

Module 2: Overcoming Barriers to Employment

Part 5: Overcoming Transportation Barriers

Welcome to the Promise parent learning module on overcoming transportation barriers for work. In this module, you will learn questions about transportation to consider when planning employment, different kinds of transportation options to consider, and ways to pay for transportation.

Planning Transportation

Transportation is a common barrier for people with disabilities. As you begin planning employment with your child, it is important that you plan with the end in mind. This means considering how your child will get to and from work before seeking out job opportunities. It would be very unfortunate if your child was offered a job and had to turn it down because transportation to and from the employer's location is impossible to arrange.

Transportation Questions

Before your child starts looking for a job, you should talk with your DVR counselor and school staff about all possible transportation options and map out the areas and times these options are available. Consider the following questions:

Where is transportation available?

When is transportation available?

Is it flexible?

Is it reliable?

How much does it cost?

Does my child need training or support to use this option?

Is it a reasonable and sustainable option over the long term?

This information will determine where your child should conduct his or her job search and the hours your child is available for work. There is a transportation planning document in the Promise parent learning community that you can download and use for planning.

Transportation Options

There might be [transportation options available](#) for your child that you haven't yet considered. Some possible transportation options to consider are walking and biking. Are there potential employers near your home that your child can walk to or bike to safely? If so, it may be possible for your child to learn to walk or bike safely to and from work with the help of an orientation and mobility specialist. The [Wisconsin Department of Transportation also runs a bike buddy program](#) for bicyclists who commute to and from work on the same route.

Taking the bus could be an option. Do you live in a community where there is a public bus system? Where and what times do the buses run? What are the easiest or fastest routes? You will want to consider the when, where, and how of the bus system as you decide where to look for jobs. If your child needs help learning to ride the bus or if you are concerned about the general safety of using the public bus system, talk to your school and DVR counselor about options such as finding a mentor, using an orientation and mobility specialist through DVR, sometimes called a travel trainer, or connecting with a volunteer bus buddy program in your area so that your child is not traveling alone.

Ride share is another option. Ride share options can be informal, such as with a family member, friend, neighbor, or co-worker, or more formal arrangements using your community's local ride share program. Once your child is working and earning wages, they could give the driver money to help with gas expenses. You can find out more about your community's ride share programs by clicking on the word ride share on the screen, which will take you to the [Wisconsin Department of Transportation Ride Share Program website](#).

Another option is reduced fare taxi service. Your community might offer a reduced fare taxi service for people with disabilities. For example, in the Oshkosh, area there is a service called Access to Jobs that provides cab rides to work for low income people for only \$3 each way. Some communities have taxi services with lift-equipped vans.

Obtaining a Driver's License

There are even more transportation options to consider. One could be getting a [driver's license](#). It might be possible for your child to get their driver's license. School staff can help your child prepare for the written exam. If needed, accommodations can be provided for the written test, such as interpreter services, taking a test in an audio format, or having someone read the test questions.

Once the written exam is passed, the school or DVR might be able to provide additional supports for helping your child learn to drive. If your child has a physical disability, DVR might be able to assist with a driver's assessment and vehicle modifications.

Specialized Transportation

Specialized transportation could also be an option. If the options that have been mentioned so far are not possible because of the area in which you live or your child's disability, specialized transportation could be an option. Specialized transportation is a more expensive option. Initially, the school, DVR, or children's long-term support would pay for specialized transportation services. Once your child is out of high school, specialized transportation could be paid for by the adult long-term care system, which is called [Family Care](#), IRIS, or County Support if your child is eligible. Your child might also be able to use a Social Security work incentive called Impairment Related Work Expense, or IRWE for short, to help cover the cost of specialized transportation.

A ride from a job coach might also be an option. If your child needs a job coach after high school on the job, the job coach might be able to give your child rides for work if other transportation options are not available. This is something you will need to talk with DVR and the adult service agencies you work with about as you plan for employment.

There might be [other options in your community](#) that have not been mentioned in this training. Your [DVR](#) counselor or your local [Aging and Disability Resource Center, ADRC](#) for short, should be able to tell you about other options in your area.

Once your child is working and earning money, there might be a chance that he or she can afford some or all of their transportation costs. If not, there are ways that transportation can be paid for based on the services your child receives. Who pays for these transportation services might depend on when your child is working.

If the job is during the school day, talk with your child's school about providing transportation. If school staff is unable to drive your child to work with their school vehicle, they might be able to hire a transportation service.

If the job is after school or on the weekend or during the summer, talk with your DVR counselor. DVR can provide limited term help for transportation services. Keep in mind that the help that DVR provides is limited term. Transportation costs will need to be covered by another source after a certain number of weeks or months, as determined by your DVR counselor and employment planning team.

Long-term Transportation

Long-term transportation costs could be paid for out of pocket, especially if your family member is earning money and is able to afford transportation costs for work. Or long-term care, which is children's long term support, Family Care, IRIS, or County Support could be used to cover transportation costs.

If your child receives Social Security benefits, a work incentive called Impairment Related Work Expense, pronounced IRWE for short, might be an option to cover transportation costs. If your child is unable to drive due to an impairment and pays out-of-pocket expenses to get to and from work using specialized transportation, operating a modified vehicle, or paying for a driver, these costs might be considered an IRWE by the Social Security Administration.

Saving money in a plan to achieve self-support, which is also called a PASS, to purchase a vehicle to get to and from work could also be another option. PASS is another work incentive through the Social Security Administration. To learn more about [IRWE and PASS](#), talk to your DVR counselor about connecting with a work incentive benefit specialist.

Conclusion

This concludes the parent training module on overcoming transportation barriers for work. If you have questions, talk to your DVR counselor about your questions and concerns.