Accessible Driving & Transportation: Adaptive Vans
Who Are We?

United Access partners with leading industry manufacturers like BraunAbility, VMI, Q’Straint, Sure Grip, Harmar, Bruno, Pride, and many others to provide you with the best and safest products. We offer a variety of mobility products to best fit your mobility needs. Our products include accessible wheelchair vans, trucks, and SUVs, along with wheelchair lifts and scooter lifts, seating solutions, hand controls, and more.
What Is A Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle? (WAV)

• Vehicles that have been remanufactured to offer ease of access for wheelchair and scooter users.

• The floor is substantially lower and the van is equipped with a lightweight ramp for easy entry and exit. A kneeling system lowers the suspension, decreasing the slope of the ramp even further.

• Front seats are often both removable, enabling wheelchair users to drive themselves or ride in the passenger position.

• Most wheelchair-friendly vehicles are minivans, but you can also choose a SUV, full-sized van or pickup truck.
Full-Sized Van & Truck Examples
Popular Makes/Models of Accessible Vehicles

**Dodge Grand Caravan** *(no longer in production)*

Companion Van, Power Foldout XT, Manual Rear Entry
Popular Makes/Models of Accessible Vehicles

Chrysler Voyager & Pacifica
(Town & Country no longer in production)

Companion Van, In Floor, Foldout, Foldout XT, Rear Entry
Popular Makes/Models of Accessible Vehicles

Toyota Sienna, Hybrid

*In Floor, Foldout*
Popular Makes/Models of Accessible Vehicles

Honda Odyssey

Power In Floor Ramp
Popular Makes/Models of Accessible Vehicles

Chevrolet Traverse SUV *(not crash tested)*

*Power In Floor or Foldable Side Entry, Rear Entry Power or Manual*
Lifts vs. Ramps

LIFTS

- Lifts are mostly used on full-sized vans, buses, RV’s and campers.
- Due to the lack of head clearance, a lift cannot be used for an adult in a minivan, only a full-sized van. In certain cases, however, a minivan lift can be a good solution for pediatric chair users.
- Lifts are heavy and bulky BUT they may allow you to get in/out of a van where a ramp couldn’t.
- Lifts require a lot of upkeep due to many mechanical components.
Ramps are more likely the option you will choose if you are looking at using a minivan or SUV for your transportation.

Ramps take extra vehicle modifications – floor must be lowered to make the ramp less steep and allow for more headroom.

You have more options with ramps: manual, power, side-entry, rear-entry, fold up or retractable underneath the floor.

Lighter mass and less maintenance.
How To Decide On Your Vehicle

This is a BIG purchase you're about to make, and you need to consider it from all angles. Planning far in advance is important – waiting until FOP causes mobility loss will cause extra stress and urgency in an already difficult situation. Be as proactive as you can!

This is where a mobility specialist can help you think through all the options that are right for you and your family long-term.

Side Entry Ramp vs. Rear Entry Ramp
Which Is Better?

- Side-entry vans have the entire floor lowered to allow the wheelchair user a choice of where to sit: as the driver, the front-row passenger or in the mid-section of the van.
- Side entry allows for additional passengers in a back row.
- Requires ample space on the side of the van to deploy the ramp (Requires a large accessible parking spot with no adjacent cars).
- Allows for curbside entry/exit.
- If the ramp folds into the van rather than retracting under the floor, view may be obstructed for the wheelchair user and other passengers cannot enter/exit the van from the side door without deploying the ramp.
- Can be more expensive than a rear-entry van
Side Entry Ramp vs. Rear Entry Ramp

Which Is Better?

Rear Entry
Pros and Cons

- Rear-entry vans typically have a lowered center cut-out where the wheelchair enters and parks – so there isn’t the option to sit in the front row.
- Wheelchair users can still exit the van even if there are no accessible parking spots or if another car is blocking the side door...however, you may be exiting out the back into parking lot traffic so extreme caution must be taken.
- Can only parallel park if there is ample space behind the vehicle for the ramp to deploy.
- May not allow seating for as many passengers.
- Can be less expensive than side-entry vans.
Different Tie-Down Styles To Consider

Manual Tie-Downs

Retractable Tie-Downs

Automatic Docking System
Other Factors & Features To Consider:

• Will my wheelchair fit through the vehicle door opening?
• What position do I want the wheelchair to sit in the vehicle?
• Will there be a caregiver present when the vehicle is in use or will the wheelchair user be operating the vehicle independently?
• Will this van fit in my garage?
• What are the most important things for me in my wheelchair-accessible vehicle?

