The Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities

2019 Statewide Transportation Summit Summary

From here to there. . how to get EVERYONE in Nevada moving!

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# Introduction

On behalf of the Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities, we thank you for attending the 2019 Statewide Transportation Summit. Access to transportation was the second largest barrier to achieving a better quality of life identified by consumers in statewide surveys to guide the goals and objectives of our State Plan. The Council has funded transportation initiatives for the past 8 years with the goal of increasing transportation options for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Our goal for this Summit was to bring agencies and advocates together to share what we’ve learned and start a statewide conversation on how we can move toward expanded, sustainable, universally designed and accessible transportation for Nevadans with developmental disabilities.

Summit Statistics:

* 151 Participants
* 33 Self-Advocates
* 12 Vendors
* Over 40 Agencies
* 44% of participants surveyed represented Rural Nevada
* 100% of participants surveyed felt the information they gained from the Summit was valuable and 97% felt their advocacy efforts would increase because of their participation in the Summit.

## About The Council

The Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities Council engages in advocacy, system’s change and capacity building activities for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families to achieve independence, productivity, integration and inclusion into the community. Key activities include conducting outreach, providing training and technical assistance, removing barriers, developing coalitions, encouraging citizen participation, and keeping policymakers informed about disability issues. Sixty percent of our Council consist of individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities; parents or guardians of children with intellectual/developmental disabilities; immediate relatives or guardians of adults with mentally impairing intellectual/developmental disabilities.

## NGCDD’s Position On Public Transportation Systems

Within our society, freedom of movement is a fundamental right. However, it remains a largely unfulfilled promise for citizens with disabilities. Millions of Americans with developmental disabilities have difficulties obtaining transportation that serves as a vital lifeline to employment, education, health care and community life.

NGCDD believes that all publicly funded and/or regulated transportation service systems must be: seamlessly coordinated among all modes of transportation; expanded in suburban, urban, rural and unincorporated areas to connect places people live with places they work, shop, socialize, worship, attend school, access health care, etc.; incorporated with mobility management and training services for individuals with developmental disabilities; designed to appropriately address insurance and liability of vehicles and operators who serve in a coordinated transportation environment, including non-profit providers); based on principles of universal design; supported by stable and adequate funding; and fully accessible to all people with developmental disabilities.

Policy Recommendations:

* Increase funding for mass transit programs (including paratransit).
* Encourage pooled use of vehicles purchased so that underutilized vehicles may be shared.
* Simplify the coordinated planning process for the programs that serve people with developmental disabilities and create transparency and accountability.
* Promote incentives that encourage greater mobility for people with developmental disabilities.
* Advocate that transportation providers to have up to 15% of their fleet include accessible vans/taxi cabs – and require training for drivers on how to assist passenger with developmental disabilities.
* Support coordinated human services and public transportation planning process and its structure.
* Encourage use of uniform data collection to evaluate customer satisfaction and to support coordination of transportation efforts.

# Roadblocks: Transportation Barriers to Community Mobility and Independence, January 2017 Policy Report Highlights

**Developed by the Guinn Center for Policy Priorities,** **Funded With A Grant From The Nevada Governor’s Council On Developmental Disabilities**

Transportation Challenges for Individuals with Disabilities:

Even though demand for paratransit services has increased in Nevada, individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities continue to face considerable barriers when using paratransit services in both the State’s urban and rural areas. Interviews with individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, as well as representatives from public and non-private transit providers, and advocacy groups identified the following concerns related to the experience of riding public transportation, the overall transit system, and some of the impacts:

* Paratransit and fixed route buses are late (or never come)
* Trips are long (some trips are more than 2 hours long) because drivers pick up other passengers
* Drivers on buses are not courteous
* System telephone operators are not courteous
* The quality of the ride was poor (air conditioning broken, passengers were yelling)
* There are concerns about personal safety and/or getting lost, which prevent many individuals with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities from taking fixed route service
* Many self-advocates do not own smart phones and thus cannot take advantage of the mobile phone applications and technology that are used by transit providers
* Scheduling paratransit rides is difficult and time-consuming for self-advocates and their guardians
* Paratransit riders are penalized when they cancel their scheduled paratransit rides without sufficient notice
* Public transit authorities fail to respond to complaints
* Limited geographic and temporal service (many transportation providers do not provide service after 4 p.m. or on the weekends)
* The absence of service on the weekends or after 4 p.m. limits employment opportunities and participation in training activities
* Transit services from Virginia City and Dayton into Carson City are unavailable, which limits participation in training programs and employment opportunities
* Clients must schedule some transit services in advance, which makes it difficult to engage in last minute social activities
* Bus routes do not provide frequent or regular service near employment or community based assessment sites (e.g., Walmart in some counties)
* The ADA service area is not large enough (and in some cases, is becoming smaller)
* Limited intercity service (e.g., there is no state/local intercity bus service between Reno and Elko), buses will not cross county lines, and there are no transfer stations that allow passengers to move safely and efficiently from one service area to another
* Fares are high and keep increasing
* Many transportation programs/services provided by non-profits have restrictive eligibility requirements, and many focus on senior citizens, and there are long waiting lists to receive services
* Assisted living centers (e.g. group homes) do not provide transportation
* LogistiCare is expensive, does not provide high quality service, and drivers are not courteous
* Insufficient funds for public transportation; transit providers often find it difficult to meet local matching requirements
* Transportation challenges make it difficult to secure and retain employment, particularly over the long-term
* Transportation challenges made it difficult to access supported employment services and social services, particularly from rural areas

## Recommendations:

For the State:

* Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for providers of independent living, day
* habilitation, and job and day training programs that serve adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities
* The Nevada Department of Health and Human Services should increase funding for programs that support the provision of transit services to adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities
* Identify new sources of State funding to fund transit services in urban and rural Nevada.
* Revise existing Nevada statute to allow revenues collected under the Fuel Revenue Indexing program to fund transit services
* Consider expanding the sales tax base to support transportation services around the state
* Support efforts to establish a State-sponsored matching fund program.
* Require providers to include a transportation plan for enhancing mobility and independence of individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.
* Establish a statewide transportation services coordinating committee
* Require disability awareness training for licensed drivers of taxi cab companies and transportation network companies
* Require businesses that receive Nevada development incentive packages to set aside funds to support transit services

For Public Transit Providers:

* Explore innovative partnerships with school districts to reduce costs
* Explore carpool incentive programs
* Establish regional Transportation Services Coordinating Committees
* Continue to explore (and fund) innovative transportation solutions

# Summit Sessions

**All Inclusive—Raising Mindful Citizens**

Joanna M. Jezierska, Ph.D. University of Nevada, Las Vegas

**Connected, Inclusive and Resilient: Requirements for Multimodal Transportation Systems**

George Mckinlay, Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities (NCED) and Nevada Assistive Technology Resource Center (NATRC)

**Inequities on the Road: Does Being Differently-Abled Make Your Travel More Dangerous?**

Erin Breen, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

**Resource Panel Discussion**

Katie Pace, State of Nevada, Office for Consumer Health Assistance (OCHA)

**Rethinking Transportation and Access to Services**

Jeff Duncan and Cheyenne Pasquale, Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD)

Speak Up and Be Heard: A Study of Social Engagement and Community Response in Washoe County, Nevada

Kelley Macmillan, Ph.D., LSW, Sanford Center for Aging, School of Medicine, University of Nevada, Reno

**Taking Lyft in Northern & Southern Nevada**

Amy Dewitt-Smith, Neighbor Network of Northern Nevada (N4) and Dan Howland, Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada

**Transportation Disruption Ahead: Technology is the New Asphalt**

Dan Howland, Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada

**Transportation, Independence, & Supported Decision-Making: A Legal Perspective**

Homa Woodrum, Esq., Nevada Aging and Disability Services

**Transportation Funding Resources, Leveraging and Brainstorming**

Abigail Wheeler, Elko Transit

**Wheelchair Transportation**

Jason Larrieu, MedExpress

**Key Note Speaker**

David Darm

**\*Session content and other Summit related materials can be found on our** [**website**](http://www.nevadaddcouncil.org/transportsummit/)**.**

# Session Transcripts:

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## Opening Session:

**Kari Horn:** Good morning. My name is Kari Horn. I'm the Executive Director of the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities and we would like to welcome you to the first Statewide Transportation Summit. This Summit is the culmination of many years of council-funded projects and collaborations with agencies and organizations who have gone on to fund their own projects, many of which you are going to hear from today. One of the things we always tell our grantees is that what you encounter as a barrier is just as important as what you encounter as a success and the information we gained has been very valuable. Our hope for this Summit is to take the information we learn today and bring people together to continue the conversation and help address these problems.

The idea of this Summit came about through discussions with the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council and the great work they have accomplished in their state. I would like to thank them for sharing their information and resources with us, the Nevada Statewide Independent Living Council, Nevada Public Health Foundation, Amy Dewitt-Smith with Neighbor Network of Northern Nevada, Matt Bradley with the Nevada Department of Transportation, Jennifer Frischmann with Aging and Disability Services, the planning committee and staff.

Last night I was talking to my seven-year-old son about why my work was keeping me from being home in time to kiss him good night yet again. I gave him my speech about what I do and why it is so important. He looked at me and said: “Mommy, why do you have to always go to conferences to solve problems just for people with disabilities?” I didn't have an answer. But it got me to thinking: Why do we always seem to have address issues like housing, transportation and employment separately for people with disabilities? Why do we have to create separate events to discuss how people with disabilities can be included in the basic elements of social reciprocity which is at the core of what gives all of our lives meaning?

It reminded me of one of my favorite cartoons that so simply addresses the concept of universal access and design. It is a scene of outside a school yard and there is a lot of snow and the janitor is out there shoveling the steps. And there is a young gentleman in a wheelchair. He asks: “Can you please shovel the ramp so I can get up?” And the janitor says: “As soon as I clear the steps. Lots of kids are waiting to go up.” He said: “Well, if you did the ramp, all of us could go up.” That concept guides everything we do, the concept of universal access and the fact that something so simple shouldn't seem so hard. Clearly the concept benefits everyone. So why is it so hard to incorporate the idea of universal access and design at the beginning of conversations instead of at the end? I don't have an answer for that either. But I would like you to keep those questions in mind as we begin the conversation of how we can progress toward an increase of accessible transportation options here in Nevada.

We all know that transportation decisions are often the outcome of other decisions, like funding and resources but there are ways that we can start the process of improving systems here in Nevada. That's why we are so excited to have our keynote speaker here with us today. David Darm has been a lifelong advocate for persons with disabilities. He was born with a visual disability called Macula Hypoplasia. He has had to overcome multiple barriers to live independently within his community, including transportation. During childhood and adolescence, David's parents and teachers taught him to effectively communicate his needs and engage in activities alongside his sighted peers. One of those is public speaking. These experiences inspired David to pursue public policy to serve others with similar challenges. For the last ten years David has served in various positions in Florida state government promoting systems change related to employment and transportation. He currently oversees the agency for persons with disabilities, supported employment, day-habilitation and transportation programs. He is responsible for identifying policies and collaborating with stakeholders to support competitive employment and community inclusion of individuals with developmental disability.

Prior to his role with APD David served as chair of the Florida Commission of the Transportation Disadvantaged, where he worked with state leaders and public transportation providers to promote greater mobility options for individuals with various disabilities. He also assisted the Florida DD Council in helping Florida's Employment First policy through his role as Executive Director of Governor Rick Scott's Commission on Jobs for Floridians with disabilities. David is accompanied by service dog Ranger and enjoys living in Tallahassee, Florida. Welcome, David.

**David Darm:** I want to take a moment to thank the Council for inviting me to speak here today and be part of this awesome discussion and this initiative of trying to help increase mobility options for people with disabilities. Honestly, it has been a life-long journey for me. As Kari mentioned I also have a disability. I am visually impaired. I have about 3 feet and then it goes bad. I neglected to mention this is Ranger. Not only does he help me to be able to get around and navigate through the barriers of visual disability, but he is my speech writer. If you have any questions about this, talk to Ranger. I am not responsible for it. I'm delivering his speech.

I mentioned I'm passionate about this topic. I have been blessed with a lot of great advocates in my life growing up. I had great parents and great teachers who pushed me not to accept my situation as a defeat but as an opportunity to overcome and then to be an inspiration to others. But inevitably transportation was always going to be the greatest, one of my greatest struggles. Even though I could have an independent mindset and tenaciousness of being an advocate, I had a major hurdle not being able to drive.

I grew up and went to school in Jacksonville, Florida, probably what you don't know about Jacksonville even though it is a city, urban community, it is actually a huge sprawled community. If you take Alaska out of the equation, Jacksonville, Florida, is the largest land mass city in the country according to the Census Bureau it covers 874 square miles.

A lot of people who live in Jacksonville including my family live in the suburban and more rural areas because of the living situation is a lot better. The school districts are better but the jobs and the economic activities are really happening in the city so there is a lot of commuter traffic and trying to get to places, it usually takes you 40 minutes to an hour sometimes to get somewhere. It is a real challenge if you do not have a vehicle, to be able to drive or have public transportation. As I was growing up and as I was going to school and becoming more independent, I was getting frustrated with the situation that I was in. I actually was an advocate, but it wasn't really my career originally, I was interested in public policy. I was interested in going to Washington, D.C. Not only to do the policy route but also to get out of Jacksonville to a city where I could have a very well-known public transportation system that I could use. But as fate would have it, misfortune which eventually turned to fortune, I graduated in college right during the worst time of economic crisis in 2008. None of the job openings were available for me in the DC route.

A friend of mine who was also an advocate really encouraged me while I was in this flux state of trying to find a job, trying to find my dreams. She really pointed that there were disability-related issues that I could address because I was passionate about this. I applied for a board called the Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged. I didn't know anything about it, but transportation being on my mind, I had nothing to lose. I did not expect that that would open up my world to so many possibilities. I was 22 at the time. And came into this board completely oblivious but also very excited because I was personally wanting to understand this issue. Not just so I could overcome my own barriers to transportation but ultimately what I learned over the last ten years, my experience could be something of value to others. I could be a voice for others to help them overcome barriers.

I've learned a lot being in transportation and the disability service arena as a whole. I'm hoping today that I can share with you experiences that I have learned, my state has learned to be in the frame of mind of tackling this complex problem. At the end of the day if there's nothing else you can take from this presentation, the biggest lesson that I've learned, it ultimately comes down to relationships and partnerships and being able to get multiple different organizations and people from different perspectives together to tackle the same problem. That is what I hope that you can get out of this message today and helping you kind of thinking through both from an advocacy perspective and also from a systems perspective.

So a lot of the theme is about systems change, being able to tackle a complex problem with multiple people working on the same goal. I thought of a perfect disability advocate. For those of you who cannot see, master Yoda, big inspiration of mine and many of you who have grown up. “If no mistake you made yet losing you are, different game you should play.” (Said in the voice of Yoda.) I think this quote is something that has been very important to understand. When we try to talk about systems change, I know a lot of you go to conferences, go to Summits. You are looking for inspiration. You will get great speeches, we are going to change the world, make the world a better place. Then what happens? The jaded perspective would say: Well, nothing. Or it seems like nothing happens. And there is some validity to this perspective. It is not because people don't want to change. Often we do want to be able to make a difference. Most of us here are here because we really do believe in this cause. I say most of us. I don't mean just the individuals in this room. I mean the individuals in our system. But when we get to actually trying to make change a reality, it is scary because our natural instinct is to not take risks. A lot of us are risk avoidant. When I talk about risk, that means possibly willing to make mistakes, to fail sometimes. But the problem is that if not doing something is the solution, it comes to a greater cost. Actually, we end up losing the long game.

Transportation is a subject that is connected, as Kari mentioned in the opening, to all of our aspects of life. It is the glue that keeps us together. If you are aware of what has been going on for the last five years with the workforce innovation and opportunity act, there a huge push for creating a systems change effort to getting more employment outcomes for people with disabilities, to increasing the connection to the community, engaging in the community, having access to healthcare services, which is so important to our quality of life. Yet when you talk about transportation….”I don't want to deal with that issue. No, that's too big. No, let's go back to employment. Let's go back to the other issues”. Yet if we can't get to the transportation issue, we will never be able to realize the vision of greater employment, greater independence, better access to healthcare. Transportation is a sticky subject. How do we get unstuck?

I have broken down an approach to make it simple for you in terms of getting you to think in terms of a frame of mind in terms of systems change. These steps can be applied throughout your work not just to transportation but also to what you are trying to do in your other advocacy work.

1. Looking at the individuals' needs
2. Looking at transportation options that do exist and finding those barriers and missing elements
3. Understanding who your partners are
4. Assemble your team.

What you are trying to do is get a sense of your environment. What is available, what is at stake, gathering your information. But then also after you understand these dynamics, look at what then moving to action the other two steps that I've laid out here are really about trying to get your partners together and coming up with a plan of action to change, to help bring about systems change.

