



# Transportation Primer

## Types or modes of transportation

**Public Transit** (subsidized by state and/or federal transportation funds) – mass transportation providing service to the general public on a regular and continuing basis. Some public transit runs on a fixed route, fixed schedule (bus) and in Wisconsin, there are shared ride taxi programs that are funded as public transit (see Shared Ride Taxi section below). Many buses are equipped with ramps that allow individuals who use wheelchairs or walkers to board and ride the regular bus.

Fares: Public transit has fares established by the transit commission. There are often discounts for youth, veterans, older adults and individuals with disabilities. Multiple ride passes or punch cards can often be purchased at a discount.

**Paratransit** – Paratransit is an alternative mode of flexible passenger transportation that does not follow fixed routes or schedules and includes special transport services for older adults and people with disabilities. These modes include:

- Human services transportation
- Taxi services
- Deviated-route or demand response systems
- ADA complementary paratransit

ADA complementary paratransit service is mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act to be offered to those who cannot use a regular fixed route public transit service. The individual must be certified to be eligible to receive these services, usually through an application process and in-person assessment. This process can take up to 1-4 weeks depending on the system.

Fares: ADA paratransit fares can legally be set to twice the fare of fixed route service. If the individual resides in a long-term care facility or a third party is paying for their transportation, the transportation provider may charge an agency rate. This rate is higher than the regular fare and is designed to help pay the local tax share and already subsidized portion of the public transit service.

**Specialized Medical Vehicle (SMV)** – a vehicle equipped with a lift or ramp to transport those needing assistive devices (wheelchairs, scooters and walkers). The drivers must have first aid and CPR training. A Certificate of Need may be required from a doctor for SMV transportation.

Fares and Fees– Fares for SMV are set by the company and are usually much higher than other modes for those without Medical Assistance. This is in part because of the training for their drivers and other licensing regulations. In Wisconsin, licensed SMVs still have the ability to bill Medicaid directly for MA eligible nursing home resident's transportation. Other Medicaid clients need to schedule rides through the Medicaid broker.

**What is the difference between paratransit and SMV?** – These services are not interchangeable because they do not have the same level of service. Paratransit is typically curb to curb or door to door service and SMV is door through door service with medically trained drivers.

**Common Carrier** - All modes except SMV and ambulance.

**Shared Ride Taxi** – As referenced under the Public Transit section above, many WI communities have taxi service that is financially supported by local, state and federal tax dollars and operates a shared ride service for more than one passenger a trip. These are usually in smaller communities where a fixed route bus may not be feasible. Unlike regular taxi service, shared ride taxi is designed to stay within the municipality or county that provides funding for it. If the municipality or county allows service out of its borders, fares are typically increased on a per mile basis.

Fares: Fares for shared ride taxi are set similar to those for public transit.

**Taxi** – There are privately owned taxi companies that operate taxi services throughout the state. These are not subsidized by public transit funding.

Fares: Fares are established by the owner of the taxi company and are typically higher than public shared ride taxi programs that are subsidized with state, federal and local funds.

## **Understanding service level**

**Curb to Curb** – The vehicle picks up the individual at the curb and drops them at the curb. The driver may provide some assistance to get in and out of the vehicle, but the rider must be ready at the curb and able to get from the curb into their destination. (taxi, fixed route bus system)

**Door to door** – The driver may go to the door and provide minimal assistance to the rider. This assistance does not include getting coats on, transferring into or out of a wheelchair, navigating steps or getting the individual into the correct room in a facility. (paratransit service, some demand response service, some volunteer drivers)

**Door through door** – The driver is able to provide some assistance to the individuals who need to get from inside a location and to inside another destination. This may include transferring, helping with coats and taking the individual into the correct waiting room at a medical facility (even on a different floor). This service can also be referred to as hand to hand. (Specialized Medical Vehicles, some volunteer drivers)

## **Mobility Management**

Mobility management is an innovative approach for managing and delivering coordinated transportation services to customers, including older adults, people with disabilities, individuals with lower incomes and the general public. Mobility management aims to meet individual customer needs through a wide range of transportation options and services. It also focuses on coordinating these services and providers in order to achieve a more efficient transportation system for customers, public policy makers and taxpayers who underwrite some of the cost of service delivery.

Mobility management may involve any of the following:

- Developing an inventory of available services;
- Identifying customer needs;
- Developing strategies to meet the needs;
- Coordinating financial and other resources;
- Improving coordination through transportation brokerage systems;
- Training staff and volunteers;
- Promoting the use of innovative technologies, services, and other methods to improve customer service and coordination; and
- Developing educational information and trip planning tools.

