**Proposal for Special Community Mobility Program in 2017 - 2018**

**Due to ITCTC on Friday,** **November 3, 2017**

**Contact Information**:

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1. **Project Name**: Full Title: *Expanding Access to Employment and Community Opportunities for Adults with Disabilities and other barriers through Travel Training*

**Shortened name:** *Transportation Options for All -* ***TOFA***

B**. Project Description**:

**Describe the proposed project goals and objectives. Is it a new or continuing project? How will the project be implemented?**

This proposal is for a continuing project that assists individuals with disabilities to become knowledgeable about transportation resources in Tompkins County and to guide and train individuals to utilize the various transportation options in their community.

The objectives are:

* Provide short-term individualized Travel Training to individuals seeking employment, already employed in community job or Challenge business or volunteering in the community.
* Provide general exposure and community travel skills to individuals who are not currently independently accessing public transportation (for some this includes Gadabout)
* Provide information to all Challenge clients including transition age students in local High School and TST BOCES, to assist them in their knowledge of transportation options in Tompkins County. In addition to individuals with disabilities, Challenge has other clients that are in receipt of public assistance. For these individuals, information and facilitated referral is typically the needed service
* Provide travel training and transportation assistance for students with disabilities who are taking part in Challenge’s Summer Youth Employment Program, other summer youth employment services and transitional services during the school year

While some individuals already have knowledge and experience using public transportation, there are a portion of job seekers and other individuals with disabilities who require extensive individualized training over an extended period of time to learn to use public transportation and other forms of transportation safely. Some people have used public transportation but need additional help if a job is obtained on an unfamiliar route, hours of work changed or changing to a new job.

In addition, Challenge continues to phase out facility-based work and training programs as we assist individuals to find paid employment, volunteer work and other community-based activities. Many of the individuals have multiple disabilities and face more significant barriers than referrals that come to Challenge for direct placement in community employment. In addition, all new referrals to Challenge are coming with the expectation of taking part in community-based training and work experience from the start, with travel training as a core part of these initial services. Many of these are graduating students who have had no experience using public transportation or accessing the community without supervision from their family or school program. Critical to this transition is intensive training in community safety and travel skills. This project is now more important than ever in ensuring that Challenge will be able to commit the necessary resources to provide comprehensive travel training for job seekers with more severe cognitive and learning disabilities as part of life skill development and training, as well as travel and safety skills training for those individuals who are working on their transition to increased community inclusion and independence.

**Implementation:**

The major components of implementation are

* Screening
* Dissemination of Information on Transportation Resources
* Full Assessment if screening indicates a need for additional assistance
* Individualized Travel Training to paid job or volunteer placement
* For Individuals with more significant disabilities who are transitioning from Contract Production or school:
a. Small group preliminary introduction to community transportation usage and community/safety skills
b. Small group travel training to volunteer and community sites
c. Individual travel training from home to downtown and/or volunteer and community sites

Screening takes place through our employment supports staff. Questions related to transportation needs are built into our intake procedure. At the time of intake a determination is made as to whether the person needs information, verbal guidance, problem solving and/or connection to transportation resources OR

a full assessment and planned training to meet their transportation needs.

Travel training starts with a comprehensive assessment that takes into account each individual’s skills, need areas and individual and family concerns. For job seekers, training will be individualized and assist the worker to learn the specific bus route, land marks and back up options through intensive support that fade over time. For job seekers without any prior public transportation experience, travel training and community safety skills building will be provided in tandem with initial pre-employment activities, to prepare the individual for specific travel training to/from the jobsite once the job seeker obtains employment. Training may be required in necessary complementary community and safety skills.

Periodic checks will be made to ensure that the person is using the skills and strategies learned, and provide the person any additional assistance needed due to changes in hours at work, obtaining needed services, necessities, bus routes, etc. The key to the effectiveness of this project is the integration of travel training with other job training and supports and ongoing communication with the individual, family, residential program or other community supports. Combining comprehensive travel training with other job training and supports provided by the same staff will help ensure that the individual and family’s comfort with the services and allow the service to be provided in the most cost-efficient manner.