Step 1: Understanding the individual's needs. A lot of times we want to jump straight into let's tackle the problem, tackle the transportation barriers. I think that that approach can really be missing the most important element which is what is the individual's experience? We should start with the customer experience and work our way backwards to what are the transportation challenges? Steve Jobs was a systems change champion in the tech industry. He had a different approach than what a lot of tech companies were doing when Apple was really reaching its height. Instead of focusing on the technology and what we could do to sell technology he wanted to start with understanding what is the customer experience. What can we bring to the individual that changes their world? How is technology an extension of that individual's life? And I want to encourage you to start with understanding the individual's perspective. What experience can we bring to our folks that we are serving? And then how does transportation fit into that discussion? In order to focus on the individual's needs we have to know first and foremost that every single individual is different. We all have different unique needs. We have different challenges. We have different experiences.

Not one solution is going to fit every single person's situation. A lot of times I get the question: What kinds of jobs are there for people with disabilities? Like there's this set group of jobs. My response is, well, maybe not NASCAR for me or heart surgery but that doesn't necessarily mean I have no options available to me. I want to take that and extend that to transportation to encourage you, there are maybe options that do exist that you can take advantage of, but asking, is that option really best fitted for the individual and understanding that need. The other piece we talk a lot about in the developmental disability is informed choice. I think that is also very important to consider when you are trying to develop solutions. We might have multiple options available, but they also need to understand what are the costs and what are the benefits. I'll use a personal example. I can actually use public bus services in my community. I do have that option. I am very lucky that I live on a bus route that goes to my work. That is very useful for me to be able to go to work and come home, but that doesn't necessarily address all the other activities that I have. I need to also understand what are the other options available? Like Uber and Lyft, having friends, family, coworkers. These need to be brought into the equation when you are thinking about transportation options for people across the board. And then not just understanding what is going to help an individual succeed in their life but also what is the benefit to the community? It needs to be a win-win not just for the individual but how does the community overall benefit? Our economic development, that people are going to work, that people are going to school, that they are going shopping and able to have access to what the community offers is very important to consider in this discussion.

Step 2: Once you've identified the individual's need, you understand that the second step is then to take an inventory of what transportation options do exist in your community. The obvious choices to look at would be seeing if you have a bus route, see if you have paratransit services, but also being able to understand what are the other options? You have your private provider organizations that you need to consider, your taxi services, your Ubers and Lyfts. That's a newer emerging market. Where is the role that they play into your planning in terms of inventory of your transportation options? I even encourage you to dig deeper and look at the human service side as well. You might have volunteer organizations or Councils on Aging, which is a big part of our state. We have had a lot of medical organizations that are invested in transportation services. How do they fit into the equation? Try to extend that web of understanding what options do exist. And then beyond just what is transportation available but also look at what your mobility options are in the community. It is not enough that you have a bus route that you know is conducive for people with disabilities, but also look at are your sidewalks accessible? Do you have bike paths? Do you have the development of the community being closely knit together?

After you've looked at the inventory of what transportation options exist, this is where research comes in handy. Understanding what are some of the common themes. We have to understand, in order to know what the problem is, we need to know what exists and being able to see what is missing. I heard from my conversations with Kari and the staff here that some of the big themes that you are looking at addressing are that there may not be many public transportation options that exist in rural communities. Understanding what is missing in your rural and small urban communities is one theme that comes to mind. But you may also have lots of different agencies and organizations funding transportation, as I learned in Florida. We had, for example, in Jacksonville multiple agencies investing in transportation services for specific types of trips. One of the things we learned in Florida was that Medicaid will pay for trips to go to the doctor's office, which is very important service. But the problem was that it would not pay for transportation to the grocery store where often people are filling out their prescription drugs. We had to figure out how to be able to address those gaps and considering that maybe there might be transportation available, but it doesn't necessarily address all of the activities that are necessary for quality of life. And so these are things to think about and also gather in your research when you are trying to address a problem. What are the common themes that you are seeing that are going to help inform your stakeholders and investors when you are trying to develop solutions.

Step 3: Who are the partners? This is probably the most important thing to towards a real systematic approach to changing the problem with transportation. Who are some potential partners to help you come up with solutions to services for people with disabilities?

* Medical centers
* Family members, self-advocates, nothing about us without us,
* Schools, churches and community organizations. A lot of churches might have van services that they could be able to assist and volunteer to help.
* Transit providers
* Planning organizations. They are a huge part of it. A lot of your cities and your local counties will have planning organizations, part of their development that are going to be part of your discussion.
* State agency organizations, your human service agencies,
* Politicians, elected officials are a huge piece to this.

In Florida we have a coordinating board in every single county chaired by an elected official in that community. You have an actual stakeholder that is going in from the elected official side who is considering the needs of the constituents they serve and also serving people with disabilities. This is only scratching the surface. There are tons of groups out there that you may not even be aware of. This is really important to consider how are these going to be the individuals that are going to advocate for changing the situation that you are in.

Now, how do we get players to move? We understand, focus on the individual's experience and their needs. Understanding the gaps and the service barriers that do exist and having a common theme as to what you want to address. And knowing your partners. How do we move them towards change?

Step 4: Assemble your team. One of our efforts the last five years has been on the employment front. The Employment First initiative, is a really important initiative that we have been tackling. That is a systems change effort. In 2011 our state DD Council wanted to invest in creating an Employment First policy in the state of Florida. They got together a team of different stakeholders. They did stakeholder engagement and gathered feedback from advocates, from families, from provider organizations. And then collected research. This is a very important piece when you are looking at systems change. Gathering your research to justify the need for a change. Gathering the research of what elements are working for other states. I understand that our state DD Council has given you some information about some of the transportation pilot projects we are doing that might help in terms of informing how you are going to build a systems change effort. So when we were doing the Employment First initiative, at the same time the DD Council was trying to create an Employment First policy, our governor at the time, Rick Scott, focused on creating more jobs across the board and including people of all disabilities not just developmental disabilities. I was at the time working with the commission that was going to recommend to the governor strategies to help create more job opportunities across the board and it made sense to align our efforts. The trade-off was we could get the governor to advocate for an Employment First policy in our state to be able to get things moving. The trade-off for the DD Council was extending the Employment First initiative, not just to developmental disabilities but broaden the network of stakeholders and partners to focus on the Voc Rehab system, the mental health system, the schools. We created an executive order that set the stage. We said we want to make this policy in the statement to make employment outcomes increase and that be the first and preferred option for people with disabilities in the state of Florida. As a result of that executive order, six months after we got nine partners to sign on to a cooperative agreement, a five-year commitment, defining each of our roles and responsibilities, how we were going to make that change a reality. I think this is really important, understanding when you are looking at trying to build a team, knowing what political forces are going on in your state, aligning those efforts will help you to get the momentum.

Then coming up with how to keep the groups together. You can get the team together and find the players, but understand that you need a long-term commitment to make it sustainable. What are some elements you need to consider when you are building a systems change, a long-term approach? Here are some elements that we identified, both on the transportation front and the employment front, that are critical.

* Leadership, as I mentioned, having your state elected officials who are behind this as well as your government leaders, your bureaucratic leaders, private sector provider organizations also in touch with this issue.
* Looking at policies that you want to change. Because policy is going to ensure that it continues.
* Funding. Always a challenge when we talk about trying to address issues with services. What funding sources are available? What is available through the federal government. You have the federal transit administration that has funding options, but that's limited. So what state options do you have? What private options do you have?
* Capacity development building, make sure you have provider networks in place. I would encourage that you consider trying to approach this at a statewide level it might be overwhelming. Maybe start at the community level, do a pilot so you can see how those elements could work in that community before you try to tackle the whole beast of the State.

As you are considering creating a systems change effort, there are two major transportation-related approaches that I would encourage you to do more research on and try to see if you can incorporate into your efforts.

1. Coordinated transportation. Pulling together the different sources of funding. Your provider networks and your stakeholders to be able to coordinate the transportation services in the community in a manner that is cost effective. One of the reasons why we did this in Florida was that we noticed having these silos and just throwing money at the problem without having it coordinated is extremely expensive and not getting us the outcomes that we need. It cannot be one organization doing all this. We need to have a coordinated effort. We have taken 30 years in the making to develop this approach. It is something that a lot of other states are grappling with and I encourage you to consider it in your efforts.
2. Mobility management. Taking the individuals' experience and using that to inform the transportation options instead of trying to fit the transportation options in with the individual. Some of our provider networks in our state, some of our communities are testing this approach and having some success. This is really trying to inform and create more innovative practices towards creating transportation options in our communities.

Lessons learned in Florida about our model:

* Creation of a statewide commission. The commission for transportation disadvantaged was created in our Florida statute and is focused on coordinated transportation across the State. A lot of people don't know that Florida is actually a very rural state. This commission was created to make sure funding was dispersed across the state and those rural communities could get those services developed and established. This commission was charged with developing the policy and creating a trust fund of funding that would be able to meet where those gaps are. Medicaid invested in a lot of transportation services. Where the gaps for Medicaid couldn't cover, the commission could be able to fund with a trust fund to take trips to the grocery store or go to school where maybe those services would not be paid for by Medicaid or the state DD agency.
	+ Understand each community is different. What solutions work for Miami do not necessarily work for Jackson County, which is a rural area in the panhandle between Tallahassee and Pensacola. We created a system where the community set the service needs that they are invested in, trying to determine how is it going to best fit their needs?
	+ Each county has a transportation coordinator. That is the set entity to focus on those needs of the community and try to build a transportation system that works for them. Some of these coordinators could be in an urban area, could be a bus service, a transit provider. In the rural counties it could be the local government. They could be the Council, a not for profit Council, an ARC chapter. It varied with each county. The bottom line is that we wanted to be able to have a designated organization that is going to help pull these funding sources together and make sure it meets the community's needs.
	+ Each community has a coordinating board to be able to make sure that we are continually improving and supporting individuals, that meets periodically to continually get the stakeholder feedback that you need to know are the needs actually being met, is there duplication of service, is there barriers that are coming up that we need to know about so we can inform the planning side of things.

These were elements that we learned and have been able to find much success with. It is not perfect, but it has been something that we could say has made a lot of sense in terms of addressing the challenges in the rural and smaller urban communities.

In terms of thinking ahead, so you have developed the model, you've identified your stakeholders, you know what kind of solutions you want to set. Some things you want to think about in planning for the future:

* Identify your baseline data. You want to be able to measure the progress of those solutions and testing how they are working out. So what are your outcomes? What do you want to consider?
* How are you going to continually get the feedback from the stakeholders? Like I mentioned we created periodic board meetings where they will meet and engage the providers. They will engage the advocates. They will engage the funders to be able to see are these solutions actually working so that they continually can adjust the services. Also look at marketing effort. Are people aware in the community of the transportation options? This is where information and referral is important. Where travel training is important. How are those being considered in your solution development?
* Being able to adjust for change. As time goes on communities may be growing. You might have more urban development. Those are things to consider as you are developing these service options.
* Adjusting for innovation. A lot of our providers have learned, have been struggling with this because technology is always changing. The market is always changing. We've seen that the mobility, the mobile app market is really having an influence on how services are delivered. So how are those pieces being considered in your planning, when you are developing a model?

There's lots more resources out there that I would encourage you to look at as you are developing a system change approach to developing transportation solutions but mobility management, the center for mobility management is one that gives a lot of great information about what different local and state communities have been doing to address their challenges that might serve as information to you.

So in closing, I wanted to give you kind of a quote from a transportation expert. Coming together is the beginning. Staying together is progress. And working together is success. Henry Ford that said this. This is a quote that I think is really relevant to what we are trying to do here today in your conference. You are coming together for the beginning, trying to understand this problem and now come up with a model to stay together. How do you know it is successful? It is when you can get these relationships to pay off. I'll give you an example of how we have seen this work in the state of Florida. In my home town, which is the suburban area of Jacksonville, we had a transportation coordinator that went out of business suddenly. They lost a funding source that caused them to be able to reduce their services to a point where they could not be able to continue their services, within three weeks and we had a huge crisis on our hands where we wouldn't be able to serve a lot of people with developmental disabilities to go to work. In the span of three weeks we were able to get with the neighboring counties transportation providers to jump in and invest. We were able to get the state DD agency to work with their service provider network and their case managers to work towards finding alternative transportation routes. A big piece is one of our employment providers. We identified 50 people that were going to work that we were able to get served to not have a disruption in the service and not lose their jobs. In the span of three weeks, by the way, happening during the Christmas break, holiday season we were able to get services continued as of January 1st without any disruption. It was this collaborative effort that wouldn't have been possible without relationships being built, without having people talking to each other, not being afraid to stick their necks out and say let's take a risk and let's try to make something work. And so that is something that I encourage you as you go forward in your development side of developing a model is how do you make those relationships flourish and continue into the future.

**Senator Cortez-Masto Video:** Hello. I'm Catherine Cortez Masto. Thank you for all your work in improving transportation accessibility in Nevada. For our friends, family members and neighbors with developmental disabilities, accessible transportation is essential for leading independent lives. Too often our transportation infrastructure creates barriers to education and healthcare, impeding the quality of life for many Nevadans with disabilities. That's why as Senator I am committed to supporting your efforts by fighting to get you better resources for transportation programs that will help make successful public transportation a reality. With your support I will continue to fight to ensure that all Nevadans have the tools and supports they need to lead active independent lives. I commend the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities and all of you for gathering today to address this issue. I also would like to thank Catherine Nielsen, Amy Dewitt-Smith, and Matt Bradley for working so hard to coordinate this transportation Summit. Events like these make me proud to represent the great state of Nevada. Thank you for your commitment for an accessible future for all of Nevada. Because of your hard work the Silver State is a more welcoming home to call.

**Catherine Nielsen:** Thank you for gathering today. My name is Catherine Nielsen. I am the Projects Manager for the Nevada Governor's Council. I am so thankful that you are all here today. If you requested any large print materials, we do have those bags set aside for you out in the lobby. We did not have anybody pick them up. Also, all of the Power Points again are available on our website. So, the materials that were provided today will have digital access online. Thank you so much for being here.

## Resource Panel Discussion with Katie Pace, State of Nevada Office for Consumer Health Assistance.

**Katie Pace:** Hello, everyone. I'm Katie Pace from the Office for Consumer Health Assistance. It is not a new organization. It has been around since 1999. But we have not had an ombudsman up here in the north for quite some time. The OCHA's mission is to allow all Nevadans access to the information they need regarding their healthcare concerns, to assist consumers and injured workers in understanding their patient rights and responsibilities under various healthcare plans, and policies of the industrial insurance, and to advocate on behalf when it is necessary.

We can help with hospital billing issues, audits of charges on your hospital bills, quality of care complains, physician balance billing issues, and also negotiate for charity and discount plan and payment arrangements. If you find those needs with you, your family or friends, we would be happy to assist with that. We also work with some Medicare and Medicaid assistance eligibility issues. We can connect with the various agencies and try to resolve some problems that you might be facing. We also assist with external review. If you have been denied certain appeal rights our office can help assist with an external review which would be outside of the organization that you might be having issues with. Workers compensation. We can assist with appeal rights in that respect as well. Our process is a constituent would call our office. We take the referral. We have consent forms. We have follow HIPAA policy and we open up a case and make some initial inquiries for the constituent and collect any pertinent documentation. We try to have our cases resolved within 60 days. One thing to note, the OCHA office, our case load in 2018 we closed over 800 cases and brought savings to consumers of over two and a half million dollars. We can help with securing savings for our constituents. Some things that we address are access to care, which is uninsured and under insured. We have an Affordable Care Act navigator in our office. We can help with appeals and grievances and with hospital medical billing issues, prescription drug issues, trying to find affordable costs.

Some cases that we had in the office: We have had people call our office for their Medicaid reimburse: We were able to connect them with the right party at Medicaid, which they are here today. And also we have had some folks that have had some issues getting their scooters on their RTC route. We have gotten them to the right folks to resolve those issues. One notable case, we had a disabled veteran who needed to work on his citizenship. He had to get to Salt Lake City. We coordinated with several organizations, which the organizations are accessible to anybody. But that coordination effort was really a key to his being able to prove his citizenship, get his Social Security disability. There were quite a few resources in the Elko area that came together on his behalf, which was a savings for him of almost $44,000. A clear need that he was able to utilize. Medicare has some reimbursements for your ambulance if you are eligible for Part B. There's also transportation resources in the realm of Angel Flight West, Mercy Medical Angels, Grace on Wings, Hope Flight Foundation. All those foundations help with flights to healthcare needs. Also, another resource to consider is [needymeds.org](http://www.needymeds.org). They have some national programs. They also offer some prescription savings accounts.

**Kirsten Coulombe**, Chief of Long-Term Services and Supports for Nevada Medicaid Kirsten oversees facility based services and community services, including transportation. Good morning. I'm Kirsten, and Briza and I tag team transportation. We are going to talk a little bit today about what Medicaid covers. We do have a fact sheet that we have that we can email out. I'm going to give a quick overview of who is eligible for transportation, what it is that we cover, and then just a couple of things that we are working on.

Medicaid as one of the services that we offer is nonemergency transportation as well as emergency. Emergency is the typical ambulance and care flights. What I'm going to talk about today is the non-emergency. Everyday transportation that you would need to go to a Medicaid or waiver service. It is really an option. We don't want to authorize people to have medical coverage and then they can't necessarily have transportation to get there. I think that's one component that has been helpful to ensuring that recipients are really getting to appointments and having their needs met.

