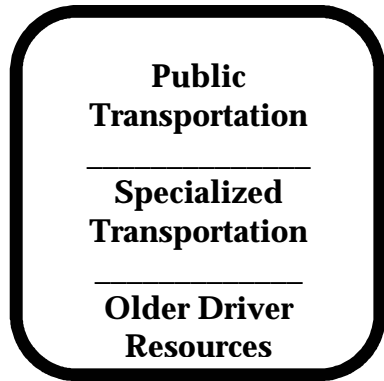


Ride Guide:

Senior Transportation Options in the Greater Austin Area



**Information compiled by:
West Austin Caregivers
In collaboration with
2003-2004 Leadership Austin Action Team**

**Printed May 2004 by:
The Community Action Network
with assistance from
Advanced Micro Devices, Inc**

Community
Action Network

Leadership Austin

Introduction

Many older Americans think giving up the car keys means giving up independence. In the Austin, TX area, that does not have to be the case. There are in place some transportation options for seniors through public and private transportation programs and specialized services.

This transportation guide will aid you in finding the transportation option that best suits your needs or the needs of someone you know. It also includes facts, and a true/false quiz pertaining to transportation needs of older adults.

The **RIDE GUIDE** started as a project initiated by the Beverly Foundation and the Easter Seals Foundation. These foundations chose West Austin Caregivers as one of seven national senior transportation programs to pilot test a Senior Transportation Guide template in their respective communities. The project locally grew into a collaborative effort between West Austin Caregivers, the Aging Services Council, Community Action Network, Leadership Austin and Advanced Micro Devices, Inc.

West Austin Caregivers and the 2003-2004 Leadership Austin Senior Transportation Action Team made every effort to assure the entries of local services are accurate. Some content was supplemented by information from *Aging: Every Generation's Concern...A Guide for Elders and their Caregivers* published by the Gray Panthers of Austin, with that organization's permission.

If you have any questions, or would like additional copies of this booklet, please write or call:

WEST AUSTIN CAREGIVERS
2601 Exposition Blvd.
Austin, TX 78703
(512) 472-6339
wacaregivers@juno.com

Preface

Senior Transportation for some is...

- ...seen as a one-way street – getting services to seniors; **but really it is a two-way street for it also involves getting seniors to services, and to life.**
 - ...perceived as the domain of the public and paratransit systems; **but it also is the domain of community groups, clubs, senior centers, meal programs and private providers.**
 - ...viewed as getting people to quantity of life services and support; **but it also involves quality of life opportunities.**
 - ...thought of as meeting service needs for the frail elderly; **but it also can be seen as providing the means for enabling well seniors to be productively involved in their communities.**
 - ...approached as a senior problem for seniors to solve; **but the solution can also be addressed by caregivers, community groups, and transportation providers.**
 - ...seen as problematic with the solution being creating new programs; **but the solution can also be adapting existing options to be more senior friendly.**
-

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True/False Quiz

The following 10 questions are to test your knowledge about senior transportation. Please mark each statement with a “T”–true and “F”–false.

- ①__ 90% of people over the age of 65 continue to drive their automobiles (have valid driver’s licenses).
- ②__ Dial-A-Ride programs only provide transportation to people who are disabled.
- ③__ Recent research indicates that most people should be able to continue driving throughout their life.
- ④__ Less than 5% of the population in the US use public transportation.
- ⑤__ Every city in the US is required to provide public transit services to its residents.
- ⑥__ Volunteer drivers for individuals or organizations must report any payment for mileage to the IRS.
- ⑦__ Volunteer drivers that use their own vehicles need personal auto insurance.
- ⑧__ Adults 65+ have the highest pedestrian death rate of any age group, even children.
- ⑨__ The 85+ population will grow 30% in the United States by the year 2009.
- ⑩__ Rural communities get more than their fair share of transportation dollars.

ANSWERS FOUND ON PAGE 20

Transportation Considerations

Whether you are looking for transportation for yourself, or you are a caregiver in search of transportation for seniors, you may want to consider the following questions before deciding on a transportation option. Then use these questions to gather information that is more detailed from the transportation provider you are considering.