For individuals with significant disabilities who have had little or no prior independence in the community, this will be a longer term, more comprehensive process that needs to include repeated and ongoing exposure to the use of public transportation. Travel training will be a core service of Pathways to Employment, a new time limited service that provides career exploration and skill training to prepare individuals with developmental disabilities for successful employment in the community. This service will be provided in small supervised groups that meet two to three times per week and practice skills that include handling money, crossing streets, social interactions, and other personal safety skills along with using public transportation. The goal of this group training will be to help individuals obtain and practice the skills and experience that will prepare them to travel independently in the community and make community employment and community participation a real option. This will be provided in combination with the range of small group volunteer work, internships and other community opportunities. Once individuals are comfortable traveling as part of a small group, staff will provide individualized training from home to/from Challenge, volunteer or internship sites (or school for transition age youth) that prepares them for independent travel to and from their eventual placement in community employment. A second part of this service will be travel training for individuals who are participating in community work experience in Challenge businesses, including the Ithaca College and Cornell dish rooms, and our Commercial Cleaning service.

Assessment, initial training and ongoing supports will be provided by our service staff that has extensive experience in providing employment and community skills training. Challenge’s Manager of Employment Supports has completed the three-day course on travel training sponsored by Easter Seals Project Action and attended the Association of Travel Instruction (ATI) Conference in 2010, and attends the local Coordinated Plan Meetings. Challenge’s Manager of Employment Supports has provided multiple trainings for Challenge staff on effective travel training strategies and works closely with the Manager of Employment & Youth Services, Pre-Vocational services Manager in provision and monitoring of travel training services. Challenge Employment Staff have also taken part in informational sessions sponsored by Way2Go. Further in-service trainings have been provided to increase staff’s knowledge and skills to implement this project. Periodic trainings are offered for new staff and as a refresher for current staff, as well as others support agencies within the community who are interested in learning travel training skills.

**How will the project serve and benefit target populations (low income, seniors or persons with disabilities)?**

This project will continue to assist low income individuals and individuals with disabilities who come to Challenge in need of support to access available transportation to get to work, get to appointments, get living essentials, as well as to become active participating members of their community. These individuals include current participants in Challenge Vocational Training, Pathways to Employment services and the Employment Training Program, students in county wide schools and T-S-T BOCES who are receiving employment readiness services through Challenge, job seekers with disabilities participating in a variety of job placement programs and other services provided by Challenge, low-income job seekers making the transition from reliance on public assistance to employment, and youth taking part in Challenge’s Summer Youth Employment Program.

Without this assistance and training, these individuals have to rely on family, residential staff or ADA-transit and are limited in the hours and types of employment they can obtain, as well as limited in their ability to access services, basic necessities, and become engaged in their community. Lack of, or insufficient transportation alternatives can result in these individuals being unsuccessful in finding employment or being terminated from employment when family or others cannot transport them to work consistently. It results in low income and/or people with disabilities having limited access to the services, basic necessities and events that their peers without disabilities have access to. As Challenge makes the transition over the next few years to totally community based services, access to training and support to use public transportation will be an increasing need for new referrals to Challenge as participants will rely more on using public transportation to access community training and work sites.

**How will the project coordinate with existing transportation services in the service area?**Our project staff will work closely not just with the individual, but will also include work with family, case managers, residences and other support agencies to assist the individual. The purpose of this team effort is to increase awareness and offer choices and opportunities to utilize existing resources available for transportation in Tompkins County. This program will look first to utilize informal supports and existing community services in providing training and assistance and grant funding will be used to supplement and not replace their supports.

This project will work closely with TCAT, Gadabout, ADA Para-transit, Way2Go, TC DSS Mobility Program and Zimride to share knowledge and resources of available transportation options and collectively strategize to identify potential transportation options. The project will also work with the informal transportation network available through shared rides with co-workers and neighbors. For individuals living in rural areas, it may likely take a combination of approaches (with back-up plans) to develop a transportation plan that provides consistent and dependable transportation to meet individual needs.

