

SANTA FE TRAILS

REDEFINING PUBLIC TRANSIT THROUGH INCLUSION

Accessible, Flexible
Transportation Models
Supporting Employment and
Independence

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SESSION OVERVIEW

(50 MINUTES)

- Why inclusive transit matters for employment and independence
- Fixed-route vs. micro-transit: strengths and limitations
- Coordinating transit with disability and workforce services
- Lessons learned and practical takeaways



**WHO
THIS
MATTERS
TO**

**People with
disabilities
seeking reliable
access to work
and services**

**School
personnel,
students, and
transition
planners**

**Vocational
Rehabilitation
and
Developmental
Disabilities
professionals**

**Employment
service
providers and
community
partners**




**INCLUSION
AS A
TRANSIT
PLANNING
PRINCIPLE**

Transportation is foundational to employment, healthcare, and independence

Designing services around real travel needs, not just routes

Equity means flexibility, dignity, and reliability

Inclusion must be built into planning, operations, and policy



**FIXED-
ROUTE
TRANSIT:
WHAT
WORKS
AND WHAT
DOESN'T**

- Strong backbone for high-demand corridors
- Predictable schedules and stops
- Limitations for shift work, medical appointments, and dispersed job sites
- Gaps disproportionately affect people with disabilities

MICRO-TRANSIT AND ON-DEMAND SERVICES

**Flexible,
technology-
supported
transportation
model**

**Serves low-density
or low-ridership
areas effectively**

**Supports ADA and
general riders in
shared systems**

**Complements—not
replaces—fixed-
route service**





WHY MICRO- TRANSIT SUPPORTS EMPLOY- MENT ACCESS



COORDINATING TRANSIT WITH SUPPORT SERVICES



**ALIGNING
TRANSIT WITH
VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION
GOALS**



**PARTNERING
WITH SERVICE
PROVIDERS AND
EMPLOYERS**



**USING DATA TO
IDENTIFY
COMMON
DESTINATIONS
AND TRAVEL
PATTERNS**



**REDUCING
DUPLICATION
AND
IMPROVING
OUTCOMES**



- Rapid service changes are possible when needed
- On-demand models filled critical gaps
- Staff adaptability and rider trust increased
- Some emergency solutions became long-term improvements

**WHAT
COVID-
TAUGHT
US
ABOUT
FLEXI-
BILITY**



**Reduced fare programs
can reduce barriers for
some riders**



**Operational, safety, and
sustainability challenges
exist**



**Equity requires more than
eliminating fares**



**Service quality and
reliability remain critical**

FAIR POLICY AND EQUITY: A BALANCED VIEW



Blending

Blending fixed routes and micro-transit strategically w/ paratransit services

Centering

Centering service design on real-world needs

Engaging

Engaging riders and providers in planning and roll out

Measuring

Measuring success by access, not just ridership

**WHAT
INCLUSIVE
TRANSIT
LOOKS
LIKE IN
PRACTICE**



KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR AGENCIES AND PROVIDERS

- Transportation is an employment support service
- Flexibility increases access and independence
- Partnerships matter as much as vehicles
- Small changes can have large impacts



**What
transportation
barriers do you
see most often?**



**Where could
flexible service
models help
today?**

**How can agencies
coordinate more
effectively?**

DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS

