

Welfare to Work: Integration and Coordination of Transportation and Social Services

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Executive Summary

In 1996, federal welfare reform legislation created a new emphasis on moving individuals from welfare to work. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act replaced the Aid for Families with Dependent Children program with block grant funding and mandatory work requirements. As states and localities began to implement their welfare-reform programs, it quickly became apparent that providing reliable and affordable transportation to jobs, to job training, and to other employment support services was critical to the success of these programs.

This is the final report for Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Project H-15A, *Welfare to Work: Integration and Coordination of Transportation and Social Services*. The project's goal was to examine the role of transportation in supporting welfare-to-work initiatives and to identify practical strategies to improve access to job opportunities for former welfare recipients making the transition to work.

Research activities to support this project included an extensive literature review, focus groups with stakeholders in welfare-to-work activities, and a series of on-site case studies. The research team identified traditional and innovative approaches to welfare-related transportation, including modifications to existing mass transit services, better coordination and integration of available transportation services, ride-sharing programs, automobile ownership programs, and subsidies for transportation costs. Of particular interest were the new collaborations between social service and transportation providers, involvement of faith-based and community-based organizations, and creative use of public and private funding sources to support improvements in mobility.

Issues and Needs

Welfare reform legislation changed the structure of the American welfare system. The strengthened emphasis on moving individuals from welfare to work has had significant implications for a wide range of support services, from child care to job training to transportation. Some of the transportation barriers that welfare recipients encounter:

- Nationally nearly three out of four welfare recipients live in center cities or in rural areas, while job growth has focused on the suburbs.
- Jobs in the retail and service industries typically require entry-level employees to work at night and on weekends.
- Most welfare recipients do not own cars.
- While urban residents generally have convenient access to transit services, those systems were never intended to get city dwellers to the suburbs – especially at night or on weekends.
- More than half of rural residents live in areas with minimal transit service or none at all.
- Women with young children – especially single mothers – are especially likely to incorporate multiple stops into their work trips.
- Many welfare recipients have difficulty using a bus schedule because of limited basic skills.

States, counties, and local communities have responded to these concerns in traditional and innovative ways. This report explores some creative approaches to planning, operating, and funding new services for the growing market of welfare-related transportation.

Planning Initiatives

New planning initiatives have been established to develop welfare-related transportation programs.

Partners in Planning

Welfare-to-work transportation programs have called upon the expertise and resources of diverse participants, many of whom are new to the transportation planning process. These stakeholders generally include representatives from agencies and organizations that have a vested interest in the outcome of the program and may include any or all of the following participants:

- **Transportation providers**, including public and private transit and paratransit operators serving the general public and agency clients, vanpool programs, private shuttle operators, and taxi services
- **Social service providers**, including agencies administering TANF program benefits and support services (e.g., training, placement, child-care)

- **Departments of transportation**, which may oversee multimodal planning and operations at a state, regional or local level
- **Planners**, including representatives from metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), councils of governments (COGs), or state, county, or local planning departments
- **Community- and faith-based organizations** that work with members of the targeted population and may have transportation resources available
- **Employers and job developers**, including representation from the area private industry council or workforce investment board
- **Elected officials**, who can play a key role in obtaining community and political support for recommended programs

Many of these stakeholders may not have worked together before, and may not be familiar with the special challenges of welfare-to-work transportation. Through the planning process, stakeholders can share their specialized knowledge as they develop transportation strategies that incorporate the best elements of their differing disciplines.

Needs Assessment

Before developing new transportation services, many states and localities have conducted studies to document gaps between transportation needs and service availability. Many of these used **geographic information systems** (GIS) to illustrate the residential location of TANF clients in relation to available transit services and potential jobs.

Learning from Welfare Recipients

As the target customers for transportation services, TANF participants know their transportation needs better than anyone else and involving them in the planning process has yielded enormous benefits. Strategies for assessing the transportation needs of welfare recipients include **surveys**, **questionnaires**, and **focus groups**.

Service Strategies

The range of service strategies that have been developed to support welfare-related transportation needs include the following:

- **Modifications** to existing services, including changes in route alignment or schedule to serve job sites, meet work shifts, or minimize transfers
- **Shuttles, circulators, and feeder** services to improve mobility within a local area or to provide connections to the regional transit network

- **Night owl** services for late-night workers
- **Coordination** among existing public and private transportation services
- **Mobility manager** to coordinate the delivery of a range of transportation programs and services
- **Ridesharing** and subscription services
- **Automobile-based** strategies, including vehicle donation and purchase programs
- **Travel information**, including multilingual materials and computerized trip planning services
- **Child-care transportation**
- **Fare subsidies** and incentives
- **One-stop centers** that consolidate transportation and support services for welfare recipients
- **Entrepreneurial** services that train welfare recipients to provide transportation services to other community members

Funding Sources

Service providers have turned to a wide variety of funding sources – from federal grants to donated labor. Three major federal funding programs may be used to support welfare-to-work transportation programs. These are: the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant program, administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; the Welfare to Work formula and competitive grant program, administered by the U.S. Department of Labor; and the Job Access and Reverse Commute grant program, administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Several states have used federal formula or block grant funds to support local or regional welfare-to-work transportation programs, often on a competitive basis. Some programs have received grants or donations from private funding sources, including foundations, faith-based organizations, and nonprofit community organizations.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were held with transportation stakeholders in Michigan, California, and South Carolina. Participants were especially clear in their belief that the transportation aspects of welfare-to-work extended well beyond transportation and included an array of societal issues. Problems associated with access to jobs are linked with issues of urban form, public

policy, and public services; any attempt to address transportation needs must also examine these other concerns.

Participants indicated that typical transit is not well suited to meet many needs, even when services are reasonably extensive. Consumers often have long trips to work, some that cross transit jurisdictions where the fit of schedules, routes, and fares is an issue. Chained transit trips – including child-care and school stops, work, and shopping – are particularly complicated for mothers with young children. Safety, accessibility, and affordability are persistent issues.

Finally, both social service and transportation providers stressed that they need to learn to speak each other’s language, understand each other’s needs, and develop shared goals and agendas

Case Studies

The following programs were profiled through case studies; all used creative strategies to address customer needs.

- **AC Transit Neighborhood Circulator**, which provides night-time connections between rail stations and a residential community in North Richmond, California.
- **AdVANtage**, in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, which trains welfare recipients to operate van services.
- **AdVANtage II**, at Sojourner-Douglas College in Baltimore, Maryland, which helps students at this community-based college to provide transportation services as van operators.
- **Contra Costa County Social Services Department**, in Martinez, California, which is making vans available to TANF participants to provide transportation services for community organizations and child care facilities.
- **Good News Garage**, in Burlington, Vermont, a faith-based program that refurbishes donated automobiles and turns them over to low-income residents.
- **Lower San Antonio Transportation Support Project**, in Oakland, California, which provides trip planning and support services to give community-based organizations in this multicultural neighborhood.
- **Metropolitan Transportation Commission**, in the San Francisco Bay Area, California, which is facilitating a county-based planning process

and developing transportation resource guides.

- **Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization**, in Clearwater, Florida, which administers a menu of transportation options for TANF recipients.
- **San Diego Workforce Partnership**, which coordinates resources from church groups and nonprofit organizations to provide work-related transportation.
- **Santee-Wateree Regional Transportation Authority**, in Sumter, South Carolina, which coordinated new flexible work-related transportation services with existing services for clients of human service agencies.
- **State of New Jersey**, which developed a comprehensive county-based transportation planning process
- **State of South Carolina**, which developed an interagency planning program to support local efforts.
- **Transit Authority of River City**, in Louisville, Kentucky, whose services include a one-stop center and a late-night subscription shuttle to support second- and third-shift workers.
- **TransPac** in Pleasant Hill, California, a regional planning agency that provides transportation incentives and traveler information.

Program Evaluation

A limited cost-benefit analysis was conducted to assess program activities and outcomes at four sites using available information. The selected sites were AdVANtage II, Good News Garage, Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization, and Transit Authority of River City. From these observations, the research team derived some conclusions regarding strategies that could be effective in other communities. Benefits assumed annual earnings for newly employed TANF participants along with reductions in public support. Costs were based on information received from the programs through the case studies. Three of the programs reviewed showed benefits in excess of costs, with benefit-to-cost ratios in the range of 2.5 to 1.0. The fourth program showed benefits equaling costs.

Lessons Learned

Because traditional transportation approaches often do not address the complex needs of welfare recipients, communities have developed a wide range of creative strategies. Although the program details vary, the lessons from these programs are quite similar and are summarized here.

- The challenges of welfare reform extend well beyond transportation.
- Welfare clients have complex transportation needs.
- Welfare reform has created new roles for transportation and social service providers.
- Welfare reform has fostered new cooperative relationships and collaborations among organizations. Of particular note is the participation of private sector organizations, especially nonprofits, community-based organizations and faith-based groups.
- Stakeholders stressed the importance of teamwork and flexibility in building successful partnerships.
- Transportation programs incorporate innovative solutions. Despite their diversity, these programs share one common trait: Program planners were “thinking outside the box.”
- Automobiles are part of the solution.
- The committed leadership of an individual or organization can help to carry a project from planning to implementation.
- Successful programs maintained ongoing communication among program staff, participants, and stakeholders.
- Progress has been slower than expected.
- Many communities have not collected sufficient data to evaluate their progress.
- Successful programs have incorporated strategies to ensure that results can be sustained over time for targeted TANF clients and in some cases the general public.

Part 1:

Introduction

Introduction

In 1996, federal welfare reform legislation created a new emphasis on moving individuals from welfare to work. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act replaced the Aid for Families with Dependent Children program with block grant funding and mandatory work requirements. The new welfare program, which shifted many administrative and policy responsibilities to the state level, imposed a five-year lifetime limit on welfare benefits and a two-year deadline for placing most recipients in jobs, job training, or vocational education programs.

As states and localities began to implement their welfare-reform programs, it quickly became apparent that providing reliable and affordable transportation to jobs, to job training, and to other employment support services was critical to the success of these programs. Because the transportation needs associated with welfare reform are difficult to serve with traditional transit services, state and local governments began to develop creative solutions to serve this new market.

Report Description

This is the final report for Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Project H-15A, *Welfare to Work: Integration and Coordination of Transportation and Social Services*. The project's goal was to examine the role of transportation in supporting welfare-to-work initiatives and to identify practical strategies to improve access to job opportunities for former welfare recipients making the transition to work. Research activities to support this project included an extensive literature review, focus groups with stakeholders in the welfare-to-work activities, and a series of on-site case studies. The research team identified traditional and innovative approaches to welfare-related transportation, including modifications to existing mass transit services, better coordination and integration of available transportation services, ride-sharing programs, automobile ownership programs, and subsidies for transportation costs. Of particular interest were the new collaborations between social service and transportation providers, involvement of faith-based and community-based organizations, and creative use of public and private funding sources to support improvements in mobility.

This report is presented in three parts.

Part 1 documents the challenges of providing welfare-to-work transportation and highlights some of the new partnerships and creative implementation strategies identified through the literature review and the field research. **Chapter 1** summarizes the issues and needs associated with welfare-to-work transportation. **Chapter 2** describes the noteworthy planning initiatives and associated partnerships participating in welfare-related transportation programs. **Chapter 3** describes the range of transportation approaches that have been developed in response to the travel needs of TANF participants. **Chapter 4** identifies major funding sources available for welfare-to-work transportation and describes specific strategies that some service providers have used to support their programs.

Part 2 documents the field research elements of this project. **Chapter 5** describes the focus groups conducted with transportation stakeholders in three locations. **Chapters 6-16** detail the case studies that profile exemplary welfare-related transportation programs.

Part 3 synthesizes the findings from the literature review and field work. **Chapter 17** includes a framework for evaluation the success of welfare-to-work transportation strategies, and **Chapter 18** summarizes the elements common to successful programs.

Appendices include relevant resources and contacts.

Issues and Needs

Welfare reform legislation changed the structure of the American welfare system. The strengthened emphasis on moving individuals from welfare to work has had significant implications for a wide range of support services, from child care to job training to transportation. Transportation plays a key role in meeting the goals of welfare reform. While welfare recipients face numerous obstacles on the path to employment, transportation has consistently been identified as a major barrier to finding and keeping a job. Without reliable transportation options, many welfare clients cannot make a successful transition to work.

Solving the transportation problem has required new collaborations among public agencies and private organizations, innovative services, and creative funding strategies. This section summarizes the provisions of federal welfare reform legislation, the demographic characteristics and travel patterns of welfare recipients, the unique challenges of welfare-related transportation, and the implications for service strategies.

Welfare Reform Legislation

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) created a series of goals, incentives, support systems, and sanctions designed to move welfare recipients into jobs. The legislation shifted responsibility for welfare from the federal government to the states and replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program with a block grant program. The block grants, known as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), were designed for states to provide eligible families with time-limited cash assistance. States were required to submit a plan for the TANF block grant by July 1, 1997.

Key provisions of the federal welfare reform law include the following:

- **Work requirements.** Adults are required to work after receiving TANF assistance for 24 months, with some specific exemptions allowed. (Twenty-one states introduced shorter time limits.) The law sets specific participation goals for work activities.

- **Work activities.** TANF recipients are required to participate in unsubsidized employment, subsidized employment, on-the-job training, work experience, community service, vocational training, or provide child care services to individuals participating in community service. Some job search activities also count toward the work requirements.
- **Transitional support.** Increased funding is available for child care to help more mothers move into jobs. In addition, the law guarantees that women on welfare continue to receive health coverage for their families, including at least one year of transitional Medicaid when they leave welfare to work.
- **Time limit.** Individuals may not receive TANF assistance for more than five years; the 60-month clock is cumulative, not consecutive. States have the discretion of imposing shorter time limits, and 18 states have chosen to do so. States may exempt up to 20 percent of their caseload from the time limit and have the option of using non-cash assistance or state funds to assist families that have reached the five-year limit.

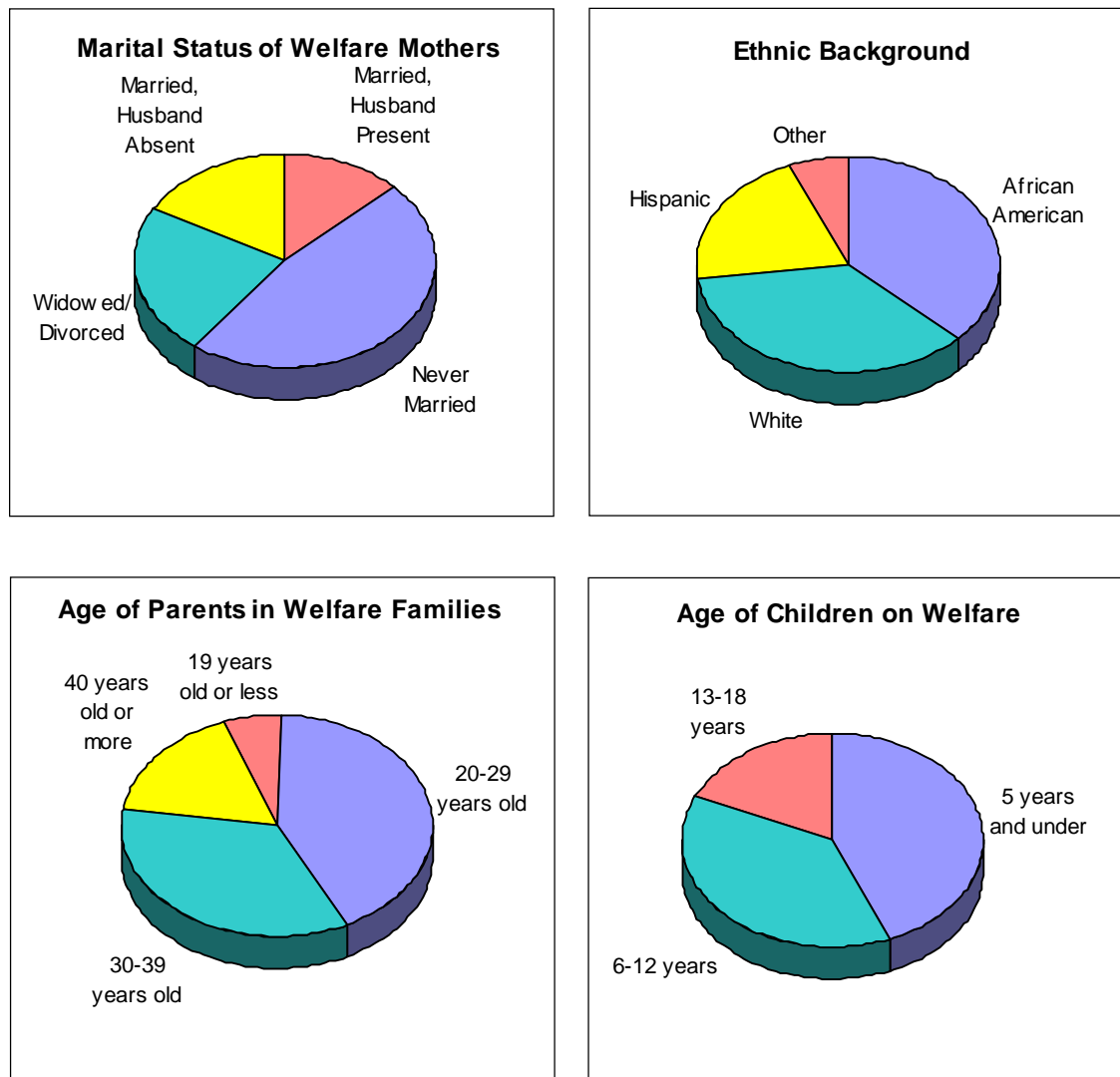
While welfare policy and administration had previously been a federal responsibility, welfare reform has shifted many of the traditional responsibilities of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to the states. This policy change meant that the nation has moved from a single centralized welfare program to 50 separate programs – each with a unique set of transportation concerns and requirements.

The following sections describe the characteristics of welfare recipients who are making the transition to work and their special transportation needs.

Characteristics of Welfare Clients

Welfare clients are overwhelmingly single women with children.¹ According to the U.S. Department of Labor, only 13 percent of welfare mothers were married, with husbands present in the household; nearly half (48 percent) never married and others were widowed, divorced, or separated.² Most of these women have only one or two children (the average is 1.9), consistent with patterns in the general public, but these children tend to be young. About 44 percent of children in welfare families are five years old or younger, and nearly 38 percent are between six and twelve years old. The average age of children receiving welfare benefits is 7.6 years. The majority of parents in welfare families are in their twenties (42 percent) or thirties (35 percent). Only 6 percent are teenagers. Finally, welfare families are diverse. About 37 percent are

Characteristics of Welfare Recipients



Source: U.S. Department of Labor

African American, 36 percent are white, and 21 percent Hispanic. (The figure above presents a series of demographic characteristics.)

More than half of welfare recipients have, at a minimum, a high school degree or GED; 16 percent have at least some college experience. About 42 percent never completed high school.³ Additionally, while 61 percent of welfare mothers reported prior work experience, many have worked only in low-wage, low-skill jobs.⁴ For example, the Institute for Women's Policy Research reported that 37 percent of AFDC mothers worked as

maids, cashiers, nursing aides, child-care workers, and waitresses. Most of these jobs were in the service industries, including restaurants, bars, nursing homes, private households, hotels and motels, department stores, hospitals, and temporary help firms; these industries employed 40 percent of welfare mothers, compared to 19 percent of all women.⁵

Cathie J. was a single mother in Vermont who raised three children on welfare after her divorce. When her children were grown, she enrolled in a training program and was hired as a pharmacy technician in Burlington. For a while she was able to drive a car that a friend had given her. But after the car broke down, she had to rely on her retired uncle to drive her to work – a forty-minute round trip twice a day.

Welfare recipients overwhelmingly live in the nation's metropolitan areas, but not necessarily the center cities. Among individuals receiving AFDC or General Assistance in 1992, 48 percent lived in central cities, 28 percent in suburbs, and 24 percent in rural areas.⁶ The pattern is slightly different for women with children. In 1993, the Census Bureau looked at the characteristics of women of childbearing age (defined as 15-44 years) receiving AFDC benefits. Among these women, who make up the majority of people on welfare, 56 percent lived in center cities, 25 percent in suburbs, and 19 percent in rural areas.⁷

Transportation Barriers for Welfare Recipients

The commuting difficulties of individuals making the transition from welfare to work have been widely documented. Stories highlight the transportation challenges that many welfare recipients face in finding and keeping jobs – multiple bus trips, incompatible schedules, long walks to suburban job sites, concerns about safety, reliance on friends and relatives, and expensive taxi rides. In addition to this anecdotal information, survey data and statistical analyses have also documented the challenges associated with providing transportation to welfare recipients. The following is an overview of these various transportation barriers that welfare clients face.

Access to Transportation Services

Most welfare recipients do not own automobiles. The U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services has estimated that, on average, about 7 percent of families receiving TANF benefits own an automobile and that these vehicles have an average reported value of \$895.⁸ As the table indicates, this national average shows significant local variation. California alone accounted for more than half of the reported automobiles, and ownership rates exceeded 20 percent in Kentucky, Kansas, and Hawaii. In contrast, fewer than 1 percent of TANF families reported autos in states like New York, Maryland, and Michigan. While these statewide averages can provide a snapshot of automobile availability, the numbers should be interpreted with caution. Until recently, families receiving welfare benefits were limited to one car valued at less than

TANF Families Reporting Motor Vehicles
October 1996-June 1997

State	TANF Families	Vehicles	Percent	State	TANF Families	Vehicles	Percent
Alabama	36,728	46	0.1%	Montana	9,442	802	8.5%
Alaska	12,312	n/a	n/a	Nebraska	13,481	165	1.2%
Arizona	56,020	456	0.8%	Nevada	12,120	421	3.5%
Arkansas	21,405	345	1.6%	New Hampshire	8,280	186	2.2%
California	832,009	160,255	19.3%	New Jersey	102,034	n/a	n/a
Colorado	31,182	245	0.8%	New Mexico	29,256	2,065	7.1%
Connecticut	56,051	599	1.1%	New York	391,000	638	0.2%
Delaware	9,900	146	1.5%	North Carolina	101,783	1,137	1.1%
District of Columbia	24,508	n/a	n/a	North Dakota	4,331	526	12.1%
Florida	179,170	5,278	2.9%	Ohio	191,437	4,892	2.6%
Georgia	111,924	2,555	2.3%	Oklahoma	31,750	185	0.6%
Guam	2,279	28	1.2%	Oregon	25,310	1,500	5.9%
Hawaii	22,487	5,480	24.4%	Pennsylvania	167,933	3,940	2.3%
Idaho	7,710	135	1.8%	Puerto Rico	48,143	n/a	n/a
Illinois	202,290	8,043	4.0%	Rhode Island	19,903	274	1.4%
Indiana	45,813	6,145	13.4%	South Carolina	35,895	540	1.5%
Iowa	29,365	247	0.8%	South Dakota	5,264	324	6.2%
Kansas	21,066	4,504	21.4%	Tennessee	73,763	4,492	6.1%
Kentucky	66,623	16,750	25.1%	Texas	222,162	2,639	1.2%
Louisiana	58,665	132	0.2%	Utah	12,613	282	2.2%
Maine	18,961	184	1.0%	Vermont	8,401	406	4.8%
Maryland	60,950	635	1.0%	Virgin Islands	1,298	n/a	n/a
Massachusetts	79,686	751	0.9%	Virginia	55,260	2,769	5.0%
Michigan	154,816	1,585	1.0%	Washington	94,619	8,138	8.6%
Minnesota	54,276	9,146	16.9%	West Virginia	34,747	839	2.4%
Mississippi	40,646	3,164	7.8%	Wisconsin	44,345	1,071	2.4%
Missouri	73,635	6,217	8.4%	Wyoming	3,084	109	3.5%
				<i>Total</i>	<i>4,058,131</i>	<i>271,412</i>	<i>6.7%</i>

Source

*Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program
First Annual Report to Congress
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
August 1998*

\$1,500. Most states have increased this asset ceiling, but participants may still under-report the number and value of household automobiles.

Without cars, welfare clients must rely on other modes of transportation – walking, bicycling, sharing rides with friends and relatives and, when available, mass transit. Urban residents generally have access to mass transit services. For example, in Essex County, New Jersey, which includes Newark, it has been estimated that 98 percent of welfare clients live within a five-minute walk of a bus route (calculated as one-quarter mile) and all live within a mile of bus service.⁹ In rural and suburban areas, however, the picture changes noticeably. Some 38 percent of rural residents live in areas without any public transit service and another 28 percent live in areas with negligible service.¹⁰ Suburbs fall somewhere in between. Looking this time at some of New Jersey's suburban counties, it has been estimated that 50-70 percent of welfare clients live within a five-minute walk of transit in places like Somerset, Gloucester, and Middlesex Counties.¹¹

As the next sections show, however, living near transit is only part of the solution. Given changes in employment and commuting patterns, the transit services available to welfare clients may not take them where they need to go or when they have to get there.

Suburban Employment Trends

Growth in America's suburbs has had profound impacts on transportation and land-use patterns in the last several decades. Residents and jobs have both moved from the nation's center cities into surrounding suburbs, while transit systems have not kept pace. Between 1980 and 1990, the nation's suburbs gained 17.5 million people while the central cities lost 500,000.¹² Suburban employment has also grown in the last few decades, again at the expense of central cities. Between 1967 and 1987, Philadelphia lost 64 percent of its manufacturing jobs, and Chicago, New York City, and Detroit each lost more than half. In many cases, these jobs were relocated from center city to the suburbs. In Detroit, for example, the city lost 100,000 jobs during the 1980s, while the surrounding suburbs gained 250,000 jobs.¹³ Nationally, nearly two thirds of new jobs created during the 1980s were located in the suburbs.¹⁴ And by 1990, the suburban share of jobs grew from 37 percent to 42 percent.¹⁵

Spatial Mismatch

Many of these suburban jobs would be quite attractive to welfare recipients – if they could get there. Unfortunately, most transit systems focus on urban transportation needs, placing many of these jobs out of reach for prospective employees without cars. Even when suburban employers are located within walking distance of transit – and transit schedules match

work shifts – trips tend to be long and may require transfers, and the walk from transit to job site may not be pedestrian friendly.

