

Secondary Transition Inclusive Transportation Service-Learning Pilot Program Information Packet

The goals of inclusive transportation service-learning projects for students are to build student learning, student leadership, shared awareness of disability rights, and knowledge of the various aspects of accessible transportation services in local communities.

Thank you for your interest in participating in the Easter Seals Project ACTION (ESPA) Secondary Transition Inclusive Transportation Service-Learning Pilot Program. This is an exciting opportunity for school districts, their staff, and students and their families to learn about a range of accessible transportation services. We are pleased that you are interested in supporting our efforts to share information about the importance of transportation options for students. Below are background information and details for this project.

The purpose of this pilot program is to help students with and without disabilities to identify opportunities to engage in service-learning projects that enhance their understanding and use of accessible transportation. Our hope is that students learn about the wide variety of transportation options available to them and use this knowledge to actively engage in decision-making about travel and mobility throughout their communities. We also anticipate this pilot program can:

- Help schools and educators develop resources and relationships with transit and transportation professionals related to accessible transportation;
- Enable schools and districts to implement transportation education programs that help students attain postsecondary goals related to employment, higher education, and independent living; and
- Support school and district secondary transition services related to United States Department of Education indicators (Indicator 13 & 14).

These projects are intended to be flexible and customized to reflect the individual needs of students and their communities as well as provide students with and without disabilities opportunities to learn with each other. At the same time, ESPA has an interest in learning from our pilot sites so that we can in turn share our learning, tools, and materials with other school districts interested in offering similar inclusive transportation service-learning opportunities to their students. The following information describes the ESPA Inclusive Transportation Service-Learning Program.

We are looking forward to speaking with you about the content of this guide, and welcome your participation as a pilot school district in this innovative program.

Why is it Important to Focus on Accessible Transportation for Students with Disabilities?

- Community-based experience, either paid or unpaid, is a predictor of student success in employment after they leave school (<http://nstattac.appstate.edu/sites/default/files/assets/pdf/InschoolPredictorsofPostSchoolSuccess.pdf>).
- School-based transportation services may not support student travel to community sites while students are still in school.
- Lack of access to inclusive transportation can challenge students and their ability to attain post-school goals related to employment, higher education, and independent living.
- When lack of transportation options compromises secondary transition, school and district performance on federal performance monitoring indicators (Indicators 13 & 14) can be adversely affected.
- Knowledge of transportation options that do not rely on the ability to drive or the use of an automobile will help students understand how to use these transportation modes and perhaps develop a preference for using alternative modes once they leave the school setting.
- Transportation education is aligned with common core standards and a focus on 21st century learning, such as civic literacy, environmental literacy, and learning & innovation skills, including creativity, innovation, problem solving, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration.
- Opportunities to learn about community transportation services enhance student engagement in their communities and facilitate social interaction with their neighbors.
- Transportation education enables students to lead spontaneous lives and bolsters their ability to direct their own transportation choices.

About this Opportunity

Your participation would entail:

- Encouraging general and special educators in your district to inform students and their families about this ESPA inclusive service-learning program opportunity.
- Establishing relationships with transportation professionals and transit providers in your community to share information about the ESPA Secondary Transition Inclusive Transportation Service-Learning Program.
- Communicating directly with students and their families about the program, with support from ESPA as needed.
- Encouraging students to use ESPA tools and services to launch their service-learning projects (see resources).

- Giving students opportunities to share their learning with other students involved in the projects, both within your school, and through national networks that ESPA may establish.
- Establishing project timelines, performance standards, and grading procedures that are aligned with your district practices.
- Participating in periodic calls with other districts and ESPA staff involved in this pilot program and sharing experiences through the online community.
- Working with ESPA staff and its partners to develop multi-level project evaluation measures.
- Providing ESPA staff with regular feedback regarding student and project activities and participating in meetings and conferences to share your learning.
- Having fun, learning lots, and engaging in interesting and meaningful work!

