



ASSESSMENT OF CAPACITY TO MEET TRANSPORTATION NEEDS OF PERSONS WHO EXPERIENCE INTELLECTUAL & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY IN SEDGWICK COUNTY: *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

**PREPARED FOR:
SEDGWICK COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY ORGANIZATION**

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Reliable, safe and affordable transportation affects every aspect in the life of a person who experiences an intellectual or developmental disability (I/DD). Transportation is an essential part of every domain of life functioning. It connects individuals who experience I/DD with a range of individualized supports including day and residential services, medical care, social activities, employment and more. It is an essential part of a person-centered support planning; to fully participate, transportation appropriate to the needs of each person served is required.

Cognitive, behavioral, physical and/or medical conditions can limit access to the opportunities that transportation affords. Challenges to accessing transportation can include:

- negotiating unknown terrain
- troubleshooting travel disruptions
- loud and overstimulating environments
- transportation staff with limited training, experience assisting individuals who experience I/DD

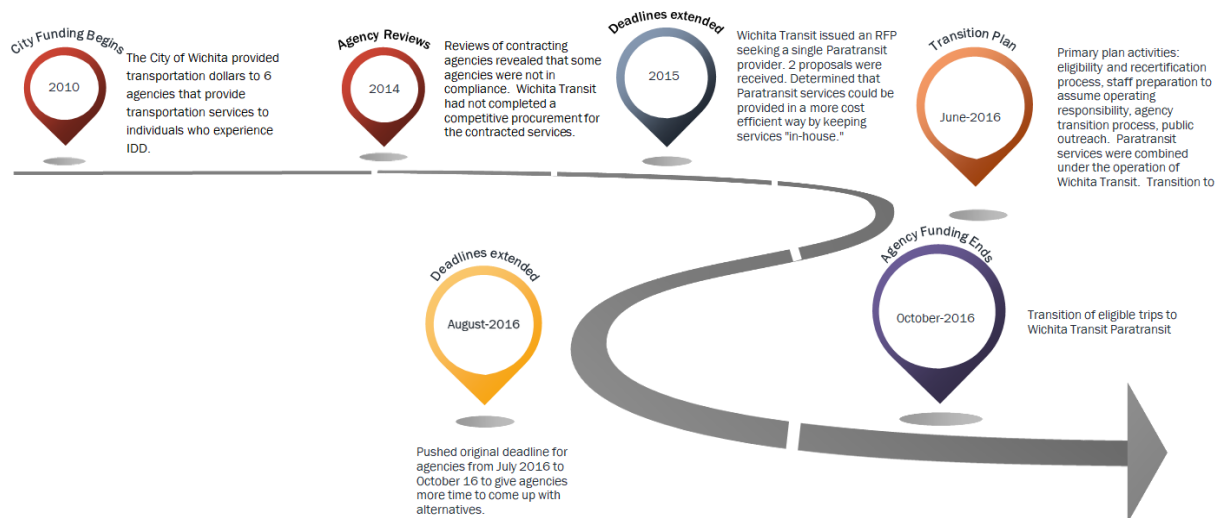
Navigating a fixed route public transport or paratransit system without the assistance of a caregiver, care attendant, friend or family member can be difficult. In many cases, using public transportation without support is not possible. This leads to missed medical appointments, employment absences, inability to attend social events and a general lack of inclusion.

There are 49 agencies affiliated with the SCDDO. A total of 53 staff members and 22 individuals who receive services from SCDDO affiliates (persons served) were interviewed. Interviews and data from SCDDO affiliates provide insight on both the logistics and actual cost of providing transportation. Investigators spoke with:

- chief executive officers
- transportation directors
- program staff
- persons served
- caregivers



In 2010 Catholic Charities Adult Day Services, Cerebral Palsy Research Foundation, Envision, KETCH and Starkey began to receive FTA funding from Wichita Transit to transport persons who experience I/DD. In 2014, after a review of compliance, coordination and public access it was determined Wichita Transit had not completed a competitive procurement process for the contracted transportation providers. A Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued and potential paratransit providers submitted applications to the City. In 2015, a cost-benefit analysis determined that it would be more cost effective to provide paratransit 'in-house' (i.e. by the City of Wichita) rather than through contracted agencies. By the end of 2016, the \$1.3 million that service agencies were receiving was reinvested in Wichita Transit's Paratransit system.