In Ohio, Case Western Reserve University's Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change, in collaboration with the Cuyahoga County Departments of Entitlement and Employment Services, was among the first to document this gap between suburban jobs and available transit services. Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software, researchers examined transit routes serving Cleveland neighborhoods with high concentrations of public assistance recipients. The study found that residents from these areas could not easily reach jobs that matched their skill levels. Inner-city residents with cars could reach about one-third of the available jobs in about 20 minutes; doubling their travel time gave them access to about three-quarters of the job openings. For those without vehicles, however, access worsened significantly. With a 40-minute commute on transit, inner-city residents could reach 8-15 percent of the appropriate jobs in the metropolitan area. Doubling their commute time to 80 minutes, these residents were only able to reach 40-44 percent of the appropriate job openings.¹⁶

In Louisville, Kentucky, a woman worked in a suburban hospital on the 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. shift. While she could take the bus to work in the afternoon, no public transportation was available for her return trip at night. Instead, she had to choose between walking for four hours or riding a bicycle for two hours – both of which required travel on suburban roads with limited visibility.

Other studies have identified similar examples of the “spatial mismatch” between suburban job opportunities and concentrations of unemployed city residents. Joseph Coughlin, Director of the New England University Transportation Centers Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Michael Rich, Associate Professor of Political Science at Emory University, used GIS to document a similar situation in the Atlanta metropolitan area. Using GIS, they plotted the locations of entry-level jobs in Cobb County, support services such as day care and training, and available mass transit. Their analysis determined that only 43 percent of entry-level jobs in Cobb County were accessible by the Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority (MARTA), and most of these required a 1-2 hour commute.¹⁷

Similarly, Annalynn Lacombe documented conditions in Waltham, Massachusetts, a high-growth suburb west of Boston. One area in North Waltham is home to 77 employers with about 3,000 entry-level workers. Although the regional transit system serves Waltham, none of the existing bus routes is within walking distance of these employers. Lacombe determined that welfare clients living in Boston could reach just 14 percent

of these employers within 60 minutes by transit – and none within 30 minutes. Even more discouraging, nearly half of these employers could not be reached by transit within two hours.

It is important to recognize that these analyses of spatial mismatch generally reflect the availability of fixed-route transit. When more flexible forms of transportation are considered, including ridesharing and demand-response services, access may improve considerably. For example, a study of two disadvantaged communities in the Los Angeles area showed that more workers used carpools than transit for their work trips.¹⁸ Such analyses indicate the importance of considering the role of flexible services in providing welfare-to-work transportation in addition to conventional fixed-route transit.

In rural Virginia, a public assistance recipient takes transit to her job at a day care center – one way only. Because the local transit system offers no midday service she must walk home from work, take a taxi, or depend on relatives. Her three children use a cab to reach their day care at a cost of \$70 a month; a relative picks them up in the evening to save the cab fare.

Temporal Mismatch

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, about 15.2 million people – comprising 16.8 percent of full-time adult workers – normally worked a shift other than a regular daytime schedule in 1997.¹⁹ (See accompanying table.) Nontraditional hours are particularly prevalent in the service industries, where many welfare recipients are expected to find employment. These industries typically operate around the clock, 24 hours a day, seven days a week (popularly referred to as “24/7”), and

many entry-level employees are assigned to the second and third shifts and/or weekend work. For example, 42 percent of full-time workers in bars and restaurants worked nontraditional shifts in 1997, as did 35 percent of employees in the entertainment and recreation fields and 28 percent of those working in retail establishments.²⁰ While these individuals were not necessarily welfare recipients, this employment pattern is illustrative of the kind of challenges many welfare clients face.

These work schedules are particularly difficult to serve with transit. Most systems do not operate 24 hours a day, and many offer limited weekend and evening service – especially in rural and suburban areas. This temporal mismatch leaves many welfare recipients without the benefit of public transportation to travel to and from their places of employment.

Trip Chaining

Another challenge of providing transportation service to the welfare population is the need to serve multiple stops. As discussed earlier, most

Shift Workers by Demographic Characteristics

Percent of Workers with Alternative Shifts			
Characteristics	May-85	May-91	May-97
All Workers, 16 years and over	15.9	17.8	16.8
Gender			
Men	17.8	20.1	19.1
Women	13.0	14.6	13.7
Race/Ethnic Background			
White	15.3	17.1	16.1
Black	19.9	23.3	20.9
Hispanic origin	15.5	19.1	16.0

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

welfare recipients are single mothers. Women workers in general – and working mothers in particular – are likely to link trips together, by dropping off children at school or day care on the way to work or stopping at the grocery store on the way home. According to the National Personal Transportation Survey, about 39 percent of working women incorporate one or more stops between work and home; this increases to 56 percent of single mothers with young children (less than 6 years old).²¹ (See following table.)

This action of linking one or more trips together, known as “trip chaining,” has significant implications for transportation. Transit passengers cannot easily make multiple trips, given the need to coordinate several schedules and possibly pay more than one fare. Accordingly, trip chaining has been associated with increased auto use. Not surprisingly, working women are especially likely to drive to work – low-income women in particular. According to Sandra Rosenbloom: “Poor central city residents may also be disproportionately dependent on the private car, given their low wages. Probably because many trips from the central city to the suburbs are so difficult to make using public transit, in 1990, urban women with household incomes between \$5,000 to \$15,000 were more likely to use a car for their work trip than comparable men.”²² While she was describing travel patterns among the general public, the implications for welfare clients are clear. Working women with young children, especially single mothers, have transportation needs that are especially difficult to serve with conventional transit.

Urban Trip Chaining by Gender and Household Characteristics, 1990

		Workers Who Link Trips	Number of Additional Trips			
			1	2	3	4 +
All Workers	Men	28.7%	49.5%	28.8%	11.6%	10.1%
	Women	38.8%	46.1%	28.8%	13.4%	11.7%
Single Adult with Young Children	Men	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Women	56.1%	50.0%	22.7%	13.6%	13.7%
Single Adult with Older Children	Men	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Women	47.4%	47.2%	25.0%	13.9%	13.9%
Two Adults with Young Children	Men	29.8%	53.5%	27.5%	11.5%	7.7%
	Women	40.6%	51.5%	25.7%	14.5%	8.4%
Two Adults with Older Children	Men	26.7%	46.7%	31.8%	10.3%	11.2%
	Women	36.4%	43.1%	33.5%	12.5%	11.0%

Source: TCRP Report 28

Information Gaps

Information about transportation services may be difficult for welfare clients and their caseworkers to obtain or to understand. Such difficulties may arise when welfare recipients have trouble reading bus schedules or route maps because of literacy or language problems. Sometimes information gaps result from the need to travel between jurisdictions or service areas or to understand complicated fare arrangements. This may be a particular problem for welfare participants traveling between city and suburb where transit services and fare structures are not coordinated.

Although the majority of welfare recipients have completed high school, many lack the basic skills they need to address day-to-day problems at home or at work. According to a recent survey, welfare recipients had a lower level of basic skills than their counterparts in the general population. The survey asked participants to complete basic tasks, like filling out a job application, totaling a bank deposit slip, or using a bus schedule. About 60 percent of welfare recipients were considered to have low or very low basic skills, compared to 31 percent of surveyed full-time workers. Differences in educational attainment explained only part of this gap.²³ Another study showed much the same thing: two-thirds of welfare recipients scored in the bottom quarter of women their age on a test of basic skills,

and one-third of all recipients had basic skills lower than 90 percent of other women their age.²⁴

Other welfare recipients may not be fluent in English, further hindering their ability to understand basic information about transit services. While the ethnic and linguistic background of welfare recipients varies by location, non-English speakers can make up a significant portion of the welfare population in some communities. A study examining barriers to employment among TANF participants classified 7 percent as non-native English speakers; this estimate is assumed to be low because it reflects only those participants who chose to conduct the interview in Spanish.²⁵ In Alameda County, California, welfare clients came in speaking more than 20 languages in a recent month; English was by far the most common, at 79 percent of the cases, but other major linguistic groups included Spanish (6%) and Vietnamese (5%). While many transit agencies already provide materials in multiple languages, especially major urban systems, telephone and face-to-face inquiries may be difficult and linguistic minorities many not have access to information at all.

Implications for Transportation

These, then, are some of the transportation barriers that welfare recipients encounter:

- Nationally nearly three out of four welfare recipients live in center cities or in rural areas, while job growth has focused on the suburbs.
- Jobs in the retail and service industries typically require entry-level employees to work at night and on weekends.
- Most welfare recipients do not own cars.
- While urban residents generally have convenient access to transit services, those systems were never intended to get city dwellers to the suburbs – especially at night or on weekends.
- More than half of rural residents live in areas with minimal transit service or none at all.
- Women with young children – especially single mothers – are especially likely to incorporate multiple stops into their work trips.
- Many welfare recipients have difficulty using a bus schedule.

It should come as no surprise, then, that transportation is a major barrier to getting or keeping a job. In a recent survey of former welfare participants,

one in four identified transportation as one of the greatest obstacles to job retention.²⁶ States, counties, and local communities have responded to these concerns in traditional and innovative ways. The following chapters explore some creative approaches to planning, operation, and funding new services for the growing market of welfare-related transportation.

Notes

- ¹ These descriptions are based on characteristics of participants in the AFDC program; it is assumed that TANF recipients have similar characteristics.
- ² Unless otherwise noted, all data are based on statistics presented by the U.S. Department of Labor in “About Welfare – Myths, Facts, Challenges and Solutions.” February 1998.
- ³ Tabulations of 1995 AFDC Quality Control Survey Data. Prepared by Demetra Nightingale, The Urban Institute, DOL Contract F-5532-5-00-80-30.
- ⁴ U.S. Department of Labor. “About Welfare – Myths, Facts, Challenges and Solutions.” February 1998.
- ⁵ Institute for Women’s Policy Research. “Welfare to Work: The Job Opportunities of AFDC Recipients.” Available at www.iwpr.org/wtwrib.html.
- ⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. *Dynamics of Economic Well-Being: Program Participation, 1991 to 1993*. Available at www.census.gov/hhes/progpart/dewb9193/pp91t1.html.
- ⁷ Bureau of the Census. “Mothers Who Receive AFDC Payments – Fertility and Socioeconomic Characteristics.” Statistical Brief 95-2. March 1995.
- ⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program: First Annual Report to Congress*. August 1998. Table 7:16, “TANF Families with Countable Assets by Type of Asset, October 1996 – June 1997.
- ⁹ Richard K. Brail, Jeffrey Doshna, Sudha Maheshwari, Graciela Cavicchia, and Jia Wei. *Assessment of Public Transportation Opportunities for WorkFirst New Jersey Participants*. Prepared for the Office of Policy and Planning, New Jersey Department of Human Services. July 1997.
- ¹⁰ Jon E. Burkhardt, James L. Hedrick, and Adam T. McGavock. *Assessment of the Economic Impacts of Rural Public Transportation*. TCRP Report 34. Transportation Research Board, 1998.
- ¹¹ Richard K. Brail, Jeffrey Doshna, Sudha Maheshwari, Graciela Cavicchia, and Jia Wei. *Assessment of Public Transportation Opportunities for WorkFirst New Jersey Participants*. Prepared for the Office of Policy and Planning, New Jersey Department of Human Services. July 1997.
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- ¹⁵ Bureau of Transportation Statistics. *Transportation Statistics Annual Report*. 1997.
- ¹⁶ Claudia Coulton, Laura Leete, and Neil Bania. *Housing, Transportation and Access to Suburban Jobs by Welfare Recipients in the Cleveland Area*. Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University. Prepared for the Fannie Mae Foundation Policy Research Roundtable, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland. July 22, 1997.
- ¹⁷ Community Transportation Association of America. *Access to Jobs: A Guide to Innovative Practices in Welfare-to-Work Transportation*. Prepared pursuant to a grant from the Federal Transit Administration. January 1998.
- ¹⁸ Jim McLaughlin and Jim Sims. "Integrated Rideshare Information Services with Public Transportation Resources To Meet the Transportation Needs of Welfare to Work in Los Angeles County." In *Proceedings of the 1998 Bus Operations, Technology, and Management Conference*. American Public Transit Association. May 1998.
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- ²⁰ Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Workers on Flexible and Shift Schedules in 1997 Summary." Press release issued on March 26, 1998.
- ²¹ Sandra Rosenbloom. *Transit Markets of the Future: The Challenge of Change*. TCRP Report 28. Transportation Research Board, 1998.
- ²² Sandra Rosenbloom. *Transit Markets of the Future: The Challenge of Change*. TCRP Report 28. Transportation Research Board, 1998.
- ²³ Hans P. Johnson and Sonya M. Tafoya. "The Basic Skills of Welfare Recipients: Implications for Welfare Reform." Copyright 1999 Public Policy Institute of California, San Francisco, CA. All rights reserved. Report available at www.ppic.org.
- ²⁴ Julie Strawn. "Beyond Job Search or Basic Education: Rethinking the Role of Skills in Welfare Reform." Center for Law and Social Policy, April 1998. Report available at www.clasp.org.
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- ²⁶ Anu Rangarajan. "Keeping Welfare Recipients Employed: A Guide for States Designing Job Retention Services." *Off Welfare and Into Work: A Report Series of the Postemployment Services Demonstration*. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., Princeton, N.J. June 1998. Report available at www.mathematica-mpr.com.

