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Independence and Mobility for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

Independence for a population that is growing older

The fastest growing segment of Virginia's population is senior citizens.

- By 2030, more than 20 percent of Virginia's population is expected to be 65 years of age and older.
- About 30 percent of the older population in Virginia or approximately 300,000 people do not drive.
- How transit systems and services respond to this demographic phenomenon will have huge economic consequences for the elderly themselves and to the public and private institutions that serve their employment, health, nutrition and social needs.
- Without the mobility provided by public transit, the seniors are more likely to lose their independence. They could become prematurely reliant on care services that are costly to the individual and the state.

Customers over the age of 65 took more than 795,000 trips on [GRTC Transit System](#) buses. That represents 8.6 percent of the total GRTC customers for the year.

In smaller cities, the percentage of elderly riders is often even higher. About 25 percent of the residents in Galax are elderly. The social services director in Galax considers the town lucky since the area is served by [District Three Government Cooperative](#) and has a good bus service.

Virginia's potential costs if public transit did not serve seniors

The fastest growing age group in Virginia is the population 85 and older, which doubled in size in the past decade. About 30 percent of older Virginians do not drive. **Without mobility, the elderly are more likely to become prematurely reliant on services that are costly to the individual and state.**

Examples of services and costs are:

Service	Average Costs Annually	Cost per Recipient
Home Meals	\$3.4 million	\$385 per recipient
Home Health Services	\$8.6 million	\$959 per recipient
Adult Day Care	\$1.3 million	\$3,634 per recipient
Personal Care	\$74.3 million	\$7,434 per recipient
Nursing Facility Care	\$393.3 million	\$14,241 per recipient

Access to employment for people with disabilities

- Virginia's population includes approximately 314,000 working-aged citizens who are disabled.
- Of this number, 71 percent or about 223,000 individuals are able to use transit services.
- In the Hampton Roads area, people with disabilities made approximately 254,000 trips.
- Responses from 166 workers in a survey conducted by [JAUNT](#), the Jefferson Area United Transportation network that operates vans in Charlottesville and the surrounding counties indicated that these workers earn more than \$1.6 million annually.

If the same people with disabilities were unable to work and support themselves, it would cost Virginia approximately \$7,000 for each person, or \$1,162,000 in tax dollars to provide in-home support services.

If these same people with disabilities were unable to work and support themselves, the state would not receive tax revenue on the income earned by these individuals since they could not get to their places of employment.

Are you wondering how you can find transportation services in your area? Consider doing a quick search on this website using the keyword "Transportation" and your zip code, city or county.

Article Source

Virginia Transit Association

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<https://www.vatransit.com>

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