Who is eligible? Anyone that is Medicaid eligible except for individuals that are Nevada checkup and individuals that we only pay the Medicare premium. In the world of eligibility, they are called QMBs and SLMBs, the qualified Medicare beneficiaries. Those individuals we pay the coinsurance. We wouldn't pay for transportation because we don't pay for other Medicaid services.

Lastly, anyone that we only pay for emergency services for Medicaid. Aside from those caveats it is the majority of people are eligible for Medicaid and would have the transportation for Medicaid that would be covered. And so how do you get transportation to a point? What we do as division of healthcare financing and policy, we contract with a net broker. I had no idea what a broker was or any of that before I started working here. Essentially, we work with a vendor, a company to do all of the scheduling to the transportation. They make sure that individuals are Medicaid eligible before they go to the appointments. From what we need as a state agency, they provide us all a report so we can assure that we do quality assurance for them, that they are doing all of the things that is required in their contract. Previously it was Logisticare. Currently our vendor is MTM. They have a customer service number that you would call. The recipient or it could be their case manager, doesn't have to be the recipient that calls to have that transportation set up. It is a minimum of three days. And then up to five days. How a transportation gets scheduled depends on the individual's condition. If someone needs specialty transport with a wheelchair, they'll make those accommodations. MTM will schedule appointments throughout the State of Nevada -- what is the medical condition or the need that the person has for transport? Then where are the vendors that are in that area for those dates and times to go to those medical appointments. We divide up by urban and rural, which is not a surprise to people in the rural areas. I'm going to speak just a minute to how it is for the urban areas. I'm really speaking to Washoe County, where we are at here in Northern Nevada, Reno and Sparks. The same applies to Clark County. We work with the RTCs. If someone is living in the service area of RTC, so RTC determines that area, then the individual has an assessment done to see if you need paratransit services or can take a fixed route, essentially the bus. We ask that the assessment is done so we know the most appropriate and safe mode of transportation for recipients. If they are outside of the service area, which would be everyone else in the rural areas and anyone outside of the service area, don't necessarily have to have the assessment done. They will have whatever mode of transportation is available. For individuals that need to go to a doctor in another state or just a long distance from where they are, we do have a distance verification process that needs to happen. We do provide transportation if it is far away from your home and we do provide transportation to cover transportation for out-of-state travel. Often times we will have individuals that need to go to UCLA medical center or if you're in Elko they will have to go to Salt Lake. So we do cover if it is, depending on the mode of transportation. Sometimes it is a long-distance train. It could be a bus. Often times it is an airplane. If you have an individual who is traveling long distance we would cover the per diem. I'm referring to breakfast, lunch, dinner, those types of things and then the lodging. As is the case sometimes, individuals will need to have someone accompany them. We do cover them as well. For their per diem as well as their transportation. And then sometimes recipients do have their own transportation, if you are living in Hawthorne but you need to go into town we do offer gas mileage reimbursement. Sometimes that can be of help so if a family member or friend or even themselves.

The other thing that we have, sometimes in the rural areas there is a lack of transportation. I know that is not new to anyone who lives in the rural areas. What we do have is a community volunteer driver program. Two things. One, that is a nice option for individuals that are needing extra work. If you know anybody that doesn't have to be the rurals, but if you know of anyone that is a fine, up standing citizen that would be interested in transporting individuals, then definitely encourage them to look into the volunteer driver program. That is really a nice option. I know a gentleman that we spoke with in Fallon. He just likes to be super busy. He has eight kids, I can see why. He volunteers in Fallon, goes to Reno, drops somebody off, does his Costco shopping, and picks them up and comes back. It is nice in the rurals, a nice option. Someone who is going there anyway, the rurals are definitely very supportive of each other and the community. That's the only option.

To recap, so we have the fixed routes bus service and the ADA paratransit where it is available. In those urban areas. We have sedan, van transport, wheelchair capability, we have the gas mileage reimbursement, community drivers, Greyhound, Amtrak and if needed we have stretcher services. Again, not emergency transport but we have stretcher services if an individual needs to have that mode of transportation for their either medical condition that needs that. And so we do have a transportation email. So Briza is quite busy. I'm sure she is a super star who at some point will promote beyond me. Instead of having individuals just email Briza, we have a transportation email that she oversees. And then we have administrative support staff and then the transportation supervisor and then myself. I am going to give you our transportation email. It is on the fliers we will send out. If you have questions that you can't reap us today or as things come up down the road, feel free to email and I promise we check it even though it is generic. We are happy to assist with answering questions it's transportation -- T-R-A-N-S-P-O-R-T-A-T-I-O-N -- @DHCFP.NV.gov. DHCFP, Department of Healthcare and Finance Policy. And the other number I want to give you is for recipients that need to schedule transportation, the customer service call number for MTM. So the customer service to schedule transportation is 1-844-879-7341.

We are looking at going out to requests for proposal for our nonemergency transportation. So we have -- Briza and I are road warriors and held 13 Town Halls from November until December of last year. We traveled throughout all of Nevada. During those Town Halls we solicited feedback on ways we can improve our transportation. We also, a very good question was asked of us, why is Medicaid in the transportation business? We thankfully had, NDOT reached out to us when they heard about our Town Halls and were a great partner to better understand how NDOT functions and how Medicaid can be better partners working with NDOT and also working on RTCs on how we can improve that process. If you have feedback about our transportation and ways that we can improve it, feel free to email that transportation email. We have not started the RFP process. We wanted to gather that stakeholder input before we developed the RFP. It would be too late.

**Briza Virgen:** Medicaid Transportation Policy Specialist, monitors Medicaid services and providers related to both emergent and non-emergent transportation. We also work closely with all the hospitals throughout Nevada for hospital discharges. If a recipient is being discharged, we are trying to work with the discharge planners out there in educating them that they can call MTM to coordinate that transportation home. This is fee for service and there is managed care and the managed care is coordinated with MTM. Lastly, for individuals with intellectual disabilities, the waiver service going to jobs in day training, it is a waiver service. We would cover transport to those services as well.

**Susi Trinidad**: Paratransit Analyst for the RTC of Washoe County. She oversees the daily operations of RTC Access. RTC education is the ADA complementary paratransit service for the Reno-Sparks area and Susi is responsible for the Mobility Center daily administration to ensure quality and ADA compliance. I'm Susi Trinidad from RTC Washoe County. I'm here to present what is available, RTC's public transportation within the Washoe County area, Reno-Sparks area. Who uses public transportation? 30 percent of the population doesn't drive. They either use transit, walking, biking are the only mobility devices that the residents have here right now. So one of the services of RTC is the fixed route service, which is the RTC Ride. This is the big buses, as I tell most of our clients who are inquiring about this program. RTC Ride Regional Connector, Regional Connector is the one that travels from Reno into Carson City. It used to be inner city. The Sierra Spirit, which is there is a certain area from UNR and other areas from Reno, like northwest. I apologize, I'm a paratransit person, but I'm just giving you an overview of what RTC Ride is. And we have, of course, schedules for bus books, okay? And right now it is being operated by MV Transportation.

The next one is the paratransit service, which is RTC Access. Every area who operates a fixed route service has to provide paratransit program, which is the RTC Access. This is for the individuals who are not able to go to the nearest bus stop or ride our 100 percent accessible buses. They have to have a certain condition that is preventing them riding or getting to the nearest bus stop in order for them to qualify for this program. And we go to an in-person eligibility. Everybody fills out an application. That is the first part for the individual. And the second part is for the medical professional to validate what is that condition that is preventing this individual from riding the big buses. We do all our assessments at our RTC Mobility Center. This is located at Victorian Avenue next to the Nugget. Our transit station there we call RTC centennial Plaza Mobility Center. Let me describe the Mobility Center that we have. We actually mimic, we use this area for our eligibility processing. We have indoors different types of surface area that, as you can see our weather is not very good right now. If we can't do an outdoor assessment, we do it inside the Mobility Center. We have different types of surface that we test our clients when they have a physical condition that is preventing them riding the big buses. Also we have a lot of testing that we use, you know, to see if they have a cognitive or whatever disability or condition that is preventing them riding the big buses.

The next one I want to talk to you about is we also have a Washoe Senior Ride Program. What is the Washoe Senior Ride Program? It is a program of discounted taxi fares. And we subsidize 75 percent. Every individual who qualifies for this program can get up to $60 of taxi fare. And they only pay $15. Who are these individuals who qualify for this program? Sixty and above. Of course, you have to be a Washoe County resident. Any individuals who are eligible for RTC Access of any age and any Washoe County veterans of any age can apply for this program. We recently dropped the income limit. So for this program we don't require anyone -- we used to have like below 45,000 income limit for this program in order for you to qualify. Just recently, April 1st, we used to use paper vouchers. We said, okay, these are costing us a lot of money and we are not saving there. So we switched to reloadable card. It is like a gift card, okay. You can see in the picture that this card once they get set up, they get this card and they use this for payment to the taxi drivers.

Any Reno-Sparks taxi company we actually partner with and it is just like riding a regular taxi. You know, you call their number to request for a taxi can or you hail like you in an airport. You can use this card. Like I said, it is up to $60 per month. And that's for the RTC public transportation. That is just like Medicaid mentioned. We also contract with Medicaid right now to provide nonemergency medical transportation. Also, we have the 5310 funding, FDA funding that we partnered with different nonprofit organizations out and about here and Jackie is here from access to healthcare, too, one of their programs.

We also provide free travel training for any individuals within Washoe County. What is travel training? If you want to learn how to ride the public transportation, either the big buses or the RTC Access, if you are in a wheelchair and you want to know how to maneuver your wheelchair within that environment that is not stressful, people are waiting on line to get on the bus, we will actually teach you how to do that, maneuver your wheelchair in the big buses that we have available. So that is free for everybody. You can just contact us. We have a booth outside that -- is time for me? We have a booth outside with all of this information that I am talking about. We are more than welcome to tell you more information. Thank you.

**Susan Haas: T**he Nevada Rural RSVP program. She was a Program Director in 2007 and now has become the CEO. Ms. Haas and the RSVP staff and field representatives along with 900 registered volunteers statewide provide programs that deliver person-centered care and a care partnership. These programs are designed to assist elders, veterans around persons with disabilities to remain independent in their homes. Good morning, everyone. I'm Susan Haas, the Executive Director and CEO of RSVP. That was an example of the type of work our volunteers provide, which is that escorted transportation where the volunteer can just go up to the door, knock on the door, assist the person to the van or vehicle, go with them to their doctor's point, grocery shopping. And actually provide that emotional reassurance that is so necessary for frail elderly and also persons living with a disability. Our mission is to provide lifesaving volunteer programs that help seniors maintain their dignity, self-respect and independence. We have been around for a long time. We have worked in throughout rural Nevada. We do some work in Washoe County with our respite program. We are part of Senior Corps, in the corporation of national and community services. These are our independent living programs. One of our most popular programs is the transportation program because as you know, many people who are living in rural Nevada are stranded in their own homes. They need access to the goods and services that will help them maintain their independence with dignity. Providing them with that access is huge. And many times they have no other resource than other people in their community. So it's kind of a grassroots type of thing. People can self-identify their volunteer. If they can find someone who is able to drive them, RSVP can register them as a volunteer, provide them with training and with mileage reimbursement. We also have vans that we acquired from NDOT, placed around the State. We have field offices around the State. As I said, the home companion program works a lot of times with the transportation program. We will drive people to a crafting class or drive people to a group respite, friends day out featuring Java music and people are out of the house and be with other people while their primary caregiver takes a break. We have so many testimonials about what RSVP has meant to people. They say it has saved their lives, it helps them to get out of their house. I mean, think about it. If you were at a point in your life where you could no longer drive, how many days a week would you like to get out of the house? What would it be like if you were only able to do that once a week or once a month? Our volunteers are very well received. These are some of the programs that I was mentioning to you. The homemaker program is where we provide cleaning for the frail elderly people. The way we are able to do all of these things is because of our partnerships. Working together with federal, state, local governments, other nonprofit service organizations and proprietary healthcare organizations. We work with aging and disability services. They help provide us with that mileage reimbursement and fuel and maintenance for the vans. NDOT provides us with the opportunity to apply for these handicapped accessible vans. The volunteers utilizing their own vehicles. It is amazing. Department of Health and Human Services worked with us to provide persons with disabilities with transportation and respite care services. As you can see, the Nevada bar association, united way, the mines. Newmont and Barrick mines. The coalitions, the Nye Coalition, the Pace Coalition. For us, we would not be able to provide the services we provide were it not for the fantastic partnerships that we have here in Nevada.

We want to do it more. We want to find other ways to partner so that we can maximize our resources and when possible get more than one person in that vehicle. We do that with our handicapped accessible vans and our mobility managers have given us great training sessions for our volunteers. So if you have any ideas, please let me know. I'm always receptive to new ideas and new ways of working together so that we can help more people maintain their independence with dignity. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

**Jackie Gonzalez** has been with Access to Healthcare Network for over seven years. Jackie has been participating in outreach for Access to Healthcare Network for the past five years focusing on Washoe County's low income and rural communities. Prior to outreach role, Jackie worked in a variety of programs for the organization, becoming very well versed in healthcare needs for the Northern Nevada community, working in collaboration with local coalitions. Jackie spearheaded healthcare events to serve the low-income population. Now she is in the role of mobility manager. Good morning, everybody, I'll try to make this fast. I'm a mobility manager for the northwestern part of Nevada and just I'm here to talk to you a little bit about the transportation initiatives we are taking in collaboration with other partnerships as well. I know we talked about that a lot here, but partnerships are very important for transportation, healthcare-related programs as well.

So as you can see up in the screen here, I put up a little map of Northern Nevada and the counties that I am responsible of as mobility manager. This book is in the little bag that you guys received today. It has all the nine counties that are in red where the transportation services are available in each county, letting you know what the eligibility requirements are and some information on those programs as well. I'm hoping to make the entire map red eventually and getting more information of all the transportation services throughout the State of Nevada.

I want to talk briefly to you about some of the partnerships that we have started here in Washoe County. Since I have become mobility manager. Under transportation we have three different programs. We have started. Originally, we got a grant from RTC in combination with Washoe County to help us start off a transportation program for those individuals that are 60 and older or low income or disabled, to go door to door to provide those transportation services for them. We did this in partnership with RTC and Washoe County to provide transportation for people outside of the ADA zone in Washoe County. People outside a little bit in the rural areas. The transit doesn't go directly to their services or they have a disability and they need the door to door access transportation.

We also with access to healthcare, my role as mobility manager we decided that one of the things that we needed to do was go after the hospitals and insurance companies because they have to step up and help their clients in getting the transportation that they need to get into the healthcare offices and make sure they are staying healthy and not going back into the ER. So St. Mary's, we have a new program with them called the senior ambassador program. They provide transportation free for all Medicare clients to make sure that they are getting to the doctor's office, they are getting to their appointments and they’re getting healthy so they don't go back to the ER. St. Mary's pays for the transportation, they pay for the vans, they pay for the maintenance and for the drivers, which is great. This has been able to help all of their clients get to their doctor's appointments. St. Mary's has been so generous as well that they don't have to have a PCP at St. Mary's Hospital to access the service. They can have PCP with their primary care doctor and sometime access the services. They get transportation for dental appointments, grocery shopping, go to the gym for physical therapy, any healthcare related. And nutrition, they provide transportation for them as well. This is only for the Washoe County area. They actually responded over to Lockwood. They go up to story county twice a month, I believe, to provide transportation as well. And the interesting part with story county, the clients are coming into town for grocery shopping more than they are for doctor's appointments. St. Mary's has been able to provide that service for them in Lockwood.

One of the new programs we started as mobility manager in conjunction to Access to Healthcare Network has been with prominence health plan. We approached them because transportation even though we have the RTC and we have the senior ambassador program under Access to Healthcare Network, we have quite a bit of a wait list. People need transportation. It is a very big need in our community. Even in Washoe County, even though we have RTC and we have established routes, transportation is a big need, especially the door to door transportation.

We talked to prominence health plans to see if there is something we can do with them. They said let's do this. To our surprise, prominence health plan was paying for Lyft and Uber and taxi to get their clients to the doctor's points which was becoming very costly for them to keep paying for vouchers, Lyfts, and those Ubers. We talked to them and they decided to start a transportation program with the Access to Healthcare Network. I assisted with making sure they have dispatch, the hours and the outline of the program as well. Now prominence health plan in Washoe County and soon they will be expanding to Carson City and other rural areas to provide transportation and bring people into Reno. They are also providing transportation home from the hospital, in-patient, out-patient procedures, grocery shopping, dental appointments and all that fun stuff as well.

As we continue to grow, we continue to talk more about different partnerships we can have with different health plans and different hospitals to where they can provide the transportation services that their clients need. That's what we are doing at Access to Healthcare Network. If you guys have questions, Evelyn is here as well at the table out there and we are happy to answer any questions you may have as well.

**Audience:** My name is Patty Weaver, working for Translation U, trying to help get employment and training. So when you get out of high school, what does it look like? What needs to happen so they can have transportation for Spanish Springs High School, North Valleys, Galena High School. There is no easy access to the high schools.

**Susi Trinidad:** So that is why we partner with different nonprofit organizations like N4 which they provide Lyft Bucks.

**Audience:** If they have employment -- they may not be able to drive. They are kids with disabilities, young adults with disabilities. We are helping them with employment. The transportation, there is a large population out there. What happens for RTC to expand? You have a great service when they are in the route area. What needs to happen to have that expanded?