Planning Initiatives

As state and local governments have begun to address the challenges of welfare reform, new cooperative relationships have emerged. Partners in these new collaborations have included transportation providers, human service agencies, regional planning associations, community-based organizations, faith-based groups, workforce development agencies, employers, and educational institutions. Some states, like New Jersey and Ohio, have mandated a local coordinated planning process; localities must prepare a written transportation plan in order to receive state funding assistance. Others have set up state coordinating committees; Pennsylvania, Montana, Kansas, Indiana, and South Carolina are among the states that have established interagency task forces to oversee planning activities. Many states and localities have initiated their planning process with a needs assessment in order to identify the particular travel requirements of welfare recipients; some have used geographic information systems (GIS) to develop detailed maps that document these needs. Finally, many program planners have solicited input directly from TANF clients to help identify needs and to develop practical responses. For example:

- In New Jersey, the state coordinated a transportation planning process that was built around county-based steering committees. Steering committee membership varied among counties, but typically included representation from transportation agencies, social service organizations, and workforce investment boards.
- The East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, a nonprofit group in Oakland, California, is coordinating a welfare-related transportation program that trains counselors at community-based organizations to provide trip planning services for neighborhood TANF recipients.
- The Good News Garage refurbishes donated automobiles and makes them available to community residents in Burlington, Vermont. The program was created and managed by Lutheran Social Services of New England and relies heavily on volunteer support.
- In San Diego, California, an innovative transportation program takes advantage of the transportation resources of the American Red Cross and area churches to provide access to jobs for inner-city residents.

This chapter identifies the partners in these new collaborative efforts and describes some noteworthy planning initiatives.

Partners in Planning

Welfare-to-work transportation programs have called upon the expertise and resources of diverse participants, many of whom are new to the transportation planning process. These *stakeholders* generally include representatives from agencies and organizations that have a vested interest in the outcome of the program. In Hartford, Connecticut, job access planners coined a phrase to describe their partnership. They referred to themselves as a BORPSAT – *a bunch of the right people sitting around the table*. Whatever they call themselves, program stakeholders may include any or all of the following:

- **Transportation providers**, including public and private transit and paratransit operators serving the general public and agency clients, vanpool programs, private shuttle operators, and taxi services
- **Social service providers**, including agencies administering TANF program benefits and support services (e.g., training, placement, child-care)
- **Employers and job developers**, including representation from the area private industry council or workforce investment board
- **Community- and faith-based organizations** that work with members of the targeted population and may have transportation resources available
- **Planners**, including representatives from metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), councils of governments (COGs), departments of transportation (DOTs), or state, county, or local planning departments
- **Elected officials**, who can play a key role in obtaining community and political support for recommended programs

Many of these stakeholders may not have worked together before and may not be familiar with the special challenges of welfare-to-work transportation. Transportation providers, for example, may not have direct experience with serving the changing needs of welfare participants as they make the transition from support services to employment. Caseworkers, on the other hand, may not be familiar with the costs and operating characteristics of different transportation alternatives. And participants from the private sector may have limited experience working with public funding sources. Through the planning process, stakeholders can share

their specialized knowledge as they develop transportation strategies that incorporate the best elements of their differing disciplines. Some of the potential stakeholders in the transportation planning process are described in the following sections.

Transportation Providers

Transportation providers often have the technical expertise and the resources needed to plan and implement a welfare-related transportation project. In some areas, transit operators have taken the lead. For example, the Transit Authority of River City (TARC) operates a late-night subscription service in Louisville, Kentucky. As a regional transit operator, TARC already had much of the organizational and management infrastructure required to introduce this new service. Similarly, the Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority was able to expand its on-going service for Medicaid clients to serve low-income workers at no additional cost by using existing vehicles and drivers. In New Jersey, the Department of Transportation and NJ TRANSIT were among the lead agencies in a coordinated planning process. Some transit agencies have provided key support by donating technical assistance or physical assets. In Baltimore, for instance, the Maryland Mass Transit Administration (MTA) donated three vans to the fleet for the AdVANTage II program, which helped low-income individuals operate transportation services. The MTA staff also provided technical advice to project staff as they purchased additional vehicles for their fleet.

Social Service Providers

As the agencies that work most closely with TANF recipients, social service providers have a clear understanding of the issues and obstacles of welfare-related transportation. Some social service agencies have taken the lead in developing welfare-related transportation programs. In suburban Maryland, the Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services helped develop and implement the AdVANTage micro-enterprise program to train and subsidize public assistance recipients to offer transportation services to other DSS recipients for employment-related activities. The Contra Costa County Social Services Department, in California, is administering a similar program designed to train welfare participants to provide community transportation services, including transportation to school and child-care.

Departments of Transportation

Departments of transportation (DOTs) can bring to the table their detailed understanding of area transportation conditions and resources. At the state level, DOTs may oversee planning and operations for multiple transportation modes, including transit, highway, and ridesharing programs, which

gives them a unique perspective on the potential opportunities for developing coordinated strategies for welfare-related transportation. DOTs also have access to various funding sources that may have applications for welfare-related programs. Finally, in rural areas, DOTs can serve as regional planning agencies and provide support and coordination for local communities and agencies to develop welfare-related transportation programs. For example, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation worked with the Department of Workforce Development to create an Interdepartmental Task Force on Employment and Transportation to encourage on-going dialogue between departments, coordinate activities, and identify issues associated with welfare-related transportation. Similarly, the South Carolina Department of Transportation has established an Interagency Steering Committee on Coordinated Transit with a goal of improving transportation services throughout the state. Among other activities, the

committee used its influence to allocate federal program funds in Kershaw County to support the local Flex Route system.



Planning Agencies

Regional and local planning organizations often have experience coordinating complex projects and frequently participate in welfare-to-work planning efforts. Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), in particular, have a central role to play in developing welfare-related transportation programs. MPOs, which consist of elected officials and transportation providers within a metropolitan area, are responsible for adopting regional transportation

plans and improvement programs. In many parts of the country, MPOs maintain regional databases with Census information and other relevant statistical data. Moreover, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has required MPO participation in the Job Access and Reverse Commute program. In large urban areas (with more than 200,000 people), MPOs are responsible for selecting applicant programs for federal consideration; in smaller areas (between 50,000 and 200,000 people), MPOs recommend projects to the state, which selects the final applicants. In addition, all projects receiving federal funds under this program must be included in the MPO's Transportation Program before receiving the grant.

This regional perspective and planning experience often makes these organizations well-qualified to lead welfare-to-work programs. For example, the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization administers this Florida county's welfare-to-work transportation program. With state designation as the Community Transportation Coordinator for the county, the MPO became responsible for managing the county's services for

transportation disadvantaged residents. As the cooperative transportation planning committee for six jurisdictions in Central Contra Costa County, California, TransPac has implemented a series of trip planning activities and ridesharing incentives. Finally, in Massachusetts, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council is coordinating welfare-related transportation activities in the Boston region; programs include expanded job counseling, transit incentives, and an Internet-based transit trip planner.

Private Industry Councils

Organized under the federal Job Training Partnership Act, private industry councils (PICs) were charged originally with planning and overseeing education, job training, and employment programs for low-income individuals. Recently they have emerged as key players in welfare-to-work planning and programs. Congress awarded PICs almost \$3 billion to oversee local welfare-to-work efforts, and the U.S. Department of Labor has identified PICs as one of the organizations eligible to receive Welfare to Work funds. PIC membership is drawn from both the public and private sectors, but private employers must make up the majority of PIC membership. Because they are representative of all sectors of the community, these public-private partnerships can help facilitate relationships among transportation providers, social service agencies, and employers.



Community-Based Organizations

Community-based organizations are especially well-positioned to participate in welfare reform activities. These groups, with close ties to their constituents, can help bridge the gap between welfare consumers and the sometimes faceless bureaucracies that deliver services and benefits. The East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC), a nonprofit group in Oakland, California, is coordinating a welfare-related transportation program that trains counselors at community-based organizations to provide trip planning services for neighborhood TANF recipients. The transportation counselors share a language and culture with their clients, many of whom are recent immigrants, creating an atmosphere of trust and support. The San Diego/Imperial Chapter of the American Red Cross made its fleet of buses, which are owned and operated by regional social services agencies, available to provide welfare-related transportation. In Maryland, the Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services collaborated with local branches of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) to develop and implement a transportation micro-enterprise program that trained public assistance recipients to operate community-based transportation services. The YWCAs, with their long history of supporting women in the community, provided training, social support structure, and follow-up with program participants.

Faith-Based Organizations

Like community groups, faith-based organizations have a long tradition of supporting people in need. Welfare reform has brought new opportunities for religious congregations and groups such as Catholic Charities and Jewish Family Services to work in partnership with communities and government organizations to provide support services for TANF participants. In Vermont, Lutheran Social Services of New England provided start-up funding and on-going support for the Good News Garage, which makes automobiles available to low-income residents. The program grew out of the organization's commitment to transportation equity, and its faith-based origin helped facilitate access to start-up funding, donated goods and services, and program volunteers. In San Diego, the churches comprising All Congregations Together are making their church vans available for work-related employment. This program was able to take advantage of the "helping mission" of its member churches to provide leadership and stability.

Employers

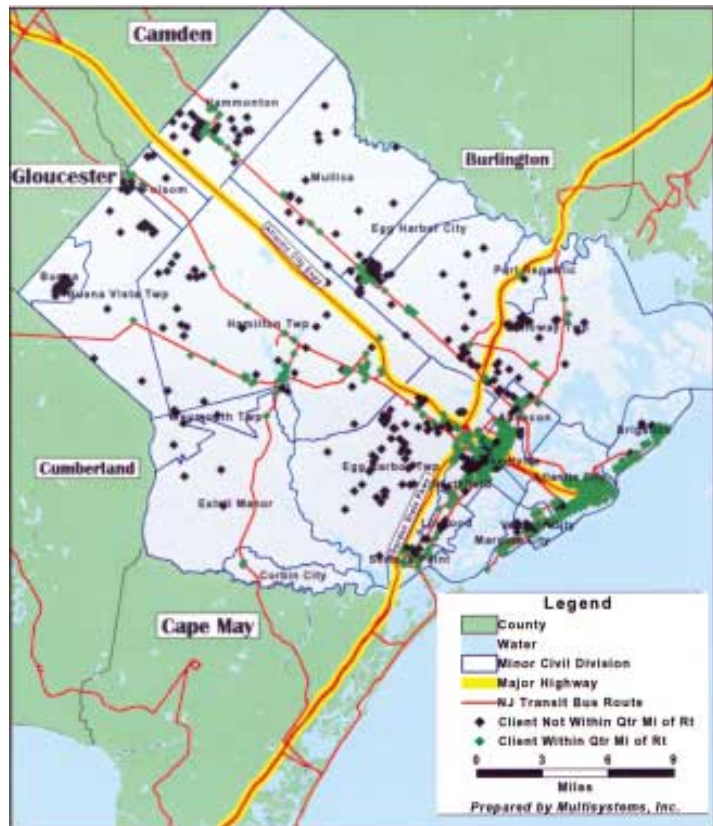
Needless to say, employers play a key role in supporting welfare reform. But, with a few notable exceptions, most have focused their efforts on recruiting, training, and hiring participants rather than providing them with rides to work. United Parcel Service (UPS) has played an active role in welfare reform from the start and has hired 20,000 people off welfare since 1997. Through programs across the country, UPS works with local government agencies, faith-based groups, and nonprofit organizations to develop, train, and mentor qualified candidates for suitable positions. In some areas, UPS has worked with local transit agencies to transport workers to the job. For example, in Camden, New Jersey, UPS contracted with NJ TRANSIT to provide late-night service to its Hog Island facility at the Philadelphia International Airport. In Louisville, UPS worked with the State of Kentucky and three area colleges to establish the Metropolitan College. Students are eligible for free tuition and receive a job at UPS. Class schedules and work shifts are coordinated, and local bus routes connect schools with work sites. Students can use their identification cards as a bus pass; Metropolitan College reimburses Transit Authority of River City, the transit operator, for half the price of each student pass.

