

# Getting to Work: Transportation Options for Students with Disabilities

As you plan for ongoing paid employment with students, it is essential that you do so with the “end in mind” and consider how students will get to and from work.

Before seeking employment, the student and his/her employment planning team should discuss the full range of options and map out the areas and times transportation is available. This is part of finding a good job match in a location that will work and important information to have when negotiating terms of employment, including where the student will conduct his/her job search and hours available for work. With each student consider the following questions:

- ⊙ **What** are the transportation options?
- ⊙ **Where** is transportation available?
- ⊙ **When** is transportation available?
- ⊙ **How much** does it cost?
- ⊙ Is it **flexible**? Is it **reliable**?
- ⊙ **Does** the student need travel training?
- ⊙ Is it **sustainable** over the long term?



## Consider These Possible Transportation Options:

- ⊙ **Find a job within walking or biking distance** - support can be provided to help students learn how to safely navigate within their community.
- ⊙ **Ride public transit** - mobility trainers can help students learn how to ride the bus safely.
- ⊙ **Set up a Ride Share** - family members, friends, other students, or co-workers might be willing to provide rides to or from work if they are traveling in the same direction. Travel stipends could be provided through private pay or possibly through long term care funding (Children’s Long Term Support, Family Care, or IRIS). The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has a ride-share service that matches people who need a ride to people who will give rides. <http://www.dot.state.wi.us/travel/commuter/index.htm>.
- ⊙ **Take a reduced-fare taxi** - some communities offer reduced fare rides for people with disabilities.
- ⊙ **Get a driver’s license** - with additional support and accommodations for driver’s education and testing, learning to drive might be a viable option.
- ⊙ **Specialized transportation** - this could be funded by long term care if the student is enrolled in Children’s Long Term Support, Family Care or IRIS. Be sure to talk with the long-term care representative about transportation options.

- ⦿ **Getting a ride from the job coach** - if the student is supported by a supported employment agency at work, the job coach might be able to provide transportation.
- ⦿ **Learn about the other Transportation Assistance Programs in your area** - Independent Living Centers, Community Action Programs, and Aging and Disability Resource Centers are good places to contact to ask about local transportation assistance programs.

### Transportation Funding Options:

- ⦿ If the job is during the school day, districts can often include transportation to and from jobs in transition services through school vehicles, staff vehicles, or contracted providers.
- ⦿ If the job is after school, on the weekend or during the summer: the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) could be an option to provide limited-term funding for transportation when the student initially begins work. The transportation cost would need to be transitioned to another source after a certain number of weeks or months as determined by the DVR counselor and employment planning team.
- ⦿ Once DVR is done covering the costs of transportation to and from work, the costs could be paid for out of pocket (after all, the student will be earning money and might be able to afford the transportation), or long-term care (Children’s Long-Term Support, Family Care or IRIS) could be used to cover the transportation costs.
- ⦿ Using a Work Incentive called Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE) may be an option (pronounced “er-wee” for short). If the student is unable to drive due to an impairment and incurs out-of-pocket costs to get to and from work for specialized transportation, operating a modified vehicle, or for paying a driver these costs might be considered an IRWE by the Social Security Administration. To learn more, contact a Work Incentives Benefits Specialist by talking to the DVR counselor or calling the local Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) program: [www.eri-wi.org/programs/wipa](http://www.eri-wi.org/programs/wipa).
- ⦿ Saving money in a Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS) to purchase a vehicle to get to and from work could also be an option. PASS is a Work Incentive through the Social Security Administration. To learn more about PASS, talk to a Work Incentives Benefits Specialist or visit: [www.passplan.org](http://www.passplan.org).