**Susi Trinidad:** First of all, you know, go to your representatives to give us more funding. That is the reason why, our funding is very limited when it comes to public transportation, but we find other ways to help those individuals. Like I said, we partner with N4, Lyft Bucks or our Washoe Senior Ride Program, which is a taxi fare program. It is all about transportation planning. If you live down at Damonte, you can have a family drop them off to our service area which, I can just as an example, it is the Walmart by Damonte. That they can use either the big buses or the RTC paratransit.

**Audience:** I get what you are saying. That is not reasonable for a young person to become independent and get to work or college, you know, to be dropped off at Walmart. So I'm just saying, I thought there was some legal law for the RTC, for the access to expand. Whatever that law is. Can I call you offline and talk to you about this more?

**Susi Trinidad:** Of course. ADA regulations, requires us if we, three-quarters of a mile of the bus route, that is the required regulations right now. Before October 2018 last year, we were able to provide some trips outside those areas, but because of the funding issue, we really need to bring our service up to what the ADA requires us to do. But like I said, we have other partnership with nonprofit organizations and other programs that we can help those individuals to come in to the service area. Then our fixed route service or our paratransit program will be able to take over.

**Audience:** I am DETR. I work with transition kids. We are having difficulty getting them transportation to appointments.

**Katie Pace:** I know there's a lot of things going around workforce development. That's probably an area we need to address. I'm sorry I’m going over time.

## Rethinking Transportation and Access to Services

**Jeff Duncan:** Good morning we are going to talk today about Rethinking Transportation and Access to Services. My name is Jeff Duncan. I'm unit chief for Aging and Disability Services, co-presenting today with Cheyenne Pasquale, our planning chief for ADSD as well. Today as I mentioned, we want to start with a brief discussion about what is important to and for people. And how this mind set is transforming the way we think about access and services

We are going to talk a little bit about No Wrong Door or Nevada Care Connection and then I am going to geek out about our grant take we got from the DD Council, self-directed project we called Go Nevada. The million dollar question is how to get accessible transportation statewide. Then we want to talk a little bit more about a few of our innovative projects and grants that we have done here in the last year. With that I will turn it over to Cheyenne.

**Cheyenne Pasquale:** Nevada Care Connection is really an effort to transform the way people access services and how the system responds to people's goals and needs. So we have this brand out here, Nevada Care Connection. It is how Nevadans find care and support services. It is a No Wrong Door approach to accessing services. Center to this concept is, is the concept of resource and service navigation, which is a person-centered process that helps people explore their options to meet their goals and needs. It may look at public programs. It may look at informal supports. It may look at veteran benefits or private pay options. Kind of helping people to explore all the options that are out there and maybe in times when we have to we get a little creative, right? That is Nevada Care Connection.

When we talk about resource and service navigation, what does that mean? The foundation is that you, the individual is in control of the meeting, the planning and your life. You share your dreams, what you want in your life, where you want to live and how you want to live. You choose what services you want, which you don't want. To reach your dreams you must be an active participant in the discussions, planning and fulfillment of the plans. You are the center of the whole resource and navigation service process.

When we talk about resource and service navigation and this more person-centered approach we know that there's some rights that individuals have and some responsibilities. So you have the right not to be discriminated against. You have the right to be treated with respect, privacy, and dignity, and to be free from threats, harassment, bullying. You have the right to receive unbiased and accurate information and assistance. You have the right to choose who is going to be included in your resource and service navigation. You have the right to control your life. You have a right to a financial eligibility determination. You have a right to have your confidentiality maintained. And to be informed of your rights and responsibilities.

The responsibility of the individual going through resource and service navigation is really to treat others with respect and dignity, to not engage in illegal and or dangerous behavior, to be an active participant in the resource and service navigation process by making decisions and to provide accurate and timely information. To provide advanced notification if we need to cancel or change a point. These rights and responsibilities along with the training for resource and service navigation were developed through a grant from the DD Council about two years ago where we worked with partners across the Department of Health and Human Services as well as families and individuals accessing services to come up with these things.

As we think about that and you think about helping people to be more engaged in decision making and putting them in control of their services, then we start thinking about things like transportation, which we know is our number one need. I'm going to turn it back over to Jeff.

**Jeff Duncan:** Now we are going to talk about transportation and what defines accessible. First, I want to ask you what accessible transportation looks like to you.

**Audience**: gets you to where you need to go. The grocery store and other stores and to where you work.

**Audience:** it gets you where you want to go when you get there, not when they want to get you there.

**Audience**: I'm from rural Nevada. Just having transportation would be great. We have some systems. They don't go very long. They have short time periods that they work in. Some places they don't have transportation at all. And my job is to try to get people to work, but how do you get people to work when they can't get a ride?

J**eff Duncan:** I like your answer about the rural and frontier dilemma we have in our state. I can sit here and talk to you for hours about my passion to get services out to rural and frontier Nevadans, whether that is transportation, respite, anything. I think that's a huge gap in our system. But if it were my pie in the sky, I probably would self-direct the whole system if the individuals were willing and had the passion to do that for themselves just because I don't like anybody to tell me what to do and I quite frankly don't think we should tell anybody what they should do. If we had the means, I think we should try to pilot more self-direction, more person-centered approach. Those are buzz words but I'm talking about putting it into action.

That's what I want to talk about next is the grant we deemed Go Nevada. It was a self-directed transportation option piloted in Clark County. It was for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities involved with Desert Regional Center in Southern Nevada. The majority of our program participants were those working at the job and day training program. Individuals who got enrolled had up to $200 a month to take care of their transportation needs. We did not have specific criteria about what that had to go to. We wanted them obviously to get to work. We wanted them to get to their doctor's appointments.

A lot of these program participants actually ended up using it for that and beyond. I believe we averaged $140 a month out of $200 which was wonderful. Options included: mileage reimbursement, bus passes and ride-share. Reimbursement was the option to pay family or friends. Ride share was for the program participants to pay for Lyft or Uber, right off their own app and get reimbursed from us. That was an exciting option. We had a lot of great feedback on the personal choice and control for that option. We had a total of 27 individuals enrolled, 23 active participants throughout the grant.

Lessons Learned:

* Support systems = specifically, we know with support systems with any self-directed program the individual has to be able to make their own decisions or have support. Many of our programs were able to do this with little to no support from others. They were able to self-direct their own transportation which is exciting and something that we wanted to pilot in this grant.
* Enrollment process = we work for the state so there's a lot of red tape and bureaucracy. That was part of the lessons learned we found, some families were not able to meet with the transportation coordinator to have that initial meeting just to get the paperwork and process started unfortunately, like any program, you have to have those administrative controls in place. Unfortunately, that was a little bit of a barrier for our families.
* Usage of funds = once people were enrolled, as I mentioned not everybody was able to utilize the full 200, which we hoped, and on average they only used $140.

**Cheyenne Pasquale:** Here is a client story. This is Josh. He is a young man who participated in the Go Nevada pilot. He is 28 years old with a mild intellectual disability, is what he put on his application. This is a letter we received from Josh's uncle: Josh is a real trooper. He works at opportunity village in a contract with the Springs Preserves. Unfortunately for his travel needs we live in the far northwest, near Centennial High School. A typical day for him starts with me dropping him off at the RTC on Durango, the nearest bus symptom at 6:00 a.m. where he catches a bus, makes the transfer and arrives near the Springs to start work at 8:30 a.m. He gets off work at 5:00 p.m. where again he catches two buses and makes it to the Durango RTC by 6:45 p.m. and he arrives home at 7:00 p.m. when we pick him up. His day is 13 hours long, sometimes longer if a bus is late. But he never complains.

We live 2.5 miles from RTC so it is too far to walk, thus, us picking him up. This pilot program let us explore options. We learned an Uber right from the Springs Preserve to home was $28. His take-home pay amounts to $55.41 a day. So he would lose money to take Uber both ways. However, the program also let us go to a party on a Sunday and not have to leave early to go pick up Josh. So that was nice. He got an Uber home from the RTC. The program also showed me how many miles I and my wife are driving to facilitate Josh working. On Sundays, I drive him all the way to the springs, mainly so I can sleep late and not get up at 6:00 a.m. to drive him to the RTC.

As I stated, Josh is a trooper and does not complain. He has an older brother who is also disabled and not quite as able as Josh. His brother has qualified for the paratransit service. So he basically gets door to door service for his transportation needs. There does seem to be a void in options for Josh. A program that would fund his transportation needs and save time from spending up to four hours to commute to and from work would be welcomed.

I am also concerned that Josh does not have a social life likely due to the amount of time spent on transportation. Josh is possibly afraid to ask us to drive him places since we already drive him so much for work. A program like this study could help provide people like Josh and people in similar circumstances independence for transportation needs and a sense of wellbeing. Additionally, this program highlighted what is important for both Josh and his brother. Both were victims of crime associated with their transportation. Both events happened when we lived in the Lake Mead Jones area. Josh got off the bus and was walking home. He was assaulted, beat up and his iPod and wallet were stolen. John, Josh's brother, was waiting for a bus and a man pointed a gun at him and demanded his valuables. The man actually got on the same bus as him and said if he said anything, he would kill him. The man later got off and John told the driver. John never got over this incident and I believe he never rode a bus again after that. Thus the start of paratransit for him.

**Cheyenne Pasquale:** That was one example of the 23, of how helping people to have a little bit more flexibility in their transportation options has really made an impact in their life. Unfortunately, this was a pilot program and it has not continued as of yet, but we are continuing to work within our planning to be able to continue this type of program. The other thing that I think is interesting, we gave individuals up to $200 per month to use for their transportation, and on average people were only using about $140 a month. Most of their rides were for work or work-related activities.

You know, if you are a person that has a driver's license and you drive and you think about all the places that you go on a daily basis, because you are able to have a driver's license and drive yourself or what have you. Working towards that vision for everybody is really what that pilot was about.

Last year we were able to do some innovation funding for innovation projects within our agency and we funded four programs. Neighbor Network of Northern Nevada is doing a Lyft subsidy and they have Lyft Bucks. Nevada Rural RSVP received funding to increase their volunteer drivers and expand into the rural areas. Churchill Area Regional Transportation, CART, received funding to have rides to and from Reno. That's a big need in rural areas where people need to get into Reno or Las Vegas, but getting transportation can be difficult, especially for some of the county-run transportation services. You know, they see it as you are going outside of county lines. Being able to increase that and to increase those rides to and from Reno for medical appointments, shopping, whatever it is that people need, that was kind of a big deal. Then Clark County Social Services, they have a pilot to promote socialization and self-sufficiency. All of these programs are about six months into their year. We are just starting to see the data, what is coming in and the lessons learned from these projects. We are hoping we will be able to continue these innovation dollars going forward to continue to spur new ideas.

At the beginning we said transportation is the million dollars question, right? Like that's what this whole Summit is about: How do we increase he accessible transportation? How do we have statewide systems? I think there is no one right answer. It is a combination of things.

**Audience:** My question was for the pilot program, what options do people go to more?

**Cheyenne Pasquale:** Probably a close tie between mileage reimbursement and ride share.

**Audience:** Obviously a lot of us have seniors and so self-directed is something we would love to see our seniors do for themselves and our 60 to 70 seniors are pretty self-sufficient. Some have technology skills. So, you know, as they age again this seems like a project that would work very well for that type of population. I'm wondering if they were all younger, 20-40 kids. It sounds like you had older ones, which is great.

**Cheyenne Pasquale:** We did. We worked closely with Uber. They have a platform called Uber central that allows a person, like say if I was the transportation coordinator I could go in and schedule rides for an individual on their behalf. Uber would bill us as the agency for that so the people didn't have to use their own app and schedule their own rides if they didn't want to. In this pilot it ended up being that most people wanted to schedule their own rides and get reimbursed, but we had that as an option just in case.

**Jeff Duncan:** So as you know, based on all of our conversations, we think about today and we know what is coming in the next decade. We know just in general people are living longer, people are wanting to self-direct their own care. I think that's why we want to keep pushing our partners and ourselves to say what can we do differently to improve the quality. And choice and control is a great start, knowing that some individuals may love the traditional transportation option. By no means am I saying we are going to get rid of the traditional options, but we want to be ready for the tsunami that is coming and the individuals having smartphones will skyrocket in the next decade. And we want to stay ahead of that and see how we and our partners can improve the transportation options.

**Audience:** I'm Mary for the center for independent living in the south. I had a question about the criteria for an individual to sign up to be reimbursed for mileage. Just to see what one would need.

Also, I just recently ran across a program in California in the rural areas where they had one individual that had a vehicle that could accommodate a lot of disabilities. So the state set up a contract that she was like the neighborhood unofficial Uber. So I don't know if that is possible with this program.

**Cheyenne Pasquale:** In order for a family member or a friend to be reimbursed for their mileage they had to fill out the state vendor form. Then every month they had to submit a mileage reimbursement claim form. So they had to track the mileage by day and then the form automatically calculated based on the government mileage reimbursement rate.

**Jeff Duncan:** Based on your second question, for the vehicles, that is something we did have initial discussions with Uber. And they stated to us based on our timelines of getting the grant that just in the state of Oregon, to have dedicated vehicles that were accessible through Lyft or Uber took them almost a year and a half just to get past the regulations. But I know both the ride share companies similar to the taxi can companies in Southern Nevada they are trying to move in that direction. We still have an access as far as the quantity, the numbers of vehicles that are available for sure. But I know the ride share companies have an appetite to meet the needs for people across the spectrum. I hope they keep going down that path and that we have future projects with them to expand the accessible vehicles.

**Audience:** I'm Susan Haas with Nevada Rural RSVP. Last year at this time I had the privilege of attending a Summit with Cheyenne at UC Berkeley. It was called Beyond, Here To There. And one professor from MIT stood up and he said that the future of transportation is A.I., artificial intelligence. As Cheyenne mentioned it is not going to be that much longer until we are going to be seeing these driverless cars. And I just was wondering, are there any plans for the state to participate in something like this? Or is that still in the venture capitalist entrepreneurial realm?

**Jeff Duncan:** Until it becomes affordable it probably won't be something that we can really go down the path. Some of the conversations we have had with Uber and hopefully soon with Lyft, that their rates just don't fit into our structure. We do obviously target a lot of lower income individuals. We are hoping that they will meet us in the middle like our community partners have done to make transportation affordable. Based on what I know about the A.I. ventures in Clark County, they are not there yet. I know they have had some accidents. The reason I bring it up and I say it to be funny, but I'm excited for the next decade about what can come out. It is not just because I love innovation or a nerd about these new technologies, but I just can't say enough about how I think that is going to improve the quality and choice and control, just the options for the people we're trying to serve. I would never close a door, but they better come with options to make it affordable. I'm not going to spend X amount of money on this when I can get a better option at the same level as something else. That's what I can say from the chief level anyway.

**Cheyenne Pasquale**: I would say that Jeff is absolutely right, but I think that from a system perspective, from a state perspective, I think we do have to be able to step outside of the box and think differently. And I know our team within planning advocacy and community services is good at that. We throw out these ideas and we pilot these things quite often and push the envelope in terms of what our fiscal department -- they'll say we've never done that before. We say, well, is there a rule against it? And then, you know, if there is not a rule against it we can move forward. So I think to Susan's point, really thinking outside of the box and thinking about these different types of partnerships that we can have to further services and to further the access for individuals is really the key to success at this point.

**Jeff Duncan:** And getting feedback from the consumers. That's what we listen to the most and the community partners for sure and the nerds, yes.

## Transportation Experts Panel

**Amy Dewitt-Smith:** I'm the director of Neighbor Network of Northern Nevada. I'm excited to introduce our panel for the lunch discussion today. We will go over a couple of questions with each panelist. If you don't want to raise your hand to ask questions or make a comment we have index cards on the tables and we will grab the cards if you would like to hand in your question or comment.

I will introduce everybody, Santa Perez, Dora Uchel, Minerva Rivera, Twyla Lemay, Jesse Rojas, James Harmon, and Robert Uranga. Everybody has utilized transportation in different ways. Hopefully we will get a nice comprehensive viewpoint today during our discussion.

Question 1: Can you please explain which types of transportation you have used or you currently use?

**Dora Uchel:** Today I use the fixed route, RTC. And sometimes paratransit when a place is unfamiliar to me and my dog and my fiancé. I use Lyft, the N4 program when I go to Carson for legislative work and Fallon for personal work.

**Minerva Rivera:** I'm with the Southern Nevada Center for Independent Living. I'm an advocate. The transportation I use is RTC paratransit for my transportation.

**Santa Perez: I ride paratransit in Las Vegas.**

**Jesse Rojas:** I use RTC, the regional connector because I live in the rural community of Dayton, Nevada. So I use the connector to get to the University of Nevada Reno because I am a student and I am also working on campus.

**James Harmon:** I live in Wellington, Nevada. I use FSC (Family Support Council of Douglas County

**Robert Uranga:** I transfer on DART and also on Family Support Council, too. That's how I get by.

**Twyla Lemay**: I am in Reno and I use the RTC bus and Lyft as transportation.

Question 2:What has worked well for you? This can mean specific programs or services or just something that really made it unique to your specific needs or you just felt like it was excellent and a positive experience?