Needs Assessment

Several states have conducted needs assessments as part of their coordinated planning activities. As discussed in Chapter 1, many areas have identified a spatial mismatch – and often a temporal gap as well – between available fixed-route transit systems and areas of concentrated employment. Before developing new transportation services, a number of states and localities have conducted their own studies in order to document any

existing gaps between transportation needs and service availability. As part of its mandated statewide planning process, the State of New Jersey provided each of its 21 counties with technical assistance for completing a needs assessment. This county-level transportation review consisted of the following:

- Inventory of existing public and private transportation services in each county
- Information about the travel needs of welfare clients
- Estimates of trip-making activity among welfare clients
- Identification of service gaps based on service availability and travel needs



The state developed a series of GIS-based maps to represent the home locations of welfare clients, employers, child-care facilities, training sites, and existing fixed-route public and private transit services. These maps provided a visual indication of the gaps between available services and key origins and destinations for welfare clients. This information guided the development of service alternatives for each county.

The State of New Jersey used GIS analysis to identify welfare recipients who lived beyond walking distance of available transit services.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation conducted a study to assess the issues associated with linking Wisconsin Works (W-2) participants from Milwaukee County to employment opportunities throughout the seven-county southeastern Wisconsin region.¹ The study documented the residential locations of welfare recipients, locations of likely job opportunities and existing transportation services. Qualitative and quantitative measures were used to identify unmet transportation needs and to assess the cost and benefits of providing additional transportation services to meet these needs. A GIS-based analysis had three components: (1) compare welfare participant residential and employment locations with existing transit services, (2) identify transit needs, and (3) develop transit improvement options. Proposed solutions from the analysis included expansion of existing bus routes, local route extensions and/or a regional express network. Costs were estimated and implementation issues evaluated for each option.

Similarly, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) conducted an “opportunity analysis” in order to determine where welfare recipients lived and where they might find employment.² Using GIS analysis, SCAG mapped the locations of welfare recipients and likely job locations. Potential job locations were further refined to include only those employment opportunities that met three criteria: (1) they required little training, (2) they had potential for future growth, and (3) they were in relevant industries. Finally the distribution of residents and jobs was overlaid with information about fixed route public transit services. This analysis determined that 36 percent of welfare clients in Los Angeles County had reasonable transit available on both ends of their work trip. Additional analysis showed a high potential for ridesharing as well. It was estimated that nearly 20 percent of welfare recipients in Los Angeles County had a car and that targeted origins and destinations were both served by SCAG’s ridesharing program.

Learning from Welfare Recipients

As the target customers for transportation services, TANF participants have a unique role in the planning process. Program participants know their transportation needs better than anyone else and involving them in the planning process has yielded enormous benefits. Their experiences juggling the complexities of their own commuting trips with the travel requirements of one or more children has provided detailed and practical guidance to those developing service strategies.

Surveys and Questionnaires

Surveys have been used as a cost-effective strategy for assessing transportation needs of TANF participants. For example, staff at county welfare offices in New Jersey distributed a brief written survey to their Work First clients. The survey asked seven simple questions about access to vehicles and transit and provided a quick snapshot of current transportation needs. Survey findings were used to complement other needs assessment strategies, including focus groups and GIS analysis, and helped planners design new service strategies.

Focus Groups

In the San Francisco Bay Area, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) included CalWORKs recipients in the planning process for its county-level welfare transportation plans. Welfare recipients were invited to participate in focus groups in some counties, while in others they reviewed and prioritized proposed service strategies. Also in the Bay Area, EBALDC developed an extensive outreach effort to identify barriers to employment in the Lower San Antonio neighborhood. Sixteen focus groups were held in seven languages, in order to assess the needs of residents of this multi-ethnic and multilingual neighborhood.

The next chapter describes some of the service strategies that have emerged

from cooperative planning programs and needs assessments.

Notes

- ¹ BRW, Inc. *Public Transportation, Jobs and Welfare Reform Study*. Prepared for the Wisconsin Urban Transit Association. July 1997.
- ² Jim McLaughlin and Jim Sims. "Integrating Rideshare Information Services with Public Transportation Resources to Meet the Transportation Needs of Welfare to Work in Los Angeles County." In *Proceedings of the 1998 Bus Operations, Technology and Management Conference*. American Public Transit Association. May 1998.

Service Strategies

Historically, welfare offices met the transportation needs of their clients by reimbursing them for transportation costs; typically they provided bus passes, taxi vouchers or mileage allowances. Welfare reform has complicated the transportation needs of welfare recipients considerably, however, and states and localities are struggling to serve their clients in this new environment. Because welfare recipients do not always live near job opportunities – and most do not have access to an automobile – transit has become a critical link in the welfare-to-work process. Unfortunately, as described in Chapter 1, this new transit market is not an easy one to serve for a number of reasons.

- **Spatial mismatch.** Welfare recipients tend to live in central cities, while recent job growth has been concentrated in the suburbs. At best, this spatial mismatch requires long reverse commuting trips, often involving multiple transfers. At worst, individuals and jobs are located in areas without any transit service at all.
- **Temporal mismatch.** Many welfare recipients are expected to find employment in the retail, service, and health-care industries. These jobs frequently have evening and weekend shifts, which are not well served by traditional transit schedules.
- **Trip chaining.** The typical welfare recipient is a single mother with young children whose work trip may need to include stops at one or more schools or child-care facilities.
- **Information gaps.** Welfare clients may have difficulty accessing and understanding travel information because of literacy problems, minimal basic skills, or limited command of the English language.

Compounding these challenges, the welfare-to-work transit market is dynamic. As TANF participants progress from training programs to permanent employment, their transportation needs are likely to change over time. States and local governments have developed a wide range of implementation strategies to support welfare reform. In densely populated areas, it has been possible to modify existing bus routes to serve new

employment centers or off-peak work shifts, with a special focus on the needs of reverse commuters. In lower density areas service strategies may include coordinated transit and human services transportation programs, brokerages, ridesharing, and programs to sell or lease donated vehicles to welfare clients. Some localities have developed programs to enhance access to travel information, and some have introduced child-care transportation programs. The following sections describe a number of demonstration programs as well as a range of service implementation strategies, including new and modified transit services, service coordination and brokerages, ridesharing, automobile ownership programs, and one-stop centers.

Modifications to Existing Services

Many localities have introduced new transit services or modified existing routes to provide welfare-related transportation. Frequently these services are designed to serve specific employment centers, to meet work shifts, or to minimize transfers. Many were developed to serve reverse commuters – city residents who work in the suburbs. The Transit Authority of River City (TARC) introduced an express bus service between inner-city Louisville, Kentucky, and a major industrial park. The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), which serves the Philadelphia metropolitan area, has extended bus routes to serve business centers and industrial parks, introduced reverse commute express services, and added service to routes serving workers on late shifts.

Shuttles, Circulators, and Feeder Services

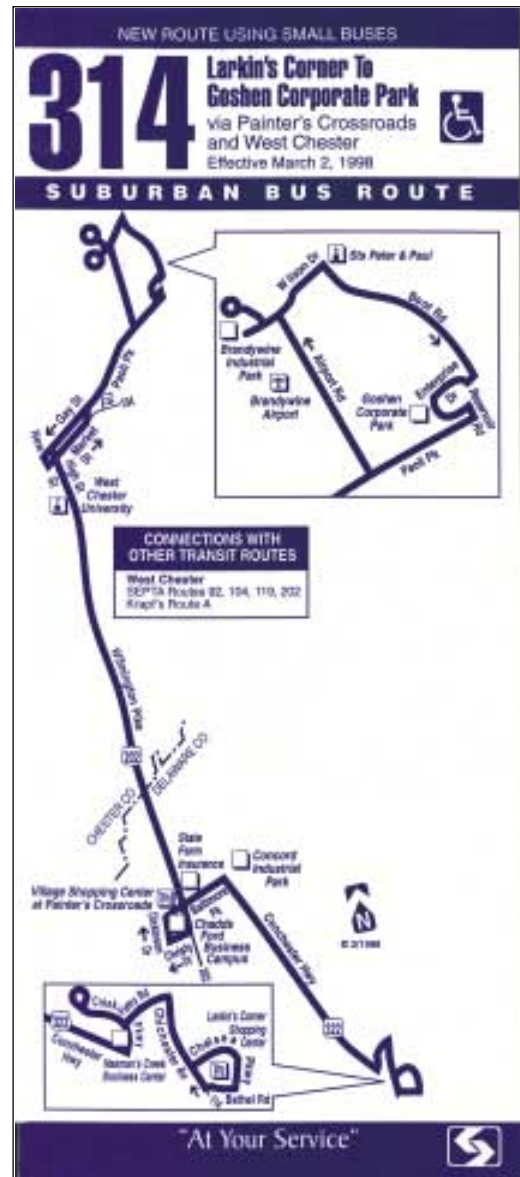
These services are designed to improve mobility within a local area or to provide connections to the regional bus or rail network. By extending the reach of existing bus routes and train lines, shuttles and feeders can serve riders in low density areas or at times of low demand. Often these routes use vans or minibuses, which have greater flexibility than full-size buses to enter parking lots and driveways; this is a particular advantage when serving employers in suburban office parks or shopping malls. For example, SEPTA has introduced new bus routes that use small buses to serve suburban office parks and shopping malls in metropolitan Philadelphia. Here the transit agency contracts with private operators to serve employers, and employers participate in the funding arrangements. In San Diego, All Congregations Together is a consortium of area churches that uses 16-passenger church vans to transport TANF participants to a central hub where they board buses that take them to work; the American Red Cross operates the work routes. In this example, community- and faith-based organizations are working together outside the conventional transit environment to provide a combination of fixed and feeder routes to serve work trips. Outside Detroit, SMART introduced several shuttles that

provide links between line-haul bus routes and suburban job sites. Passengers taking SMART routes to a central location can board a van that serves otherwise inaccessible locations in shopping malls and employment centers.

The Bridges to Work demonstration program, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, has used various service alternatives to provide access to suburban jobs for low-income urban residents. Program sites are Baltimore, Chicago, Denver, Milwaukee, and St. Louis. The Bridges to Work project in St. Louis was designed to provide transportation for residents in portions of north St. Louis County, which includes a large part of the north side of the City of St. Louis. The targeted destination was a portion of the I-64 corridor in west St. Louis County, the surrounding Chesterfield Valley region, anchored by the Spirit of St. Louis Airport with 2,000 jobs. Another 2,000 industrial, hotel, health and business service jobs are located in the I-40 corridor west of the City of St. Louis. Red Cross vans provided service to the employment corridor; Bi-State Development Agency, which provides bus service in St. Louis, transported participants to and from van pick-up and drop-off points at the origin point.

In Baltimore, the Bridges to Work program, operated by the Historic East Baltimore Community Action Council (HEBCAC), provides transportation between East Baltimore and the Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI), about 15 miles away. Although city bus service is available to the airport, the first bus arrives too late for employees on most morning shifts to get to work on time. After identifying job-ready individuals in East Baltimore, the program helps them prepare for and obtain employment in the airport corridor, and provides them with transportation to and from work. HEBCAC also provides free van rides for job interviews in the airport district. HEBCAC uses a fleet of eight vans to provide daily door-to-door transportation for each of its 200 clients. Vans pick up clients in the morning and take them home in the evening.

In Denver, the Bridges to Work program used a combination of public and private transportation resources to serve suburban employment sites: express buses operated by the Denver Regional Transit District and a privately owned



In Philadelphia, SEPTA has introduced shuttles to serve suburban work sites.

shuttle van service. Service decisions were based on the work site location or shift times. Pick up and drop off points were located throughout the origin area near specially designated bus stops and other essential services.

Suburban Job-Link Corporation, a private not-for-profit employment service and transportation program, has been serving unemployed Chicago residents since 1971. The program focuses on developing reverse commuting strategies between inner-city Chicago neighborhoods and the job-rich suburbs. One key element of its program is the Job Oasis, in suburban Bensenville, Illinois, which provides support facilities for job seekers. Transportation services include a series of express routes and shuttles, many of which are focused around the Job Oasis, as described here.

- **Express routes.** Suburban Job-Link operates express bus service between neighborhoods in Chicago's West Side and employers in the city's northwest suburbs. Passengers pay up to \$2.00 per ride; Job-Link covers the remaining costs. In some instances, Suburban Job-Link has turned some routes over to Pace, the region's suburban bus operator. By turning over established bus routes to a public carrier, complete with built-in ridership, Job-Link can devote its resources to developing additional routes for its constituents.
- **Shuttle services.** Suburban Job-Link provides free transportation between inner city neighborhoods and its suburban Job Oasis, as well as transportation between the Job Oasis and employers for job interviews.
- **Ridesharing.** Suburban Job-Link is working with Pace to develop a vanpool program to support reverse commuting.

Finally, in Milwaukee, the Bridges to Work program focused on providing 400 job-ready inner-city residents with transportation to suburban jobs. Once accepted into the program, applicants received free transportation to and from interviews with Bridges to Work employers; once hired, they became eligible to receive 18 months of free transportation to and from their Bridges to Work job. Targeted destinations were not served by public transportation during the hours that Bridges to Work transportation is in operation. Bridges to Work contracted bus and van service to private operators.