C. **Project Budget** (Present the budget including assumptions.)

Based on previous experience with job seekers with disabilities served through Challenge’s employment programs, job seekers identified in the target population above can require one to three weeks of daily travel training to and from work, with two to five days of re-training over time. Additional time may also be needed to address other community and safety skills that are required to safely and effectively use public transportation. The amount of staff time will vary based on the location of the individual’s home and place of employment or other destination. Challenge will also provide small group instruction for the Pathways to Employment service and training to access Challenge community business sites for individuals transitioning from the work center and new referrals, including students graduating from T-S-T BOCES and other local high schools. This service will include pre-travel training instruction, small group travel training, and then individual travel training with assessment and follow-up instruction as needed. These services will be delivered two to three times a week over a period of twelve to sixteen weeks.

Below are estimates for average time that will be spent for each project participant receiving travel training and collective time based on serving 10 individuals in individual instruction who require intensive, individualized travel training over the next year. These estimates are based on experience in providing travel training to and from their place of employment with individuals with disabilities that have little or no experience in using public transportation. In addition, the budget includes providing 21 individuals small group instruction (three per group) providing exposure and intensive training in learning to independently travel in the community as preparation for future independent travel and community employment.

***Service Components Per Person Per Group (3)***

 (10 trainees) (7 groups)

Initial assessment: 2 hours 6 hours

Travel Planning & Coordination 4 6

Daily travel training with fading 16

(2 weeks at 4 days/week)

Weekly travel and other 40

community skill building

Additional community/safety training 4 8

Re-Assessment and Re-Training 4 8

 Total 30 68

We are requesting $8,000 to assist Challenge in providing intensive travel training. See attached tracking sheet used for documentation, billing and tracking of project resources and outcomes.

**Itemize Expenses and Revenues:**

***Expenses: Revenues***

 STATE FUNDS OPWDD JARC

Direct Service Staff: Salary & Benefits

$18.37/hr x 773 hours 14,200 3700 4150 6,350

Project Management:

 .1 FTE Manager of Employment Supports 4,500 1,500 1,500 1,500

Mileage Reimbursement:

 1,000 miles @$.56/mile 560 260 150 150

Administration/Overhead 10% 1,926 963 963 0

 Total 21,186 6,423 6,763 8,000

**How will Federal funds will be matched (100%)?**

**Local match options include cash or in-kind resources. Please describe in detail.**

As listed above, current state funding will be matched with funding from JARC to expand both the numbers of individuals with disabilities that are provided travel training to get to and from work and the comprehensiveness of the training that will allow Challenge to offer this training to individuals with significant transportation barriers. Matching funds will include funding from OPWDD, ACESS-VR, and OMH.

**D.** **Project Evaluation**

How will you measure the performance of the project? What are the most important outcomes? Describe criteria you will use to measure the project’s performance. The most important outcome of the project is to ensure that individuals with disabilities and other barriers have access to the most independent form of transportation and they have the skills and support to travel safely in the community. The criteria that will be used to measure the project’s performance are:

* The number of individuals who, after being provided training, can independently (without project support) take public transportation to destinations of their choice ( ie.. work, volunteer opportunities, and other community activities).
* Percentage of individuals served those who formally relied on Gadabout, family, or residence who now successfully utilize public transportation options to travel within the community.
* Number of individuals who develop basic community safety skills, who are now prepared for future individual travel training.

**Signature (or email address):** davida@aboutchallenge.org

**Date:** 11/9/17

**Send to Fernando deAragon, ITCTC, 121 E. Court St, Ithaca, NY 14850 or by email** **fdearagon@tompkins-co.org** **before November 3, 2017.**

**For technical assistance contact Dwight Mengel, Tompkins County DSS, at: 607-274-5605,** **Dwight.mengel@dfa.state.ny.us** **before November 3, 2017.**