1. What is the service area?
2. Is there a limitation on distance?
3. How much will the service cost?
4. Do insurance companies pay for rides provided by the service?
5. Are there requirements to qualify for the service? If so, what are they?
6. Is there an evaluation that must take place prior to the first ride?
7. Is there a required membership fee that must be paid before scheduling rides with the service?
8. How far in advance must riders make reservations?
9. Are rides available in the evenings, on weekends or on holidays?
10. Are rides only for medical appointments and grocery shopping?
11. Is service door-through-door, door-to-door or curb-to-curb?
12. Are people who use wheelchairs able to use the service?
13. Do riders stay in their wheelchair, or must they transfer to a seat during the ride?
14. Is there an escort or attendant in the vehicle with the driver?
15. Does someone stay with me/my family member during appointments?
16. Can a family member serve as an escort? If so, is there an extra cost associated?
17. Will there be a wait when picked up from home? If so, how long?
18. Will there be a wait when picked up for my return trip? If so, how long?
19. Will the driver or attendant come into the office/building for the return trip?
20. Will other passengers be riding? If so, what is the maximum length of time of the ride while others are being pick-up/dropped-off?

Transportation Facts

- In 2000, almost 35 million Americans were over age 65, comprising 12.4% of the nation's total population. There are over 4 million Americans 85+ years. This group is 12.1% of all seniors.
- Only 3% of those 65-74 have chronic conditions that restrict them to traveling within their own neighborhood.
- Most seniors are aware of their limitations and self-regulate their driving to reflect their driving ability by driving less and avoiding nighttime or bad weather driving, for example.
- Most transit systems provide specialized paratransit services. Collectively, they provide more than 70 million trips per year.
- On average, 18% of those eligible for paratransit service in mid-sized cities are registered; in large size cities, the corresponding figure is 22%.
- Riders who use paratransit rarely make more than 40% of their trips on these systems.
- An estimated 3.4 million Americans depend on Medicaid transportation for medical appointments (roughly 10% of the covered population).

Senior Drivers

Adaptive Driving Program

St. David's Rehabilitation Center offers a comprehensive driver evaluation and training program for individuals who experience medical or age-related functional difficulties that hamper the ability to drive a vehicle. Therapists use objective, standardized data from clinical tests and "on the road" driving tests to determine the patient's: ability to drive; ability to use adaptive equipment if necessary, and; willingness to participate in training sessions. Recommendations may include advanced driver training or the need to defer from driving.

- **St. David's Rehabilitation Center**
1005 E. 32nd St.
Austin, TX 78705
(512) 404-8140

Driving Instruction

Older drivers can benefit from follow-up driving instruction and information about changes in driving habits that will help them feel safe on the road.

- **55-Alive Driver Education Courses**
www.aarp.org/drive
- **AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety**
(202) 638-5944
www.seniordrivers.org
- **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**
(888) 327-4236
www.nhtsa.dot.gov
- **GrandDriver**
(888) 472-3603
www.granddriver.info

Handicap Parking Permits

Handicap parking on a temporary (6 months) or permanent (4 yr renewal cycle) basis is available to individuals who have an approved handicap placard or handicap license plate. Physicians complete forms that patients obtain from the County Tax assessor's office. Physicians must clarify whether the handicap is temporary or permanent, and whether the reason is mobility, or non-mobility related. The Handicap Parking Placard is convenient to use when a passenger in other vehicles too.

■ **Travis County Tax Assessor**

(512) 854-9473

■ **Williamson County Tax Assessor**

(512) 943-1602

Renewing Driver's License / State ID

Many older drivers continue to renew their driver's licenses even after "giving up the car keys" to have it for identification. Non-drivers can obtain a **State Identification** card that is an official document for identification.

■ **Texas Department of Public Safety**

For general information and neighborhood bureau locations:

(512) 424-2600

Public Transit

Established in 1985, Capital Metro Transportation Authority (Capital Metro) provides public transit and paratransit service in the Austin area with fixed route, door to door, and suburban express service.

A Board of Directors guides Capital Metro. A Mobility Impaired Service Advisory Committee provides recommendations from passengers for enhancement of services to senior citizens and passengers with disabilities.

Service boundaries include Anderson Mill, Austin, Jonestown, Lago Vista, Leander, Manor, and San Leanne.

