

AUCD/Easter Seals Project ACTION

Sponsored Project: Transportation for People with Disabilities

Description of 2008 Program and Application Procedures

Background

Easter Seals Project ACTION (Accessible Community Transportation in Our Nation), in cooperation with the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), announces an opportunity for students to produce a product that relates to public transportation for people with disabilities. *Please note: proposed projects may not be related to airline travel.*

Through this program, Easter Seals Project ACTION (ESPA) anticipates awarding up to four post baccalaureate students with awards up to a ceiling of \$3,000 per award to expand upon current transit-related research from a disability community perspective, particularly in regard to quality of life issues related to transportation services. The product of this research will be used to contribute solutions to the transportation challenges people with disabilities encounter in their communities, and will be nationally distributed through the ESPA clearinghouse. In addition, this sponsored project seeks to increase the involvement of university students in the issues that surround accessible transportation and how it impacts on the lives of people with disabilities.

ESPA is a national technical assistance program funded through the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration. Established by Congress in 1988, ESPA facilitates cooperation between the transportation and disability communities and works to increase the availability and use of accessible transportation for people with disabilities of all ages. ESPA provides a variety of training, technical assistance, and products, and supports research opportunities and projects.

AUCD is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that promotes and supports the national network of university centers on disabilities, which includes University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD), Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) Programs and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers (DDRC). AUCD envisions a future where all persons, including those living with developmental and other disabilities are fully integrated and participating members of their communities and where culturally appropriate supports are available across the life span to individuals and families that leads to independence, productivity and satisfying quality of life.

Guidelines

Applicants have considerable flexibility for submitting potential research projects. Examples of final products might include, but are not limited to, research reports, articles prepared for submission to academic journals or professional publications, tools/instruments or curricula. Proposed projects must be completed by August 30, 2008.

The intent of ESPA is to fund projects to create report in APA style or product on a topic of significance related to public transportation from the disability community perspective. The report should address issues related to transportation challenges that people with disabilities encounter in their communities. ESPA will review the student's final draft report and make recommendations so the resulting report or product will be publication-ready for the ESPA clearinghouse. In addition, this sponsored project seeks to increase the involvement of university students in the issues that surround accessible transportation and the impacts and implications on the lives of people with disabilities.

Applications should be consistent with the following ESPA goals:

- Assisting transportation planners and providers, disability organizations, individuals with disabilities and others in the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Advancing the creation and use of coordinated accessible community transportation services for people with disabilities, seniors and people with low incomes.
- Increasing the awareness and use of accessible transportation by people with disabilities through the development of stimulating and informative strategies, techniques and materials.
- Eliminating barriers in the pedestrian environment that prevent people with disabilities from using accessible transportation services and facilities.
- Facilitating independent travel options for people with disabilities, including youth and older adults including concerns of people with disabilities and their families regarding general safety, security and other considerations.

Some sample topic areas for consideration:

- Travel training and other customer supports for using transportation.
- Accessibility issues related to paying fare on public transportation.
- Ways to increase fixed-route ridership for people with disabilities.
- The role of Personal Care Assistants on public transportation.
- An overview of the issues faced by people with mental illness and public transportation use.
- ADA transportation options through coordinated private networks.
- An exploration of the issues related to environmental barriers in the pedestrian environment.
- Importance of incorporating the concept of universal design in transit projects.
- A discussion on the topic of transitioning youth and the integration of public transportation as part of an IEP.

Eligible Applicants

Current post baccalaureate students of AUCD network programs: University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) and Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) Programs.

Evaluation Criteria

Projects will be selected based on the applicability, usefulness and anticipated impact of the research results with the intention of expanding accessible transportation for people with disabilities. Projects must reflect and contribute to achievement of ESPA goals.

Proposal Requirements

Applicants must submit a letter of interest, letters of support, and a proposal of no more than four pages. WITHIN THE LETTER OF INTEREST, applicants should delineate how their project meets the criteria and use the following format:

- I. **Title**: The title accurately reflects the scope of the project.
- II. **Introduction**: This section identifies the applicant and provides evidence of his/her capacity to undertake the proposed project.
- III. **Problem Statement**: This section identifies the problem/issue to be addressed and provides evidence to support the contention that the problem/issue is significant, relevant, and addressable with the proposed project.
- IV. **Goal and Methodology**: This section identifies a proposed product of the project, provides a clear methodology to develop the product, and identifies any resources or partners to be utilized in the completion of the proposed project.
- V. **Evaluation Plan**: This section identifies the data analysis plan and/or the plan to evaluate the proposed project's success.
- VI. **Project Timeline**: This section provides a timeline of milestones to be achieved in the implementation of the proposed project.

In addition the applicant must submit a current resume and letter of reference from the director of their UCEDD or LEND and, if any partners are proposed, a letter of support from those partners.

Submit your application online:

Applications will **only** be accepted through online submission at:

<https://www.aucd.org/app/index.cfm?r=895>

Proposal and Project Schedule

- Applications must be submitted by October 22, 2007, no later than 11:59 p.m. E.S.T.
- Selected applicants will be notified by November 15, 2007.
- Selected applicants will submit two short progress reports updating their work (using an ESPA form). Due dates for these reports will be determined based on the timeline of the selected projects.
- The final product will be due to ESPA on or before August 30, 2008.
- Selected applicants may have an opportunity to present their product at an ESPA-related event (ESPA will arrange and underwrite the cost of travel, lodging and other per diem expenses). Selected applicants will also be offered the opportunity to present their product at the Fall 2008 AUCD Annual Meeting & Conference in Washington, D.C.

Selection Process

ESPA and AUCD staff will review all applications using the criteria above and may select finalists for telephone interviews.

Stipend Agreement / Distribution

Selected applicants will sign an agreement documenting the work that will be accomplished through their sponsored project. Stipends will be distributed in four increments: One-fourth of award amount at date of agreement, one-fourth with receipt of each progress report, and one-fourth once final product is received.

Sponsored Project Questions

Please contact Mr. Ken Thompson at 800-659-6428 or kthompson@easterseals.com with any questions or for more information. Applicants interested in research and secondary data analysis of public transportation systems data are welcome to discuss potential transit partners with Mr. Thompson.

Applicants are encouraged to view the ESPA Web site at www.projectaction.org to review examples of ESPA products. Follow links "Free Resources and "The Easter Seals Project ACTION Clearinghouse."