**Santa Perez:** I find paratransit good, better than other areas in the State. When I get on I like a nice salutation, I like to know how long I will be on the bus.

**Dora Uchel:** What really works well for me is my “Chevrolegs” -- no, just kidding. I like to walk. I don't drive. I like to walk, but really what works well, it gives me independence is the Lyft Bucks program. However, I do like to utilize the RTC fixed route. I only wish it was more frequent and that the bus stops are more accessible. So to all you RTC folks here, make it more accessible.

**Minerva Rivera**: In Southern Nevada I like the convenience that you can ride paratransit 24 hours a day. That's a great incentive. I have had the opportunity to travel and RTC doesn't run in other states 24 hours a day. That's something that I really appreciate and I enjoy that works very well.

**Jesse Rojas:** The specialty route from Carson City to Reno. It actually simplifies my life getting from point A, which is getting from here back home, which is a lot more convenient for me because if it wasn't for that specialty route, I wouldn't get transportation to be able to get out here and reach my dream and my passion, which is self-advocacy and other stuff. I just want to impact as many people as I can and having this transportation really simplifies. But ease of use per se, you know.

**James Harmon:** I like bowling.

**Robert Uranga:** What has worked for me because I like to plan ahead of time, okay. And then when I take DART (Douglas County), I just like to watch out for them, go ahead and pay them and I'm ready.

**Twyla Lemay:** I use Lyft. Lyft makes it so I get to places easier and I use RTC bus and that has been good for me because I can get to places I want to. And it is making it more independent transportation.

**Amy Dewitt-Smith:** Twyla is teaching me how to ride the bus right now.

Question 3: If you could list one or two of the biggest barriers or challenges that you have experienced or that you would like everybody that is at the Summit to think about as we start to figure out some solutions regarding transportation in your community.

**Santa Perez:** I really love the (RTC Southern Nevada) website where I can book my rides independently. I do have some suggestions for the website, though. The font size needs to be bigger. There needs to be more room for more addresses. There needs to be a place where we can put temporary addresses. Let's talk about the drivers. The drivers are great. They are nice and courteous. But there are some drivers that don't talk at all. They just motion where to put your chair. We are not robots. I like a nice salutation and to know how long I will be on the bus. Another big issue is when booking a ride, you don't know how many pickups or drop-offs the driver has before they get to your destination. It is hard to gauge how much time you need to allow.

**Dora Uchel:** I agree with Santa. But sometimes the bus drivers here in Northern Nevada where I do live, some of the drivers that come to our door and knock on the door and we would think they are the pizza people or something because they have no vans and they don't say anything. They don't say RTC Access or van driver or nothing. Also they pet my dog. And it is a service dog and they are not supposed to be distracted. So I think there is a gap in training there. And I also can't say I have seen, but I heard that some of the bus drivers -- they drop people's walkers like it is a piece of can and that is not okay because I know they are expensive. I have brought that up to the RTC.

**Minerva Rivera:** This is a tough one because there are a few things. When working with individuals and things that I have faced myself, when you go in for a recertification, often times individuals have disabilities that are hidden. So they get denied for services. And that is where we kind of guide them and help them through the process and make sure they have the documentation needed. Another one is when you schedule your ride, often times, especially for my work, they assume it is where I live. And they go and pick me up at work when I'm still at home. So that has happened quite a few times. The assessment when it comes to the evaluation for the paratransit and also when booking the ride it is also a lengthy process. Especially for me, it takes me on average two to two and a half, sometimes three hours just to get to work and to go back home it is sometimes the same. About two to three hours. And I know I live across town, so I know that is kind of a factor, but it would be nice if that distance could be a little shorter.

**Jesse Rojas:** One of the barriers that I feel like needs to be addressed, where you go, some of these places aren’t designed for chairs like myself or Santa's chairs.

**James Harmon:** No buses get to his house, that's a big barrier, big problem.

**Robert Uranga:** Sometimes we have to wait another half hour or hour because sometimes they run late. Out in Gardnerville and they sometimes, sometimes they change things around. Like drivers or something else.

**Twyla Lemay:** Well, for me with Lyft, it's the cost because they like to charge me more and the RTC bus on weekends they run half an hour later and sometimes I am late to work because of that.

**Amy Dewitt-Smith:** Is there anything else that we missed or that you would like to say before we open it up to questions and answers? We're good? We will go ahead and take questions and comments from the audience now. Again if you don't want to state your question or comment, go ahead and write it down and we will grab the card and say it for you.

**Audience:** Thank you all for sharing your experiences. I had a question as to how each of you learned how to use these various transportation options? Did you have family or friends? Did you have an advocate that trained you on mobility options in your community and how you were able to use it in your day-to-day living?

**Jesse Rojas:** I didn't have any like training per se, but as soon as I got the hang of it on the first time, I knew what I was doing.

**Twyla Lemay:** I went through the training bus program a few years ago. And the trainer taught me how to use a bus and how to press the yellow tape to stop and how to put the money in the fare box. Amy helped me with how you right click on the Lyft app to get the lift Lyft ride and how you do it through the app.

**Dora Uchel:** So for those of you who don't know or can't see, I'm very blind. I went through Voc. Rehab and I gained mobility skills. My daughter showed me how to use the bus ten years ago. We have only been here for 11 years. Then for Lyft, I want to say thank you to Mark Tatter. We had a peer to peer group at the center and we had the Lyft Bucks app with my family, my fiancé and my dog. It takes a village.

**Amy Dewitt-Smith:** Awesome point, yes. In the north we have the Center for Independent Living that has a Visually Impaired user group that will go over a wide variety of things that people are interested in learning, in particular apps and different technology and devices.

**Minerva Rivera:** I had known about the services when they moved from California to Nevada. And then I contacted our Center for Independent Living in Nevada and that's where I learned about all the different resources regarding transportation, what is available and how to go about applying. Now, 11 years later that's what I do for a living. So I connect people with disabilities to services out in the community.

**Santa Perez:** When I was young -- I'm old now, I learned how to ride the bus on my own. I went on the strip.

**Audience:** What accessible transportation option does not currently exist in your area but you wish did? How would you make your dream option a reality?

**Jesse Rojas: T**here is no public transportation or bus from the capital, which is Carson City, to the rural areas like stagecoach or Silver Springs or even Fernley. Those rural small towns, it is hard when there is no transportation and people don't get out as much as they want. So that is the biggest issue. And I wanted to always bring it up at a state level, but I never had the chance to do it. So at some point that is one way, one of the points of endless emphasis, to make sure that people in the rural communities get heard and a change needs to happen at some point. There are many people that live out there that have a disability and don't get a chance to live a normal life.

**Santa Perez:** I wish Uber had a lift, an accessible lift. That would mean a lot more, it would be a lot better because with paratransit, you have to schedule ahead of time. Sometimes you have to go somewhere in a hurry.

**Audience:** The State of Nevada has three mobility managers that can assist anyone in getting transportation in Nevada. And then there is a website: [www.nevadaDOT.com/mobility/transit](http://www.nevadaDOT.com/mobility/transit).

**Audience:** How do you cope with potential safety concerns that arise from your preferred accessible transportation method?

**Dora Uchel:** So I know karate. Just kidding. My fiancé goes with me. He's a big guy. We go together all the time. But that aside, I have my iPhone and thanks to ATRS and people from TMCC I have cool apps on my phone. Sometimes when I get stuck and I'm on my own because I go to work I FaceTime people, people that I trust and they sort of navigate me where I need to go and get a bus or just to find my location.

**Twyla Lemay:** I use a bus during the day and not at night to stay safe because I don't feel comfortable using a bus at night.

**Amy Dewitt-Smith:** Is there something that someone could do to make you feel safer on the bus at night?

**Twyla Lemay:** Someone walking me into the bus stop at night so I wouldn't get so scared.

**Audience:** How does accessible transportation provide you with greater inclusion in your native community?

**Twyla Lemay:** Well, it made it so I can like go to things, like be part of a community. For transportation, meet other people.

**Minerva Rivera:** It has allowed me to completely live independently. It has allowed me to be able to commute from home to work without having to rely on my husband. It also, to go in and do social activities, not only to fulfill my duties at work but also to have a social life. That is so important to be able to, if you want to go meet with friends or if you want to go to a movie, you don't have to rely on others to do those type of activities. I think that is part of what we all strive for is to be part of the community and to be involved in the community. We don't want to be isolated or feel like we have restrictions. We want to be able to go freely and comfortably as we choose just like everyone else.

**Dora Uchel:** I think if we have more frequent bus transportation, that would be great. For instance, in July I am going to be traveling to D.C. When I come back it is going to be at midnight. There will be no bus available. That is okay because there is Lyft. However, my dog is trained to go to the bus stop because that is where he knows where he is going because I do. If I don't, he's lost and we are both blind. It would be great because when you go to the airport, for those of you who know, Lyft or Uber have a different stop from the bus or taxi. I don't know if I'm wrong still or that's the same thing. It is very hard especially in the middle of the night. It is dark and I can't see and that's okay, because I can't see any way and my dog can't talk, so I'm SOL.

**Audience:** One of the things that is really hard for us where we live, James doesn't have a bus that goes so far and he has a job but the bus doesn't come and take him home at night and I also heard today that Medicaid will not pay to have you transported if you have a wheelchair.

**Kirsten Coulombe:** I'm with Medicaid. Apologies if my presentation this morning about our options was misinterpreted. Medicaid does cover transportation to Medicaid services for individuals that qualify for nonemergency transportation. We would absolutely cover someone in a wheelchair. We wouldn't discriminate based on that. Happy to talk about specific Medicaid cases with this young lady up in the front. Thanks.

**Audience:** This isn't really a question. I'm one of the mobility managers. I drove four and a half hours here. I wasn't super excited about it. It is a long drive. I have to tell you guys, all of you really re-mined me about why we do it. I think a lot of the transportation professionals in this room will agree with me that you guys are the inspiration for why we do what we do. It matters. Our work matters. I really needed you guys to show me that so thank you.

**Santa Perez:** We don't bite, a lot.

## Raising Mindful Citizens

**Joanna Jezierska:** I work for University of Nevada Las Vegas. I am not an engineer. But I have been an educator for over 30 years. I am Polish American, raised in a Communist country. I have to tell you from the beginning, I had to be resourceful and extremely creative since growing up in a Communist country, you don't have access to a lot of things. Believe me, people with disabilities they have no access to anything there. Nobody even thought of them to have cuts in curbs. They never thought to have a lift on buses. Those folks were really ignored throughout at least six decades. So when I was growing up, I would watch my grandmother who could hardly walk. We didn't have a car to help her. We needed to be resourceful and very creative. This is my simple background of how my life I dedicated to help people and I simply created accessibility for them. My Ph.D. is in higher education leadership. My Master's degree specialized in educational methods, methodology of teaching. I currently work for director of multicultural program for health sciences. I am the one who works with young future engineers. What is it I need to do to make them mindful, respectful and aware of people's struggles and challenges? I have been using the method that I was part of inventing many years ago. It really works here in my classroom setting or simply workshops on my individual work with young people. From 2006 to the present I have been developing workshops for people. Not just students, faculty and staff, but for people in the community. The program I'm in charge of has a huge network and we are tied to workforce professionals who provide big support to our students. From 2004 and currently I am a recipient of a federal grant from the Federal Highway Administration in Nevada, the Department of transportation. They are helping, giving us money to run summer camps for high school students. It is usually a two-week residential camp on the UNLV campus and solely dedicated to transportation issues. This is how it works. Simple questions: How much do you know about yourself? Do you know your weaknesses or your strengths? What comes easy to you? What is your personality type? Do you know how to learn? What is your learning style? Have you ever taken those tests to find out who you really are? Because if you don't know who you are, I can tell you right now most likely you don't even know how to work in a group setting. You will struggle, not understanding the members of your group. That is one of the reasons if you went to college and if you remember those group projects, how some of the members did not really feel like working. You are getting angry and worried because the grade was given to all of you. The work was supposed to be spread out for all members but one person was working and the others didn't really.

If you know who you are, to find out who you are, I go from personality tests. I do go from learning style type tests. I will show you, that's why I'm saying it is an interactive session. You will have a chance to see some of this today. I challenge you to find out what is your brain dominance? Are you more artistic? Are you more analytical? Have you ever asked yourself this question? Why do you write with your right hand? Why do you write with your left hand? What implications does that have to you on your personality, how you process information, how you take information. In my working with students I do pay attention to the environment. What matters is how this person can contribute to the learning setting, to the learning process. How can they work within a group setting. If they have a challenge, how they can be supported. Not just by me but mostly with group members. I work with young engineers and these people need to know, because when they go to the workforce and start working professionally, usually you work with people who are mathematicians, designers, engineers, and they don't have social skills. They feel themselves the most compatible with devices, numbers, with themselves, but not really in social settings. We need to teach them people skills and how to be simply sensitive to other people's needs. I took classes how to really be analytical, how to solve problems.

You should not approach any problem without being very open minded, first of all. Then extremely sensible, but also flexible. And you have to listen to other people around you because everybody's perspective matters. You cannot just simply hear your own voice. I also encourage my students to exchange contact information. Especially in the classroom I have people with disabilities. In the college of engineering those folks have no idea or experience when it comes to disability in the classrooms. They don't know how to deal with it. That's where my role comes. I offer workshops, seminars, and sessions to make them sensitive and aware. By the time they actually join the workforce they are fully prepared because they already heard, they have been put through the experiences, what that means to have someone with a disability in a classroom, what it means to have someone, for example, who is a nonnative speaker. And you have a language barrier.

So dominance. You can test yourself. Do you like music? Are you more artistic? If you are, that is your right brain, you are a right brain dominant person. If you are more a language person, the words, numbers, if you are more analytical, then you are left hemisphere, left brain dominant individual. Your goal actually in life is to have those both hemispheres developed equally. That is where you become truly sensitive and mindful and aware citizens. Both hemispheres. You can do that. You can see someone and you can detect someone's brain dominance by the way they walk. Which leg goes first. Watch them. See how people cross their arms while they are sitting. Is it the right arm above or the left one? If I can see that someone is more creative, which is the right brain dominant person I can switch my language structure and talk to them. I can give them appropriate examples so they can communicate with me and understand me better. The same applies to someone who is left brain dominant. Then I have to throw numbers to the table, some statistics, so they can see me and comprehend me much better or whatever the context of the information I'm providing to them. It is very important to look at the body language. This is one of the best ways to find out which brain hemisphere is developed better. By looking at your thumbs. Look at the moon. If the moon of one thumb is bigger, higher, that is the brain dominance, that is the hemisphere developed better. Now, it might happen that you have those moons developed the same way. Then lucky, perfect, bingo, because your hemispheres developed equally the same. You are same way creative and analytical. That is the perfect state you want to be in. I do these exercises with my students all the time not simply information from me but I also want them to know more about themselves because the learning process, the teaching process is all about discovery.

This comes to the transportation, other disabilities, everything with what we actually encounter in our lifetime. When it comes to learning styles, now I wonder which style is yours? Are you more an eye person? Ear? Or action? If you were in a classroom and just go back in your memory, if you sat through lectures and you watch people, some people doodle because if a person just talks and they have no visuals, you probably lost one-third of your audience. Because in a classroom right now even with this group, I assure you I have people who are eye smart, kinesthetics and tactile and I have also the audio. You have to actually address every single learner in the classroom or people leave the classroom after the lecture saying what just happened? I didn't get anything. Of course, you didn't. It was not structured for you. I'm teaching my students about all of these learning styles so when they actually become professionals and will be doing designing and working, for example, in the transportation industry they will be paying attention to every single user or participant of a group.

Now we talk about building skills. How can I understand someone with mobility challenge? If you never lived through this experience you will never do it. We just heard the panel people and it is heart breaking how still right now we don't address those issues. We don't. We just simply put blinds on our eyes. We don't see them. We don't hear them. I have been using experiences from my students. Folks in my class groups are simply individuals who have no visible disability. I made them actually go through experiences so they will be mindful of other people's needs. That is very important to be empathetic to somebody else. Also remember this is a transferable skill, yes? It can be applied to children. It applies to seniors. You have to be patient. You have to understand. You can't question your mother. I have an 86-year-old mom. Sometimes I can lose my patience with her because I keep repeating the same stuff all over again and I have to stop myself. I really have to stop physically myself and say hey, she's old. She just doesn't get it. It is not the same she was 20 years ago. This skill being empathetic to someone else's needs, it is transferable skill to everybody in the society. Having patience, maybe you have somebody who doesn't respond right away because they have a comprehension issue. We apply the ten-second rule. Don't talk all the time. It applies to me because believe me, I can talk. I have to be very mindful about this. Ten-seconds rule. Give people time and space to answer. It is important, especially for young people. They have the instant generation because of the technology advancement, they need it like right now. It doesn't work. Tolerance. What you see right now on the screen, we are enriched when we are together, yet representing our uniqueness as individuals. That is actually the motto of the program at UNLV for the health sciences which I'm in charge of. This is our motto. We are individuals in the class and we all bring a lot of diversity to the group. As a group we represent, we are something together. We are actually the culture, but individually we also matter and we have to be respectful to our differences. Including disabilities.