Fixed route fee: \$.50/ free transfer

Fixed Route Buses

■ **Capital Metro Transportation Authority**

106 E. 8th St. (Customer Service Center)

Austin, TX 78701

(512) 474-1200 (information) (512) 389-0190 (complaints)

Bus schedules (English & Spanish) are available at local grocery stores, Austin Public Libraries and other locations, or call the “GO-Line”: (512) 474-1200. Route schedules are also posted at major bus stops.

Special Accommodations for Fixed Routes

Capital Metro accommodates the special needs of senior citizens and passengers with disabilities who choose to use the fixed route service:

- Free fixed ride service with:
 - Capital Metro Mobility Impaired card
 - Senior Citizen Identification card
 - Identification for proof of age - 65+
 - Medicare card
- Large print schedules
- General & schedule information TDD line (512) 385-5872
- Training for senior citizens and passengers with disabilities to ride fixed route buses
- Courtesy stop requests due to accessibility barriers
- Automated stop announcement for major stops
- Bus driver announced stops by special request
- Reserved front of bus seating
- Lift and ramp access on specially marked buses

Identification cards for senior citizens and mobility-impaired passengers are available for \$3 at Capital Metro's Transit Store, Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Capital Metro Transit Store
323 Congress Ave.
Austin, TX 78701
(512) 389-7454

Northwest Dial-A-Ride

1. Advance registration for door-to-door service is available in Lago Vista, Jonestown and Leander every Monday, Wednesday and Friday for direct service.

Northwest Dial-A-Ride goes to:

- Any location on the Highway 183 corridor between FM 620 and the U.S. 183/MoPac intersection
- Highland Mall
- Northcross Mall
- The Central Medical Complex-any location within the following area: north of 26th, south of 45th, west of Guadalupe and east of Shoal Creek
- Other destinations are available upon request, contingent upon scheduling constraints at time of reservation.

2. Reservations are required at least 24 hours in advance.

CALL (512)478-RIDE between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. for more information or reservations.

3. The adult one-way fare for the Northwest Dial-A-Ride service is \$1, but senior adults, Medicare cardholders and persons who are mobility-impaired ride free.

Paratransit

Originally established in 1976, Capital Metro has operated **Special Transit Services (STS)** since 1985 using mini-vans with lifts, cars and cabs. Pre-approved persons with disabilities can request the door-to-door service at sixty cents per ride. This is a shared-ride service operating in the same geographic areas as Capital Metro fixed route service. The Demand-Response service requires reservations to be called in as early as 8 days in advance and until 5:00 p.m. the day before service. Rides are on a first-come, first-served basis. Passenger assigned Escorts may accompany dependent on space availability. Rides are point to point, therefore return trips are usually scheduled as a separate ride request. If booked as an “Open return trip,” this may involve waiting more than an hour after calling for a ride.

■ Special Transit Service

2910 E. 5th St.
Austin, TX 78702
(512) 389-7480

Tickets available at a discount for a ten-ride book for \$3.00 or monthly pass for \$15.00 at local grocery stores or Capital Metro Transit Store (see pg 7).

Taxi Voucher Program

The STS Taxi Voucher program provides enrolled passengers with an alternative for return trips from medical or therapy appointments and grocery stores. Eligible passengers must be able to ride in a sedan. The Voucher program provides a subsidized taxi ride, up to \$12.00 (6 miles) for a minimum of \$.60. For trips exceeding 6 miles, passengers pay the difference:

6.1 - 9 miles = additional \$2.00
9.1 - 12 miles = additional \$5.00
12.1 - 15 miles = additional \$8.00

Requests to be on the Taxi Voucher list for a specific date are made when scheduling transportation with STS to the appointment.

Specialized Senior Transportation

Volunteer Caregivers

There are seven neighborhood-based Volunteer Caregiver programs in the greater Austin area. Their shared mission is to provide volunteer support services to enhance the independence of older adults. Transportation is a major component of the service delivery. The volunteers, who use their own vehicles, serve as companions while providing transportation. There is no charge for this service, but clients pay parking lot fees. These nonprofit organizations accept donations.

Transportation to essential requests for healthcare needs and groceries has first priority, but rides are available to social/recreational activities, beauty shops and personal/business errands. Service requests are for round trip or one way rides. Most service is scheduled late morning to early afternoon, but some volunteers are available for early morning, late afternoon, evening or weekend service.