Night Owl Services

Whether by choice or necessity, many TANF recipients work late at night, when transit service may be minimal. To address this gap, some transit agencies have introduced specialized late-night routes, often dubbed "night owl" services. In Louisville, Kentucky, the Transit Authority of River City operates Night Owl subscription shuttles to provide service for late-night workers who

live or work in the Louisville Empowerment Zone. Shuttles operate seven days a week from 11:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. and provide door-to-door transportation between home and work. In North Richmond, California, AC Transit introduced a community-based circulator to provide connections to a rail station and commercial district between 7:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m., after the fixed-route service stopped running for the evening.

Service Coordination

Some states and localities have begun to make use of existing systems to provide welfare-related transportation. Programs may already be in place to serve seniors, persons with disabilities, school children, clients of human service agencies, and religious congregations. Many of these programs may be able to make their vehicles available for employment transportation. Using existing vehicles can be a cost-effective approach to welfare transportation, but it requires considerable coordination among agencies and organizations. The Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority, which serves several rural counties in South Carolina, combined its existing door-to-door transportation for agency clients with a newly designed fixed-route service to provide access to jobs for low-income workers. In San Diego, a coalition of churches made its vehicles available to provide work-related transportation for TANF recipients.

Mobility Manager

Some localities offer multiple options for providing welfare-related transportation; these may include travel vouchers, bus passes or tokens, and contracted services. With this approach the service agency may serve as a mobility manager or broker, handling the administrative details for obtaining and delivering transportation services. For example, the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization manages the provision of welfare-related transportation services throughout its service area. Case managers work with program participants to determine the most appropriate transportation options; the menu of strategies includes bus passes, ridesharing incentives, and taxi vouchers. Similarly, through the Massachusetts Access to Jobs Initiative, the state's transit authorities have hired Transportation Coordinators to work with welfare case managers to help recipients make transportation arrangements for work and child care. The coordinators refer clients to existing public transit services whenever feasible and otherwise arrange for demand response service, organize vanpools and carpools, and provide one-time transportation subsidies.



Ridesharing and Subscription Services

Ridesharing programs can be a cost-effective and practical solution to welfare transportation in some areas, filling the gap between fixed route and demand response services. Ridesharing options can range from casual carpools among coworkers to formalized vanpool arrangements. In Dallas, the Texas Workforce Commission funded a vanpool program that provides selected program participants with transportation for a thirteen-week period. Passengers pay a weekly fare, which is held in escrow; after completing the program, participants use the accumulated funds for a down payment on a personal automobile. King County Metro, in Seattle, developed a more conventional vanpool program for TANF clients. The agency entered into an agreement with an employer and a municipality to develop a vanpool program to serve this manufacturing plant, which is located in an area without transit service. While the vanpool program is open to the facility's entire work force, the program provides participating TANF clients with a monthly subsidy to offset the vanpool fare.

Automobile Strategies

Driving is still the most convenient mode of transportation for many welfare recipients, especially those in rural areas with limited transit options or those dropping off children on their way to work. Many states have developed programs or policies designed to help welfare recipients use the cars they already have or to acquire new ones. Some communities have tried to offset the



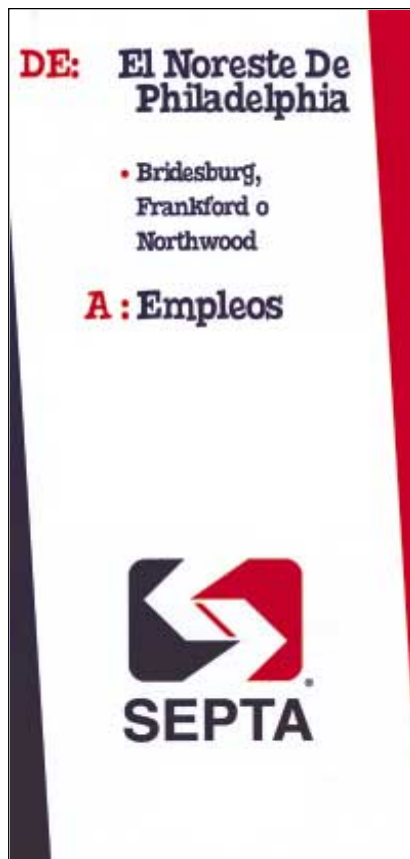
out-of-pocket costs of driving by subsidizing gasoline, repairs, or auto insurance, while others have increased the allowed value of an automobile under welfare asset limitations. Under federal rules for AFDC eligibility and benefits, families were allowed to have one vehicle worth up to \$1,500. In order to encourage TANF recipients to become self sufficient, many states have increased this cash allowance to allow welfare recipients to own more reliable automobiles without jeopardizing their benefits. The following table summarizes changes in this allowance. Finally, a number of localities have developed programs to enable welfare to lease or purchase automobiles. In Vermont, the Good News Garage accepts donated vehicles, fixes them up, and sells them to low-income residents for the cost of the repairs. In Forsyth County, North Carolina, the Wheels-to-Work program provides selected TANF recipients with a reliable automobile at a nominal cost. The vehicle is released to the individuals after a year if they meet certain conditions.

Asset Limit on Automobiles

State	Limit	State	Limit
Alabama	No statutory change	Missouri	Value of one vehicle
Alaska	Up to \$5,000	Montana	Value of one vehicle
Arizona	No statutory change	Nebraska	Value of one vehicle
Arkansas	Value of one car	Nevada	No statutory change
California	Up to \$4,500	New Hampshire	Value of one vehicle
Colorado	One vehicle	New Jersey	No statutory change
Connecticut	Value of one vehicle	New Mexico	Up to \$4,500
Delaware	To be determined	New York	Up to \$4,650
District of Columbia	No statutory change	North Carolina	Counties to determine
Florida	Up to \$8,500	North Dakota	Value of one vehicle
Georgia	Up to \$4,500	Ohio	Same as food stamp program
Hawaii	Value of one vehicle	Oklahoma	Up to \$5,000
Idaho	To be determined	Oregon	Up to \$5,000
Illinois	No statutory change	Pennsylvania	Value of one vehicle
Indiana	No statutory change	Rhode Island	\$1,500 or same as food stamp program
Iowa	Up to \$3,889; increases with CPI	South Carolina	Value of one vehicle
Kansas	Value of one vehicle	South Dakota	To be determined
Kentucky	No statutory provision	Tennessee	\$4,600
Louisiana	To be determined	Texas	Up to \$5,000
Maine	No statutory change	Utah	Up to \$8,000
Maryland	Up to \$5,000	Vermont	Value of one vehicle
Massachusetts	Up to \$5,000	Virginia	Up to \$4,500
Michigan	Value of one vehicle	Washington	Up to \$5,000
Minnesota	Up to \$7,500	West Virginia	No statutory change
Mississippi	No statutory change		

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures

Travel Information



SEPTA has developed informational materials in several languages.

Limited access to information can be a significant barrier to welfare recipients; some may have difficulty reading English-language materials and others may have difficulty using bus schedules. In Oakland, bilingual staff from community organizations are serving as travel counselors to a largely immigrant population. SEPTA is producing brochures in Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese that summarize transit connections from selected Philadelphia neighborhoods to regional employment centers.

Computerized trip planning services are an increasingly popular response to welfare-related transportation programs. For example, in the San Francisco Bay Area, welfare counselors and clients – as well as the general public – with Internet access will be able to use an interactive program to plan transit trips. This system, which is already available in the Los Angeles area, provides detailed information about bus or rail routes, travel time, stops, and fares. Similar trip planning resources are in development in Boston, New York, and Detroit, among other places.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission has also developed a series of Transportation Resource Guides for counties in the San Francisco Bay Area. Each guide includes an overview of bus, rail and paratransit services, ridesharing resources, transit ticket programs, subsidies and incentives, bicycle programs, and taxi services. A “Quick Reference Guide” summarizes alternatives for reaching jobs outside the county. Instructions are included for obtaining more detailed information by phone, in person, via the Internet and by mail. The guides are intended for staff members at social service and community-based organizations who provide

direct assistance to welfare recipients. They are available from MTC and posted on-line at www.mtc.dst.ca.us.

Child-Care Transportation

Several organizations have tackled the complicated needs of providing child-care transportation. The Contra Costa County Social Services Department (SSD) is overseeing a program to train welfare recipients to provide community transportation services, including transportation to school and child-care. The Massachusetts Access to Jobs program provides child-care transportation if no other alternative is available. Also in Massachusetts, the Lowell Regional Transit Authority operates a van that fills in the gaps for parents who do not have other alternatives for child-care transportation. The authority’s van can carry six children plus a monitor and operates five days a week, seven hours a day.

Subsidies and Incentives

TransPac, the cooperative transportation planning committee for six jurisdictions in Central Contra Costa County, California, offers TANF participants incentives to support approximately 60 days of transit use or ridesharing activities.

Recipients may receive transit passes, gasoline vouchers for carpool or “school-pool” participation, or vanpool fare subsidies.

Similarly, the case workers in Pinellas County, Florida, can offer their clients transit passes, gasoline credit cards, and mileage reimbursements for drivers who transport TANF participants.

Massachusetts transportation coordinators may provide one-time subsidies, including payment of auto insurance, driver’s license fees, car loans, leases, and repairs for donated vehicles.



One-Stop Centers

Some localities have developed integrated one-stop centers that consolidate a variety of services for welfare recipients, including transportation. The Nia Travel and Employment Center houses employment services, a transit center, and a number of small businesses in West Louisville, Kentucky. As a result, patrons can work with a job counselor to identify potential employers and then consult a transit staffer across the hall for personalized bus trip planning. In San Diego, welfare-related transportation services originate at a community center that also provides child care.

Suburban Job-Link Corporation operates a number of reverse commuting services for inner-city Chicago residents. In addition to the reverse commuting services described earlier, Job-Link maintains the Job Oasis support facility in suburban Bensenville, Illinois, to house its employment services, transportation, and client amenities. Program literature describes the Job Oasis as follows:

As a home-away-from-home between interviews, the Job Oasis support facility is a place to rest and relax, to have a meal or snack, and to use the rest rooms. In general, the facility provides a supportive, welcoming environment for West Side Chicago residents seeking suburban employment.

Employment services include staff job developers, job coaches to help prepare participants for interviews, and a series of workshops stressing skills for getting and keeping a job. Free transportation is available for job applicants.

Suburban Job-Link uses passenger vans and buses to provide service between city neighborhoods and the Job Oasis, and shuttles are available at the center to take applicants to and from job interviews.

Entrepreneurial Services

Some programs train welfare recipients themselves to provide transportation services to other community members. Such programs support the broader goals of helping welfare recipients to become self sufficient while still addressing day-to-day transportation needs. The AdVANtage Van Micro-Enterprise program, in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, is perhaps the best known example. The program trained and subsidized public assistance recipients to become entrepreneurs; they, in turn, offered transportation services to other welfare recipients for job searches, job training programs, and work trips. Sojourner-Douglass College in Baltimore and Contra Costa County in California have set up similar programs.

The next chapter identifies strategies for funding welfare-to-work transportation programs.

Funding Strategies

Welfare-related transportation can be expensive to provide. Many services operate in low density areas or at times outside traditional commuting hours. These service characteristics often restrict the economies of scale that allow efficient provision of transit service in more traditional settings. To cover costs, service providers have turned to a wide variety of funding sources – from federal grants to donated labor. This section describes available federal funding programs, as well as innovative programs on the state and local levels.

Federal Funding Sources

Three major federal funding programs may be used to support welfare-to-work transportation programs: (1) the **Temporary Assistance to Needy Families** (TANF) block grant program, administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; (2) the **Welfare to Work** formula and competitive grant program, administered by the U.S. Department of Labor; and (3) the **Job Access and Reverse Commute** grant program, administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Block Grants

After passage of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, several separate federal welfare programs (Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training, and Emergency Assistance) were combined into a single new block grant to states called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families administers the program.

States may use the new TANF block grants to finance transportation and other support services that will make it easier for welfare recipients to find and retain employment, or help to achieve other goals of the welfare reform effort. TANF funds may be used for the following transportation purposes:

- Reimbursement or a cash allowance to TANF recipients for work-related transportation expenses

- Contracts for shuttles, buses, carpools or other services for TANF recipients
- Purchase of vehicles for the provision of service to TANF recipients
- Purchase of public or private transit passes or vouchers
- Loans to TANF recipients for the purpose of leasing or purchasing a vehicle for work travel
- Programs to obtain and repair vehicles for use by TANF recipients
- One-time payments to recipients to cover expenses such as auto repair or insurance
- Payment of “necessary and reasonable” costs for new or expanded transportation services for use by TANF recipients
- Assistance to TANF recipients with the start-up of a transportation service
- Transfer to a Social Services Block Grant to provide transportation services for disadvantaged residents of rural and inner city areas
- Payment of TANF agency expenses associated with planning transportation services for TANF recipients

Certain restrictions apply to the use of TANF funds. TANF funds may not be used to construct or purchase buildings or facilities. Furthermore, TANF funds may not be used to subsidize transportation services for individuals who are not receiving TANF benefits. If such individuals use a TANF-funded service, or if the TANF agency participates with another agency to provide transportation services, only the expenses associated with eligible TANF recipients’ use of those services may be allocated to the TANF program.