Social skills. If you have ever met engineers, scientists, hmm, they are not people. They don't know how to talk. You have a conversation it is usually a monologue. They respond yes or no, very short answers. Again, my role is to teach them that they have to respond in full sentences. They have to pay attention and they have to listen. Flexibility and clear communication. This is a picture from students I work with. I put them through a lot of exercises. Blindfold them. One-person volunteer comes to the white board and doesn't know what they will be doing, but I leave the person in the hands of the group. The group knows they will be giving instructions to the blindfolded person and they are responsible to draw something according to the instructions given by the group. Do they communicate clearly? Usually no. If I want them to write a cat, that cat doesn't look like a cat as a final image, but that is okay. This is how they learn that they are not clear. The instructions were not good enough for the person who cannot see to simply put a drawing of a cat because they don't know what they are drawing. They simply listen to instructions.

Creativity, how creative are you? Think outside the box. Engineers, they solve problems. I tried to break that rule by organizing summer camps for students working alongside professionals from the industry and those young students bring that fresh perspective to the professionals, to their designs, to break that golden rule. We follow the established habits that are in existence. Look beyond the obvious. Have you been to the museums and you walk up to the painting and someone is standing half an hour in front of the painting and you wonder, what does that person see that I can't see? It is looking beyond the obvious. What do they see that I can't? It is important, guys. Being resourceful. Let's just give you a simple exercise. Simple object. A plastic bottle. Can you tell me what you can use this for? The audience said this could be used for dogs to play with, to get a drink, put your loose change in, recycling. Now this is a very simple thing you can do, take it to your families, your children, anybody, your friends. Start challenging people: What can you use this simple object for? This is how you become creative. Sitting and listening to other perspectives. By listening to other people's perspectives, you learn something. You may question yourself, why did this person say that? That's a good idea, I never thought about it. That is how you become resourceful by listening to other people's perspectives and the lens they look through. That could be a great way of teaching your brain, guys. This is the right hemisphere, right brain hemisphere. Responsible for your creativity.

So think of this because our goal, the future life is to have both hemispheres develop the same. By doing exercises like this it helps you to develop your brain cells to have both analytical and creativity develop equally the same. That is your goal. That's what you want to do.

Please look at the image. What do you see? This is beyond, to look beyond the obvious. What do you see? Does this woman look young or old? Someone sees a young woman, someone else sees an old woman. Can you see both? At the same time? Guys, these are brain teasers. I did not invent the wheel. You can just again Google brain teasers and they have zillions of hits with a lot of exercises that challenges your brain, challenges your creativity and thinking and looking beyond the obvious. Some people will see one thing. You will see something different. Where does this person see this? Ask. Come up to the person in the museums and tell me what you are seeing in this painting because I cannot see much. Ask them. I do all the time. People will tell you the story of what they see. They will take you on the journey of their perspective. Actually, this way this person enriches the way you see the world. Let's see another one. What do you see? Audience responds with flowers, a cat, profiles/faces. There are faces in this picture. Not just flowers but you actually have profiles of faces hidden in this picture. Can you see them? I have more people nodding their head. Do you see faces? They are profiles. I'm so far away from the screen, this is funny. This is a challenge to see something that maybe you don't see but others see. Then you are challenging your brain because your brain just got a signal that there is something else hidden. Now your eyes are trying to find that. You are challenging, not just your eyes but your brain to see beyond the obvious. That is the brain teaser. But their role is to simply make you more creative.

Values of peer mentoring. My students they have the responsibility of work with everybody in the group, regardless. They pay attention to their needs. First of all, when we talk about the generalized benefits of our peer mentoring is this element of being social. They make friends. They talk. They see each other. They have fun with each other. They congregate, not just because I divide them into groups to work on a project. They simply do a lot of things together. They support each other. It is very important. Now, they also help each other with reading comprehension, especially if I have someone in the group with a challenge. They simply read out loud to each other. They try to explain the context so people actually become an active participant of whatever they are working on. They are not left out. They are part of it. They contribute. You know, every single group or person I work with, they do have the element of public speaking. And then in their quest of becoming an engineer, there are a lot of benefits. Interpretation. Do we know how to read maps? Do we know how to read context of whatever the project is involved, data, statistics? They help each other. You always have someone in the group who is simply better with numbers. The numbers speak to them. So that is the responsibility to actually explain to others of how this works.

So how can we teach people to be more empathetic? I mentioned to you before there are a lot of exercises to go through. At some point at the college of Southern Nevada in Las Vegas I was in charge of the disability resource center. I was put as a special assignment temporary, but I stayed like for two years because the director left in the middle of the semester unannounced. She simply walked away right before midterms. She left 800 cases of students unattended. They asked me to jump in and help.

That was the best probably experience for me working with people with disabilities. So that was the moment that I actually had a fantastic background to use those experiences and develop certain exercises that I can simply use later.

For physical disabilities, you know, I always took a group of people and gave them tasks to do. And usually the culmination was like lunch. I bought lunch for those students. But I wanted them to put themselves in the situation of people with struggles. I put a person in a wheelchair. I said look, you have to go to a building, a building across the campus. They have to figure out the ramps, the access. They have to get around in the wheelchair. With crutches, or they are blindfolded. I have to figure this out with a white cane or you have to have someone next to you. They have to live through other people's challenges. I have to say even though those students were volunteers, it was the best experience for them because now they understand.

When it comes to mental impairments we apply challenges. I put students through exercises so they will be better citizens, better people in the future. I keep tell them you are walking right now but you never know what is going to happen in your life. When I had a 2016 car crash when someone hitting running a red light and I was put on crutches, it was the worst ever time in my life. I didn't know how to walk on crutches. I put myself in a brace because I could not walk on crutches. I was using braces instead. I'm doing this with my engineering students because I want to make sure when they build the bridge they think of all users, of all the people who will be using that bridge and this how to access them safely and comfortably. How they can use that structure.

In the classroom, those workshops are not simply aimed at students. I also include faculty and staff. A lot of my faculty within the college of engineering, like I said, they come from industry. They never were probably taught, never taken education classes. They are not aware of difficulties. So I do those workshops for them and invite them to be part of it. We have dimensions of diversity. I teach them about culture. I look like you but I am from Poland. How much do you know about my culture? I have to educate them about differences.

Change, how flexible are you? Change is a vital part of our lives. Are you adaptable? Can you change?

I am a sole recipient in the State of Nevada of federal money, it is called summer transportation institute. I have been given the federal money to organize two-week residential camps at UNLV for high school students. It does have an intense interesting curriculum. They have morning training with Army officers. It is not boot camp but it is a way of socializing. I do take my kids to the test site. I take them to the McCarran International Airport and RTC Mobility Center or FAST center which is the center that runs all the intersections in Las Vegas. There is a lot of great different places I can show them because my goal is to attract those young people to the transportation industry. STEM engineering, but transportation engineers is not just the vehicles. It is the infrastructure around transportation. That's why my business partners have so much interest in being part of it. They want to sell it. They want to market the company well to young people so that they can consider becoming a professional within their discipline or industry.

The day they arrive at UNLV I divide them into groups. The next day I have people coming from the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada. I have people volunteering, engineers, architects, engineers, designers, they come with real life projects, a slice of that project that is at the same time run in Vegas. When you become the professional, your images are stilted. You have already that golden rule that you go by. They need somebody else's fresh perspective. That is the partnership that I have with original commission RTC in Vegas. They will bring this project, show it to them and tell them exactly what they need to know. They will give them all materials, whatever is accessible to students. Think will be working with them for the next two weeks in groups.

I have to tell you the proud moment is four times we have already had those projects done, every single year it happened and RTC took a part. They picked pieces, elements, whatever they liked, whatever they needed they picked pieces of the student projects and incorporated that in their life. One slide is one group's presentation. You can see part of the disabilities element of the users that we have to be mindful of is part of this crowd project. You have access inequity. They have to be mindful of all users. If they are working on a pedestrian walkway or the traffic signal elements of the city, they have to think how this is going to impact someone who cannot hear or how a person who can see can safely cross the street. They have all the elements provided and they have to be mindful of that.

In closing, first of all, in my work I make sure that the environment, doesn't matter regardless what I do. The environment is friendly. It is safe and it is inclusive. Everybody participates. What I always say, the project is not complete until everybody contributes. It is very important that everybody, everybody's voice is heard. It doesn't matter what you said. You may say only, it wasn't that important. No, it was. It was what you wanted to say. You are part of it. Empathy, max factor, we have to pay attention to that. You have to be sensitive. Build confidence, consistency and work ethic.

## Taking Lyft in Northern and Southern Nevada.

**Amy Dewitt-Smith:** I'm the Executive Director of the Neighbor Network of Northern Nevada. We go by N4 for short. My background is working in the Aging and Disability Services division. I jumped over into the nonprofit sector. What is unique about this particular breakout session, I'm able to give the kind of grassroots startup nonprofit perspective while Dan, coming from a large public transit agency, I think it is unique to see that innovation and pilot projects can happen in a variety of settings. Some background on N4. We utilize the senior village model. We are fully inclusive. We are open to everyone. We are member driven and use a grassroots approach. We serve Northern Nevada, primarily Washoe County currently. We are looking to expand more into the rural counties as time goes on. Because we are tasked with building social capital and making sure that people have full inclusion to their community we can't ignore that transportation is a need in order to accomplish that. We use what is called a human centered design approach to our service design, and how we deliver services. Really what that means is we take our expert hats off. No matter what our board members or our staff or even our colleague’s expertise is, whether it's transportation or service delivery we take those hats off and try to be mindful about what the community is telling us it needs. For transportation in particular, we want to talk with people who are utilizing transportation services before we decide what the solution is.

Human centered design has three phases. There is that hear phase. That's where we spend as much time as we possibly can to really make sure that we are conducting public engagement activities, focus groups, meetings, one-on-one interviews. We really try to engage either members of our network or community members to do some peer to peer stuff. We have had really good success with peer to peer interviews. So building those kind of trusting relationships. Then we move into what is called the create phase. That is where we prototype various solutions and test out pilot projects and then at the very end we deliver. It just kind of has an iterative ongoing evaluation component to it to make sure if we need to make a change or something isn't working, we fix it.

Within N4 we have a time exchange program where our members can exchange services with one another. For example, if I babysit somebody's child for one hour I can bank that time and have another member give me a ride to the store or mow my lawn or teach me how to play guitar. We have a volunteer village that fills in some of the gaps of our time exchange. It is a way that we collaborate with other organizations in the community who might need to utilize volunteers. We make sure that we connect people in our volunteer village to other organizations who might speak to a cause that is really important to them. We also offer time credits for our volunteers who want to go out and help our community partners. We currently have a healthy community project funded by the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. At least monthly we are going to the community teaching people about specific health topics and showing them how to utilize Nevada Care Connection and 2-1-1, our ADRC, resource directory.

N4 connect is what I'll talk about mostly today, our shared ride program with Lyft and transit planning for all is a project that is funded by the CTAA. We just finished round one and are moving into round two. This is the engaging activities where we get into the community and talk to people about what they think transportation needs to look like. We come up with specific roles and ways that people can feel empowered to help in the planning process. Coming soon we will be starting our community care program. We just received some state funding to increase respite services. We have kind of a unique model for that.

So we have a strong focus on transportation because we can't build full community access and increase social capital if people are isolated and can't get where they need to go. Back in May of 2015 when we first incorporated we catapulted our design and our membership started after receiving funding from the national center for mobile management. This was specific to coming up with an innovative solution for people to access healthcare, getting to their doctor's appointments and to the pharmacy and such. In 2016 and 2017 we received funding from the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities to expand our volunteer transportation programs. 2018 through 2020, we have received FTA5310 funding from RTC up here in Washoe to expand our transportation as well as getting some wheelchair accessible vehicles. We are pairing those vehicles with share ride and going together with community members who may have an accessible ride sharing software to link them to community members who need the ride. Kind of making that as easy as possible for them. And then in 2018 and 2019 we have that CTAA funding to continue our inclusive transportation planning project.

Our shared ride pilot initially started because we subcontracted with a nonprofit called the Sierra Nevada Transportation Coalition, previously called City Care. And that very small pilot was money that was from the DD Council for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities living in that zone and we provided a gift card for them and they could have $160 of Lyft rides per month. We moved to 2017 and continued the shared ride model and moved to 75 percent discounted voucher again using the gift card model. As the program grew, we really could not use the Lyft gift card system anymore. It was making it harder and harder to send the gift cards. The banks didn't like to see numerous purchases on the same site so we had to go around that. In 2018 there were some changes in SNTC's administration and they had limitations to the funding and we brought the share ride program in house now called N4 connect and we were able to sign an agreement with Lyft to have vouchers dropped directly into participants' apps so we didn't have to go through the gift card process and we started using the Lyft concierge. This helped with people who don't have access to or aren't able don't want a smartphone. This allows us to put in special notes and things to the drivers as well.

N4 connect is designed to provide a means for people to access more affordable transportation options. We are now at 50 percent discounted rate. There have been conversations today about, what is interesting is when you pilot a program like this, people actually start to access their community more. It can grow exponentially and very quickly. Because of that we have had to kind of stretch our grant dollars as much as we can. Now it's that 50 percent discounted rate. Riders will pay a 50 percent copay and to use our concierge part of it there is a five to ten-dollar just monthly service fee to help cover the costs of our project coordinator.

For our personal smartphone option we provide a lot of education and support for people who maybe have never used Lyft so they know how to get the app on their phone and are comfortable requesting a ride. We are working with existing participants in supporting them and giving them a stipend to do some peer to peer teaching. There is actually someone here at the conference today who is learning how to teach other people not only how to use Lyft but also how to use the bus system and using a real nice peer to peer model for that. And then some people come in and start on the concierge program and through our information referral if they meet certain income eligibility requirements, they can get access to a smartphone. They can get a phone plan. Then we try to move them towards utilizing Lyft more independently. That is a strong philosophy within N4 that we start and meet people where they're at but we do our best to make sure they feel confident in doing things independently. Sometimes they start with concierge and they will owe move over to the smartphone option.

We have future plans coming in the spring. We will have our wheelchair accessible vehicle to use in the N4 connect program. We will continue to build partnerships with community members and organizations who might have wheelchair accessible vehicles in down times within their programs, that we might be able to add that vehicle to their pool, within our ride scheduling software. Using that flexible ride scheduling software, it will be able to be used. We may have volunteer rides some of the time. Maybe sometimes we're using it for time exchange and other times using it for the shared ride.

We do have a couple of upcoming events. Round two of our transportation planning service is held on Lakeside Court at Swill. We will have refreshments there and ask people to RSVP for that. We will go over the things we did in round one and talk about what we want round two to look like and ways we can implement the ideas and solutions that came out of round one.

**Dan Howland:** I'm the Director of Paratransit for the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada in Las Vegas. I am talking about the same day, on-demand pilot program. I’m also going to talk about how this pilot came to be, the nuts and bolts of how it was developed and what our next steps are.

We provided 1.3 million total paratransit rides in fiscal year 2018. We provide about 5,000 rides on any given weekday. At a cost of $51 million a year. That's a lot of rides. Our per ride cost is over $32 per ride. It is an expensive service. We have over 19,000 paratransit eligible customers in Southern Nevada. We have 10,000 - 12,000 that are active. However, they can ride fixed route for free with their paratransit ID.

Just a little bit of information on the paratransit service area. There are 39 fixed routes. By law, we must extend it by three-quarters of a mile. Paratransit is one of those services that is necessary and mandated. It is an unfunded federal mandate from the government. We provide this service for people who do not have access or cannot access the regular bus service, for either cognitive or physical reasons. A rider can call in and schedule rides one to three days in advance. The rider will be given a window of time for which the transportation will arrive on the day of service, which is typically 30 minutes. The bus then waits five minutes for the rider to board the bus. Same day rides with us, is not typically an option. We would certainly try if we had the capacity, but it is not something we can guarantee. We typically do around 25 (or less) same day rides per week. It is a difficult task for our organization to do. Paratransit, as some people have said, is cumbersome and clunky. You have to plan your life around it and you can't do anything spur of the moment. So with that being said, we wanted to save some money. We wanted to provide some freedom, independence and flexibility for paratransit pilots to cover this. We talked to some of our peers, LA Metro, OCTA, and the MBTA in Boston. My favorite was the discussions we had with MBTA. They lowered their fare for the TNC Lyft ride for their same day program, to what their paratransit ride actually cost. It was two dollars for a ride on their TNC pilot. They didn't put any caps on how many rides they could take.

Imagine in a metropolitan area like Boston, many people have a smartphone. They tried to subsidize the Uber or Lyft rides and it became a popular program, but too popular. The idea is to save money and provide convenience and flexibility. We learned a lot in that conversation. Due to this conversation we came up with the ride on demand pilot, which would allow for same day rides. We decided to charge the regular paratransit fare of $3 on the Lyft pilot and subsidize the next $15 up to 10 miles. You might ask why 10 miles? 10 miles is the average paratransit trip. If we have individuals who want to go beyond the 10 miles and beyond the subsidy, they have the option to pay the difference. We have over 200 rides on the pilot and the rider schedules the ride via the Lyft app. If they want to go beyond the subsidy, they pay it and know what the ride is going to cost them out-of-pocket before they take it. They may change their mind and decide they don't want to pay that.

