The Arc™
Connecticut

TransitNet
Transit Network for Connecticut

www.transitnet.info

The Arc
Connecticut

DIFF-ABILITITY & TECHNOLOGY:

Creating Straightforward Information Access to Empower People with Disabilities and Older Adults to Improve Inclusive Coordinated Transportation.

TRANSITNET

"**Though I could get a job in one town, I could not actually get to it.** Because Connecticut has some large sections that are very rural and some that are much more populated, there were gaps in transportation options and services. Therefore, I helped plan 18 public transportation forums around the state, and I attended and spoke at 17 of them."

Jamie Lazaroff, *Self-advocate and co-project manager for Round 1 of the Inclusive Coordinated Transportation grant.*
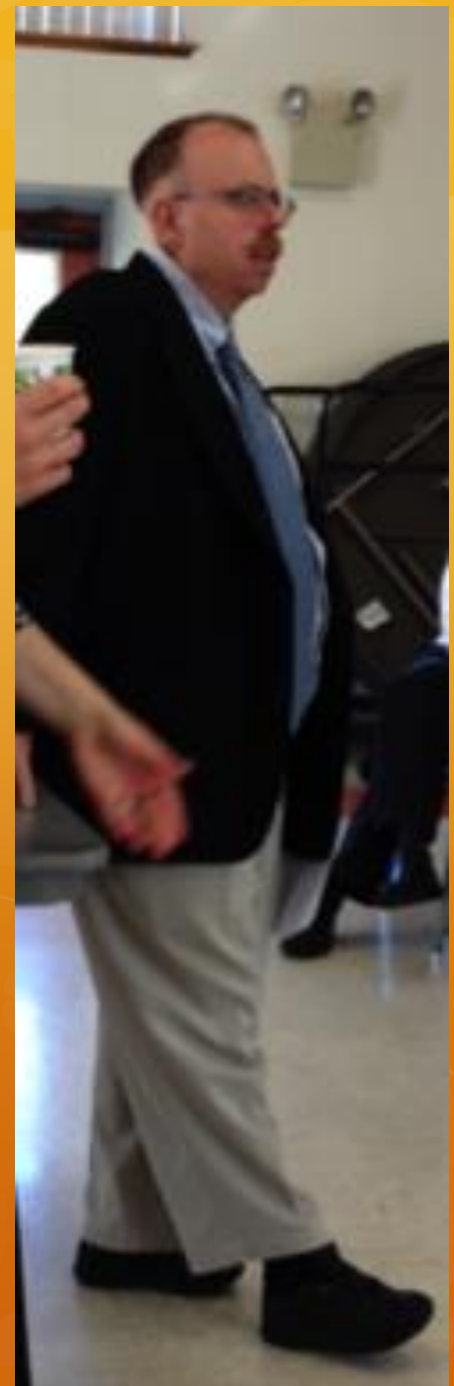
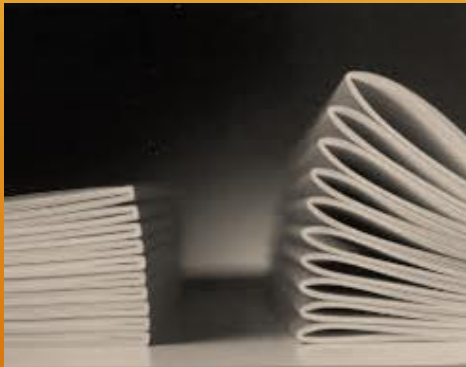# Steps we used to understand transportation issues in Connecticut:

Round 1:

* Hired self-advocates
* Held focus groups
* Held meetings at accessible, central, and familiar locations
* Used collected data to create survey
* Wrote summary to present to stakeholders across the state
* Analysis of the data helped us decide our main goals

MAIN GOALS

WEBSITE

BOOKLET

CALL CENTER

Steps we used to plan a website, booklet, and call center for diverse groups of individuals:

Round 2:

* Held stakeholder, key partner, and participant meetings
* Conducted research on the web and through interviews
* Hired an individual with a disability as our webmaster
* Collected similar booklet to research formats
* Created worksheet for website testing
* Held a website testing

Photos from the 2014 Website Testing:
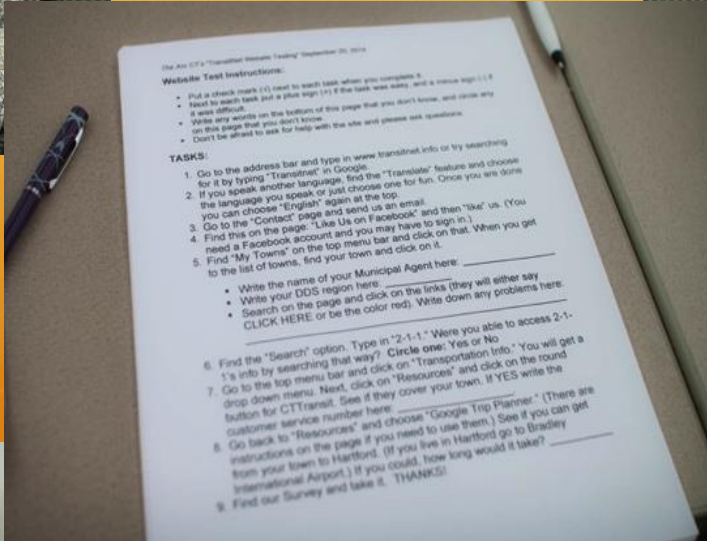
Options to acquire feedback from populations that have differing levels of abilities, access to technology, and needs:

