

TRANSPORTATION



Wisconsin Council of the
Blind & Visually Impaired

Getting where you need to go reliably and on schedule is key to sustainable employment, health care access and independent shopping for necessities. Reliable transportation can also link you to family and friends.

Nearly 30 percent of Wisconsin residents are nondrivers; yet their transportation needs are rarely prioritized in economic development and public policy decisions. About 70 percent of people who are blind or visually impaired are unemployed, and a comprehensive public transportation system is critical to the ability to get and keep a job.

BUDGET ITEMS

Specialized Transit: Increase funding for the specialized transit program for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (85.21) by 10% per year.

Mass Transit: Increase mass transit funding to keep up with inflation, increase services for nondrivers, and help transit companies recover from the steep decline in ridership caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Grants for Pedestrian Signals: Provide \$200,000 to the Department of Transportation to administer a grant program designed to help municipalities install accessible pedestrian signals.

Funding for DMV Customer Service Centers: WCBVI supports sufficient funding to expand service hours and create more mobile service centers to reduce barriers nondrivers face in obtaining State ID for purposes of voting and other services requiring proof of identity.

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ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Streamline Agency Services: Direct state agencies to do an evaluation of which services can be provided online or virtually instead of requiring a trip to an in-person office. This will create efficiencies within government programs and increase access for Wisconsin's estimated 1.2 million non-drivers.

Insurance Coverage: Change insurance coverage rules that treat volunteer drivers as commercial operators, creating additional expenses that discourage volunteering.

LEGISLATIVE ITEMS

WCBVI supports these legislative priorities:

- Continue the Wisconsin Non-Driver Advisory Council—which we currently co-chair—as a key standing body within WisDOT shaping policy and practice around serving the needs of nondrivers.
- Expand cross-municipal transportation options.
- Increase awareness of Wisconsin's pedestrian right-of-way laws and other driver responsibilities that enhance the safety of pedestrians, including those who are visually impaired and use a white cane or guide dog.
- Increased enforcement of pedestrian safety laws to guarantee the safety of pedestrians who are visually impaired or blind.