

GETTING THERE



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TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS

Getting around in Northwest Indiana is a challenge for many people—every day. Getting to work, getting to a doctor's appointment, getting to a store, or getting anywhere without a car is a struggle for thousands of our residents on a daily basis. Their lives are literally coming to a stop.



Our roads are a vital part of our lives. It is easy to take it for granted that whenever we want to go somewhere, we can jump in our vehicles and . . . *just go.*

However, for many, our roads are an obstacle. Many communities are designed for commuter traffic. We do not have sufficient public transportation to connect workers with employers, to help senior citizens who no longer drive, or any number of people with transportation needs.

When people cannot get where they need to go, they often cannot find work. If they cannot afford to own and maintain a car, they lose their jobs. They miss important doctor visits. They lose hope.

They feel stuck — You can only walk so far

What do people do when they don't have transportation?

There are options...people can borrow a car, they can ask someone to give them a ride, they can walk, ride a bike, take a cab, or try to car pool. However, sustaining those options on a daily basis isn't always possible.

"I couldn't get to my doctor's appointment...again. I couldn't find any way to get there and I live too far from the bus routes."

"I finally found a job after looking for months...but I either had to have a car or take a bus that could get me there early. I have neither."

"I have a disability but public transportation isn't near my home."

"My employer needed me to work a later shift but I couldn't get a ride. I lost my job because no public transportation was available. I felt helpless."

What do people do when transportation stops? It is important for people to get to know their coworkers and plan ahead for times when transportation is no longer available by sharing rides. They can also coordinate trips with neighbors, friends and relatives.

What do people do when they are caught by surprise and are unable to cope with the sudden loss of transportation?

"My car broke down and I couldn't afford to get it repaired. I couldn't get my children to daycare...and I couldn't make it to work on time. My employer let me go."

CONNECTING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

The economic costs to our communities for missed healthcare visits, lost jobs, stranded senior citizens and those with disabilities is a serious issue in Northwest Indiana that needs to be addressed.



You may know someone who has a transportation problem. You may have been there yourself at one time. Feeling stuck is a burden on our families, our communities and our employers who have to replace someone who can no longer find transportation to and from work.

The cost of owning and maintaining a car is just too expensive for many individuals and families. *Did you know that it costs the average family 19 cents of every dollar of income to own and maintain a vehicle?* For families that need two cars, it can be a financial nightmare.

That translates to several thousand dollars each year for car payments, license fees, insurance, maintenance, repairs, and fuel—dollars that some families do not have to spare.

Thankfully, there are some public transportation options in Northwest Indiana that deserve our attention. We need help to grow and expand our capabilities to serve those who need to get moving.

Here is what you can do to make a difference

Be aware of the need for public transportation. Even if you or your family has transportation, other folks do not. Discuss this issue with your friends, colleagues or members of your church group to help everyone better understand how important public transportation is to so many people. Access to affordable public transportation impacts our fellow citizens' opportunity to work. It impacts our community's opportunity for economic growth. It impacts employers' ability to find the right workforce when they're ready to add more jobs.

TRY IT YOURSELF! TAKE A BUS. TAKE A TRAIN.

There are numerous bus and train routes throughout Northwest Indiana. Do you know what's available? Could you manage without a car? Find out about the choices near your home, your employer, your doctor, to go shopping or to visit a friend.

ABOUT US

The Northwest Indiana Workforce Board includes representatives from Jasper, Lake, La Porte, Newton, Porter, Pulaski and Starke counties and the Cities of Gary, Hammond, Michigan City and Portage. The board's **vision** is that Northwest Indiana will have a workforce which is highly skilled, motivated and diverse, earning sustainable or higher wages and actively engaged in skill advancement and life-long learning. The board oversees offices in Gary, Hammond, East Chicago, Crown Point, LaPorte, Michigan City, Portage, Valparaiso, Rensselaer, Knox, Morocco, and Winamac.

OUR MISSION

To mobilize and integrate the leadership, services and resources of the community to support workforce development. This will be achieved by:

- Strategically planning and developing policy for workforce development
- Overseeing the workforce development system
- Developing and allocating resources for workforce development
- Participating in related economic development activities

For more information, contact NWIWB at (219) 462-2940.

Feel free to share this publication with your friends, family and colleagues