



CONSORTIUM
for
CITIZENS
with
DISABILITIES

CCD TRANSPORTATION TASK FORCE PRIORITIES

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) is comprised of over 100 national organizations representing the interests of people with disabilities. CCD's Transportation Task Force is very interested in transportation reauthorization legislation, particularly the sections that relate to people with disabilities. Individuals may be limited in their mobility due to physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities, and as a rule are more reliant on public transportation than the general public. It is critical that transportation legislation ensures that people with disabilities have safe, affordable and accessible transportation to fully participate in community life. The following issues must be addressed in the legislation:

- **NEW FREEDOM INITIATIVE:** The New Freedom Initiative (NFI) must be maintained as a program separate and apart from Section 5310. CCD supports the President's request for \$158.4 million in funding for this critical new initiative. The NFI is intended to remove barriers and provide services to people with disabilities beyond that required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, and therefore has a distinctly different purpose than 5310. Although NFI projects must be coordinated with 5310 services, it is not intended exclusively for 5310-type segregated transportation services. Accepted uses of NFI funds include accessible taxi, van-pooling and ridesharing programs, voucher and volunteer driver programs and mobility management programs.

Further, combining these programs would grant eligibility to public transit agencies. CCD is very concerned that non-profits may be edged out by public agencies in allocations of already insufficient funding in Section 5310 programs. We ask that you support the New Freedom Initiative as a separate and distinct program.

- **SECTION 5310:** Funds authorized under Section 5310 of TEA-21 provide critical transportation services for people with disabilities and senior citizens. The current funding level of \$91 million is grossly insufficient to meet current demand and must be greatly increased. To increase flexibility and innovation at the local level, funding from any source, including federal funds, should be eligible to be used as matching funds by the local entity. Also, much § 5310 money is used simply to replace aging vehicles. To best meet local needs, local entities must also have access to operating assistance.

CCD asks that Section 5310 funding be consistent with other state operated transportation, i.e., JARC and New Freedom Initiative, and changed to make projects eligible for 80/20 share for capital expenses and a 50/50 share for operating expenses.

- **PROJECT ACTION:** Easter Seals Project ACTION (Accessible Community Transportation in Our Nation) is a federally funded program that promotes transportation accessibility for people with disabilities and helps transit providers comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Project ACTION has become the nation's leading resource on transportation accessibility. The Project has funded 84 innovative demonstration projects and research initiatives in local communities throughout the nation. Project ACTION works with transit systems across the nation to provide information about the most cost-effective means to improve accessibility and achieve ADA compliance. CCD request that Project Action be funded at \$3.5 million annually.
- **PLANNING:** CCD supports the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of transportation plans and projects. All too often, access for people with disabilities is not considered during the planning and design of transportation projects. Expressly including people with disabilities in the planning process will go a long way toward addressing this critical issue.
- **MOBILITY MANAGEMENT:** Mobility management may provide planning services for improving coordination among public and other transportation providers, manage public transportation demand and focus on customer need. Transit dependent populations, including people with disabilities, often find that transportation is lacking and therefore opportunities for employment, education, and recreation are unnecessarily limited. Mobility management programs are intended to better identify customer needs and plan transportation services to effectively meet those needs. CCD asks that money for mobility management activities be included in reauthorization.
- **FAIR SHARE FOR SAFETY:** Another priority for CCD is improving accessibility to sidewalks, crosswalks and other public rights of way. An accessible public route has the added benefit of being a safe public route. A safe accessible pedestrian route is wide and level enough to allow wheelchair use and has curbcuts where needed. Accessible pedestrian signals at intersections provide information about safe crossing to people who are blind or have low vision. Also, adequate crossing time allows all pedestrians to cross safely.

Despite the availability of STP and CMAQ funds for pedestrian walkways and transportation enhancements, most states expend little funding to improve sidewalks, crosswalks, signals and curbs. While 12% of all traffic deaths are pedestrians, less than one percent (0.7percent) of federal transportation construction operations and maintenance are spent to ensure a safe walking environment. In addition, states have under-spent the funds available for the Transportation Enhancements program by about \$700 million since FY 1998.

TEA-21 reauthorization should provide \$250 million from the Surface Transportation Program Safety Set-aside program to support "Safe Access to Transit". We also support the "Fair Share for Safety", an allocation from the Highway Safety Improvement program for bicycle and pedestrian safety based on state safety records on pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities.

The undersigned members of CCD's Transportation Task Force ask that you support these provisions in the reauthorization of TEA-21. CCD appreciates your support for integrated accessible public transportation for people with disabilities. If we can provide further information, please contact Maureen McCloskey, Paralyzed Veterans of America, at 202-416-7696 or maureenm@pva.org Jennifer Dexter, Easter Seals, 202-347-3066 jdexter@easterseals.com or Julie Ward, The Arc and UCP, 202-783-2229 ward@thedpc.org.

On behalf of,

American Association of People with Disabilities
American Association on Mental Retardation
American Council of the Blind
American Foundation for the Blind
APSE: The Network on Employment
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Brain Injury Association of America
Council for Exceptional Children
Easter Seals
Epilepsy Foundation
Helen Keller National Center
National Association of Councils on Development Disabilities
National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Coalition on Deaf-Blindness
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Rehabilitation Association
NISH
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Research Institute for Independent Living
Spina Bifida Association of America
TASH
The Arc of the United States
United Cerebral Palsy
United Spinal Association