

July 23, 2019

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed,

The undersigned organizations that serve and advocate on behalf of people with disabilities and older adults seek your support for public transportation formula grants and technical assistance and training aimed at removing barriers to transportation services and expanding mobility options for people with disabilities and older adults. **As you write your fiscal year (FY) 2020 bill, we ask that you fully fund Sections 5310 and 5314 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST) Act and that you include report language to ensure the unique mobility challenges of people with disabilities and older adults continue to be prioritized through technical assistance and training investments and activities.**

Accessible transportation options are critical for older adults and people with disabilities. The population of adults 65 and over is growing at an unprecedented rate with nearly 10,000 people turning 65 every day. The number of older non-drivers was projected to increase by up to 52 percent between 2000 and 2020, with about 600,000 Americans stepping away from driving each year.

For people with disabilities, lack of transportation options remains a top barrier to accessing employment and community services. Eight in 10 non-drivers who have a disability reported that they were unable to participate in an activity or tend to a chore because they were unable to secure transportation. A Government Accountability Office (GAO) report concluded that local transportation service providers struggle to implement practices to improve the mobility of transportation-disadvantaged Americans.

To help address the transportation challenges and needs of people with disabilities and older adults, Congress included provisions in the last highway bill (FAST Act) to enhance mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities (Section 5310) and to make available specialized technical assistance and training (Section 5314) to improve public transportation and to meet the transportation needs of transportation-disadvantaged populations, including people with disabilities and older adults.

Through Section 5310 grants, states receive formula funds to assist communities, nonprofits, and public transportation operators to remove barriers to transportation services and to expand transportation options. Funds can be used to purchase buses and vans, implement wheelchair lifts or curb-cuts, or to launch or operate travel training, ride-sharing, or mobility management programs. Through Section 5314, FTA provides specialized technical assistance to community leaders, transportation officials, and health and social service providers to promote compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, increase transit ridership, meet the transportation needs of elderly individuals, and address transportation equity, among other activities. Section 5314 funds have been used

for direct technical assistance, community planning grants, continuing education—such as online courses to share, develop, and scale innovative transportation practices. The funds have also supported publications, reports, and other resources on trending topics, such as volunteer transportation programs, riders living with dementia, caregivers, and opioid use.

The undersigned organizations appreciated the investments in technical assistance and training and in grants to enhance the mobility of older adults and people with disabilities in your FY 2019 funding bill. We respectfully ask that you continue this strong commitment to improving mobility and independence of people with disabilities, older adults, and other transportation-disadvantaged populations living in urban and rural areas by funding the following:

- **No less than \$289.08 million for Section 5310 formula grants to enhance the mobility of older adults and people with disabilities, and**
- **No less than \$5 million for Section 5314 technical assistance and training. This level is in addition to the \$9 million available through the obligation limitation under the FAST Act.**

In addition, we seek the following report language in your FY 2020 bill to emphasize the need for specialized technical assistance and training for people with disabilities and older adults.

“The Committee expects the Department to continue to address the mobility challenges of people with disabilities and older adults through specialized technical assistance and training.”

Thank you for your consideration of our requests to improve awareness of, and access to, accessible transportation options for people with disabilities and older adults. Please contact any of our organizations if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Retired Americans
American Foundation for the Blind
American Therapeutic Recreation Association
Blinded Veterans Association
Brain Injury Association of America
Caring Across Generation
Easterseals
Justice in Aging
Meals on Wheels America
National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)
National Alliance for Caregiving
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA)

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)
National Association of RSVP Directors
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Council on Aging
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
Paralyzed Veterans of America
The Arc of the United States
The Gerontological Society of America
The Jewish Federations of North America
WISER