

# Before You Give Up the Keys Create a Roadmap for Transportation Independence



Connecting You to Community Services



Older people who are able to maintain connections to family, friends and the broader community are more likely to enjoy the benefits of aging in place. However, we often associate our ability to live independently with our ability to drive. So what happens if, one day, you are no longer able to drive?

We developed this brochure to help you do three important things—learn, prepare and act—so that, should you need to give up the keys, you will already have a roadmap to guide you toward a healthy, happy and safe non-driving future.

## Are My Driving Skills Changing?

Chances are the physical and sensory skills you need to be a good driver are likely to decline as you age, and, as a result, you may have already changed some of your driving habits. For example, you no longer like driving...

- **after dark** because your night vision has worsened
- **on the freeway** because your reaction time is slower
- **while making a left turn** because you can't always judge the distance between oncoming cars



### Transportation Challenges & Well-Being

Older adult non-drivers take...

**15%** fewer trips to the doctor

**65%** fewer trips to visit family, friends, church

**60%** fewer shopping trips

Bailey, Linda (2004), "Aging Americans: Stranded without Options" Surface Transportation Policy Project, Washington, DC

#### Assessment of Readiness for Mobility Transition Tool

[www.seniortransportation.net/AboutNCST/ARMTTool.aspx](http://www.seniortransportation.net/AboutNCST/ARMTTool.aspx)

#### National Center on Senior Transportation's

##### "Older Driver Safety & Transition for the Mature Driver"

[www.seniortransportation.net/Portals/0/Cache/Pages/Resources/Mature\\_Panels.pdf](http://www.seniortransportation.net/Portals/0/Cache/Pages/Resources/Mature_Panels.pdf)

#### National Institutes of Health "Older Drivers" Webpage

[nihseniorhealth.gov/olderdrivers/howagingaffectsdriving/01.html](http://nihseniorhealth.gov/olderdrivers/howagingaffectsdriving/01.html)

#### American Occupational Therapy Association's

##### Tip Sheet "Driving Safely As You Age"

[www.aota.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/AboutOT/consumers/Adults/Driving-Tip-Sheet.pdf](http://www.aota.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/AboutOT/consumers/Adults/Driving-Tip-Sheet.pdf)

#### American Occupational Therapy Association's "Keeping Older Drivers Safe Tip Sheet" (also available in Spanish)

[www.aota.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/AboutOT/consumers/Adults/Older-Driver.pdf](http://www.aota.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/AboutOT/consumers/Adults/Older-Driver.pdf)

Learn



**78%** of family caregivers provide transportation for loved ones, making it the **most requested type of assistance** by older adults.

*National Family Caregiver Alliance and AARP Public Policy Institute "2015 Report on Caregiving in the U.S."*



Challenges accessing transportation ranked as the **#1 reason** people contacted the Eldercare Locator in 2014.

*2014 Eldercare Locator Data Report*

Learn

## How Can I Become a Better Driver?

It's a good idea to evaluate and strengthen your driving skills, even though you still consider yourself a good driver.

- Check in periodically with family and friends to see if they have any concerns about your driving safety; they may notice changes you might have missed.
- Get regular eye exams and health check-ups to confirm that you have no underlying conditions that could impair your ability to drive.
- Have your driving skills evaluated by a driving specialist and take a refresher driving course if needed.

### American Occupational Therapy Association Driver Rehabilitation Specialists

[www.aota.org/olderdriver](http://www.aota.org/olderdriver)

### AARP Driver Safety Course

[www.aarp.org/home-garden/transportation/driver\\_safety/](http://www.aarp.org/home-garden/transportation/driver_safety/)

### CarFit Personal Vehicle Assessment

[www.car-fit.org/](http://www.car-fit.org/)

### AAA Roadwise Review: A Tool to Help Seniors Drive Safely Longer

[www.roadwiseonline.org/](http://www.roadwiseonline.org/)

## What Transportation Options Might Be Available?

You may be fortunate to have a personal transportation support network that includes friends, family, co-workers and others who are willing to provide you with a ride to the doctor, grocery store or other destinations. However, additional transportation options may be available to enable you to travel with independence and choice.

### Alternative Transportation Options

- **Public transit** (operates on a regular schedule and offers specific routes)
- **Specialized transportation or paratransit** (a service for older adults and people with disabilities who are unable to use public transit)
- **Volunteer transportation** (one-on-one rides in a volunteer's vehicle that can be reserved on demand)
- **Transportation with assistance** (riders receive additional support at pick-up and destination)
- **Private-pay transportation** (services such as taxis, Uber and Lyft are available on demand)



With the boom in the 65-plus population, there has been a corresponding **spike in the number of non-drivers of more than 1.1 million** between 2001 and 2009.