Enrollment is limited to older adults who are still living independently in the community.

Contact the Volunteer Caregiver program serving your neighborhood to schedule an assessment for enrollment or to inquire about volunteering.

The Volunteer Caregiver groups provide transportation services based on the clients' level of need:

Curb-to-Curb:	Client goes to vehicle on own when volunteer arrives. Volunteer drops client off at destination and returns to pick up client later for return trip to residence.
Door-to-Door:	Volunteer goes to residence door for client and escorts to entrance of destination. Volunteer returns to pick up client later and assists client to residence door.
Door-through-Door:	Volunteer goes into residence, assists client into vehicle and escorts client into destination, staying for the duration. Volunteer then drives client home, assisting into residence.

■ **Far Northwest Caregivers**

10633 Lake Creek Pkwy.
 Austin, TX 78750
 (512) 250-5021

Wheelchair accessible: No

Call for scheduling: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, M-F

Advance notice: at least 3 working days

Service hours: usually 8:00 am-4:00 pm M-F

Level of Service:	Geographic Boundaries:
Curb-to-Curb Door-to-Door Door-through-Door (round trip or one-way drives)	North–FM 2243 South–Loop 360 to Duval East–Parmer Ln. West– 620 to 2222

■ **Georgetown Caregivers**

1001 Main St.
 Georgetown, TX 78626
 (512) 868-9544

Wheelchair accessible: only lightweight, collapsible wheelchairs

Call for scheduling: 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, M-F

Advance notice: at least 3 working days

Service hours: usually 9:30 am-2:30 pm M-F, but some early morning, late afternoon, evening or weekend requests can be accommodated.

Level of Service:	Geographic Boundaries:
Curb-to-Curb Door-to-Door Door-through-Door (round trip or one-way drives)	Georgetown city limits

■ **North Central Caregivers**

6800 Woodrow Ave.
 Austin, TX 78757
 (512) 453-2273

Wheelchair accessible: No

Call for scheduling: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, M-F

Advance notice: at least 3 working days

Service hours: usually 9:30 am-2:30 pm M-F, but some early morning, late afternoon, evening or weekend requests can be accommodated.

Level of Service:	Geographic Boundaries:
Curb-to-Curb Door-to-Door Door-through-Door (round trip or one-way drives)	North-1325 (Burnet Rd.) South-45 th St. East-I-35 West-Burnet Rd.

■ **Northeast Caregivers of Austin**

6100 Berkman Dr.
 Austin, TX 78723
 (512) 459-1122

Wheelchair accessible: only lightweight, collapsible wheelchairs

Call for scheduling: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, M-F

Advance notice: at least 3 working days

Service hours: usually 8:00 am – 4:00 pm M-F, but some evening or weekend requests can be accommodated.

Level of Service:	Geographic Boundaries:
Curb-to-Curb Door-to-Door Door-through-Door (round trip or one-way drives)	North-Yager Ln South-Martin Luther King East-Decker Ln. West-I-35

■ **Round Rock Caregivers**

2498 E. Palm Valley Blvd.
 Round Rock, TX 78664
 (512) 310-1060

Wheelchair accessible: No

Call for scheduling: 9:00 am -12:00 pm, M-F

Advance notice: at least 3 working days

Service hours: usually 9:30 am-2:30 pm M-F, but some early morning, late afternoon, evening or weekend requests can be accommodated.

Level of Service:	Geographic Boundaries:
Curb-to-Curb Door-to-Door Door-through-Door (round trip or one-way drives)	North–Chandler Rd. (1431) South–FM 1325 East–CR 122 West–Parmer Ln.

■ **South Austin Caregivers**

205 E. Monroe
 Austin, TX 78704
 (512) 445-5552

Wheelchair accessible: No

Call for scheduling: 9:00 am -1:00 pm, M-F

Advance notice: at least 3 working days

Service hours: usually 9:30 am-2:30 pm M-F, but some early morning, late afternoon, evening or weekend requests can be accommodated.

