

TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND ASSESSMENT SURVEY

SUMMARY: DECEMBER 7, 2018

Overview

The National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) partnered with KRC Research to conduct a survey of older adults, people living with disabilities and transportation caregivers to assess their transportation behaviors, needs, and preferences. Questions focused on experiences and perceptions of public and private transportation options and behaviors, patterns, and needs of each target audience. The survey provides a snapshot and insights for NADTC and other agencies to assist communities to create accessible transportation solutions that respond to current and future mobility needs.

Methodology

KRC Research conducted national quantitative surveys of three audiences from October 19 to November 5, 2018. A 20-minute survey was conducted among 509 adults age 60 and older (309 online, 200 telephone); 513 adults age 18-59 living with one or more disabilities that limit physical activities, seeing, and/or hearing (413 online, 100 telephone); and 627 caregivers age 18 to 84 that provide and/or arrange transportation for an adult family member or friend (all conducted online). The sample of 509 older adults included 33 percent living with a disability that limits physical activities, vision and/or hearing. The samples of older adults and younger adults with disabilities were weighted to be demographically representative based on U.S. Census data. The caregiver sample included 390 caregivers of older adults and 237 caregivers of adults living with a disability.

Key Findings

- **Older adults and younger adults with disabilities drive themselves or depend on family and friends to get around but they are worried about not being able to drive and believe finding alternative transportation would be difficult:** 74 percent of older adults and 71 percent of younger adults with disabilities who drive have already cut back on driving; 42 percent of older adults and 56 percent of younger adults with disabilities anticipate a time when they are not able to drive; and 68 percent of older adults and 79 percent of younger adults with disabilities say finding alternative transportation would be very difficult of somewhat difficult. Those without caregivers are especially concerned about finding transportation if they stop driving (73 percent of older adults and 77 percent of younger adults with disabilities)
- **Caregivers play a pivotal role in helping older adults and younger adults with disabilities meet their transportation needs and most are happy to help, but find providing or arranging rides to be extremely time consuming:** 39 percent of caregivers spend five to 10 hours or more on the transportation needs of friends or relatives each week;

86 percent of caregivers are concerned about the care recipient's driving; and for 28 percent of caregivers, driving care recipients to where they need to go feels overwhelming.

- **Older adults and younger adults with disabilities who give up driving cannot do the things they need and want to do, leaving them feeling isolated and frustrated:** Eight in 10 non-drivers who have a disability and 40% of older adults cannot do the activities or chores they need or like to do because they do not drive. Giving up driving makes older adults and younger adults living with disabilities feel dependent on others (63 percent, 70 percent), frustrated (39 percent, 65 percent), isolated (33 percent, 55 percent), and trapped (30 percent, 54 percent).
- **Older adults and younger adults with disabilities are not using public transportation services:** Only 15 percent of older adults and 32 percent of younger adults with disabilities use public transportation services; most older adults and younger adults with disabilities drive their own vehicle (82 percent and 66 percent respectively) or ride with family or friends (58 percent and 74 percent respectively).
- **Fewer people living in rural areas or small towns say the transportation alternatives available to them are good:** Only 49 percent of older adults and 45 percent of younger adults with disabilities in small towns say they have good alternatives to driving, compared to 62 percent of older adults and 75 percent of younger adults with disabilities in large cities or suburbs.
- **Those who do not drive face many barriers, including access to affordable transportation alternatives:** Access and availability (40 percent older adults, 38 percent younger adults with disabilities) and affordability (12 percent, 20 percent) stand out as barriers, particularly for those without a caregiver; and only about a quarter say they have excellent options.
- **There is no single “go-to” resource for alternative transportation options:** 43 percent of older adults and 48% of people living with disabilities rely on family, friends or colleagues for information and many (24 percent and 31 percent) search on the computer. Organizations that serve older adults or people with disabilities and transportation agencies are less frequently consulted.
- **The majority of older adults (66 percent) and younger adults with disabilities (54 percent) expect transportation options to stay the same or get worse, but many would be comfortable with various transportation options, including public transit, if it was readily available:** 50 percent of older adults and 40 percent of younger adults with disabilities say they would be comfortable using public transportation.

Conclusion

Older adults and younger adults with disabilities face significant transportation-related challenges once they no longer drive. A lack of available and affordable options means that most rely on friends and family to get them where they need to go or continue to drive themselves

even as they modify their driving habits. The absence of good alternatives means many older adults and people living with disabilities who do not drive cannot do the activities or chores they need or like to do. This contributes to social isolation and feelings of dependence, and puts a burden on family caregivers. Most say they would be comfortable using public transportation and special transportation for older adults and adults with disabilities, if these options were available and they were aware of them. **There is no single recognized “go-to” source for alternative transportation information, and so most rely on word-of-mouth from amongst family and friends.**