

Topic: Transportation
(Church World Service, Overseas Processing Entity, Accra)

Activity: Transportation Overview; Public Transportation versus Car Ownership Debate

Objectives	<p>When participants first arrive in the US, they will need to rely on public transportation to get to work, school and shops. The public transportation system requires that participants understand schedules and that they are on time. Participants may think that car ownership is necessary in the US. On the contrary, it can be expensive and has many responsibilities. Rules for all travelers and drivers will be very different in the US, so participants should always pay attention to safety rules and signs. It is the goal of this module to provide participants with the information that they will need to feel comfortable getting around their community in the US.</p> <p>After this unit, participants will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know how to use public transportation• Know the laws and responsibilities of owning and driving a car• Appreciate the use of a public transportation system
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaching points (included)• Cards with instructions and questions• Paper and markers
Introduction	Discuss the teaching points.
Practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Setting: 2 groups. Group I: Pros; Group II: Cons.2. Divide participants into 2 groups and explain the activity to them.3. Let each group advance points either in support of the use of public transportation system or owning a private car.4. The leader of each group presents their argument on behalf of his group for class discussion.
Variations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Low-literacy: This can be discussed orally.

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Teaching Points

Different Types of Transportation

Bus systems operate in larger cities. They operate on tight schedules and are low-cost. They are usually operated by local governments and have local routes.

Subways are available in most very large cities. They go above and below ground and run on tight schedules. It is usually necessary to switch trains several times. They are typically low cost and are operated by local governments and have local routes.

Commuter trains also operate in larger cities as an alternative to subways. They are also typically operated by local governments and are low cost.

Taxis can be found in most cities and are usually very expensive. Taxi drivers will expect a tip. Rates are strictly regulated.

Private cars are owned by many Americans. There are high costs associated with car ownership and well as many legal responsibilities. Many car owners car pool with co-workers to save on cost.

Long-distance buses and trains also operate in the US through private companies. Prices depend on the distance and competition.

*Airplanes are used to long distance travel. Airfare costs are very high, but much time can be saved.

Walking and bike riding are permitted only in certain areas. Typically they are not permitted on major highways.

Carpooling- Many people living in the US carpool, which means sharing driving responsibilities to and from work. This cuts down on transportation costs and is good for the environment.

Use of Public Transportation

Public transportation, such as buses, subways and commuter trains, is available in larger communities.

Public transportation may not be easily accessible in all areas.

To use public transportation, daily or period tickets are purchased.

Public transportation follows a schedule and route. It is important for the participants to be on time and plan their schedule in advance. It may be necessary to change from one route to another.

Discounted tickets may be available for senior citizens and children. Age limits will vary by city.

School age children living outside of walking distance from their school can take free school buses. These yellow buses are for participants only.

Car Ownership (Trainer's note: Place low emphasis)

Participants should be encouraged to wait on buying a car until they have become established. There are many pitfalls for newly arrived refugees including accidents, bills, laws and insurance. In some locations,

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however, car ownership may be the only way to travel around. Participants should consult their resettlement caseworkers for advice.

To own a car, the owner must show proof of insurance, have proper registration and have a regular vehicle inspection.

Most states require by law that cars have insurance. Failure to have up to date insurance can result in heavy fines.

Registration of the vehicle is required to receive license plates.

An inspection is typically conducted on an annual basis to make sure that the car is safe.

Cars are typically taxed by the state on an annual basis. The tax will be based on the value of the car.

Money will need to be budgeted for maintenance, gas and parking.

Getting a License (Trainer's note: Place low emphasis)

Learner's permits are available for new drivers. This is recommended for all participants, even those who have driven, because there are many differences. To receive a learner's permit, the individual will have to pass a visual and written test first. Drivers with learner's permits are required to have a licensed driver with them at all times.

Driving schools are available in the US. Information on these schools can be found in telephone books and through the resettlement agency.

To receive a driver's license individuals need to pass visual, written and driving tests.

Age limits for receiving a license will vary from state to state, but generally 16 is the legal age. Participants must check with their resettlement agency.

There is typically a fee for applying for a driver's license.

The driver's license is not permanent and will need to be renewed every few years.

It is illegal to drive without a license.

International or overseas driver's licenses are not accepted in the US.

It is not necessary to own a car to get a driver's license.

Driving Laws (low emphasis as is addressed in U.S. Law)

All road signs must be respected. Speed limits vary from state to state and road to road. Highways have maximum and minimum speed limits.

Drinking alcohol and/or taking drugs while driving is a serious offense. Each state has alcohol limits, but any drinking and driving could result in impaired driving. Repeated offenses can lead to deportation.

Infants, toddlers and children are required to ride in car safety seats.

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Seatbelt laws vary by state, but the use of seat belts is required in most states. Generally anyone sitting in the front seat is required to buckle up. Children should always wear a seat belt. The back seat is the safest place for any child 12 years old or younger. Child safety seats are also required for infants, toddlers and children. All 50 states have laws regarding “buckling up” a child, but the laws concerning child safety seats vary from state to state. (For more details refer to Child Safety Seat Poster-still being developed.)

If stopped by the police for a traffic violation, the driver will be given a ticket. The ticket will contain instructions on how to respond. Consequences may be fines, community service or jail time depending on the severity of the offense.

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