

Christopher Bove

2025 Outstanding Service Award

Thanks to Chris' advocacy and leadership, the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority's (RIPTA) RId e Anywhere Program expanded from a pilot program in 2024 to a permanent paratransit service in 2025. RId e Anywhere requires RIPTA to serve riders with disabilities anywhere in the state.

As Chris explains it, "Prior to January 2024, RIPTA's RId e Program only transported riders with disabilities within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of a fixed bus route. This meant that large regions of the state had no paratransit or standard bus service whatsoever. This included almost all areas in the western rural area of the state, (plus the east bay region) including Tiverton, Little Compton, and some portions of Newport, Middletown, and Portsmouth."

"Back in 2022, I began going on TV and advocating for an expansion of the service and explained that the current system was creating large areas of the state that were segregated to able bodied people," states Chris. "In 2023, the Rhode Island General Assembly provided a \$500,000 allocation to create a one-year pilot program that required RIPTA to serve riders with disabilities anywhere in the state, regardless of their proximity to a fixed bus route."

"This pilot program came to be known as the RId e Anywhere Program," Chris continues. "In 2025, the General Assembly voted to establish the RId e Anywhere Program as a permanent service, ensuring that riders with disabilities will be able to travel anywhere in the state."

"I am so beyond proud to have been a part of this work to bring transportation access to all Rhode Islanders with disabilities regardless of their zip code. And I was both honored and surprised to receive the National Federation of the Blind of Rhode Island's Outstanding Service Award. They had not given out this award in over 10 years, so I didn't even know it was something that they do. I felt so honored to be recognized by such an amazing organization of advocates," Chris concludes.

