priorities established by MODOT are important as long as there is an effort to better maximize transportation vehicles through the use of vehicle sharing. The MODOT 5310 top four priorities are: 1. Replacement of accessible vehicles that have reached the end of their useful life; 2. Replacement of non-accessible vehicles that have reached their useful life; 3. Accessible vehicles to be used in eligible expanded mobility services; 4. Non-accessible vehicles to be used in eligible expanded mobility services; and 5. Support for mobility management and coordination programs.
- The Grow American Act, a federal transportation funding law that replaces MAP-21, is designed to address a variety of transportation funding priorities. There is a great deal of funding associated with the Act, and the Council applauds this. However, the Council also believes that federal funding should be used wisely to assist in better coordination (transportation sharing).
- In rural areas, access to transportation options is even more critical. In light that rural public transportation services have declined precipitously in the last twenty- five years, this needs to be addressed on a continual basis. At the current time, OATS serves 87 of the 114 MO counties while SMTS (Southeast Missouri Transportation Services) serves an additional 20 in southeast Missouri. This leaves out approximately six counties with

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either OATS or SMTS, although there might be some “mom and pop” providers in those counties.

- Missouri is a vastly underserved state in terms of intermediate and longer distance transportation options for any citizens. The “system” is cumbersome, rigid, expensive, and unworkable for most of the state.
 - In urban and suburban areas, though there are more options, many individuals cannot access public transportation due to complex paratransit eligibility requirements, cuts in services, and schedules that do not match their needs.
 - The statistics on rural transportation are alarming. Despite having approximately 25% of the nation’s population, only 6 % of federal transportation funding is allocated to serve rural residents. Further, approximately 37 million people in the United States in 1200 counties have access to no public transportation. (NCIL transportation position paper).
 - Rural areas have higher incidences of poverty, unemployment, and isolation than their urban and suburban counterparts. The lack of transportation options exacerbates the poverty, unemployment and isolation seen in rural areas. The 2010 U.S. Census states that more than 15% of rural residents are poor as defined the “Poverty Threshold” versus 13% of their urban counterparts.
 - Fortunately, gasoline prices are relatively low compared to its 2008 peak. However, when gas prices go up again, they disproportionately affect lower income individuals, many of whom are people with disabilities.
 - Missouri is fortunate to have AMTRAK as an alternative. Yet, the train only operates in a very limited slice of Missouri and only twice per day. Regarding accessibility, most lifts into the train must be arranged ahead of time.
 - While there have been federal laws to assist in the civil rights of persons using airlines (i.e. The Air Carrier Access Act) and there have been advances in technologies which allow for greater comfort in transportation, there is still much work to do to ensure that flyers with disabilities are treated fairly, humanely and legally.
- **Recommendation:**
 - The Governor’s Council on Disability supports policies, funding, and legislation that promote a wide range of transportation options for individuals with disabilities. Because transportation is a necessity for all citizens, the Governor’s Council on Disability embraces policies that create accessible, affordable, and safe transportation for all.