TANF funds also may not replace other federal funds that normally would be used to provide those services. If funds from another federal agency, such as the Federal Transit Administration, are currently used to provide transportation services that will be used by TANF recipients, TANF funds may not be substituted for those other funds. Funding for the TANF program was authorized at \$16.5 billion annually through FY 2002.

Welfare to Work Grants

In FY 1998-1999 the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded a series of formula and competitive Welfare to Work grants to states and communities

designed to benefit the hardest-to-employ TANF recipients. Eligible participants were defined as follows:

- Long-term recipients faced with two out of three significant barriers to employment (lack of a high school diploma or GED and poor reading or math skills, a substance abuse problem requiring treatment, and an unsatisfactory work history); or
- Recipients scheduled to lose TANF benefits within 12 months; or
- Noncustodial parents of a minor child whose custodial parent falls within one of the categories above.

Funds were available for job readiness and employment activities, job placement, post-employment services, and job retention and support services such as child care, substance abuse treatment, housing assistance, and transportation. A local match of one dollar for every two dollars of federal grant funds was required; up to 50 percent of matching funds could be in the form of third-party in-kind contributions.

Eligible activities were similar to those authorized under the TANF block grants, with the following restrictions. Welfare to Work funds could be used only for transportation services not otherwise available to the participant and only for individuals participating in an allowable welfare-to-work activity. Welfare to Work funds cannot be used as a local match for other federal programs with the exception of the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program. Finally, Welfare to Work grants could not be used as loans or down payments for individuals to lease or purchase a vehicle for work-related travel.

Grants totaled \$3 billion for the two-year period; DOL is seeking reauthorization of the program.

Formula Grants

Seventy-five percent of the program funds (excluding some set-aside programs) were distributed as formula grants to states. Formula allocations were based on (1) the percentage of the national TANF population living in the state and (2) the percentage of national poverty population living in the state. Each state was guaranteed a minimum allotment of 0.25 percent of the available amount.

States were required to prepare a plan for approval by the Secretary of Labor that included strategies to promote and encourage coordination with the state department of transportation, metropolitan planning organizations, transit operators, and other transportation providers. States

were required to pass at least 85 percent of their allocations to Private Industry Councils (PICs) or Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) established by the Job Training Partnership Act. Half of a state's funds were to be spent in areas where 7.5 percent or more of the population is living in poverty. Not more than half was to be allocated to areas within a state with a high concentration of adults who have been receiving TANF assistance for 30 months or more and a high number of unemployed individuals.

Competitive Grants

Twenty-five percent of the \$3 billion in Welfare to Work funds were distributed on a competitive basis to cities, counties, or PICs; private for-profit and nonprofit organizations, community-based and faith-based organizations, educational institutions, and workforce development organizations were eligible to apply in conjunction with these entities. Priority was given to urban areas with high concentrations of poverty and rural areas in the grant award process.

The competitive grants were distributed through three rounds of an application process during FY 1998-1999. Organizations selected had up to three years to spend the grant funds. The grant funds were awarded as follows:

- In Round 1 (May 1998), \$186 million was awarded to 51 competitive programs.
- In Round 2 (November 1998), \$273 million was awarded to 75 programs in 44 states and the District of Columbia.
- In Round 3 (September 1999), 64 programs in 34 states and the District of Columbia received \$222 million.

The grant awards were split approximately 70/30, with 70 percent of the grants going to urban areas with high concentrations of poverty and 30 percent of the grants to rural projects. Successful applications combined innovative, collaborative and sustainable welfare-to-work strategies designed to enable recipients to obtain employment, increase earnings, or receive support services while making the transition from welfare to work. Several of the projects selected pertained solely to the transportation needs of welfare-to-work participants, or had transportation included as one facet of the support services provided by the program.

Job Access and Reverse Commute Grants

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, referred to as TEA 21, authorized the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) grant program

to help develop transportation services to link welfare recipients and others with jobs and support services.

Projects must be the result of a coordinated human services/public transit planning process in order to be eligible for funding and may include:

- Capital, operating or associated capital maintenance expenses
- Promotion of transit use by employees with non-traditional work shifts
- Promotion of use of transit vouchers by eligible individuals
- Promotion of employer-sponsored transportation
- Subsidy for addition of reverse commute services
- Subsidy for purchase/lease of vehicle(s) by nonprofit organizations for dedicated employment shuttles
- Other activities to facilitate the use of transit for access to jobs for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals

Funds may not be used for planning or coordination activities.

Funds are awarded on a competitive basis. The federal share of the costs of projects funded under this program will be 50 percent. However, other federal funds (e.g., TANF or DOL grants) may be used for the local share.

TEA 21 authorizes \$150 million annually for the Job Access program for five years starting in FY 1999. Guaranteed funding levels began at \$50 million in FY 1999 and increase to \$150 million by FY 2003. In each year, \$10 million is to be set aside for reverse commute projects that provide access to suburban jobs for people living in inner city or non-urbanized areas.

In the first round of JARC grants, FTA awarded more than \$70.8 million to 167 projects in 42 states and the District of Columbia. California received the largest number of grants (18), followed by New York (13), New Jersey (12), Maryland (11) and Ohio (11). Transit agencies sponsored the majority of successful applications. However, funding also was awarded for projects sponsored by other agencies, such as state departments of transportation, city and county governments, metropolitan planning organizations, social/human service agencies and other nonprofit organizations.

Other Federal Resources

In addition to these federal programs, which specifically target welfare-to-work activities, other federal programs are available to support transportation planning, capital expenditures, and operating assistance. For example, transportation is an allowable support service under Social Services Block Grants, Community Services Block Grants, Medicaid, and the Workforce Investment Act. A detailed list of other federal resources is included in the appendix.

State Funding Programs

Some states have used federal TANF block grants or Welfare to Work formula funds to support local or regional welfare-related transportation services. In New Jersey, for example, the state Department of Transportation set up a Transportation Innovation Fund (TIF) to provide seed money for local or regional transportation programs. Any county, municipality, public agency, private entity, or nonprofit organization may apply to the fund for seed money to initiate innovative transportation solutions. Multi-agency, multi-county or regional projects are encouraged.

The first round of TIF grants served as the required match for the FTA's Job Access and Reverse Commute Competitive Grants. The TIF grants were awarded in two separate categories: TIF Community Transportation Grants, funded by state transportation funds; and TIF Welfare to Work Grants, funded by U.S. Department of Labor Welfare to Work grants. Total funding for TIF grants for FY 1999 was \$2 million for both grant categories. The DOT encourages funding applications to fall in the range of \$100,000 to \$150,000, with a maximum grant amount of \$250,000. Eligibility criteria for the grants included the following:¹

- Proposed project must cite evidence of coordination with the local County Transportation Coordination Steering Committee.
- Proposal must describe an ongoing process for identifying and prioritizing transportation needs.
- Proposed project must be part of a coordinated system that includes "to work" transportation services.
- Proposal must describe how a demonstrated gap in transportation service is being met.
- Proposal must include an ongoing funding strategy which explains how the initiative will be fully funded after TIF dollars are exhausted.

- Proposal must embrace a deficit-funding approach, using TIF dollars to fill a short-term funding gap not met using existing funding sources.

TIF Community Transportation Grants are available for projects serving the general population. TIF Welfare to Work Grants are restricted to helping the hardest-to-serve target populations as defined by the U.S. Department of Labor and the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission (SETC).²

Proposals are expected to combine funds from multiple sources. The Innovation Fund will not fund more than 50 percent of any initiative, and preference will be given to programs obtaining more than 15 percent of their funding from sources other than state and federal programs. Grant recipients will have up to 24 months to spend program funds. Additional information on the TIF grant program can be found at www.state.nj.us/transportation/workforce/TIF.

Other states have set up similar competitive programs, including Michigan, Connecticut, and California.

Private Funding Sources

Private funding sources are playing a major role in supporting welfare-to-work transportation. Programs have received grants and donations from a wide range of private sources, including foundations, employers, nonprofit community organizations, and faith-based organizations. Some examples are cited below.

- In Vermont, the Good News Garage is affiliated with the Lutheran Social Services of New England with the assistance of volunteers from the area Lutheran churches. To support its transportation-related programs, the Garage received grants from Wheat Ridge Ministries, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod World Relief Fund, Aid Association for Lutherans, Lutheran Brotherhood, as well as the support from the Gift Fund of Lutheran Social Services of New England, the sponsoring agency.
- Goodwill Industries is participating in auto ownership programs in Colorado and North Carolina, while United Way of Greater Tucson is assessing area transportation needs and resources.
- The San Diego/Imperial Chapter of the American Red Cross joined forces with a coalition of local churches to provide transportation services in southern California.

- The McKnight Foundation of Minneapolis, Minnesota, initiated the Family Loan Program in 1984 to help family members pay for unexpected expenses that could interfere with their ability to keep a job or stay in school. In 1994, Family Service America entered into a partnership with the foundation to replicate the Family Loan Program nationally. In addition to 12 programs in Minnesota, pilot programs are underway in Indianapolis, Kansas City, Milwaukee, and Akron, Ohio. Most of the loans have been for cars, which have helped individuals better achieve their work and education goals. In fact, while some three out of four loan recipients were receiving government assistance at the time of their loan application, their use of public assistance dropped by 40 percent within two years.
- United Parcel Service subsidizes transportation services to a number of its facilities, including sites in Philadelphia, Hartford (Connecticut), and Louisville (Kentucky).
- In Missouri, more than 30 banks are participating in the FUTURES automobile loan program.

Although the role of the private sector in supporting welfare-related transportation is still evolving, these programs show potential areas for participation.

Combining Funding Sources

Many programs have adopted a creative approach to funding by combining multiple funding sources to support a single program. The federal government in particular has taken specific steps to ensure that programs reflect collaboration in planning and implementation. The Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Transportation have jointly issued guidance on the use of federal funding sources to help states and communities take “full advantage of existing resources to develop seamless, integrated services addressing the transportation challenge of moving people from welfare to work.”³ The FTA’s Job Access and Reverse Commute grant program, in particular, is intended to support coordinated regional programs. According to the *Training and Guidance Letter*:

All projects funded under this program must be the result of a collaborative planning process that includes transportation providers, agencies administering TANF and Welfare to Work funds, human services agencies, employers, metropolitan planning organizations, States, and affected communities and individuals. In addition, the program is expected to leverage other local funds that

are eligible to be expended for transportation and encourage a coordinated approach to transportation services.

The eligibility requirements and program parameters of each funding source further encourage such collaboration. For example, DOL Welfare to Work grants have targeted a narrowly defined group of hard-to-serve TANF recipients, while the FTA Job Access and Reverse Commute program extends its reach to welfare recipients and other low-income individuals. And while TANF funds may be used to provide loans to lease or purchase vehicles, the Welfare to Work program specifically excludes this application. Accordingly, many welfare-to-work programs, including those profiled in this guidebook, have woven together multiple funding sources. For example, the State of New Jersey used formula Welfare to Work funds to match grants awarded through the FTA Job Access and Reverse Commute program.

Others have pieced together federal, state, local, and private funds to support their programs.

- AC Transit, for example, funded service expansion on a late-night shuttle with a combination of agency operating funds, county sales tax revenues, and an FTA Job Access and Reverse Commute grant.
- The Transit Authority of River City obtained an FTA Livable Communities Initiative to provide start-up capital funding for the Nia Center and Night Owl Service and uses its own operating budget, supplemented with federal Congestion Management and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, to operate the Night Owl. A federal Job Access and Reverse Commute grant will allow the Night Owl to expand its service area.
- In Philadelphia, SEPTA operates the Horsham Breeze, which serves several suburban employers. Montgomery County funds weekday service on the route, while individual employers support evening and Saturday service.
- Sojourner-Douglass College launched its AdVANtage II program with funds from the Baltimore County Department of Social Services and technical assistance from the Maryland Mass Transit Authority.
- Since its inception in 1996, the Good News Garage has combined funding from numerous public and private sources, including its sponsoring organization Lutheran Social Services of New England, the federal government, private donations, and revenues from the sale of refurbished cars.

- The Contra Costa County Department of Social Services combined a Welfare to Work grant from the U.S. Department of Labor with matching TANF funds distributed through the State of California to support its shuttle van program.

These examples show the range of approaches to funding welfare-to-work transportation programs – from federal grants to private donations. While federal funding programs (including those disbursed through state agencies) are a major source of support, many programs have assembled multiple funding streams for this purpose. Some of these coordinated approaches responded to the federal requirements to demonstrate collaborative planning efforts. Others were practical responses to funding constraints or limitations on use. Regardless of the reason, this coordinated approach to funding welfare-to-work transportation programs has come to typify the spirit of cooperation associated with welfare reform.

