



Project Summary: The ARC Connecticut

August 2014

Lead Agency: The Arc Connecticut

Project Name: Connecticut Moving Forward, Round Two

Geographic Service Area: Connecticut

Lead Partners & Key Stakeholders: Leslie Simoes (executive director), Dianne Bilyak (project director); The Arc Connecticut; Commission on Aging and DDS; The Arc's Self Advocacy Advisory Panel; and People First of Connecticut.

Participants: Seniors, people with both physical and intellectual disabilities, and anyone else who uses or wants to use public transportation in Connecticut.

Description of the Project: The first round of Connecticut Moving Forward held eighteen forums all over the state of Connecticut, interviewing 205 residents about their opinions on the region's public transit; what their issues with it were and what suggestions they had to improve it. Common problems were lack of transit services to rural areas and other nonrural areas, as well, and the services being too expensive.

Recommendations of solutions were to create a central call center that anyone using public transit could contact with questions, request, and to schedule rides and communicate with drivers. Other proposed solutions were a more inclusive website and more engagement from providers with their customer.

These problems and their proposed solutions will, as a goal of Round Two, be brought to public policy professionals, the executive legislative branch of government, state agency officials including commissioners, state legislators, human services providers and providers of transit services, for consideration, development and implementation.

Also in Round 2, The Arc Connecticut has hired a web consultant from People First of Connecticut, and a focus group made of various participants who attended the eighteen forums, to attend bi-monthly meetings. These bi-monthly meetings are to collaborate for the improvement of the website. It will be made more interactive, inclusive and informative

to better aid and educate the target populations. The material from the website will then be made downloadable, printable and even into hardcopies that will be delivered to central points in all Connecticut towns so that those who do not have or use computers can also have access to it.

The website itself will have message boards to website where users/participants can post and read important transit news, a link to Arc Connecticut's new Facebook group, and short welcome and instructional videos featuring participants and key partners. The website will be tested by a few members of the website development team described in the paragraph above.

In addition, a call center, as suggested by the eighteen focus groups, will be established at the self-advocacy office of People First of Connecticut. Customers of the region's public transit system will be able to call with questions, comments and requests.

Outcomes and Sustainability: The outcomes of Round Two of Connecticut Moving Forward will be to make a reality all the suggestions and plans developed by the 205 people of the eighteen focus groups. The website and its information will be created, print versions of the information will be distributed, and the call center will open. Part of this information will be a list of all the public transit.

Innovations: The improved website (and the extensive marketing for its kick-off), and its information, message boards, Facebook group and instructional videos.