



## FTA's Enhanced Mobility Program Case Study

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### Background

The Arc of Northern Virginia serves more than 39,000 individuals with IDD – such as autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and rare chromosomal disorders – of all ages and their families in the cities and counties of Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, and Falls Church. They provide education, information, and referrals to help caregivers navigate complex disability systems throughout each stage of their loved one's life. They also provide financial management through their Special Needs Trust program. They have created innovative tech tools that help people with IDD live more independently. And they advocate at the local and state level for better policies and funding for the needs of people with disabilities.

The Northern Virginia Chapter was created by the merger of smaller chapters in Arlington,

Alexandria, and Fairfax, and incorporated by the Commonwealth of Virginia on March 21, 1962. The first sheltered workshop in the region was a product of this consolidation, and shortly afterwards a pilot day care center was established that later became the Growth & Development Center under the Arlington County Health Dept.

In the next six decades, their chapter would create community residential systems, create a transportation program, run a summer camp and a thrift store, establish their guardianship and trust programs, teach self-advocates how to find their voice, and become a fiercely effective advocate organization on the local and state level.

### Project Description

The Arc of Northern Virginia's Achieving Independence project sought to expand the reach of the successful Travel Training Program and the innovative individually customized virtual travel lessons created and disseminated by The Arc of Northern Virginia in the last four years throughout the Washington Metropolitan region. The success of the virtual travel guides was leveraged to continue to embed travel training into current programs in disability organizations, specifically by continuing to provide trainings with two sister Arc Chapters in Montgomery and Prince Georges County in addition to the providers in Northern Virginia and D.C.

## Impact

In 2011, the Metro-CIL project found that the need for comprehensive and individualized travel training services is significant in this region, especially for people with developmental disabilities and other cognitive challenges. The current models for travel training provided by the CILs in the region, each with 2 travel trainers, does not necessarily provide the specialized or long-term travel training required for individuals with ID/DD. The Arc of Northern Virginia's successful and award-winning online curriculum TravelMATE in the first year showed that 96% of those trained were more independent using public transit and 43% became completely independent using this innovative tool. The digital virtual individually customized travel lessons, delivered through the platform ONEder, meet the functional challenges of these individuals, and reduces the need for high levels of staff and resources from overwhelmed agencies. This project allows more individuals to use fixed public transit and other modes of transportation more independently than they could before.

## Next Steps

The Arc of Northern Virginia has entered a new round of funding within the Enhanced Mobility Program (EM5). They have launched a new project titled Growing Independence: Expanding the Reach of Mobility Options in the Washington Metropolitan Region. This project seeks to continue what the Achieving Independence project began.

## More Information

COG served as the designated recipient for the NF program in the Washington DC-VA-MD Urbanized Area. The National Capital Transportation Planning Board (TPB) at COG solicited and selected projects that aimed to improve mobility for transportation-disadvantaged groups. Currently, COG helps administer the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities grant program in the region.

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For more information about this project or future solicitations, contact:

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