Level of Service:	Geographic Boundaries:
Curb-to-Curb Door-to-Door Door-through-Door (round trip or one-way drives)	North–Colorado River South– Boggy Creek East– Pleasant Valley/Nuckols Crsg. West– Mopac/Brodie Lane

■ **West Austin Caregivers**

2601 Exposition Blvd.
Austin, TX 78703
(512) 472-6339

Wheelchair accessible: No

Call for scheduling: 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, M-F

Advance notice: at least 3 working days

Service hours: usually 9:30 am-2:30 pm M-F, but some early morning, late afternoon, evening or weekend requests can be accommodated.

Level of Service:

Geographic Boundaries:

Curb-to-Curb Door-to-Door Door-through-Door (round trip or one-way drives)	North-183 South- Town Lake East- I-35 to 45th St, then Burnet Rd West- 360 to Lake Austin
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Volunteer Caregiver programs are interfaith-based and initiated by coalitions of congregations to reach out to their senior neighbors. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation encourages interested congregational coalitions to pursue funding for the development of programs in underserved areas through the *Faith in Action* program.

For additional information:

Call - (877) 324-8411

E-mail: info@fiavolunteers.org

Log on: www.faithinaction.org

**A Neighbor's Independence
Depends on You**

Capital Metro EasyRider Program

The EasyRider Program is a service of Capital Metro. It provides free group (20 or more) transportation for senior citizens (65 years or older) during specific hours.

Call (512) 389-7583 for additional information on the EasyRider program.

Senior Support Services of Austin

This project of the City of Austin's Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) provides: (1) rides along set routes to senior centers and senior lunch programs; (2) personal rides for non-emergencies such as medical appointments and grocery stores; and (3) rides for groups of seniors for shopping trips and other outings. Rides outside of the established routes require 24-hour reservations and availability of the program's 14 vans and 24 mini-buses. Serves only within Austin city limits with suggested \$2.00 donation. Service is curb to curb.

■ Parks and Recreation Department

Phone Number: (512) 480-3012

Home Care Services

Some home care agencies provide transportation as part of the package of services offered to enrolled clients. As with other services, transportation is usually booked in 2 – 4 hour segments with a separate fee for service payment. If currently enrolled for other services, ask the provider whether transportation is an optional service. Check the *Yellow Pages* of the local phone directories for listings under HOME HEALTH SERVICES or contact the Area Agency on Aging of the Capital Area (512) 916-6062 for assistance.

Taxi Service

Taxi services in the greater Austin area offer pre-arranged and response/demand sedans and vans. Several of these companies provide wheelchair transport. Check the TAXICAB listing in the *Yellow Pages* of the local phone book.

American Cancer Society

Road to Recovery, sponsored by the Austin Metro Area American Cancer Society, is a volunteer-based transportation program. Volunteers use their own vehicles to transport persons with cancer for cancer treatment and some medical appointments. Apply by phone.

■ **American Cancer Society**

2433 Ridgepoint Dr.
Austin, TX 78754
(512) 919-1829

Wheelchair accessible: No

Call for scheduling: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm, M-F

Advance notice: 3 days

Level of assistance: depends on driver

Geographic boundaries: Austin and Round Rock

Meals on Wheels and More

In addition to home-delivered meals, this organization also offers transportation to medical appointments and grocery shopping. Volunteers use their personal vehicles. Call to schedule an in-home assessment for enrollment.

■ **Medi Wheels: Meals on Wheels & More**

3227 E. 5th St.
Austin, TX 78702
(512) 476-MEAL (6325)

Wheelchair accessible: No

Call for scheduling: 8:00 am-5:00 pm (M-F)

Service hours: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, M-F

Advance notice: 2 days

Geographic boundaries: mainly Travis County

■ **Groceries to Go: Meals on Wheels & More**

3227 E. 5th St.
Austin, TX 78702
(512) 476-MEAL (6325)

Wheelchair accessible: No

Call for scheduling: 8:00 am -5:00 pm (M-F)

Service hours: Determined by client need and volunteer availability

Advance notice: 2 days

Geographic boundaries: mainly Travis County

Medicaid Recipient Transportation

Elderly Medicaid recipients may qualify for free transportation to doctor appointments and pharmacies if they are not residing in a long term care facility, or do not have dual enrollment in Medicare and Medicaid. Texas Department of Human Services does not have vehicles, but provides free tickets for use with Capital Metro services and taxis. Check Medicaid card for these programs: QMB or SLMB. If **NOT** receiving these services, Medicaid recipients can call (877) 633-8747 to receive free tickets to use Capital Metro's Special Transit Service or the Taxi Voucher Program.