We met with taxi companies because obviously we knew we wanted to have wheelchair accessible vehicles in this pilot and we knew that taxi companies had wheelchair accessible vehicles. The problem with the taxis was, they didn't want to agree to a rate that we would pay them, like we are paying Lyft for the subsidy of $15. They wanted to use the metered rate. And the taxi culture in Las Vegas is a little different than what it is in other parts of the country. They are owned and operated by a company, the drivers are employees. The metered rate was very important. We had multiple conversations and we couldn't come to an agreement. Uber was also apprehensive about sharing data with us. We wanted data on what our customers were doing. However, Lyft was a little more receptive to sharing data with us. We partnered with Lyft and started the pilot in February 2018, which is still taking place. We have provided over 20,000 rides, so far. One of the main obstacles we had to overcome to get to that point was accessibility and driver onboarding. A lot of people had a lot of apprehension and fear. The fear stemming from the thoughts that, “I'm going to get into a vehicle. I'm not familiar with the vehicle. I'm not familiar with the driver and I don't know if I trust opting into this program.”

Lyft was good about their non-discrimination policy and have done a great job with sensitivity training. We partnered with them and we have a web portal that Lyft has. All the information that we have provided them on sensitivity training and the needs of our customers, is on that web portal. They orient their new drivers to it and share it with their veteran drivers.

We also did outreach at some senior centers. They were also apprehensive about somebody strange going to pick them up. What turned the table for several of them to opt in, was their ability to rate the driver after their trip. They realized that there were consequences if the driver did not provide a good ride. We have just over about 215 individuals on this pilot now. Customer satisfaction has been excellent with this pilot. For the seniors without a smart phone, they have the ability to call into the call center and book a ride. 98% of ride users report overall satisfaction when booking through the app. 96% of users reported overall satisfaction from RTC, regarding this program.

The woman on this slide says “I am loving the freedom this program allows for. I love the professionalism of the drivers and the caring and customer concern.” This woman is on the board of Blind Connect in Las Vegas. They work with individuals who are blind and/or visually impaired to teach daily living skills. She is completely blind herself and uses the Lyft app with text to speech. She also brings her service animal with her on her rides and typically has around 22 rides per month via the Lyft app. She also uses paratransit, where she can pick and choose which ride she'll use for the Lyft. The more spur of the moment and the late-night rides, she chooses to use the Lyft same day on demand ride option.

WAV and Tango. WAV stands for wheelchair accessible vehicle. Like I said before we wanted taxis to be part of this program and we couldn't get them in there. Most people who use Lyft or Uber understand that the likelihood of them having a wheelchair accessible vehicle, is slim to none. We needed to create some equity with our pilot program, in the form of providing access for people in mobility devices who cannot transfer or fold down their mobility devices. We took some of our wheelchair accessible vehicles and we partnered with a small company in Las Vegas called Tango Car. We provided vehicles to them and they hired and trained the operators. They have done a great job doing that. They are operating the wheelchair accessible vehicles. Now we have folks that have mobility devices that can request same day rides and are part of our Tango pilot.

The next steps for our pilot include cost savings. With over 20,000 rides per month, if we did these rides on paratransit it would cost us $794,000. To do those same rides on this pilot with Lyft, the costs are around $374,000. Which is a 53% savings. We've realized the savings with this program have received high customer satisfaction remarks. Our next steps are to satisfy the FTA requirements for transporting individuals with mobility devices on our same day rides pilot, moving this to a program that is supplementing our paratransit service. Which we hope to do in the near future.

**Audience:** Is RTC doing background checks on the Lyft, WAV or Tango drivers?

**Dan Howland:** That is a big part and I'm glad you brought that up. We aren't able to do those background checks. Lyft and Uber TNCs, do what they do with respect to background checks.

**Audience:** Are you using 5311 or 5310 FTA funds for these?

**Dan Howland:** The money that we are using for the pilot is local money. We are purchasing vehicles with all of our federal funding. That makes life a lot easier for us.

**Amy Dewitt-Smith:** Dan, you did mention that there's the drug and alcohol screening and training for the shared ride drivers. But I think there's a really, really important point to make when we start to ask questions about additional regulations for people with disabilities and older adults to access services. When we start saying no, they can't use this service because we have to make sure that everybody has a background check or is fingerprinted. I understand the vulnerability in that and that can be very scary for parents and guardians and even people utilizing the services, but we are not adding additional barriers for people to access the service. There is dignity and risk. We have to make sure that people are making informed choices, so we are supporting them in accessing the different services and programs but not adding barriers or causing resentment. Drivers typically are thinking, “I have to do this extra thing because of this part of the population”. We don't want to go there.

**Dan Howland:** That is a great point. When we did our outreach, that is why we weren't forcing people on to this pilot. This is voluntary and you can choose to opt into it. Your point was a big concern of some people. You don't want to add extra regulations because you are not going to take the risk and you are not going to find those solutions. We are doing regular customer satisfaction surveys on a daily basis, with each employee and participant after they have taken a ride. The feedback is astounding. If you don't do a good job, you get immediate feedback from those customers. The customers love to have that ability and call it like they see it. If the driver is giving great service, they get a great rating. If they are not, they are probably going to be off this program.

**Audience:** But you said you can only take up to 250 right now.

**Dan Howland:** It is a small pilot because we have a paratransit service. It’s something that we want to turn into a program, to see where it can go from there. But we also have a huge demand for paratransit. We have a union workforce, for our contractors and we don't want to disrupt that either.

**Audience:** You said I think it was $160 for, 50 percent. Is it to purchase up to that dollar amount or they can only take one ride per month?

**Amy Dewitt-Smith:** Each person can purchase up to $160 worth of Lyft rides per month. If they purchase the full 160, it would cost them 80. If they only want to purchase $80, it would cost them $40. They can do the $80 twice a month. Some people are on limited income and can't get the whole $160 at once, we break it up for them. For the voucher program, we drop those ride credits into their app directly twice a month on the 1st and 15th. However, the concierge is a little different. They make their purchase and then they can utilize it any time throughout the month to schedule the ride and their credits roll over. If they don't use it in one month, it stays in their app or their account.

**Audience:** So are other states in the U.S. also doing this with Lyft?

**Amy Dewitt-Smith:** Yes, however, ours is a little different. Most of the transportation partnerships that Lyft has, they do the person's payment through the app and then whatever the discount is, they apply it. If they go over that, it will come out of their card per ride. Because our initial pilot was specifically for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, it can be tough if there are added charges coming out of their bank account, and a lot more risk for things being charged to their card. Due to this, we were pretty adamant about having a voucher system, where we collect the copay and then the person has the ride credits in their promo section of their app. They are not at risk of having their card charged every time they take a ride and not understanding that they went over the specified amount. I'm very thankful because Lyft really has gone out of their regular system to support our program. Typically, in other areas it looks more like a promo code. The participant would just enter in the code in their app and it would give them that special discount for their region, based on the ride.

**Audience:** Amy, on your service where you have a client who doesn't have a smartphone, how do they know where to meet the Lyft driver? If you have someone using the concierge service, where they are booking through you, how do you handle that end of it?

**Amy Dewitt-Smith:** We make sure, when we are scheduling that drive, we are very specific about the pickup and drop off location. We also ensure that the person understands where they need to go and that they have five minutes to get out their door and to the driver, so they don't drive off. We have a way to put in special notes. It's a little bit more on the driver to find and identify the person because they don't have that app. They have the rider's phone number. There have been times, where the person will call our office and the office will coordinate with the driver and the dispatcher to answer those questions.

**Audience:** My question is for Southern Nevada, are they required to have a smartphone to be able to opt into this program?

**Dan Howland:** No, but the vast majority of them do. For those that do not, they can call into our call center and book through the call center. We do have customers in this program who book their Lyft rides in advance. Some of them are booking through the call center same day an it's similar to what Amy said the process is.

**Audience:** Can you tell us what internal trainings and certifications the drivers are receiving for the vehicles they are driving? If I had someone, a family member who needed that service and they utilized paratransit otherwise, how can you assure us that they aren’t getting a car with someone who maybe has a reckless driving record, DUIs or something similar? If something happened, who assumes that liability? Is that a two-party situation where you guys might end up being sued and the driver is sued?

**Dan Howland:** I think Amy made a great point with that. It would really shut the door on folks if we were so proscriptive. We found that Lyft has done a very good job with respect to vetting their drivers and removing drivers that should not be on the program. I wouldn't say it is trust, but it is a partnership and where they have proven to be a really good partner. There is some indemnification involved there. I can give you expert information, but I would have to go back and talk to my friends who pretend to be lawyers and get that information for you. While there is some liability, there is also some indemnification. These are very good questions. I'll provide you with my card.

**Amy Dewitt-Smith:** Lyft does do the driver screening. They also have a very specific vehicle inspection process. I have known people who wanted to drive for Lyft but if their car was past a certain age, they wouldn't be able to utilize their vehicle. There are specific requirements with driving records, as well as the vehicle and its safety.

**Dan Howland:** I would agree they have done a very good job with setting standards for the age and the condition of the vehicle.

**Audience:** So what about passenger assistance driver training? If they are using a lift, do they know how to use the lift properly and properly secure the rider? We require that.

**Amy Dewitt-Smith:** Right. That is hopefully our next steps with N4 connect. We are really focusing on getting additional accessible vehicles because of our shared pool. If you are from the North, we don't have that option currently in our community. Along with that we would focus on recruitment of drivers. Then they go through the sensitivity training and learn how to utilize accessible vehicles. This is on the horizon for us and the newest thing that we would like to try out and see if we can get it going here. Lyft has this training in some cities but not others. In the North, we don't currently have a way to select an accessible vehicle in the app, which is another thing we are pushing toward in some of the systems changes.

**Audience:** Thank you. Do you know if anybody has tried to do this with a nonprofit rather than with a for-profit situation? I mean, open source software versus proprietary software? Volunteer drivers versus paid drivers? Do either of you know if there is anything like that happening that you are aware of?

**Amy Dewitt-Smith:** I want to make sure I understand your question. N4 is a nonprofit. Do you mean in partnering with a not-for-profit company for a shared ride? There is currently a project in, I believe, Massachusetts, that is piloting their own shared ride app and it is a nonprofit doing it. I am interested to see how the pilot turns out to see if there are other options. It doesn't have to be a partnership with Lyft. There are Lyft, Uber and other systems as well.

**Audience:** The idea would be like a free bus, where if I'm driving down the street and I have a vehicle and I have been vetted properly, that if someone had an app and they found out that I was driving down their street, they could hail me. I could pick them up and take them to whatever destination was closest on my ride and in this case, everybody would be happy at the end of it.

**Amy Dewitt-Smith:** I do think there are car pool apps out there. I am not sure what that looks like in our community, but it is certainly something I can look into.

**Dan Howland:** I'm familiar with it happening in the rurals, but I am not familiar with it happening in Nevada. As Amy said, there are car pool apps, but as far as picking people up for the purposes of transporting them to and from another location like Lyft or Uber, I am not aware of that happening. It's a great idea. I have heard through those type of volunteer programs, there's a lot of attrition with those too. I don't think people realize what is involved. The expense of wear and tear on your vehicle as well.

## Past Projects, Discussion, Lessons Learned, and Future Considerations.

**Catherine Nielsen:** I want to take the time right now to thank you for being here. If you have a moment, please fill out the survey in your bag or go online and fill out the digital survey.

Through our office, we put a lot of grants out in the community. We try to support a lot of systems change. We have obviously granted out to different organizations, who have provided different input and different projects for us as well. However, there are other projects in the community that were not funded by the Council, that we felt were very important and we’ve asked them to provide information to you today, as well.

Today we have with us 7 of our guests, 6 of which had a grant in our office and another that had a project running out of UNLV that was quite superb. While we had the Transportation Experts Panel during our lunch session, these presenters will be answering questions from the other side.

We have Steve Decker from the Family Support Council, Emily Davis from TSI (Transition Services Inc.) in Las Vegas, Cheyenne Pasquale from Aging and Disability Services, Sam Lair from the Kenny Guinn Center, Abby Wheeler from Elko County Transit, Joanna Jezierska from UNLV and Amy Dewitt-Smith from N4.

We’ve asked each of them to please answer a few questions about each of their projects. They have five to seven minutes each to talk about it and we'll open up for any questions you may have. There are index cards in the middle of the tables, if you don't feel comfortable asking questions. We will have staff members with microphones walking around.

Question one: What was your transportation project or what aspects of your project involved transportation for people with disabilities?

Question two: What are one or two barriers they encountered regarding accessible transportation in the project?

Question three: What can we take away from your project that will guide future efforts in obtaining accessible transportation?

**Steve Decker:** Family Support Council had the wild idea that Uber and Lyft are not the only companies that should have a way to manage their transportation systems online and provide accessible transportation for people with disabilities. Our grant project was to build an open source scheduling platform and pilot that we could then use ourselves, but also share with other organizations which we have done. This allows us to provide individuals with developmental disabilities the ability to call into our office or to use an online platform to schedule their rides. They can do this either through smartphone or regular computer to request rides. We then use our little fleet of vehicles to take these people where they want to go. One of the vehicle is a '77 1-ton Ford flatbed pick-up. The quality is awful and the average cost per mile is 21 cents.

The most common barrier encountered was that people didn't want to schedule the ride in advance. They just wanted the ability to take a ride now. “Why can't I go to the store this very minute?”

A very common problem with anyone who needs transportation is the inability to just go. Though we were able to shorten the time that people needed to request rides, we still had to have a 24-hour window to be able to book a vehicle, staff, and get people taken where they wanted to go. The biggest barrier over and over, was the time frame.

What we learned from the project is that we are a small little nonprofit in Douglas County, Nevada. If we can do it, the big city folks can.

They don't really have any excuses as to why they shouldn't have access to this type of technology and use it and make it available for people with disabilities who want to go places. So that was our take-away. If we can do it, anybody can do it.

**Emily Davis:** For those of you who aren't familiar, transition services inc. is a job and day training service in Las Vegas. We serve 400 adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Our project was funded by the Council 2017-2018 and was twofold. Part of our grant was a transportation travel training program and the other part was an employment program.

We actually tied those goals together by identifying folks that wanted to participate in the travel training program and help them come up with goals that they wanted to achieve both on site and in the community. We were able to tie that to employment goals. If they wanted to do career exploration, job shadowing, volunteering, etc. this actually helped us overcome one of the biggest barriers, which was a lack of interest. Most of our folks rely on paratransit services to get them to and from work. A lot of the comments I received were along the lines of “I don't need to learn to travel by myself. I have staff, an RTC bus, I don't need to.” By tying these to the activities we increased the interest that our folks had in travel training quite a bit.

One shining story I like to share is about a gentleman in our program. He got booted from RTC at one point because he had some behavioral challenges that made that not an option for him. From that point on, he didn't care. He didn't want to learn to take the bus. He relied on people he knew to get him out into the community. Then when he got a job, his staff said “look, we can't take you this far. It's too far for us to be able to go.” He went from having zero interest and low skill in traveling independently, to being able to take a one-hour fixed bus route ride to and from work independently several days a week. He was then able to hold that up to his peers as an example of what you can do when you succeed. It helped motivate a lot of his peers to participate as well.

Another barrier was related more to economics. We do a five to one ratio normally. Five of our participants with one staff person. It is challenging to provide travel training when you have five folks because their needs, goals, abilities can be very different.

This has remained difficult and a challenge that we are all looking together to try to solve. As far as being able to pay support staff to be out there the community and training folks to learn how to travel more independently.

The big take away, I think for us is really tying goals together. A lot of times there is not anything super appealing about learning to take a bus in this case. It's not only, “I’ve always wanted to do this”. When we say, “let's get you a job and this is a skill to get you there”, it's a lot more appealing.

One of the other take-away was that folks didn't have a lot of interest. We need those early adopters, the first couple people who are on board and yeah, they want to do this. They do it, have fun and success and then come back and talk to their peers about the success that they had. This would kind of ease the more apprehensive folks into the idea of joining in and participating. There's just something about peer support, that as an instructor, it doesn't always sink in. When it is coming from a peer, often times they are a lot more likely to participate, when they see the coworkers and peers are having fun with it as well.

Two other things I didn't take note on previously but that did come up in previous sections. One is etiquette training, people with and without. We are incorporating it as being mindful of other people and as pedestrians. For example, don't stand in front of a curb cut, if you don't need to use it. Be mindful of people standing still on a sidewalk, when someone using an electronic wheelchair needs to go by. We can be mindless and stand on the sidewalk and take up space.

The other one in Las Vegas, I don't know if we can handle, is the weather. Transportation is limited because we can't be in 110-degree weather at a bus stop or waiting to cross the street. If anybody has ideas on how to beat the 100-degree weather, let us know.

**Cheyenne Pasquale:** I'm with Aging and Disability Services Division. We called our project Go Nevada, a self-directed transportation program. We offered individuals up to $200 per month to use for their transportation needs. They could use these funds however they chose to.

It wasn't a check in their hand, but it was a reimbursement basis. Because it was a pilot project we had 23 active participants. On average our participants spent about $140 of the $200. The average age was 31. Our eldest person was 58 and our youngest was 21.