Implementation Steps

- 1) **Packet Review.** Please review the information and resources contained in this packet prior to our Introductory Meeting.
- 2) **ESPA and District Introductory Meeting.** This is an opportunity for ESPA to provide a comprehensive overview of the service-learning program and address any questions participants may have. Districts should invite to this meeting participants who will likely be involved in implementation. Attendees at the meeting might include district representatives, such as general and special education administrators, transition coordinators, transportation officials, and service-learning professionals. This introductory meeting can also be an opportunity to familiarize external representatives, such as parents and families, planning organizations, and transit professionals, with the program. This meeting is expected to last approximately two hours.
- 3) **ESPA and District Orientation.** This three-hour orientation is intended to provide educators and students who will participate in the service-learning program with an orientation to the materials and tools that might be used as the projects are launched (Approximately 3 hours total – this meeting can be conducted in conjunction with the first introductory meeting).

Considerations for Project Characteristics

ESPA is pleased to have the advice and input of an expert panel and national advisory committee as we launch this work. These colleagues have offered recommendations regarding potential characteristics of service-learning projects. The recommendations are offered only as suggestions—and we want school districts and students to have flexibility in designing their own service-learning projects. We recognize that projects should reflect the individual needs of students and the characteristics of a school district and community. With this in mind, we offer the following actions that can guide the design of inclusive service-learning projects:

1. Encourage students to assess their community and its transportation resources. ESPA tools can help students collect information about the transportation services and resources in their community.
2. Facilitate cooperative learning between students who do and do not receive special education services.
3. Support opportunities for students to build relationships with transportation organizations and transit providers.
4. Align with academic content standards—and wherever possible, integrate service-learning projects into curriculum.
5. Provide students with at least 25 hours of learning.
6. Be explicit about how inclusive transportation options can affect participation in community and help students attain post school goals.
7. Suggest that service-learning projects enable students apply a variety of learning styles and incorporate universal design principles wherever appropriate.
8. Incorporate features and content that allows students to address transportation safety issues and use social and self-advocacy skills, such as knowing how to answer the following questions:
 - What do I do if I am lost?
 - What do I do if I am being bullied?
 - What if transportation doesn't show up or a driver is rude?
9. Embed technology and social media where appropriate.
10. Reflect tenets of Green/Built Environments.
11. Reflect the needs of students with physical disabilities as well as those with less visible disabilities, such as emotional/social differences as well as the needs of typical developing students.
12. Develop a “product” that has potential to be replicated across school districts.

Examples of Hands-On Service-Learning Projects

We encourage students to be innovative and creative in their implementation of an inclusive transportation service-learning project but keeping it aligned with curriculum and content standards to the maximum extent possible. We hope students will use such technologies as photo voice, YouTube, and other social media to capture and document their journey to learn about and access public transportation. We hope that these projects can be woven back into curriculum. Here are some suggestions for project activities.

- Create their own experiment—test transportation from different peoples' perspectives, (i.e., from people with different abilities). Make it as hands-on as possible.
- Interview transit operators and drivers about their experiences in providing inclusive transportation.
- Go to intersections, bus stops, transportation centers, ride the different transportation options and develop a format to share what was learned.
- Compare different types of maps—what kinds work for what kind of learners/abilities. Do new formats need to be made?

- Develop awareness-raising materials about transportation options for families, educators, and other school personnel.
- Create materials and tools for transit operators that help them understand student needs.
- Encourage connections across high-school and higher-education settings around accessible transportation.
- Explore buses—do the drivers announce stops, what are the visual displays like, what is the noise level, and who is the primary ridership?
- Examine transportation schedules, do they serve the whole community, are the times transit is available workable with the schedules of students and/or those needing the transportation, does the bus run to the locations needed—schools, shopping and other social venues, hospitals/health care?
- Assess crossing signals. Do they include sound? What colors are they? How do the call buttons feel to the touch?
- Address social issues that come up when using transportation—how to talk and ask questions, explore personal boundary issues.
- Explore mobility management. What is it? What do other communities have? What is missing in your community? What are the costs and benefits? Create a map of the mobility options in your community.
- Work with the aging community. There is much to learn from how the aging community manages transportation.
- Explore if and how transportation for youth differs from that of transportation for adults.
- Conduct a pedestrian road safety audit to identify potential problems and barriers, and identify opportunities for improving pedestrian safety (<http://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm69.htm>).

