AN ACT

1 Providing for a shared-ride program for persons with
disabilities; ensuring Statewide coverage; and making an
appropriation.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Persons with
Disabilities Shared-Ride Program Act.

9 Section 2. Legislative intent.

10 It is the intent of the General Assembly, and it is the
purpose of this act to increase public transportation
opportunities for Pennsylvania citizens who are under 65 years
of age and who have certain disabilities. Grants made by this
program are intended to supplement and shall not supplant
existing transportation funds or existing transportation
services for persons with disabilities.

17 Section 3. Definitions.
The following words and phrases when used in this act shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Average fare." Total passenger revenue divided by the total number of fare-paying passengers, excluding trips by senior citizens participating in the shared-ride program for senior citizens.

"County transportation system." The term shall mean and include buses, vans or other transit vehicles purchased, maintained and operated by any county or its agents and used to provide free or reduced rate transportation within the county to eligible persons with disabilities.

"Department." The Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth.

"Eligible applicant." Any provider of shared-ride programs for the elderly, any county, any county transportation system, any transportation authority, any local transportation organization, any municipality, any transportation company or any urban common carrier mass transportation provider.

"Fixed-route public transportation services." Regularly scheduled transportation that is available to the general public and is provided according to published schedules along designated published routes with specified stopping points for the taking on and discharging of passengers. Eligible services include public bus and commuter rail systems. Excluded from this definition are exclusive ride taxi service, charter or sightseeing services, nonpublic transportation, school bus or limousine services.


"Local transportation organization." Any municipality or any
mass transportation, port, redevelopment or airport authority
now or hereafter organized under the laws of Pennsylvania or
pursuant to an interstate compact or otherwise empowered to
render, contract for the rendering or assist in the rendering of
transportation service in a limited area in this Commonwealth,
even though it may also render or assist in rendering
transportation service in adjacent states.

"Person with disabilities." With respect to an individual,
an individual with a physical, sensory or mental impairment that
substantially limits one or more major life activities which may
prevent the person from transporting himself or engaging in
regularly provided public transportation systems.

"Program." Shared-ride public transportation services for
persons with disabilities.

"Provider." Any eligible applicant that applies for and is
approved for grant funds under this act.

"Secretary." The Secretary of Transportation of the
Commonwealth.

"Shared-ride public transportation services." The term shall
include demand-responsive transportation that is available to
the general public, operates on a nonfixed-route basis and
charges a fare to all riders. For transportation to be included
in this definition, the first fare-paying passengers to enter
the public transportation vehicle must not refuse to share the
vehicle with other passengers during a given trip. Services
excluded under this definition are exclusive ride taxi service,
charter and sightseeing services, nonpublic transportation,
school bus or limousine services.

"Transit vehicle." A self-propelled or electrically
propelled vehicle designed for carrying four or more passengers,
exclusive of the driver, other than a taxicab, designed and used
for the transportation of persons for compensation.

"Transportation company." The term shall mean and include
any person, firm or corporation rendering public passenger
service, with or without the rendering of another service, in
this Commonwealth pursuant to common carrier authorization from
the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission or the Interstate
Commerce Commission.

"Urban common carrier mass transportation." Transportation
within an area that includes a municipality or other built-up
place which is appropriate, in the judgment of the Department of
Transportation, for a common carrier transportation system to
serve commuters or others in the locality, taking into
consideration the local patterns and trends of urban growth, by
bus or rail or other conveyance, either publicly or privately
owned, serving the general public, but not including school
buses or charter or sightseeing services.

Section 4. Persons with disabilities shared-ride program.

(a) Power and duty of department.--The department shall have
the power and duty to administer a program authorizing grants to
eligible applicants that agree to provide shared-ride public
transportation services to eligible persons with disabilities.

As part of the program, the department shall:

(1) Establish a process through which potential
providers receive notice of the program, are given the
opportunity to submit grant proposals and are evaluated based
on eligibility criteria established by this act.

(2) Award grants to providers that meet the eligibility
criteria established by this act.

(3) Enter into contracts with providers that meet the
eligibility criteria established by this act.

(b) Request for proposal process.--The department shall establish a request for proposal process wherein notice of the program is published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, eligible applicants are given an opportunity to submit proposals and the proposals are evaluated. A minimum of two persons with disabilities shall be included in the evaluation. For any eligible applicant to receive grant funds under the program, the applicant's proposal must demonstrate each of the following:

(1) The applicant has the ability to provide shared-ride, point-to-point accessible services for eligible persons with disabilities.

(2) The applicant has the ability to limit access to the program to those eligible persons with disabilities.

(3) The applicant has the ability to administer the program such that eligible persons with disabilities pay no more than 15% of the full-fare cost of the transportation.

(4) The applicant has the ability to implement an eligibility verification process to ensure that access to the program is limited to eligible persons with disabilities.

(5) The applicant has the ability to compile such information as the department may require.

(6) The applicant has the ability to solicit and receive public participation from persons with disabilities who reside in the communities in which the applicant is proposing to serve in the development of the application and documented ongoing commitment to assist with the planning, implementation and administration of the program.

(7) The applicant has the ability to serve either portions of a county that are rural in nature or portions of
a county not currently served by fixed-route transportation.

(8) The applicant has had documented substantial input from people with disabilities in the communities in which they are proposing to serve.

(c) Grant awards.--The department may award grants to any provider that meets the eligibility criteria in subsection (b), provided that, in determining grant awards, the department shall:

(1) Ensure that applicants from rural, suburban and urban areas of this Commonwealth are considered for grant funds.

(2) Give priority to applicants whose service areas are rural in nature or whose service areas are not currently served by fixed-route transportation services.

(3) Give priority to applicants that have the ability to provide or coordinate services across county lines.

(d) Limitation on grant amounts.--Grants authorized to any provider under this act shall be limited to an amount equal to 85% of the total cost of rides of each provider's program. Individuals utilizing the program shall contribute the remaining 15% through fares.

(e) Agreement.--The department may enter into an agreement with any provider that meets the criteria under subsections (b) and (c) to award grant funds under this act. The agreement shall include terms requiring that grant funds be used in accordance with the proposal submitted to the department by the provider. The time, payment, amount and any other conditions on the receipt of the grant funds shall be set forth in the agreement.

Section 5. Program review.

(a) Legislative Budget and Finance Committee.--The
Legislative Budget and Finance Committee shall conduct a performance audit to assess whether the program is enhancing the mobility of persons with disabilities. The findings of the performance audit shall be presented to the General Assembly no later than two years after the effective date of this act.

(b) Department report.--The department shall submit an annual report to the Transportation Committee of the Senate, the Transportation Committee of the House of Representatives, the Appropriations Committee of the Senate and the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives, which at a minimum shall include total number of riders, total number of rides provided per month, number of providers, percentage of population served, geographical coverage of shared-ride usage, customer satisfaction, total monthly expenditures, total cost per ride, required subsidy per passenger and per mile and breakdown of what type of shared-ride services are being provided.

Section 6. Entitlement not created.

Nothing in this act creates or provides any individual with an entitlement to services. It is the intent of the General Assembly that services under this act shall be made available only to the extent of availability and level of appropriations made by the General Assembly.

Section 7. Appropriation.

The General Assembly hereby appropriates the sum of $8,700,000 to carry out the provisions of this act.

Section 8. Effective date.

This act shall take effect in 60 days.