This substantial decrease in Wichita Transit funding forced SCDDO affiliates to make significant changes to the accessibility of their transportation services.

- Agencies that had provided free transportation services in the past started charging a fee. Agencies already charging a fee increased the fee.
- Transportation service areas shrank; access to service ended for some living or working outside of the new transportation areas
- Despite these changes, affiliates reported that the higher fees did not cover the actual cost of providing transportation.

Cost to Provide Transportation*

<i>Staff</i>	\$44,011
<i>Vehicle</i>	\$38,245
<i>Equipment</i>	\$1,307
<i>Other</i>	\$996
<i>Total</i>	\$84,559
<i>Revenue</i>	\$33,056
<i>Total</i>	-\$51,503

*Cost information provided by Starkey

Aside from the SCDDO affiliates, other transportation options in Wichita do exist, including Wichita Transit and Paratransit; however, the data provided in this report show that a small number of riders do not opt for these alternatives for a wide variety of reasons.

- Accessibility. Both the public fixed route bus and paratransit systems are not available after 7 PM, or on Sundays. This causes a major barrier for those riders who work in the evenings, or on weekends
- Long wait times and ride times associated with these services can result in safety concerns for riders.
- Sedgwick County residents living outside the City of Wichita are unable to access either service unless they can travel within the city first.
- Each Paratransit ride must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance, which can cause confusion and frustration for riders. The service can be terminated if the person served is not present for transport at the scheduled time.

Another barrier is the lack of cognitive and behavioral supports, especially on Wichita Transit.

- Eight out of every ten persons served represented in BASIS were assessed to need total support to make a direct trip using public transportation.
- Other necessary skills, including the ability to read and comprehend simple sentences and understand 2-step directions, are a challenge for people represented in the BASIS data.

BASIS Cognitive Ability & Total Support to Use Public Transport

	<u>% Total Support</u>
Unable read/comprehend simple sentence	74%
Unable perform simple addition & subtract	64%
Unable to understand 2-step directions	62%
Unable to distinguish left & right	58%
Unable to tell time to nearest 5 minutes	57%

This emphasizes the need for expanded SCDDO affiliate support, since this is a safe and realistic option for many riders. Many rely on friends or family to provide transportation to medical appointments, work and social outings; some walk (if able).

With taxi service being too expensive, public transportation unavailable to some and SCDDO affiliates unable to travel everywhere, where does this leave persons served? There are opportunities to increase accessibility of transportation for the I/DD community.

- One approach is to provide training to riders in need of cognitive, behavioral and physical support. This training would be specialized according to the needs of the individual served. It would cover skills such as using a map, pedestrian skills, locating a transit stop, boarding and exiting a bus. Training could be provided by SCDDO affiliates, by schools and/or by public transit-minded nonprofit organizations.
- Working with Wichita Paratransit to expand this service is another possibility; particularly if drivers were able to provide cognitive and physical support as well as door-to-door service.
- Better coordination of transportation services provided by agencies serving persons who experience I/DD would help. A unified transportation system could be explored.
- One can also consider solutions such as a NEMT (non-emergent medical transportation) brokerage to coordinate on-demand transportation to medical care that does not involve an emergency.
- The addition of transportation as a service that is part of the HCBS I/DD waiver could increase access and expand opportunities for persons served.
- More support for transportation from local government would improve access and expand opportunities for persons who experience I/DD in the community

A perfect transportation system that serves everyone, including the more than 2,500 individuals served by affiliates of the SCDDO, is unrealistic; however, better serving individuals who experience I/DD and live in Sedgwick County can be achieved.

The mission of the SCDDO and its 49 affiliates is to provide supportive services that enable persons served to “experience life according to their preferences.” Transportation is an essential ingredient. It connects persons served with things big and small: groceries, training, employment, social activities, healthcare and more. This report is one step in an ongoing conversation with persons served, caregivers, case managers, SCDDO affiliates, the City and the County. How, together, can we meet the transportation needs of persons served in Sedgwick County?