



'Ridesharing' Companies Uber, Lyft and Sidecar Are Shutting Out Passengers with Disabilities

So-called “ridesharing” taxi companies such as Uber, Lyft and Sidecar started in the San Francisco area. Today, San Francisco’s taxicab environment serves as a warning of how such Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) harmfully impact access to transportation for people with disabilities.

Twenty-five percent of San Francisco’s [wheelchair-accessible taxicabs are sitting idle](#) because there aren’t enough drivers to operate them. That’s because it’s [cheaper to drive for a TNC](#), since they avoid costly but necessary overhead such as full-time commercial insurance, police-conducted background checks based on the driver’s fingerprints, driver training, and regular vehicle maintenance conducted by independent inspectors. News has also emerged that California’s [TNC drivers have been refusing](#) to pick up blind passengers with service dogs.

TNCs have an extreme disconnect with passengers with disabilities:

- Many people **with disabilities live on fixed incomes** and do not possess credit cards. TNC taxis do not serve passengers who use cash.
- Wheelchair-accessible taxicabs are significantly more expensive to purchase, maintain and fuel. The majority of TNC drivers are freelancers who have **zero financial incentive to invest in a wheelchair-accessible vehicle**.
- Educating a driver to service passengers with disabilities can require hours of special training. TNC **drivers receive almost no training** before getting on the road.
- Populations with disabilities are exceptionally vulnerable to abuse. TNC **drivers receive inferior third-party background checks**—[which have already failed notably](#)—are not conducted by law enforcement.

Two Tracks, Wrong Way

In most cities, drivers for licensed taxicab companies are mandated to provide community-wide service, including to passengers with disabilities. However, some cities, such as Seattle, have implemented a two-track system that allows TNC taxi drivers to choose where and when they operate, and give them the ability to deny rides to passengers.

If adoption of this two-track model becomes widespread, people with disabilities will inevitably be among those who will suffer most from a degraded taxi environment.

For more information, visit www.WhosDrivingYou.org

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