

Independent Perspective #1893 with Cathy Colicchia

Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

Welcome to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living.

00:00:07 Speaker 1

One of the many services offered by Western New York Independent Living is Independence Express, a fee-based transportation program that offers rides for people with disabilities who reside in one of the five Western New York counties.

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Joining us today to tell us more about the transportation program at Western New York Independent Living is Cathy Colicchia, Director of Independence Express.

00:00:30 Speaker 1

Welcome to the program, Cathy.

00:00:32 Speaker 2

Hi, Ernie.

00:00:34 Speaker 1

Howdy.

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Can you provide us with an overview of Independence Express, who can use it, and what counties does it cover?

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Sure, we have six wheelchair accessible vans that also carry people who are ambulatory,

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that travel throughout Erie, Niagara, Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming counties.

00:00:56 Speaker 2

Anybody with a disability is able to use our service.

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They need to sign up for it first.

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And once they're signed up, they can start scheduling rides.

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And we do have different programs available.

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Great.

00:01:17 Speaker 1

What's the cost of using the transportation service?

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And how does billing work?

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So, the cost is \$20 each way, plus 50 cents a mile.

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So, any round trip is going to be \$40 plus 50 cents per mile traveled.

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So that's from your pickup to your destination.

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And we do not you never pay the drivers.

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We

00:01:46 Speaker 2

have a billing.

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If you take a ride in December, you get a bill in January.

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So, you get a bill the following month for the ride.

00:01:57 Speaker 1

But I bet that's probably more reasonable than most Ubers and taxi cabs.

00:02:02 Speaker 2

Yeah, you don't have to pay on the spot.

00:02:04 Speaker 2

And that is very convenient for a lot of people.

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All right.

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And you have a separate program.

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called Family Support Service Transportation.

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What can you tell us about that?

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We have Family Support Services Transportation is for people who are eligible for OPWDD services in Erie, Niagara, Genesee, and Orleans counties.

00:02:34 Speaker 2

They can get up to six free round trips per month, or 12 one-way trips based on availability.

00:02:42 Speaker 2

to wherever they'd like to go except for doctor's appointments.

00:02:46 Speaker 2

They are not permitted to use the transportation for doctor's appointments, and it's at no cost to them.

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However, if they do have a self-directing budget, they have to have it provided for in their budget.

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We also have the bus pass program, which will provide a half fare bus pass or

00:03:07 Speaker 2

10 to 20 paratransit pass trips, a paratransit pass trips per month for people who are eligible.

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They have to live in those counties, live with a family member, and sign up for the service.

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Oh, I'm sorry.

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What's the process to get more information and/or sign up for transportation services?

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So, they need to call our office at 716-836-0822 and either dial extension 126 for our intake office or

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if they get the operator, ask for extension 126 intake.

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If they'd like more information, they can press extension 108 or ask the operator for Christian in transportation.

00:04:07 Speaker 1

Boy, that sounds like you have a quite a comprehensive service there.

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But I'm sure that we haven't answered all the questions that individuals might have about the service.

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Who is the best one to contact?

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If they have more questions about the transportation, they would contact Christian at extension 108.

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And if you could remind us of the overall phone number again?

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Sure, it's 716-836-0822.

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Thanks so much for being with us, Cathy.

00:04:40 Speaker 2

Thank you so much, Ernie.

00:04:41 Speaker 1

You've been listening to Independent Transportation.

00:04:45 Speaker 1

Well, actually, you've been listening about independent transportation on Western New York Independent Living's Independence Express.

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And our guest today has been Cathy Colicchia, director of Independence Express.

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Have a great week.