

## Tips for Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle and Modifications

This tip sheet has been created to assist you in making the right choice for your family and loved one. Invest your time to research the many options to meet both your financial and medical needs.

### **What is your budget?**

This is very important. Your budget will determine if you will need financing and the amount of finance you can obtain. Remember it's the cost of the vehicle plus the modifications. Some banks offer special financing for mobility vans up to 10 year loans.

### **Do your research to discover what type of vehicles can be modified?**

Currently, the manufacturers are converting the Dodge/Chrysler minivans, Toyota Sienna, Honda Odyssey, Chevrolet/Buick minivans and Ford E-Series vans. Confirm the vehicle can be modified to accommodate a wheelchair. (Information is always subject to change) Some vehicle manufacturer's offer rebates for vehicles that will be modified. Check with your dealer.

### **Are you looking to buy a brand new vehicle to have modified?**

You may purchase a vehicle from a car dealer as long as it can be modified for wheelchair transport. Next you will coordinate to have the wheelchair modifications completed by a company that specializes in wheelchair conversions. It is a good idea to work with both the dealer and vendor (company that will modify your car) before making your final purchase.

### **Do you want to purchase a vehicle already modified?**

There are dealers that sell vehicles already modified. These include both new and used. If you are on a budget this may be a good option.

### **What type of lifts and ramps are available and what are their price points?**

The price range will vary on the type of ramp you select. There are wheelchair power lifts which are more expensive and may need additional work done on the vehicle to support the weight vs. non power/fold out ramps. Research which type of modification you prefer. That includes the type of lift or ramp as well as rear entry or side entry accessibility. Keep in mind future maintenance expenses you may incur to keep your lift in proper working condition. You may also choose the type of wheelchair secure systems for inside the vehicle. Options may include:

- 4-point manual strapping system
- Optional 4-point retractable straps
- EZ-Lock bracket system

### **Will you need extra room for height, weight, or a large power chair?**

Depending on the wheelchair size and rider, make sure the vehicle and modifications will appropriately accommodate both. For example some power wheelchairs can weigh over 400lbs in addition to the weight of the rider. Children's Specialized Hospital Rehab Tech Department recommends if you are ordering a new power wheelchair, it is best to receive the new chair and then shop for your new vehicle. This will help to ensure the chair will fit appropriately.



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Consider where you would like your rider to be seated. There are multiple options for wheelchair placement. If appropriate the wheelchair can be placed in the front passenger seat, middle row or back row. Discuss these details to identify your options. Consider all passengers, including children or a nurse. This will impact your decision.

**Research your State Agencies that provide funded programs to assist disabled individuals. Some may contribute to the cost of the vehicle plus modifications; others will contribute to the cost of the modifications.**

The following link will provide each state agency:

- <https://www.themobilityresource.com/financing-handicap-accessible-vehicles/state-grants>

Catastrophic Illness In Children Relief Fund –may provide financial assistance for both the vehicle and modifications. For more information go to the following link:

- <https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/cicrf/home/>

You can have a fundraiser to supplement the expense. Go Fund Me and Help Hope Live are options for online fundraising.

**Visit multiple dealers, van modification experts and events that share information and displays of products and options for wheelchair accessible vehicles. The following link is information on the Abilities Expo held at the NJ Convention Center in Edison, NJ.**

- <https://www.abilities.com>

**Roadside Assistance is available should your vehicle breakdown. For a fee this service will ensure that wheelchair passengers will be accommodated. Some companies that offer this assistance;**

- ADA Nationwide Roadside Assistance: [adaautoclub.com/](http://adaautoclub.com/)
- Mobility Works: [www.mobilityworks.com/resources/roadside-assistance.php](http://www.mobilityworks.com/resources/roadside-assistance.php)
- Creative Mobility Group:–[www.creativemobilitygroup.com/services/24-hour-roadside-assistance/](http://www.creativemobilitygroup.com/services/24-hour-roadside-assistance/)

**Speak with families that have experience with different types of wheelchair accessible vehicles. People who utilize wheelchair accessible vehicles can be a great resource.**