- Attend meetings held by self-advocacy groups, providers, and at senior centers
- Ask these groups to email their members
- Call specific acquaintances and interview them
- Visit libraries and query patrons at computers
- Go to aging and disability conferences, public hearings, and workshops
- Secure a booth at these conference and supply a laptop or tablet for demonstration and use

From these options we learned that most participants:

* Were not often reliant on technology for info
* Owned a home or cell phone
* Would rather use phones than the Internet
* Had some access to, and knowledge of, computers

The most helpful info we learned:

* We'd never be able to accommodate everyone's needs
* Large booklets would become out-of-date quickly
* A brochure would be economical and sustainable
* Our state has THREE mobility managers

*Once we realized Connecticut had **three mobility managers**, we rethought our strategy. We decided to make a brochure rather than a comprehensive booklet, and decided that **creating an accessible website was JUST AS important as its content,** and the more universal*

What to consider when designing a website for those with diff-abilities and only "some access to, and some knowledge of computers":

* Drop down menus can be difficult to maneuver
* The text on websites is typically too small
* Web pages often are too busy
* Contact info is either non-existent or difficult to find
* Direct phone numbers are often not included
* Too many images can hinder individuals who are visually impaired
* The colors chosen must be readable for those who are colorblind

Main strategies to be accommodating, yet still creative, within the structure of web design:

* Choose a designer who's artistry does not disrupt accessibility
* Create or use others' instruction sheets, links, and/or videos
* Be flexible but consistent
* Start with large text rather than offer an enlarger feature:

ACTUAL SIZE:

CLICK HERE for *Amtrak*.

CLICK HERE for *Connecticut Limousine*.

CLICK HERE for *Greyhound Bus Lines*.

CLICK HERE for *Peter Pan Bus Lines*.

"Right away, I liked that the TransitNet website used large and readable text and the information I needed was easy to find."

Bob Rodman, *ADS Zone 1 Coordinator and Connecticut State Carfit/WNTT Coordinator*

We typically used a "CLICK HERE" approach rather than the more common option of hovering over colored text:

Mobility Managers

A MOBILITY MANAGER IS A PERSON WHO PROVIDES TRANSPORTATION INFO TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, SENIORS, AND VETERANS.

CLICK HERE

Other Transportation Resources:

CLICK HERE for the *Department of Developmental Services* transportation options.

CLICK HERE for the *Department of Transportation.*

CLICK HERE for the *Connect-Ability Transportation* page. (This service is through the Department of Rehabilitation Services.)

Phone: 866.844.1903 (Toll Free)
E-mail: connect-ability@ct.gov

We created TWO menu bars, rather than drop down menus that follow the user to each page:

HOME ▼ ABOUT CONTACT TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES MY TOWN

▼ ABOUT

HISTORY

PHOTOS

VIDEOS

Select Language ▼

Powered by Google Translate

🔍 Search

CONTACT US!

BLOG

EVENTS

TAKE A SURVEY

TRANSITNET BROCHURE

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

AND…

…the "contact us" button is in both the top and side menu bars which leads to:

Contact us:

Voicemail: 860.381.0514
E-mail: *transitnetct@gmail.com*

Name

[ ] [ ]

First Name   Last Name

Email Address *

[ ]

We created a "back to" option at the tops of most pages…

← BACK TO RESOURCES

…and PDF instructions for people to download and/or print:

How to use Google Transit (Trip Planner)

CLICK TO DOWNLOAD PDF

We compiled a "Town List" page with basic contact information for all 169 towns in Connecticut.

TOWN LIST

What does the Town List offer? To find out more CLICK HERE.

NOTE: Some towns listed below have a mobility manager (a person who helps with transportation). If your town does, we recommend that you contact them first.

Andover   Griswold   Prospect

Prospect

Municipal Agent:

Lucy Smegielski
Phone: 203.758.5300
E-mail: lulubelle4u@hotmail.com

Senior Center:

Prospect Senior Center
Address: 6 Center St.
Phone: 203.758.5300
E-mail: lulubelle4u@hotmail.com
Hours: M-F 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Transportation Info

DDS Region:

West
Phone: 203.805.7400
Toll Free: 866.274.3888
E-mail: ddsct.west@ct.gov

CLICK HERE to go directly to the site.

Mobility Manager:

None yet.

The Connecticut Association of Area Agencies on Aging (C4A):

Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging (WCAAA)
CLICK HERE to go directly to the site.

Some methods to market your website:

* Leverage existing resources
* Attend related events, meetings, and conferences
* Create wallet cards with the web address
* Use diverse, manageable mailing lists
* Create a Facebook page and "promote" it
* Offer a free presentation about the website
* Make a "commercial" or be interviewed on public access TV
* Plan a launch event for your "go live" date

Photos from the 2014 Launch Event:

How to include participants to ensure your site remains current, useful, inclusive, dynamic, and suits their needs:

* Attend meetings, conferences, and do presentations
* Continue conducting research
* Join related LinkedIn/Google groups and message boards
* Subscribe to related Listservs, RSS feeds, and newsletters
* "Like" similar pages on Facebook
* Secure an older adult or person with a disability to maintain the page
* Create a Facebook group where participants can post questions, concerns, and info and also get peer feedback
* Keep utilizing surveys to make sure your info is current

Note: *The more random and larger the email list used actually incurred fewer responses. When small groups that were familiar with The Arc CT were targeted, they were more invested.*

Ways to make your website and brochure sustainable:

* Put together a board or a steering committee
* Create an internship or independent study for a college student to earn credit

Options if you are funded by a grant:

Secure a relevant group to sponsor or fundraise to maintain it like:

- A local AARP chapter
- A senior center
- A local C4A or Arc Chapter
- A relevant state agency
- A self-advocacy group
- A university/high school group
- A local company / business