



Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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"Fix It:" Transportation Needs Reform for People with Disabilities

Tonight, at "Just Fix It" events, people with disabilities respond to the counties' invitation to discuss transportation needs. We know the need to fix funding for *all* modes of transportation. The recently released budget proposal from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation would not provide the necessary funding.

"People with disabilities identify transportation as the most significant barrier to community living" noted Maureen Ryan, Survival Co-Chair. "We remind counties and state policy-makers that we need to fix the transportation funding to support programs that allow older residents and people with disabilities to work real jobs, live at home and engage in community events like tonight's events. Too many people with disabilities lack transportation to attend these meetings." Evenings are one of the hardest times to get places for people who don't have a vehicle they can drive due to age or disability.

"We must increase funding for transit and paratransit and address other transportation needs for people with disabilities in the budget" adds Kit Kerschensteiner, Survival Co-Chair. "Without increased funding for transit and other transportation programs, people with disabilities and older adults can't work, shop, vote, or participate in their community."

The number of people with disabilities in Wisconsin increased by over 13% from 2009 to 2014. Adding older Wisconsinites (over 65) who rely on many of the same transportation programs, this part of our population increased by over 15% from 2009 to 2014. We expect both numbers to increase over the next decades as baby boomers age. This trend limits the ability of transportation programs to meet needs with existing funding.

The increased transportation need comes at the same time as reduced funding. These cuts in Aids – 10% at the depth of the recession – resulted in reduced routes and/or increased fares. This reduced access isolates many people with disabilities and denies them independence and access to employment, education, healthcare, small businesses, schools, churches and other community resources. As noted by the U.S. Dept. of Transportation, "Transit ridership is on the rise, and people with disabilities make up one of the groups most reliant on transit."

To read about the Survival Coalition's other transportation budget priorities, go here:

<http://www.survivalcoalitionwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Survival-Budget-Recommendations-2016-Final.pdf>

Survival Coalition is comprised of more than 30 statewide disability organizations that advocate and support policies and practices that lead to the full inclusion, participation, and contribution of people living with disability.

Survival Coalition Issue Teams: education, employment, housing, long term care for adults, long term care for children, mental health, transportation, workforce, voting, Medicaid and health care.

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Investing in People with Disabilities