

GIBSON COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING ADA Policies

It is the policy of Gibson County Council on Aging to abide by all provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, including all programs, services, activities, operations and relationships with—and accommodations/modifications of—employees, client-customers, and the general public, including but not limited to those stated below.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires that individuals with disabilities receive the same level of service as non-disabled individuals. Services that are “separate but equal” are not acceptable. Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

All recipients must keep federally funded equipment and facilities in good operating condition. Recipients must have policies and procedures to maintain vehicles. Recipients must maintain, in operative condition, those features of facilities, vehicles, and other capital equipment that are required to make them accessible. ADA accessibility features must be repaired promptly if they are damaged or out of order. Recipients must establish a system of regular and frequent maintenance checks of lifts sufficient to determine if they are operative.

Specific transportation provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, include but are not limited to the following requirements:

Equivalent service: As required by the ADA, Gibson County Council on Aging has a sufficient number of, or access to, wheelchair accessible vehicles in our fleet regardless of employment status to ensure that individuals needing an accessible vehicle have equivalent access to our transportation services as ambulatory individuals.

Maintenance of Accessible Features on Vehicles: As required by the ADA, the accessible features on our vehicles are maintained in operative condition so that individuals needing these features receive equivalent service to individuals not needing those features. Accessibility features are repaired promptly if they are damaged or out of order. Drivers are required to report lift and ramp failures promptly.

Transporting and securing wheelchairs: A wheelchair is a mobility aid belonging to any class of three- or more-wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for, and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered. Gibson County Council on Aging will transport passengers with wheelchairs, even in circumstances when the wheelchair cannot be secured to the driver’s satisfaction, unless the wheelchair exceeds the size or weight capacity of the wheelchair lift or ramp.

Adequate Time for Vehicle Boarding and Disembarking: As required by the ADA, Gibson County Council on Aging provides adequate time for boarding and disembarking our vehicles for individuals with disabilities. Additionally, Gibson County Council on Aging permits individuals with disabilities who do not use wheelchairs, including standees, to use a vehicle’s lift or ramp to board and/or disembark the vehicle.

Use of Portable Oxygen/Respirator Equipment: As required by the ADA, individuals using our transportation service may bring respirator, portable oxygen equipment, and/or other life support equipment on board our vehicles, as long as they do not violate the law or rules relating to the transportation of hazardous materials. All equipment must be small enough to fit into our vehicles safely and without obstructing the aisle and/or blocking

emergency exits. Passengers must secure the equipment by means such as carrying the equipment using a shoulder strap or securing the equipment to a wheelchair or a seat.

Service Animals: As required by the ADA, any guide dog, signal dogs, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision or alerting individuals with impaired hearing, have access to our vehicles. All service animals must be kept under the control of their owner at all times and abides by local animal safety regulations.

Training in Wheelchair Securement, Sensitivity to Passengers: As required by the ADA, Gibson County Council on Aging trains its personnel to operate vehicles and equipment safely, assist passengers properly, and treat individuals with disabilities who use the service in a respectful and courteous way. A “Certified Trainer” in Passenger Assistance Safety and Security (P.A.S.S.) provides training to personnel prior to being released to drive for Gibson County Council on Aging.

Driver use of, and assistance with, Accessibility Equipment: As required by the ADA, Gibson County Council on Aging personnel make use of all available accessibility equipment when needed and provide a reasonable level of assistance to passengers as necessary and upon request with lifts, ramps, and securement devices.

ADA complaints: Gibson County Council on Aging discrimination related customer service complaints, including those associated with ADA regulations, are reported to ADOT Civil Rights Office and complaint documentation is maintained on file for one year. ADA related service complaint logs are kept on file for five years, per USDOT regulations.

Contact Gibson County Council on Aging Executive Director, at (812) 385-2897 or at exec.director@gibsonseniors.com.