



Opportunity Center of Owensboro

Grant Application: Expanding Transportation Services for Enhanced Community Integration

Organization Overview:

Since 1956, the Opportunity Center of Owensboro has been dedicated to creating endless possibilities for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Based in Owensboro, we serve a diverse population not only from Daviess County but also from the surrounding counties of Ohio, McLean, Muhlenberg, Hancock, and Henderson. Our mission is to empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to achieve greater independence, self-sufficiency, and community integration by providing high-quality, person-centered services that meet the unique needs of our participants.

Project Overview: Expanding Transportation Services

To better serve our participants, the Opportunity Center is seeking to expand our transportation services by adding additional vans to our fleet. These vehicles are essential for facilitating client outings, accessing community resources, and supporting participation in social and vocational activities. Reliable and accessible transportation is a critical component in our efforts to promote community integration and enhance the overall quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

Evidence of Need:

- **Transportation Barriers:** Many of our participants face significant challenges related to transportation, which limits their ability to engage fully in community life. Without reliable transportation, access to employment opportunities, social outings, and community events is severely restricted, leading to social isolation and decreased independence.
- **Inadequate Current Resources:** Currently, our staff members often have to use their personal vehicles to transport clients. These vehicles are not designed for accessibility, limiting our ability to serve participants who use wheelchairs or have other mobility challenges. Additionally, relying on personal vehicles presents safety and liability concerns, as these vehicles are not owned or maintained by the Opportunity Center.
- **Increased Demand:** As our programs grow, so does the demand for transportation services. The addition of new vans will allow us to accommodate more participants and offer more frequent and diverse outings, promoting greater community engagement.

Client-Centered Success Story:

One of our clients, who previously struggled with social isolation due to limited mobility, now regularly attends community events thanks to our expanded transportation services. This has significantly enriched their social connections and sense of purpose, demonstrating the profound impact that reliable transportation can have on an individual's life.

Program/Project Description:

The Opportunity Center of Owensboro aims to enhance community integration and quality of life for individuals with disabilities by expanding our transportation services. Our specific, measurable objective is

to increase the number of community outings by 50% within the first year by acquiring a second accessible van. This expanded program will allow us to serve more clients and offer a wider range of activities, aligning with our mission of creating endless possibilities for people with disabilities. Within six months of receiving the grant, we will purchase the van, customize it for accessibility, and provide staff training on safe transportation practices and client support. Following this, we will develop a schedule of outings based on client interests, coordinate with community partners to enrich these experiences, and continuously evaluate the program to ensure it meets the needs of our participants.

Statement of Community Need:

There is a pressing need in our community for increased transportation access for individuals with disabilities. Nearly 20% of Americans have a disability, and many struggle with reliable transportation, leading to social isolation, reduced access to services, and a diminished quality of life. A survey conducted by our organization revealed that 70% of our clients face difficulties accessing transportation for community outings. The limited local public transportation options are often inaccessible or inconvenient for our participants, who frequently depend on family members or caregivers for transportation, placing additional burdens on them. The Opportunity Center is uniquely qualified to address this need due to our extensive experience, established community relationships, and commitment to providing high-quality, person-centered services. Transportation is a vital component of our programming and essential for fostering community inclusion for individuals with disabilities. Access to reliable and accessible transportation enables our clients to participate in community events, engage in social and recreational activities, access job sites, and attend necessary appointments. Without these opportunities, individuals face isolation and limited engagement with the broader community. By ensuring safe and efficient transportation, we empower our participants to lead more independent lives and fully integrate into their communities, which is central to our mission of creating endless possibilities for people with disabilities.

Impact 100 Grant Impact:

The Impact 100 Grant will be instrumental in enabling the Opportunity Center to purchase additional vans, directly addressing the transportation barriers faced by our participants. With these new vehicles, we can expand our transportation services, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their physical or geographic limitations, have access to the community resources, social activities, and vocational opportunities that are vital to their independence and well-being. The new vans will also eliminate the need for staff to use their personal, non-accessible vehicles, providing a safer and more appropriate transportation solution that aligns with our mission.

Conclusion:

The Opportunity Center of Owensboro, with over 65 years of dedicated service, is committed to breaking down barriers and enhancing opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Expanding our transportation services by adding new vans is vital to promoting independence and community integration for our participants. Accessible and reliable transportation will empower them to lead full, active lives within their communities, aligning with our mission to create endless possibilities.

We respectfully request the Impact 100 Grant to make this vision a reality. Our extensive experience, high-quality person-centered services, and strong partnerships with local businesses and community leaders uniquely position us to effectively meet this critical need. By expanding our transportation capacity, we will significantly improve the quality of life for our clients, foster greater inclusion, and support their journey towards independence.



Impact 100 “OC On The Go” Program Budget

Budget for Purchasing Two Wheelchair-Accessible Vans

Expense Item	Cost per Van	Quantity	Total Cost
Used Vehicle Chassis with Wheelchair Conversion	\$56,000	2	\$112,000
Comprehensive Mechanical Inspection			
Vehicle Registration, Title, and Licensing Fees			
Safety Restraint Systems (wheelchair restraints)			
Graphic Decals Company Logo	\$800	2	\$1,600

Total Cost \$113,600

Notes:

- Used Vehicle Chassis with Wheelchair Conversion:** Each vehicle includes the used chassis and brand new wheelchair conversion, totaling \$56,000 per van.
- Graphic Decals:** Custom decals for branding and identification of the vans, enhancing visibility and community presence.
- Comprehensive Mechanical Inspection:** Ensures vehicle safety and reliability.
- Safety Restraint Systems:** Securement systems for wheelchairs during transport.

This budget accommodates all necessary expenses for two wheelchair-accessible vans, including custom graphic decals, while staying within the \$113,600 limit.

Any additional funds required to complete the vehicle purchases will be drawn from existing invested funds, which were received through the State of Kentucky COVID Relief Fund and set aside by the Opportunity Center's board of directors for program expenses.

Ongoing expenses such as automobile insurance, licensure, and vehicle maintenance will be covered through operational funds allocated for client programming.