Outreach and Building an Infrastructure

Your participation in the ESPA Inclusive Transportation Service-Learning Program represents your commitment to establishing partnerships across many sectors, including education, service-learning, community planning, and transportation. We hope your participation in this work will foster new and sustain existing connections between your district professionals, students, and transit professionals, and that you will realize unexpected positive benefits from these relationships. ESPA can share with you several letters and materials that you can customize and use to reach out to various partners, informing them about your participation in the ESPA Inclusive Transportation Service-Learning Program. These sample documents include:

1. General informational sheet that enables you to develop articles, information briefs, and other written communications about your participation.
2. Sample letter to a state director of general or special education.
3. Sample letter to community, regional, or state transit providers or transportation officials.

4. Sample letter to the regional administrator affiliated with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Here is a link to FTA regional offices http://www.fta.dot.gov/12317_1119.html.

We encourage you to let your colleagues and others know about your work and commitment to inclusive transportation for students with disabilities. Please keep us informed about your outreach and contact us for suggestions regarding these communications.

Tools and Materials that can be Helpful to Educators and Students

The ESPA Store contains a variety of free materials, tools, and curriculum that educators and students can use to implement inclusive service-learning projects. All of these materials and alternate formats can be accessed the ESPA website at https://secure2.convio.net/es/site/Ecommerce/654744760?VIEW_PRODUCT=true&product_id=4161&store_id=9663. Use the product titles below to retrieve these products. Please call 1-800-659-6428 if you would like hard copies of materials or are having difficulty accessing any of the products. We also included links to other resources that might be helpful to educators and students as they implement service-learning projects.

Accessible Pathways & Livable Communities Pocket Guide [PDF]. Accessible pathways help form the foundation of an accessible transportation system and a livable community. This pocket guide contains concepts for communities to consider when improving transportation facilities, sidewalks, and routes to transit.

Buses and Trains for Everyone [Combo - Print w/ CD and DVD]. Serving as both a curriculum guide for teachers and as a workbook for students in grades 4-8, this resource documents lesson plans from different schools around the country and presents classroom activities for students.

Competencies for the Practice of Travel Instruction and Travel Training [CD]. Compiles key guidelines and outlines the fundamental abilities needed for effective travel training instruction. Includes sample travel trainer job descriptions for easy reference.

Impact: Feature Issue on Meeting Transportation Needs of Youth and Adults with Developmental Disabilities. Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Minnesota. (Vol. 18, 3). This newsletter shares ideas and strategies for meeting transportation needs and removing transportation barriers to community inclusion and participation <http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/183/183.pdf>.

Integrated Self-Advocacy (ISA) Curriculum. ISA Sensory Scan™ and ISA Social Scan™. These modules, developed by researcher Valarie Paradiz, Ph.D., and adapted by Dr. Paradiz for the ESPA inclusive transportation service-learning program, help students understand and address sensory and social challenges. This increased knowledge and awareness enables students to build a self-advocacy portfolio around accessible transportation that are aligned with sensory and social needs.

Playing in the PARC: Inclusive Service-Learning Manual. Resources to support the inclusion of youth with disabilities in service-learning
<http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/index.php?page=servicelearning#Teacher%20Training%20Guides%20and%20Service-Learning%20Curricula>

Project ACTION in Action: Helping Schools Meet the Transportation Needs of Students with Disabilities [PDF]. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) ensures transportation services for eligible students who need public transportation to reach school. Obtaining transportation services can sometimes be challenging for school districts that need to identify new funding, partnerships or resources to provide rides for students. This report discusses the process used by six school districts from across the country to identify their education and transition services transportation challenges and solutions.

Public Transportation: The Route to Freedom. A Transportation Education Program for Students with Disabilities in Grades 8-12 [CD and DVD]. Curriculum developed to teach students in secondary schools about the concepts, skills and behaviors necessary to use public transportation. The course is aligned with New York State standards while complementing the standards of other states. Included is a book containing teacher and resource guides, a book for students participating in standardized assessment of skills, and one for students participating in alternate assessments.

Safe Routes to Schools Program (SRSP). (National Center for Safe Routes to Schools) The U.S. Department of Transportation awards State grants, who in turn, award grants to districts and schools. The SRSP Program makes funding available for a wide variety of programs and projects, from building safer street crossings to establishing programs that encourage children and their parents to walk and bicycle safely to school. Visit the National Center for Safe Routes to Schools to learn about programs in your state and community and to identify opportunities for collaboration across your service-learning program and the SRSP program.
<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>.

