



For immediate release  
May 14, 2018

## **Transportation program expands options for people with disabilities**

*My Freedom helping 300 Central Indiana residents get to work, medical appointments, more*

Today, citizens with disabilities may qualify for public transit vouchers through CICOA Aging & In-Home Solutions' Way2Go service that allow them to cross county borders, thanks to a new program called My Freedom.

My Freedom makes it easier for people with disabilities to use transit to get from their home in one county to an appointment in another county. The program was created through a partnership between the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA) and CICOA. A similar program existed previously but was discontinued, leaving many clients without transportation to work, medical appointments, religious services and social activities.

Until My Freedom began in July 2017, if someone in Hendricks County – for example – needed public transit to get to downtown Indy for a medical appointment, the person would need to make arrangements with Link Hendricks County and also IndyGo's Open Door. The two vehicles would meet in the Meijer parking lot on busy US36, and the person would have to switch vehicles.

CIRTA and CICOA wanted a better solution for those with disabilities. CIRTA worked with CICOA to secure a total of more than \$112,000 from the Federal Transit Administration and Indiana Department of Transportation. CICOA provides another \$38,000 to fund the program.

Through My Freedom, CICOA sells drastically discounted vouchers to people of any age who have a disability. Citizens can use the vouchers with a variety of participating transportation services, including Way2Go transportation, Boone County Senior Services, Hendricks County Senior Services, Access Johnson County, taxi companies and more.

"CIRTA's role is to act as a broker to assemble funding sources to solve problems," said CIRTA's Mobility Manager Philip Roth. "In this instance, we knew where to find funds that could be allocated for a need. Then, CICOA can focus on the delivery systems."

More than 300 Central Indiana residents with disabilities are participating in the My Freedom program. Individuals may qualify if they have difficulty accessing regular public transportation due to a disability such as visual impairment or developmental delay, if they require assistive devices for mobility, or if they are undergoing chemotherapy, radiation, kidney dialysis, or physical or occupational therapy.

"My Freedom allows us to give people the freedom and dignity of moving from place to place on their own," said Karren Sondrini, CICOA's director of Way2Go transportation. "We have so many stories about people who are regaining or maintaining their independence by being able to arrange their own transportation. The only downside remains that we have more demand than we can meet."

One CICOA client who uses the vouchers is Raymond Montgomery (pictured). The father of three doesn't drive because he is blind, and says transportation is one of his biggest challenges. He uses the vouchers when can't spare the time to ride a bus. He uses them to get to and from work, as well as to get to his children's school and other functions.



### **About the My Freedom Program**

The My Freedom Program provides those of any age with a disability access to transportation services across county lines. Its goal is to increase transportation options for people in Boone, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Madison, Marion, Morgan and Shelby counties. People qualify if they have difficulty accessing regular public transportation due to a disability such as visual impairment or developmental delay, if they require assistive devices for mobility, or if they are undergoing chemotherapy, kidney dialysis, or physical or occupational therapy. For more information, visit <https://cicoa.org/services/way2go/my-freedom/>.

### **About CICOA Aging & In-Home Solutions**

CICOA Aging & In-Home Solutions is a not-for-profit agency that provides information, advocacy and support services for older adults, people with disabilities, and family caregivers. For more information, visit [www.CICOA.org](http://www.CICOA.org)

### **About CIRTA**

The Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA) is focused on bringing more transportation options to Central Indiana. CIRTA works to better connect Indianapolis with suburban and rural communities in Boone, Delaware, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Madison, Marion Morgan and Shelby counties. Improving and increasing transit options helps employees and employers alike throughout the region. For more information, visit [www.cirta.us](http://www.cirta.us).

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