*AARP Public Policy Institute "2009 National Household Travel Survey"*



**Female non-drivers outnumber male non-drivers three to one.**

*AARP Public Policy Institute "2009 National Household Travel Survey"*



**N**ow that you have a general understanding of the alternative transportation options that may be available, you are likely to feel more confident about embracing the idea of a non-driving future that keeps you as connected with your family, friends and the wider community as you are now. But to make that future a reality, it's important to prepare before you have to give up the keys, to ensure the smoothest transition possible.

It's time to roll up your sleeves and identify the transportation options that exist in your community today. To help you tackle this research, contact your local Area Agency on Aging and ask to speak with a mobility counselor or other staff member familiar with the range of transportation options available. To find the Area Agency on Aging in your community, speak with an information specialist at the Eldercare Locator at 1.800.677.1116 or contact them via email or online chat at [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov).

You can also contact your local transit agency and ask about available public transportation options, as well as specialized transportation services. To find the local transit agency near you, check the American Public Transportation Association webpage directory [www.apta.com/resources/links/unitedstates/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.apta.com/resources/links/unitedstates/Pages/default.aspx).

Prepare





**Transit use by people age 65-plus**, as a share of all the trips they take, **increased by 40 percent** between 2001 and 2009.

*AARP Public Policy Institute "2009 National Household Travel Survey"*



**Older adults** took more than **1 billion trips on public transportation** in 2009, a **55 percent increase** over trips in 2001.

*AARP Public Policy Institute "2009 National Household Travel Survey"*

**Y**ou now know which transportation options are available in your community, so it's time to evaluate your specific needs and determine whether the existing options cover all of your transportation bases.

## How Do I Become More Comfortable Taking Public Transit?

You may have never, or rarely, taken public transit or other local transportation services, so it's no wonder you may be intimidated by the prospect of riding a bus or subway. Travel training programs, aimed at teaching older adults and people with disabilities how to take public transportation independently, are becoming increasingly available.

- Check with your public transit agency to see if there's a travel training course available.
- Meet with a mobility counselor or other staff from your local Area Agency on Aging to get details on the training programs offered in your community.
- Ask a family member, friend or neighbor to ride along with you on your first public transit outing to increase your level of confidence.

Use the enclosed "My Transportation Needs Checklist" to develop a detailed transportation plan that meets your needs.

Act



# Visit Your Local Area Agency on Aging

There is an Area Agency on Aging (AAA) in virtually every community in America and so chances are, there is one near you. AAAs provide a welcoming environment for older adults and caregivers interested in learning about a range of services from meals, transportation and in-home care to volunteer opportunities and classes to keep them healthy and engaged in their community.



**To learn more about the AAA  
in your area, call the Eldercare  
Locator at 800.677.1116  
or visit [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov)  
to get connected today.**

Connecting You to Community Services



## Acknowledgements

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This brochure was published by the **Eldercare Locator**, a program established in 1991 and funded by the Administration for Community Living; it is administered by the **National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)**. The mission of n4a is to build the capacity of its members so they can better help older adults and people with disabilities live with dignity and choices in their homes and communities for as long as possible. Visit [www.n4a.org](http://www.n4a.org) to learn more.

The Call Center (800.677.1116) is open five days a week from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET and serves as an essential, trusted gateway to help older adults, caregivers and aging/health professionals navigate the maze of aging programs and services, as well as to assist them in identifying and accessing the resources that match their needs best.

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# My Transportation Needs Checklist

## 1. Transportation Options in My Community

To learn more about the transportation options in your area, speak with a mobility counselor at your local Area Agency on Aging or transit agency.

Transportation Option:	Contact Information:	Cost:	Will take me to: (Doctor, Grocery, etc.)
Public Transit			
Specialized Transportation or Paratransit			
Volunteer Transportation			
Transportation with Assistance			
Private Pay Transportation			

## 2. My Personal Transportation Support Network

Name of Family, Friend, Neighbor or Co-Worker:	Contact Information:	Gives me a ride to:

### 3. My Transportation Needs

Where do I go now?	How do I get there now?	What are the alternative ways I could get there?
Doctor Appointment		
Pharmacy		
Grocery Shopping		
Other Shopping (Clothes, home goods, etc.)		
Social and Cultural Activities		
Places of Worship		
Work		
Volunteer Activities		
Hair Salon/Barbershop		