

**Administration on Development Disabilities
Technical Assistance Institute – Presentation Summary
Transportation Panel
Friday, August 11, 2006, 10:00 a.m.**

Facilitator: Karen Wolf-Branigin, MSW, Training and Technical Assistance Manager, Easter Seals Project ACTION, Washington, DC

Panelists: Theresa Cooper, Project Coordinator, South Los Angeles Youth and Young Adult Self Determination Center (SLAYD), Los Angeles, CA; Jeanette Doty, BS, Oklahoma Alliance for Youth (OKAY); Joy Gordon, BA, Inclusion Research Institute, Washington, DC; Michael Hoenig, MA, Adult Co-Director, Self-Advocacy and Leadership for Youth with Disabilities (SALYD), IA

Transportation Conditions Where We Live:

“SLAYD in Los Angeles also assists with the parent organization. For transit related issues, we provide taxi vouchers. Prior to that we had a ride-share program. Usually when we are having any events the programs that the youth/parents are a part of will transport youth to the activities. If we cannot find transit, we call folks and ask for assistance which usually works very well. Regarding public transit, we have Access Transportation and which will take you to any part of Los Angeles County. The downside is that they must pick you up almost 2-3 hours before you are ready to go and the same for leaving. We have people call or write in about the service complaints and we are trying to improve the transportation. We recently have a metro system. The metro system is flawed in that they have passed people who use wheelchairs and we are working to fix this issue.”

“In Oklahoma, they don’t seem to believe in any kind of mass transit or the subway or any kind of public transportation. We conduct our meetings at the Metro Technology Center in Oklahoma City. We hire out through the Airport Transit Company – Airport Express to get out participants to the OKAY meetings. Unfortunately, the cost is a huge issue and it keeps going up. We are looking at alternate forms, but this causes delays in our participants arriving; therefore, our meetings start late. Our city is large and covers a lot of territory. It is not meant for foot traffic. Participants are coming from more than five or ten miles distance and this makes it difficult to get to the center. “

“In the District of Columbia we have the bus and rail system which is color coordinated. The rail system or metro has a very detailed map that one would use to see where they are going and to get connected to. We also have a bus called The Circulator which runs every 5 to 10 minutes. We also have a Paratransit system called Metro-Access. Metro-Access offers door to door service in the metropolitan area and is specifically for persons with disabilities. However, one down side is that you must make your arrangements and request travel at least 24 hours in advance. Metro-Access also has issues with prolonged wait periods and “dropping” client’s schedule or no shows. We have all of our events assuring that they are metro accessible. On our flyers promoting the events, we tell them of the nearest metro stop they can use. We will wait with our clients until Metro-Access arrives and never leave them alone.”

“In Iowa, I have learned that not one solution works. A summary of my last few days includes that I work far away from home. I utilize a para-transit system to get to the location where I then meet up with the university van pool. It takes almost two hours one way. I then take the university city-bus the rest of the way to my actual building. When I return home today from the event, I will take a taxi to the airport and a friend of mine will transport me home. In other ways, I have used the Greyhound which isn’t a great mode of transit but it works. What’s important is that we all need to be resourceful. We have to get creative in finding access to transit. After the passage of the ADA, the CIL’s, the ARC and other organizations paid visits to the transportation board meetings to get them to provide para-transit. It was important that we continually showed up to meetings and advocated for change. We hold meetings centrally in Iowa. We utilize carpool and the para-transit system.”

Questions

For the Youth who participate in your activities, do any of the projects pay for their transit to the event? At times, youth are not signed up to use para-transit by the meeting date and that poses a problem. They cannot utilize the system until they get certified. In Iowa, we have paid for transit services. We build this into our budget, mileage and an hourly rate for meals or some sort of other accommodation like a personal care assistant. **What are the hours of your para-transit system? Our activities run over, or end late and the system doesn’t run to accommodate these issues.**

In Los Angeles, the system runs 24 hours. In DC, the para-transit system runs until 2 a.m. and holds the same hours as the metro-rail which is required under the ADA. In Iowa there is a subsidized taxi system called Roll-Out Taxi. The fees are lower than normal and someone can call at anytime though there are a limited number of trips per month and the funding has recently been cut.

Have any of the panelists partnered with teachers at schools to teach the youth travel training or to help them get certified for para-transit services? Some youth also have trouble calling the day before, and the parents aren’t willing to help.

In Oklahoma, we ask the youth to call us for assistance, because we can get charged for no-shows. What also works is repetition and practicing with the youth to help them get a better understanding of making their arrangements. Keep trying and assisting them. Also offer praise, praise, praise to reinforce the youth’s confidence in trying to make their arrangements. In North Carolina, we advocated for free bus service around the campus, and we have been successful in making the system free to disabled users.

In Summary

Report the problem but you must offer solutions

Coordination of transportation for your constituents is a combined effort and takes lots of planning and lots of research to find solutions

Public transit providers are required to have an advisory committee usually called the Elderly and Disabled Committee – it would be a great committee for those attending to participate on.

RESOURCES

**Project ACTION Easter Seals - <http://projectaction.easterseals.com>
Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) –
www.april-rural.org**

**A list of questions given to each of the presenters can be found at the following link:
http://www.ent-s-t.com/ADD_0806/08-11-06%20-%20006%20-%20Transit%20Panel.pdf**