Mobility Managers may have job titles like Transportation Coordinator or Mobility Specialist, and can work in various organizations from Aging & Disability Resource Centers, to Independent Living Centers or Community Action Programs. A list of mobility managers and additional information can be found at the WI Association of Mobility Managers (WAMM) website. <http://wi-mm.org/>

## **Transportation Coordination**

Federal transit law, as amended by SAFETEA-LU (2005) and continued in MAP-21 (2012) and FAST Act (2015), requires that projects selected for funding under the Section 5310, Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program, be “derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan” and that the plan be “developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers and participation by members of the public.”

Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) collaborates with Regional Planning Commission (RPC) and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) planners to facilitate the planning process and plan development. State funded specialized transportation projects must also be identified in these plans.

Each county or regional coordinated plan must be developed through a public process and each plan needs to meet the federal requirements. Coordinated plans for air quality non-attainment areas and maintenance areas, as designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (bordering the Great Lakes), are required to be updated every four years and were completed in 2016. Plans for the rest of the state are required to be updated every five years and were updated in 2018. Plans are required for counties and municipalities to receive state and federal transportation funding.

Additional resources and county plans can be found here. <http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-business-with-us/transit/compliance/coord.aspx>

## **Transportation Funding Options for Counties and Tribes**

Source: WisDOT website: <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/astnace-pgms/transit/default.aspx>

### **Specialized Transportation Assistance Program for Counties State Statute 85.21**

**Eligible Applicants:** Seventy-two Counties in Wisconsin

- Funds are for the provision of transportation to older adults and individuals with disabilities of any age.
- Allocations are set by formula based on the proportion of the state's elderly and disabled population located in each county. No county can receive less than 0.5% of the total annual appropriation (\$79,889 in 2020)
- Funding can be used for a variety of services including, but not limited to: provide direct service, purchase transportation for other entities, operate a volunteer driver program, coordinate transportation services, provide training, or purchase equipment or planning studies.
- Trip purpose priorities (medical, nutritional, social) are allowed to be set by local policy development when needs exceed resources.
- Funds cannot be used for the transportation of food, except as an incidental part of a service with the purpose of carrying passengers.
- This is not a competitive grant.

*\*Projects must be reflected in locally developed transportation coordination plan*

### **Tribal Transportation for Elders: State Statute 85.215**

**Eligible Applicants:** Eleven Federally recognized tribes in Wisconsin

- All eleven tribes will receive an equal share of the total funds, in 2020 (\$435,600), or \$39,600 each.
- Funds are for the provision of transportation to tribal elders.
- Funding can be used for a variety of services including, but not limited to: provide direct service, purchase transportation for other entities, operate a volunteer driver program, coordinate transportation services, provide training, or purchase equipment or planning studies.
- This is not a competitive grant.

### **Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program: Federal Section 5310 (State 85.22)**

**Eligible Applicants:** Private non-profits and local public bodies and tribes

- Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program is federal funding matched with state funds from the 85.22 program.
- Projects must improve the mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities.
- Eligible projects include the purchase of Human Service Vehicles, operating budgets, Mobility Managers, coordination and non-vehicle capital.

*\*Projects must be identified in the locally developed transportation coordination plan.*

## **Rural & Small Urban Area Public Transportation Assistance: Federal Section 5311 (State 85.20)**

**Eligible Applicants:** Municipalities or counties with populations greater than 2,500, as well as transit or transportation commissions or authorities.

- The Federal Formula Grant Program for Rural Areas, with the addition of 85.20 state funds supports operating and capital expenses for public transportation services that are operated in non-urbanized areas (population under 50,000).
- The State Urban Mass Transit Operating Assistance program (codified in Wisconsin State Statute 85.20) provides operating cost assistance to transit systems in order to alleviate local tax burdens.
- Public transportation services eligible for this program includes bus, shared-ride taxicab, rail or other conveyance either publicly or privately owned.
- Annual funding amounts per system are equalized via formula statewide.

## **Transit Assistance for Urbanized Areas: Federal Section 5307 (State 85.20)**

**Eligible Applicants:** Eligible applicants include municipalities or counties with populations greater than 2,500, as well as transit or transportation commissions or authorities.

- The Federal Formula Grant Program for Urbanized Areas is a federally funded grant program that assists transit systems in large communities (populations over 200,000) with capital expenditures, including bus replacement and capitalized maintenance.
- Transit systems in urban areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000 may utilize the funds for capital or operating assistance
- The State Urban Mass Transit Operating Assistance program (codified in Wisconsin State Statute 85.20) provides operating cost assistance to transit systems in order to alleviate local tax burdens.

*Information provided by the Greater WI Agency on Aging Resources.*

Contact Carrie Diamond, GWAAR Transportation Specialist 608-228-8092, [carrie.diamond@gwaar.org](mailto:carrie.diamond@gwaar.org) 11/2019