Rural Transportation

The Capital Area Rural Transportation System, or CARTS, provides vans and special lift-equipped vehicles to the public in rural locations. Service frequency in the various locales ranges from several times a day to once a month. The service gives priority to the elderly and disabled adults. Most CART vans have scheduled routes to nutrition sites, senior centers and health, medical and social service facilities. Routes also include shopping and recreational sites. Apply by phone.

■ CARTS

2010 East 6th St.

Austin, TX 78702

(512) 478-7433

Call for reservations (512) 478-7433 or (800) 456-RIDE

Wheelchair accessible: Yes

Call for scheduling: 7:00 am - 7:00 pm (M-F)

Service hours: 8:00 am – 4:30 pm, M-F

Advance notice: 24 hours

Cost: \$1.00 and up (depends on mileage)

Level of assistance: curb-to-curb

Geographic boundaries: 9 counties, including Travis & Williamson but excluding the City of Austin.

Ambulance Services

For non-emergency situations, call the ambulance company in advance to determine cost and payment arrangements. Insurance coverage for ambulances is usually restrictive so it best to check with insurance company ahead of time to determine coverage. Ambulance companies often require cash payment at the time of transfer. Billing is on a flat fee plus mileage basis, with extra charges for additional service such as oxygen. Check the *Yellow Pages* of local phone directories for listings under AMBULANCE SERVICE.

Business Shuttles

Several health care providers in Austin and Round Rock provide transportation to and from appointments for specific procedures or services. Typically, these services are for day health programs, ophthalmology care and physical therapy programs. Contact your service provider to inquire about transportation.

Information & Referral

Community Awareness

The United Way of the Capital Area manages the local Information and Referral service program. Call **211** to find out about services and providers in the local area.

The Area Agency on Aging of the Capital Area provides information about senior services for recipients and caregivers.

Call: (512) 916-6062 or (800) 622-9111

True/False Quiz Answers

So how well did you do? The following are answers to the Quiz questions found on page 1.

- ① **F** According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, about 75% of the people over age 65 have a valid driver's license, which makes it legally possible for them to drive their cars.
- ② **F** While some Dial-A-Ride services also function as ADA services (which have specific eligibility requirements) many Dial-a-Ride programs serve community residents regardless of health and disability status.
- ③ **F** According to recent research, people age 70-75 have a life expectancy of at least 18 years. On average, they can expect to drive 11 of these years and depend on other transportation for the remainder of their lives.
- ④ **T** According to the National Personal Transportation Survey 3% of the population uses public transportation.
- ⑤ **F** Funding for public transit is provided from the US Department of Transportation and frequently matched by local communities. However, communities are not required to provide public transit.
- ⑥ **F** The Internal Revenue Service exempts reimbursement for mileage to volunteer drivers as reportable taxable income.
- ⑦ **T** Generally, a volunteer driver's insurance policy is the "first line of attack" in the event of a crash during the course of driving a person on a volunteer rather than a paid basis.
- ⑧ **T** According to the US Department of Transportation adults age 65+ have the highest pedestrian death rate than any other age group, even children. The reason is that they are physically frail, which makes them more prone to a serious injury and more difficult for them to recover.
- ⑨ **T** The 85+ population is expected to increase from 4.4 million in 2000 to 5.7 million by 2009, a 29.5% increase.
- ⑩ **F** According to the Community Transit Association of America, while 30% of the population resides in rural America, only 6% of the federal transportation dollars are allocated to rural communities.

Supplemental Senior Transportation

For more information about nation-wide Supplemental Transportation Programs for seniors (STPs) and resource products, please visit the Beverly Foundation online at:

www.beverlyfoundation.org

For additional older adult and caregiver transportation resource materials, please visit the Easter Seals Foundation online at:

[www.easter-seals.org/ntl trans care](http://www.easter-seals.org/ntl_trans_care)

For additional resource materials, please visit the American Automobile Association Foundation for Traffic Safety online at:

www.aaafoundation.org