Just Starting Your Search for Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles? This step-by-step guide helps you identify what kind of vehicle is right for you based on your lifestyle, budget, and style. Take our lifestyle quiz to find out what wheelchair accessible product is right for you.
Can I Modifying My Existing Vehicle?

**Possibly**, but certain conditions must be met. Only certain vehicle makes and models can be converted and there may be other limiting criteria (such as mileage) as well. Make sure to call your local dealer for parameters.
Can I Buy From A Dealership And Then Bring It To A Facility For Modification?

While this can sometimes work, we recommend contacting United Access BEFORE purchasing a van. If you visit a car dealership first, you risk purchasing a vehicle that cannot be converted because it is the wrong model – or it may be the right model but not equipped with the right options.
Rent vs. Purchase

• Rentals are available for a day, a week or long-term. This may help you decide which vehicle is right for you when you actually try out a certain model.

• Even though some people own an accessible van, they may choose to rent a van for vacations to preserve the mileage on their own van.

• Purchasing a van is a big step and should be thought out well in advance.

• Financing options, grants and assistance programs will significantly vary by state and county.
Funding

** (general overview – varies by state)

- United Access or other dealers can work with you on financing.
- **Medicaid and Medicare** typically do NOT provide funding for accessible vans but look into the WAIVERS – some states may have a waiver that could potentially provide some funding. ([MedicaidWaivers.org](http://MedicaidWaivers.org))
- Contact your local **Centers for Independent Living**. These organizations exist all over the U.S. and if they can’t help with funding, they should be able to refer you to organizations in your area that may be able to help.
Funding

** (general overview – varies by state)

- If you need a van or car adaptions to get to school or work, contact your local Vocational Rehabilitation Program. They may be able to assist with some funding.

- Contact additional government agencies to see if they can provide funding for a van or vehicle modifications: Department of Rehabilitation Services, Aging & Disability Resource Centers, Council for Developmental Disabilities, Disabilities Act Center, and the Assistive Technology Exchange.
Funding

** (general overview – varies by state)

- You may need to do some fundraising in your local community, start a GoFundMe campaign or investigate local charitable organizations.
- Don’t forget the IFOPA has the Quality of L.I.F.E. Awards that can be used on adaptive equipment or disability needs, and van conversions would fall under this category. Just note, you will have to prove you have the remaining funds to cover the rest of the balance before the IFOPA will wire the $ to the dealership.
- Prepare yourself. Finding funding will take perseverance, and a lot of paperwork. Be prepared to advocate for your transportation needs!
Other Vehicle Mobility Products

** If your FOP is not too progressed and you can still stand, pivot, transfer, and take a few steps, you may not need an entire wheelchair van – you may only need certain mobility products to help you in and out of the car as a driver or passenger.

Scooter & Wheelchair Lifts (Interior & Exterior)
Accessible Vehicle Seating
Transfer Seating
Scooter & Wheelchair Lifts

- Internal & external options for storing the scooter or wheelchair.
- Styles for vans, trucks, SUVs and sedans.
- Perfect for someone with FOP who still has the mobility to walk short distances and enter a vehicle with minimal assistance.
Scooter & Wheelchair Lifts

Curb-Sider

Joey
Scooter & Wheelchair Lifts

Outsider

Chariot
Accessible Vehicle Seating

Power seats that rotate either within the van or rotate to the outside of a car, truck, or van to assist the individual into the driver or passenger position.
Accessible Vehicle Seating

B&D Transfer Seat

LINK

Turny Evo
Transfer Seating

Good option for young adult drivers or adult passengers that need just an extra surface to slide into a car more easily.