

INDEPENDENCE ASSOCIATION HCBS Policy: 002

Title: TRANSPORTATION ACCESS AND MANAGEMENT POLICY

Date: May 16, 2022

Policy:

Independence Association (IA) recognizes that people need transportation for routine and spontaneous access to places, activities, and people in the broader community, consistent with their individual goals and interests. IA also recognizes that many settings will not be within walking distance of parks, may not have sidewalks or curb cuts, recreational facilities, stores, libraries, and other amenities associated with living or working within a metropolitan area. As a result, transportation will be necessary in most cases to empower clients to access their respective communities. Additionally, people will need transportation for the purpose of finding and maintaining employment. Therefore, Independence Association programs will provide transportation in a variety of ways, depending upon the location of the program, the availability of options in that particular area, and the level of independence of each individual. Options include Non-Emergency Transportation (NET), program-owned vehicles, taxi services, Uber/Lyft and family members or volunteers. It is important to note that IA will not transport people from their homes to attend Community Supports programs, unless they live in an IA group home or community living arrangement. It is recognized that there may be times where there may not be enough transportation assets to support all people at the same time. During these occasions staff will work with clients to problem-solve using options identified in their transportation plan and determining priorities for vehicle access. IA will not transport visitors of individuals supported by IA due to vehicle insurance restrictions.

Procedures:

A. Overall:

1. Staff will be familiar with client goals and interests.
2. Each program will maintain an accessible list of available transportation (such as NET, agency vehicles, taxi services, natural supports, or volunteers).
3. Each individual will be given a listing of the transportation assets available to them in a way they can understand.
4. Each program will maintain a list of community places and activities clients have identified in their assessments that closely represent their desires and goals. This list will include written and/or pictorial information as needed.
5. Programs will exercise maximum support to ensure clients have flexible transportation to maintain integrated employment.

6. Programs supporting clients with the physical need for handicap-accessible vehicles, will ensure NET or agency vehicles are made available to support them to and from activities.

B. Determining Transportation Options

1. Upon admission and annually thereafter, all transportation options available for the setting will be made available to each person, and/or their legal guardian.
2. Managers will determine transportation accommodations that may be needed by each individual and seek solutions to any barriers to obtaining these accommodations for each type of transportation that is otherwise available locally.
3. Managers will provide mobility training specific to using public transportation if identified as goal in an individual's person-centered plan and/or service implementation plan.
4. Managers will ensure as a minimum that individuals are enrolled in their local Non-emergency Transportation (NET) systems which are accessed through their respective Community Action Plan locations.
5. Managers will research transportation needs for each person in their program and match available options for transportation of people in their programs. Emphasis will be on matching transportation options to the individual's travel assessments and / or mobility needs. This will be recorded in the respective PCP.
6. When multiple options are available, emphasis will be on using the least restrictive mode of transportation. During the planning meeting, the individual will indicate which type of transportation they prefer, and this will be documented in their respective plan.
7. When transportation options other than agency-owned vehicles are available, programs will post options and phone numbers in a location accessible to all people in those programs.
8. If a person chooses to only use the program vehicle, or if that is the only option available to them, and the vehicle is already scheduled or being utilized, staff will assist the individual in obtaining a vehicle by contacting other programs within the department to determine if another is available.
9. If the person chooses to be transported by family/volunteers they know, staff will assist them in preparing a list of potential friends to call and ask if they would consider transporting the person and, if yes, what days and hours would they be available and how much of a notice must they be given. Name, telephone number, days of the week and times, and amount of advance notice would then be written down so the information is easy to access for the person.
10. If the person chooses a taxi service, staff will help the person call the taxi services posted on the list to find out the hourly rate, locations in which they travel, how much advance notice is necessary.

11. When a person chooses a taxi service, staff will help each person budget their own personal resources and/or transportation funding they are self-directing to pay for public transportation options, in addition to transportation included in the HCBS funding paid to the provider.
12. Staff will assist the person to write down the names of taxi services they will call, their phone numbers and the amount of advance notice necessary, and the anticipated cost of the transportation.

C. Requesting Transportation

1. Given limited transportation assets, IA encourages clients to request transportation as far in advance as possible. Transportation assets will be prioritized to enable clients to see their respective medical/dental, therapeutic providers and to go to work on time.
2. IA will create one centralized activity schedule from which clients may choose to attend activities. Activities will be posted in all residential settings and the day program from where the activity emanated.
3. Dates, times, and the names of primary and alternate staff supporting the activity will be published. As clients choose their desired activities, their names are written down on the schedule. This allows the client to choose the activities they desire and choose with whom to participate and the staff that will support them.
4. Residential clients who desire to participate in any published activity will be supported via their respective home support staff who will augment the community support staff.
5. All clients will be given a minimum of three activities in the community from which to participate each week.
6. IA will attempt to support clients requesting spontaneous transportation to and from an event. Staff will review the schedule to see if the activity can be supported from a staffing and transportation perspective.
7. When both are available staff will assist the client in attending the activity.
8. If either resource is not available, staff will reach out to the respective list of potential transportation assets which includes family members, friends, or if appropriate taxi services to transport the individual.

D. Review and Documentation of Community Activities and Employment

1. Each person's community activities and employment are to be documented in the Electronic Health Record (EHR) immediately upon return to their home or community support program, or, at least prior to the participating staff's end of shift.

2. Managers will review all documented notes of both scheduled and spontaneous activities or employment a minimum of monthly to ensure that individuals are receiving the amount of community access and transportation to employment they have requested.
3. Managers will follow up and document reasons for any missed scheduled activities or lack of spontaneous activities in the respective EHR.

E. Review and Assessment of Vehicle Usage

1. Staff will document all transportation outings into the EHR. Staff will also document and track any missed scheduled or spontaneous activities due to lack of available transportation and managers will verify that all transportation assets were exhausted.
2. Managers will ensure all transportation outings where agency vehicles are used are tracked on the agency Transportation Log.
3. Managers will notify the Directors any time an activity has been cancelled due to transportation issues.
4. The Directors will work with the Executive Director to resolve issues due to lack of transportation.