We had a lot of lessons learned. I think that one of the barriers that we experienced was in enrolling participants and the reimbursement process. When we first tried to enroll participants, we’d meet with the families and individuals in person. This became a challenge. Our next idea was to have our transportation coordinator try do the enrollment through email. We’d have to make sure the families and the individuals, filled out the state vendor form and the enrollment application through email, while walking through this process with them on the phone. This was a little bit of a challenge. For those who chose to do a mileage reimbursement for family or friend providing their transportation, getting those mileage reimbursement forms in, in a timely manner really became a challenge for us.

We got a lot of really positive feedback and if the opportunity presents itself for us to do it again, absolutely, we are going to try.

Our three most popular options were mileage reimbursement for family and friends, bus passes and ride share services. I think that having that option to have a budget for transportation and being able to explore different options was important.

We had some families who used a combination of all three of those options to maximize their transportation with that $200. We had an individual who had an opportunity to go out for happy hour with one of her friends and that was something that she had never had the opportunity to do before, but because she had this budget and was able to use a little bit of that for a ride share. While most of her transportation went for work stuff, which she did through bus passes and mileage reimbursements, the ride share gave her that opportunity to do her happy hour. These are important things in life.

Those are our take-aways. Giving that flexibility with the budget, giving more options than just the one. I can take you to work with this transportation or I can take you to your medical appointment. But having variety was the key.

**Sam Lair:** I’m with the Kenny Guinn Center. This is an important conversation to have and we are happy to be part it.

Our project was primarily a data driven report, that you can find in your conference materials. This report tried to highlight the barriers that people with disabilities have when it comes to accessing transportation. On top of that, trying to engage with some of the stakeholders that are part of this problem or want to see the problem solved and trying to engage how we can come up with solutions.

Briefly, I want to give you background information. The Guinn Center acknowledges that people with disabilities rely heavily on public transportation to get where they need to go especially when it comes to accessing medical care. As well, adults with disabilities are twice as likely as those without disabilities to have inadequate transportation, 31 percent versus 18 percent, a real gap.

The figure I want to hit on, nearly 2 million people have disabilities in the U.S., many never leave their homes. They don't do so because they don't have access to appropriate transportation, whether that is through general access, they don't have a bus route near them or because of cost inflation they can't afford that. This is important. 560,000 people across the United States that could be integral parts of our society that aren't given an opportunity to be part of it.

As mentioned earlier, public transportation is a big part of it. This is a large problem, especially in Nevada. We've seen this huge population increase over the past 10-20 years, but we haven't necessarily planned and thought out further about how we are going to take our transportation infrastructure and be able to handle all this increase of people coming to the state, especially with our high transiency level. The lack of planning to make sure we have the correct levels, affects two groups more than most. One, people of low income and second, people with disabilities.

There are private organizations, other stakeholders and nonprofit organizations that try to act as stop gaps but they can only do so much. We have seen a lot of organizations not have the ability to get the funding that they require, match funding or grants, and some of that might be just because they may not be aware of the grants that they have available to them. Also, it can be in part, that some organizations might not have the regulations that allow them to easily apply for those.

With that background information established, the Center and the roadblocks report that I just mentioned, what we want to try to do is frame this issue with data and information so that individuals trying to deal with it can fully understand the scope of it. On top of that we wanted to begin the conversations like we are having right now so we can give the stakeholders in the community have some sort of private fleet of transportation. This way we can kind of pool together our resources and figure out how we can make a tangible effect on this problem without the necessary additional funding that we need.

I think two of the big successes our project had so far, one, getting this information out there. Whether it is law makers, RTC, or nonprofit organizations, whatever the stakeholder is, it is important that they have the information and data so they understand the entire scope of the problem we are trying to do, which I think we accomplished here in the report.

Furthermore, it has been important for us to identify a lot of stakeholders in this room right now that want to see this issue solved. That way we can start creating those conversations.

However, the biggest barrier we have seen so far, that the Guinn Center laments, is that we haven’t been able to identify the stakeholder that care about the issue and want to see it solved. On top of that we pointed to the numbers and the facts showing that it is a problem. We have the tools and the resources to fix it. We have had problems with getting these representatives around the table, like we are right now, so we can have the conversation and start to pour resources together and figure out how to tackle the problem.

Moving forward we hope this is a continuing conversation with multiple meetings and stakeholders so we continue to work towards a solution. We are hoping in the next five to ten years to make a tangible, measurable impact on the problem we are facing here today.

**Abby Wheeler:** My project, that I worked with the NGCDD on a few years ago, was focused on the rural areas. One of the things in the rural areas that we found was that it is hard for transit providers to break away from their schedule to do training for transit-required trainings like PASS and driver training.

I had this idea we could put something together online that would be for the rural Nevada providers. A lot of times these people are wearing multiple hats. They are a nutrition director at a senior center, taking care of transit/transportation and they are taking care of six other programs as part of their job. To try to make things simple, it is a lot of work for them to break away from doing all of their other jobs to come in. They would have to travel to train, however, they would have a full day of travel, the training time and then another full day of travel to return.

This fed into supporting people with disabilities because they need the accessible transportation and it went hand-in-hand. It wasn't 100 percent focused on just people with disabilities, but of people as a whole community.

The successes I came out with, was the beginning of what became our mobility manager grant program. It was the baby steps that caused me to do further research into mobility management.

After this grant closed and as some things flourished on the state level, we got NDOT and Aging and Disability Services to help us fund a mobility manager position in northeastern Nevada and northwestern Nevada (we already had a mobility manager in Southern Nevada). That was a big success. The barrier I ran into, was that I am one person. There is just not enough time or enough of me to go around. There were some things that if I could go back, I would have done better. Including hiring more staff, though hiring prior is difficult. Additionally, volunteers are far and few between, especially in the rural areas.

The greatest success was leading into the mobility manager programs that we now have in place.

**Joanna Jezierska:** I'm the multicultural director of health sciences. I have a different grant to talk about. I am going to acknowledge one person in the room because there is no way I could do this grant by myself. Erin Breen, the director of UNLV transportation. It is a nationwide grant that comes from Federal Highway Administration and Department of Transportation, which is supported by NDOT here in our state. It is called National Semi-Transportation Institute. Every university in the country is open to apply. If they are awarded the grant, they run a two-week summer camp for students. Ours is for high school students, incoming sophomore, juniors and seniors. The goal is to attract young people into STEM industry, with the focus on transportation.

Every camp has around 20 (up to 30) students at UNLV for two weeks. They have to stay for two weeks and do not come and go. They live in the dorm so they can have a real college experience. They also dine in the dining commons with other students on campus. They are with us and we teach them every option possible and expose them to every possible career within transportation industry.

For the students, they come wake up 6:00 o'clock in the morning every day. It is not beach time or the type of summer vacation most have in mind. The time they spend with us is very intense. By 6:15 they’re outside on the law, exercising with Army officers. Why? Because we want those folks to socialize with soldiers, officers, but also to provide the officers with the opportunity to interact with high school students. They exchange information about transportation within the military. However, this is not boot camp. They have fun for half an hour every day.

As soon as they eat breakfast around 8:30 in the morning, we go on a field trip and load onto buses. Between breakfast and lunch, we connect with different workforce partners. I am lucky to have Erin with me working on that initiative because she is well connected.

We have access to a lot of people from the industry. I can assure you, almost every single November I get phone calls from organizations asking if we are hosting this program again, because they would like to be part of it. We have more people coming forward with opening doors to the facilities and careers to expose those young people. But more than we can actually accommodate because that is only 14 days. However, the field trips are just one component. We have something that is just so unique. We have experts from original transportation commission of Southern Nevada coming forward and we have all these engineers, experts, and designers and architects coming to us with real life projects that are currently running in the city. We don't have to make them up. The organizations provide information on projects they are currently working on.

They come and participate because they want young people's perspective. They want to participate because they can see the problems and find solutions to whatever problems they encountered. They are working with them alongside for two weeks. We bring the participants to construction sites and other locations to see how the project has been done, built and run.

The students work in groups and from the beginning of day one, they start working within the groups on the project and their solutions. They compete against each other for a grand prize.

Within 14 days they go through the entire process from coming up with an idea, researching and completion of a project, for example building a model. They help and support each other. At the end of the 14 days they present their project within a group to our jurors. One group is selected for the grand prize.

My role is to make sure that we attract young people to STEM engineering careers. There is a lot of math and science and they are required to be at the minimum algebra level math. We encourage incoming sophomores because they take algebra in high school and they can properly utilize the knowledge.

It is an intense two weeks, but a great opportunity. There is no cost to students and all expenses, including travel, are covered by the Federal grant.

The biggest barrier that I encounter for the past four years has been with recruiting. We have not yet had a student with disabilities. This presents a challenge, we are working on projects and we incorporate ADA compliance. We talk about unique challenges. The future engineers need to be aware of what challenges they may go through when they are designing something or working on a project. However, we have never had a person with a disability attending our camp. This is a problem. We are thinking, why is that? Why we don't have students with disabilities applying to become part of this great opportunity?

Now, how can we connect? I'm standing in front of you right now. This is a great platform to start spreading the word. My pledge is and I'm asking right now, because I have in the room a lot of representatives from different groups who work with people with disabilities. Spread the word. Talk to people. I want you to be part of these great initiatives. This is a statewide program for all students throughout the State. Please, share this information with them. I'm currently recruiting for summer camp that will start July 21 through August 3.

I can assure you that if I have a student with disabilities, they will be provided with full support. Please spread the word. If you go on www.UNLV.edu/multicultural, you will find the flyer and information packet. Encourage students to attend. Additionally, I would like to see participation from your agencies. I would like to connect, if you would like to be part of the grant.

**Amy Dewitt-Smith:** I've spoken with most of you so far today. I am with the Neighbor Network of Northern Nevada, we go by N4 for short.

I never would have believed that somebody would have told me I was going to work in transit. My background is Aging and Disability Services and I worked for the State for ten years and then started N4. But I quickly discovered that in order to build a community that is fully inclusive and ensures that people have full community access, we have to address the transportation problems in our community.

With that being said, we partnered with the Sierra Nevada Transportation Coalition on a couple of grant funds that we received from the DD Council. The first was a mini grant, where we were able to start our time exchange program. That was really just about linking people with intellectual and developmental disabilities into our time exchange; discovering what their assets and talents were. Flipping the script. People so often focus on their diagnosis and how they are eligible for their service. We used an asset based approach to discover what people can do and what they enjoy doing. They can earn time credits doing those things in order to receive support from other members for things that they need.

For example, if someone is passionate about animals and want to walk somebody's dog every week they can bank that time and have somebody else give them a ride. Our mini grant was getting that program going as well as recruiting community members willing to be mentors and providing technical assistance for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to utilize our time exchange.

In 2017, we received a little bit larger grant to start our volunteer driver program as well as start the beginning stages of our shared ride pilot project. Within our volunteer ride program, it was pretty simple. Connecting volunteers who were open to giving rides with people in our network who needed them. With our pilot with Lyft, we provided 100 percent free Lyft gift cards for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who lived in the non-ADA zone where paratransit isn't operating.

We were able to figure out some of the systems and processes that we needed to have in order to expand that. And now we have expanded that into what we call N4 connect. It is now a voucher system. It is at a 50 percent discount. We have over 150 people who participate in that program, and we also have a concierge option. If people do not have a smartphone or don't have a desire to learn how to request a ride through a smartphone, they can call our office and we schedule a ride for them. We put special notes in the system so the driver knows what they might need to be looking for or do to support that person.

Some barriers that we encountered were mostly some of the tracking and the system stuff with having a volunteer program. It is the best and most cost-effective way of tracking volunteers and communicating opportunities while linking them with members as well as making sure that we have a solid way to provide instruction for people to use technology, if they need support with that. Muddling through a pilot in that way and figuring out the best, most effective way to use it.

Some of the take-aways from our projects would be that I have really enjoyed building collaborative partnerships with other community organizations through our grant projects. Even just people on the stage here, learning more about the No Wrong Door System with Cheyenne and Steve has helped us get through some of our technical difficulties in coming up with the ride scheduling. It is always awesome to meet other people in the community who really understand that it just takes us all working together to build a strong community, and to know that there is a benefit in that.

I feel very fortunate to be on the nonprofit side of things and getting to try stuff out. Messing up and learning and moving on, trying something different and having a lot of really awesome colleagues who are in it with me.

**Catherine Nielsen:** Thank you all so much for providing that information. We are going to open up the floor now for any questions that you guys might have for these organizations. If you don't feel comfortable asking them, you can write them on the cards. Do we have any questions? (No questions)

Awesome! Thank you all for being here and providing that information to us.

I would like to now invite our Executive Director Kari Horn up for closing remarks. Thank you all.

**Kari Horn:** I'm going to take the time to reiterate how grateful we are to have all of you here. This was a much better turnout than we ever expected. Two of my favorite sayings are "it takes a village" and "nothing about us without us." Both of those sayings were fulfilled today. We can't do anything without the support that you all do. The grants that the Council provides are mandated to be innovative pilot projects. Pilot projects are messy. They are about learning what works and what doesn't work. That is always the key of how we move forward.

Again, I just want to thank everybody for coming out today. All of the volunteers that put in hard work, all of the agencies. We had at least 30 to 35 agencies from across the state represented here today.

For Nevada that is a heck of an accomplishment. You know, we all work in silos, but hopefully we can start the process of moving forward. Those of you who don't know about the Council, it's made up of 60 percent individuals with disabilities and family members. They are the guiding force behind what we do. I am the Executive Director but they are my bosses. I work for them.

They are the ones that make the decisions and sometimes the grant process, some of the grantees here can attest, it is not always easy, but I think in the end we have had some great results. I am so excited.

Going back to Abby's grant is when I first started with the Council six years ago. We don't have a lot of money. You take the pockets of money but look at where we are today. As David showed us earlier, that it is possible and we can move forward. What I am going to propose to the Council is that in the next Federal Fiscal Year, we put our transportation funds into creating a statewide committee or council, to keep this conversation going because we have all the right stakeholders in the room. We have all seen what we can do when we had the Employment Summit and we had the right stakeholders around the room. When we had the Autism Summit 15 years ago, now we have ATAP funds.

We have all seen what we can do. We are going to facilitate the conversation going forward. We hope to have your support in doing that.

I'm going to remind you again, please, please, please fill out the surveys because we are responsible for federal funds. It is available online and we welcome constructive feedback. Just like with our grants. We want to know what worked and what didn't work. We are not going to put one of these on every single year because it just about killed my staff. However, we are going to keep the conversation moving forward. Also, in September we are looking at holding a statewide self-advocacy Summit in Las Vegas. We hope to see you guys there. Again, thank you so much. We couldn't have done this without you. Thank you for coming out, David, and for providing the resources and lessons you learned.

One thing I take away from conferences is the networking, even more than the sessions. The reason we are here today is because of the connection I made with Shelly from the Florida Council. It progressed to this point. It can be done. Thank you, everybody!

Presentation materials for sessions can be found on our website <http://www.nevadaddcouncil.org/transportsummit/>

# Survey Feedback:

• I learned a lot at the summit and I am grateful for that, I just wished that there was more info on helping our rural areas.

• The connections made with other professionals within my own county were invaluable. To see the programs and pilot programs in southern Nevada gave me great insight on what could be possible for the future transportation of rural areas. What I least liked was the closing. Maybe there could be a time limit on the answers. Overall the information and connections made were incredibly valuable. Thank you all for your hard work in putting this amazing summit together for us.

• Would like to have round table discussions to be able to continue this discussion. Sensitivity training would be a good topic for transportation providers.

• I enjoyed hearing the various speakers give their presentation and learn about the different transportation options that are available. Also, what agencies are providing transportation services, and the obstacles that people are facing throughout the state of Nevada. It was a pleasure to be part of the lunch/transportation experts panel.

• Hearing first-hand experiences from individuals with disabilities using the transit services.

• Great Summit. Loved hearing from the folks living with disabilities and hearing more about their perspective. Networking was good! Atlantis very good! It got really cold after lunch with the AC.

• The information was valuable and useable to help others in our community. So glad to address concerns for people with disabilities. Thank you for doing this summit.

• A great mix of attendees, panelists, and topics. Folks were extremely engaged. The expert panel during lunch was extremely beneficial to understand the community's need to access transportation.

• Extremely satisfied and the information was extremely valuable. I found it helpful getting to meet + network with so many different professionals in the field. I gained so much knowledge by programs I wouldn't ordinarily know existed.

• Gathered excellent info for advocating

• I liked many of the brake out sessions especially the one on finding funding for your projects. I still see transportation as a huge problem especially travel to employment.

• Best - This was my 1st conference as a self-advocate.

• I really enjoyed the networking from organizations to individual transportation affects and the outside of state keynote speaker, to talk about programs that have worked.

• The information was very informative and I learned a lot. There was not anything that I did not like about the summit.

• I really enjoyed the presentation by RTC Southern Nevada Showing our technical innovations affecting transit and traffic. The ADSD presentation on Go-Nevada was very good. My favorite part was the networking and meeting new people.

Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

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# Thank You to the Following for Their Contributions and Support

Nevada Statewide Independent Living Council

Neighbor Network of Northern Nevada

Nevada Department of Transportation

Nevada Public Health Foundation

Regional Transportation Commission North and South

Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division

Nevada Disability Advocacy and Law Center

Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities

Southern Nevada Transit Coalition

Access to Healthcare

Greater Elko Transit

Florida Developmental Disabilities Council





