



Transportation 101



Greater Wisconsin
Agency on Aging Resources, Inc.



Urban Mass Transit Operating Assistance - 85.20

Public transit in Wisconsin can vary depending on the specific location. In large urban areas such as Milwaukee and Madison, there are comprehensive public transit systems that include buses, commuter trains, and light rail.

In small urban areas, public transit options may be more limited. Many smaller communities in Wisconsin have local bus services, such as the Wausau Metro Ride and the Eau Claire Transit.

In rural areas, public transit is very limited. Some communities operate a bus or shared-ride taxi system providing public transportation for rural residents.

Paratransit Aids - 85.205

Transit agencies are required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to provide paratransit services to individuals with disabilities who are unable to use fixed-route transit services.

- Paratransit services must be provided within the same geographic area as the fixed-route services (3/4-mile radius around fixed-route service).
- Fares for paratransit services cannot be more than twice the fare for fixed-route.
- Paratransit services must provide curb-to-curb or door-to-door service, depending on the individual's needs.
- Paratransit vehicles must be accessible to individuals with disabilities, including those who use wheelchairs, scooters, or other mobility devices.

Specialized Transportation – 85.21, 85.215, 85.22

The goal of our specialized transportation system is to provide transportation for older adults and individuals with disabilities to allow them the ability to fully participate in society and access fundamental community services.

- County Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance 85.21
- Tribal Transportation for Elders 85.215
- Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (85.22 and 5310 combined)

Volunteer Driver Programs

Volunteer driver programs in Wisconsin are community-based initiatives that rely on the services of volunteers to provide transportation to people in need. These programs are often operated by local non-profit organizations or government agencies and aim to provide reliable, safe, and affordable transportation to individuals who may not have access to their own vehicles or public transportation options. Types of programs include:

- Senior
- Disability
- Rural

Volunteer driver programs play an important role in helping to address transportation challenges faced by vulnerable populations.

Volunteer Driver Programs

Volunteers are vital to the successful delivery of aging and disability programs and services across the State! Without volunteers, older adults and individuals with disabilities will lose access to healthcare, nutrition, health promotion and social engagements. Volunteer drivers fill the transportation gaps where our public transportation system can not reach.

We lost so many volunteers as a result of the pandemic and have not been able to bring them back. Services have been cut, directors and staff are delivering meals and our older adults and individuals with disabilities are not getting the services they need to live a quality life.

Grant	Geographic Area	Eligible Recipients	Eligible Projects	Clients	Type
5310/ 85.22	Varies	Private non-profits and local public bodies	Human Service Vehicles, operating budgets, Mobility Managers, coordination, and non-vehicle capital	Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities	Annual, Competitive
5307/ 85.20/ 85.205	Urbanized Areas (50,000-200,000 and 200,000+)	Municipalities	Capital and operating	Public (must provide complementary paratransit service)	Annual, Formula

Grant	Geographic Area	Eligible Recipients	Eligible Projects	Clients	Type
5311/ 85.20/ 85.205	Rural Areas (population under 50,000)	Municipalities	Capital and operating	Public (must provide complementary paratransit service)	Annual, Formula
85.21	County	County	County discretion	Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities	Annual, Formula
85.215	Tribal	Tribal	Tribal discretion	Tribal Elders	Annual, Formula

Our System is Underfunded!

Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities/85.22

WisDOT distributed 28% more funding in 2023 (over 5 million) than in 2022 (3.9 million). This is due in part to the increase in funding Wisconsin received from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) that was enacted on November 15, 2021.

- There were 74 applications requesting 8.5 million in funds for 101 projects
- WisDOT provided 1.3 million out of 1.7 million requested to fund 15 Mobility Management projects at 83.48%
- WisDOT provided 1.6 million out of 2.6 million requested to fund 19 Operating projects at 60.76%
- WisDOT awarded 28 first choice vehicles totaling 2.1 million out of 4.2 million requested
- The State contributed around \$959,000 to the 85.22 program for 2023. In 2000 the State contributed around \$921,900. This is a 4% increase from 2000 to 2023.

Underfunded continued...

Mass Transit Operating Aids 85.20

Since 2011, cuts to state mass transit aids have exceeded the increases. Inflationary costs alone result in nearly 20% less funding over the same period of time. This has resulted in increased costs to local government, reduced services, and the inability for our statewide transit systems to keep up with the needs of businesses and citizens around the state.

5% Decrease from
2011 to 2021

CY	Total 85.20
2011	\$118,309,200
2021	\$112,952,300

Underfunded continued...

Specialized Transportation 85.21/85.215

- I am meeting with Aging Units on a regular basis to brainstorm how to raise funds or to identify private grants to replace an aging fleet.

17% Increase

CY	Total 85.21
2011	\$13,623,400
2021	\$15,977,800

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