



**L**ocal transit authorities provide accessible public transportation systems across the state of Tennessee. This is an especially important resource for individuals who are not able to drive or do not have access to other forms transportation. Many transit authorities have reduced fares for individuals with disabilities to reduce the financial barriers associated with transportation and independence. If travelers cannot travel by the bus on the fixed-route system, many transit authorities provide accessible vans specifically designed to meet more intensive travel needs with door-to-door service.

### **What services or resources does this agency provide?**

Transit authorities provide: fixed-route maps for the region they serve, services that will tell somebody how to get from one location to another using public transportation, accessibility by providing specialized vans for individuals with more intensive travel needs, and reduced fares for individuals with disabilities using the fixed-route system.

### **What areas of Tennessee do they serve?**

The TN Department of Transportation (TDOT) is responsible for transit planning and services in all regions of the state, including urbanized areas, small urban areas, and rural areas. The types of services provided to the general public and individuals



with disabilities vary. When state-run public transportation is not available, grants can be issued to private non-profit organizations and public bodies that provide specialized transportation services to individuals with disabilities.

### **Is there a cost and, if so, who pays?**

If using the public transportation with fixed-routes, there is generally a reduced rate for people with disabilities. There are also fees associated with using the special vans that provide door-to-door service. Fares are calculated by one-way rides. The fare varies by local transit authority, though the cost is generally \$4.00 per one-way ride. Private companies have related fees. These fees will depend on location, gas, and mileage.



### **For which students might this agency be appropriate?**

This is appropriate for individuals who require public transportation to get to work, home, grocery stores, school, and other places that would improve quality of life and independence.

### **Who is eligible to receive their services/ supports and when?**

Though anyone can use fixed-route public transportation, there are eligibility requirements related to using the special van transportation service. To use the van transportation, there is often an application process, including an interview and functional assessment to confirm a need for the service. If denied service, there is an appeals process.

### **What is the referral process?**

#### **What documents are needed?**

There is not a referral process to use public transportation, however there is an application process affiliated with using the accessible van service. Anyone can apply, but approval is required from TDOT.

### **What is the family's responsibility?**

The family's responsibility is to consider what transportation services might best suit their son/ daughter by looking at routes, stops, service times, wheelchair accessibility, and more. After gathering the information required, the family can then decide if they need to apply for their child to use the special van service.

### **Where can I learn more?**

Visit the TDOT website at: <https://www.tn.gov/tdot/multimodal-transportation-resources/office-of-public-transportation/public-transit-services1.html>

### **What is the student's responsibility?**

It is the student's responsibility to learn how to use the transportation services available to them so that they can live independently.

### **What is the responsibility of an educator?**

The educator should explain to parents that their child has the potential to be more independent by using public transportation. The educator can also differentiate between fixed-route buses and special accessibility vans. Fixed-route buses are buses that everyone in the public can use. Special accessibility vans are reserved for those with more intensive needs, and require prior approval from TDOT for use. Finally, teachers should emphasize the reduced fares available for individuals with disabilities.

### **How (and when) do you involve them in the transition planning process?**

Though your local transit authority does not need to be directly involved with transition planning, below are some suggestions for teachers to get parents and students accustomed with local transportation.

- Teachers should gather information on the accessibility in their local community, including information on routes and fares to share with parents.



- Teachers can ensure that students can navigate their transportation systems with as much independence as possible. Teach mini-lessons on using the local transportation system, and then practice using transportation with students.
- Being able to use transportation will affect a student's job opportunities and chances for living independently successfully. When developing postsecondary goals, transportation should be discussed in terms of independent living as well education and training. If a student plans to get a job or take part in a continuing education program, transportation options and plans must be discussed to ensure that participation is feasible.

### **What questions should I ask of my local transit authority?**

- Is there a waitlist for approval to use the special van service?
- Does my son/daughter need to pay with cash to use the buses and van services?
- What happens if there are not bus or van services available in my area?

### **Where can I learn more?**

- Give TDOT a call at: 615-741-2848