Toolkit for Bus Stop Accessibility. This toolkit is primarily targeted towards staff at transit agencies and public works departments who are responsible for bus stop design and placement. The toolkit is intended to be a convenient resource that can be used to enhance the accessibility of specific bus stops, or help in the development of a strategic plan to achieve system-wide accessibility. Disability community representatives should also find in these pages material that can be used to advocate for accessibility improvements and barrier removal.

Transit Customer Rights and Responsibilities Bookmark [PDF]. An easy-to-carry reference guide, this laminated bookmark details the rights guaranteed to transit customers under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the responsibilities passengers have when using community transportation.

Travel Training for Student Success: The Route to Achieving Post-Secondary Student Outcomes. A primer for school administrators interested in learning how high schools across the country are connecting students to travel training services, developing and adapting goals, and supporting local implementation of travel training programs

http://projectaction.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ESPA_resources_supporting_young_adults_TravelTraining. This resource includes the following

[A Practical Guide for School Administrators \(PDF\)](#)

This 23-page booklet was developed by ESPA with contributions from education, disability, and transportation professionals. It offers multiple examples from across the United States of how schools are making travel training services available to their students. These initiatives range from offering travel training services directly through school district personnel, to enrolling students in travel training programs offered by the local transportation provider or a human service agency.

PowerPoint slide shows:

[Travel Training for Student Success Part One: Benefits of Travel Training \(PPT\)](#)
[Travel Training for Student Success Part Two: Getting Started \(PPT\)](#). Use these PowerPoint shows to inform and enlist other education officials, colleagues and community partners in support of goals related to travel training for students. The PowerPoint presentations include talking points. To view the talking points, right-click when the slides appear. Select "Edit slides." In the toolbar, select "View" and then "Notes Page."

United We Ride. United We Ride (UWR) is a federal interagency initiative aimed at improving the availability, quality, and efficient delivery of transportation services for older adults, people with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. Transportation plays a critical role in providing access to employment, health care, education, community services, and activities necessary for daily living
<http://www.unitedweride.gov/>.

Youth Transportation Roundtable Event Yields Ideas, Commitment. Easter Seals Project ACTION hosted a roundtable discussion event Oct. 28, 2009, to bring focus to the transportation needs of the nation's youth with disabilities. The discussion, conducted in Savannah, Ga., was a pre-event to the 15th International Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Career Development and Transition Conference. The linked [press release](#) lists key points and ideas resulting from the discussion. In addition, an Exhibit having the theme, "[*A View from Within - What Transportation Means to Me*](#)," was a feature of the day-long conference http://projectaction.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ESPA_resources_supporting_young_adults_RoundtableNEWS.

For information about the Inclusive Service-Learning Program, please contact Judy Shanley at jshanley@easterseals.com or 202-403-8354.

School District Participation Form

We are pleased about your participation in the ESPA Inclusive Transportation Service-Learning Program. To help us better understand your district and services, please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. We can address these questions during the ESPA – District Orientation Meeting.

1. District Name: _____ Student Enrollment: _____

2. Primary District Contact Name – Title: _____

3. Describe how you will engage colleagues representing the following perspectives in the service-learning project:

3A. General Education Administration/educators: _____

3B. Special Education Administration/educators: _____

3C. Parents & Families: _____

3D. School Transportation Services: _____

3E. Research & Evaluation: _____

3F. Service-Learning: _____

3G. Community Transit Professionals & Transportation Providers _____

3H. Other Key Participants: _____

4. Describe the programs or services you offer currently to students around inclusive transportation. Do all students in your district participate in these activities?

5. Describe how you will select students to participate in a service-learning project.

6. Describe how you will monitor student progress in a service-learning project.

7. Describe how student participation in a service-learning project will be aligned with academic content standards in your district.

8. Describe how information about student participation in a service-learning project will be reflected in IEPs.

9. Describe how you will engage community transit and transportation providers.

10. We are interested in collecting data regarding the impact of this program. Do you have the capacity to collect information from students currently, and after their participation in the program?

11. Do you also collect student outcome data when students leave high school regarding how transportation has affected their attainment of postsecondary goals related to employment, higher education, or independent living?

12. Do you anticipate any challenges in carrying out program activities?



Easter Seals Project ACTION is funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, and is administered by Easter Seals, Inc. This document is disseminated under the sponsorship of ESPA in the interest of information exchange. Neither Easter Seals nor the U.S. DOT, FTA assumes liability for its contents or use thereof.