Notes

¹ New Jersey Department of Transportation Office of Workforce and Community Transportation and New Jersey Department of Human Services Office of Policy and Planning. “Proposed Guidelines: Transportation Innovation Fund.” Draft. January 12, 1998.

² New Jersey Department of Transportation Office of Workforce and Community Transportation. “FY ’99 Transportation Innovation Fund Program Guidelines and Application Procedures” November, 1998.

³ U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. *Use of TANF, WtW, and Job Access Funds for Transportation*. June 1, 2000. Available at www.fta.dot.gov.

Part 2:

Field **R**esearch

Field Research

The Research Team met with stakeholders in order to learn first-hand about the challenges of welfare-to-work transportation and to profile exemplary programs. Focus groups were held with transportation stakeholders in Michigan, California, and South Carolina; findings are summarized in Chapter 5. Chapters 6-16 summarize case studies describing exemplary programs that provide transportation services to welfare recipients and, in some cases, other low-income workers. The profiled programs used a variety of creative strategies to address customer needs. They include the following:

- **AC Transit Neighborhood Circulator**, which provides night-time connections between rail stations and a residential community in North Richmond, California.
- **AdVANtage Van Service**, in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, which trains welfare recipients to operate van services.
- **AdVANtage II**, at Sojourner-Douglas College in Baltimore, Maryland, which helps students at this community-based college to provide transportation services as van operators.
- **Contra Costa County Social Services Department**, in Martinez, California, which is making vans available to TANF participants to provide transportation services for community organizations and child care facilities.
- **Good News Garage**, in Burlington, Vermont, a faith-based program that refurbishes donated automobiles and turns them over to low-income residents.
- **Lower San Antonio Transportation Support Project**, in Oakland, California, provides trip planning and support services to give community-based organizations in this multicultural neighborhood.
- **Metropolitan Transportation Commission**, in the San Francisco Bay Area, California, which is facilitating a county-based planning process and developing transportation resource guides.

- **Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization**, in Clearwater, Florida, which administers a menu of transportation options for TANF recipients.
- **San Diego Workforce Partnership**, in San Diego, California, which coordinates resources from church groups and nonprofit organizations to provide work-related transportation.
- **Santee-Wateree Regional Transportation Authority**, in Sumter, South Carolina, which coordinated new flexible work-related transportation services with existing services for clients of human service agencies.
- **State of New Jersey**, which developed a comprehensive county-based transportation planning process
- **State of South Carolina**, which developed an interagency planning program to support local efforts.
- **Transit Authority of River City**, in Louisville, Kentucky, whose services include a one-stop center and a late-night subscription shuttle to support second- and third-shift workers.
- **TransPac** in Pleasant Hill, California, a regional planning agency that provides transportation incentives and traveler information.

These programs were selected because they approached the transportation needs of their clients in innovative ways.

A list of individuals contacted for the case studies appears in Appendix D.

Focus Group Findings

A series of focus groups was convened to identify and discuss issues associated with access to jobs and potential solutions. The focus group technique is a research method borrowed from the market research and product testing fields. It is a qualitative method for eliciting people's perspectives, opinions, feelings, and thoughts about a topic. In research applications such as this, the method has been modified to fit with discussions of public policy and practice issues. Some noteworthy modifications were made. In particular, participants are chosen because of their involvement in some aspect of the topic, rather than being "ordinary" citizens. The elaborate one-way mirrors and other physical aspects of product testing are omitted. Incentive payments are used sparingly, if at all (in this case, only for consumer participants, for whom an incentive might defray the out-of-pocket costs of participating).

Focus groups were convened with transportation stakeholders in three locations to assess the issues and challenges associated with welfare-related transportation:

- Detroit, Michigan
- Oakland, California
- Columbia, South Carolina

The research team set up and facilitated each focus group; local agencies provided assistance in recruiting participants. (Local agency information and focus group schedules are presented in the appendix.) Overall, the focus groups drew participants from social service agencies, transit providers, employers, private nonprofit organizations, and welfare clients. While each group included a mix of individuals, not every focus group included representation from every category. Because the focus group participants were assured of confidentiality, more detailed information about the group composition is not presented in this report.

The focus groups elicited information about employment transportation needs and exemplary planning, service operation, and financing strategies.

They were designed to help the research team identify potential case study sites and develop a useful evaluation methodology. Hearing directly from practitioners about their day-to-day concerns will help ensure that the research results from this project remain relevant. Discussion topics included the following:

- What is the role of transportation in supporting welfare reform?
- What kind of information and resources would be helpful in meeting the transportation needs of your agency?
- What are the barriers to providing employment-related transportation?
- How would you evaluate the success of your transportation program? How would you compare it to others?

The focus group findings are summarized in the following sections.

Overall Themes

The major themes of the three focus groups complement and support the findings from the literature review and are summarized below.

Focus group participants felt clearly that the transportation aspects of welfare to work were bigger than just the transportation link. They saw the need to create strong, effective coordination between transportation and social service providers – real working partnerships around consumer needs and shared provider goals and agendas if they are to successfully solve the complex problem of welfare to work. But they stressed that the problem must be seen in an even larger context.

This context has to do with land use and development patterns and extent and location of affordable housing – conditions and dynamics that make a challenging problem even more difficult to solve. It also has to do with the nature of poverty in this country and how it affects poor people seeking jobs, the challenges and needs they face, and the requirements and demands this creates for social service and transportation providers seeking to find solutions. Unless planners see the problem in this holistic way, they will miss essential links and context and will be less effective in finding solutions for the transportation component.

Discussion of the transportation aspects of welfare to work centered almost entirely on public transit. They stressed that this is essentially a *public* issue and specifically a *public transit* issue. Transit is the only realistic option for most consumers in most locations. Other modes of transportation are not viable alternatives for most people, either because

they are not available (van services, free employer shuttles), because of distances between work and home (say, for bicycle or pedestrian trips), or because they cost too much (taxis and autos).

Participants felt that consumers' needs varied by where they lived and worked – and the distances between home and jobs, the urban or rural character of the area, the availability of transportation services and options. The experiences and skills of welfare clients, both in the realm of seeking and keeping a job and in using transit, were also key ingredients in the mix. They commented that the farther social agencies go in reducing welfare rolls and getting consumers into the work force, the more difficult the problems are in meeting the needs of those remaining clients still in need of work. These individuals often have an array of problems and needs that reach well beyond access to jobs.

Participants repeatedly addressed an array of gaps between the needs of consumers involved in welfare-to-work programs and available public transit services. Typical transit is not well suited to meet many needs, even when services are reasonably extensive. Routes are often oriented to core areas; they often do not serve outlying areas such as industrial complexes, where there might be jobs for consumers, and rural areas are sparsely served. Transit schedules do not fit well with the job hours of many individuals making the transition from welfare to work – weekends, early hours for service workers in hotels and restaurants, as well as late-night shifts.

Transit trips can be especially complicated for mothers traveling with young children.

Consumers often have long trips to work, some that cross transit jurisdictions where the fit of schedules, routes, and fares is an issue. Chained transit trips – including stops for child care and school, work, and shopping – are particularly complicated for mothers with young children. Safety, accessibility, and affordability are persistent issues.

Both social service and transportation providers stressed that they need to learn to speak each other's language, understand each other's needs, and develop shared goals and agendas. They are not accustomed to working together, and they are driven by different program mandates and needs. They feel that they are tackling the same problems, but from different angles. Their approaches are most often not well known to one another or well coordinated, much less jointly developed to yield mutual support and shared efficiencies and effectiveness. There are some instances in which they have developed good working relationships, and rare cases where they see themselves and act as true partners.

Stakeholders defined success in much the same way – convenient, efficient, reliable, affordable, accessible, and safe transportation to work.

Participants felt that the major stakeholders – consumers, social service and transportation providers, and employers – shared common goals and had much the same definition of success: to have convenient, efficient, reliable, affordable, accessible and safe transit to work.

Participants thought that some stakeholders had different perspectives on costs and the challenges and difficulties of linking consumers with their jobs. Employers vary in the depth of their understanding of the issues and their degree of flexibility. Their capacity to be important contributors to solutions depends on their willingness to be flexible partners, the pool of jobs they have to offer, and the state of the economy which shapes their ease or difficulty in getting and keeping employees.

Almost all of the participants expressed the feeling that politicians mandating welfare-to-work programs were not realistic about what it would take to accomplish a successful program. They expressed frustration and stress at the pressures of trying to solve the problem, help meet consumers' needs, and achieve mandated results. Many felt they were just getting to know their counterparts on the social service or transportation sides, and they expressed the desire to work together.

Perspective of the Participants

The following summary presents the major points made by participants in all six focus groups. One central goal is to highlight the strong, shared agreements and emphatic opinions that emerged from the overall discussion. In addition, significant differences of opinion are highlighted. This summary distills the shared perspectives of participants and is intended to capture the essence of the comments, rather than to present a detailed record of all points raised.

Stakeholders and Their Needs

As might be expected, focus group participants identified social service providers, transportation providers, and consumers as the major stakeholders. Employers were also cited as important stakeholders. Others mentioned included elected officials; governmental agencies (in addition to transportation and social services) who fund, program and regulate public policies and services; education and training organizations; economic development organizations; churches and other community-based groups; and labor and industry.

Issues and Obstacles To Overcome

The discussion of issues and obstacles to be overcome consumed the greatest amount of time and engaged participants' energy and interest the

most. This clearly was a broad topic of real concern to everyone present, and participants had a lot to say about all aspects of the subject.

Participants felt strongly that a broad view of this subject is vital. They stressed that the essence of the problem will be missed if it is defined simply and narrowly, focusing just on the transportation link between workers and their jobs. The topic must embrace a wide array of stakeholders, a large set of core and ancillary problems and issues, and integrated strategies in order to lead to successful solutions. The subject and the solutions are cross-disciplinary by definition.

Participants said that the problems associated with consumers' access to jobs are linked with other key issues of urban form, public policy, and public services. Many of these are familiar topics to transportation planners and social service providers alike, though they are not always addressed together when considering issues like welfare to work. Participants saw critical links with land use and development patterns, including the affordability of housing and its distribution in urban areas and the ill fit between sprawling urban areas and transit service patterns. They commented regularly on the imbalance between funding for highways and transit, common perceptions that transit is for the poor, and lack of concern by the wealthier about transportation needs other than their own. Some also noted perceived inequities in funding between large regional transit systems and smaller operators within the region.

Focus group participants placed welfare-related transportation in the larger context of poverty in American society.

Links between poverty and a host of other factors were the subject of considerable discussion; these included race, single-mother families, generational poverty, age, multiple physical and social problems, lack of education, lack of work and life skills, and inadequate cultural and experiential supports. Multiple challenges of rural poverty were noted, including its broad distribution and its links with families living in an area for a long time but no longer able to support themselves off the land. Participants noted the added difficulties in serving people who are often widely scattered in sparsely populated areas, far from job concentrations, transit services, and social service locations.

These interlocking networks of problems were seen to create great demands on all the key players trying to link people with jobs. This also creates difficulties in integrating and coordinating transportation and social services. They make the job of transportation providers more challenging because customers often have different mobility patterns than core

oriented, nine-to-five work trips. Also, customers may be unaccustomed to using public transit, particularly if trips have many links that cross transit jurisdictions. Multiple jurisdictions within a region also complicate the task of coordination, both among transportation providers and between transportation and social service agencies.

These problems also complicate the job of social service providers. Participants noted that they were called upon to develop and use new sets of information, to interact with new partners, and to help their clients make what could be a tremendously challenging transition into the workplace. They also cited issues associated with making all the “pieces of the puzzle” fit together: training, social service coordination, job seeking, employer recruiting, coordinating transportation to work (and, for many clients child-care trips), transitioning from financial support for transportation to having clients assume responsibility for their transportation costs, and so forth.

Transportation services should provide seamless connections, especially for the complex trips that are typical for many welfare clients.

Quite unanimously, participants felt that public transit services were the foundation and the practical service choice for the vast majority of welfare-to-work clients. Typical transit services may serve their traditional riders well, but gaps can be significant for welfare-to-work passengers. Schedules and routes of existing services often need to be modified to fit the origins, destinations, and work schedules for workers and the entry-level jobs they are likely to secure – at least initially. In addition to basic accessibility, TANF clients need services that are reliable and safe. Participants also felt that transportation providers need to make their services more interconnected and “seamless,” particularly for the long, multi-leg transit trips that are typical for many welfare clients.

Flexibility (the ability to vary a set trip pattern, if necessary) was also considered important, though perhaps not possible for many consumers. Such flexibility could result from more frequent service, service options, and back-up provisions (such as emergency rides home for consumers, or back-up vehicles for small-scale operators in case of breakdowns).

Finally, focus group participants flagged transit affordability as an issue, both with regard to overall fare levels and the cash outlay generally required for prepaid passes. They also noted that costs can jump if working mothers have small children to drop off and pick up at school or day care. Some participants also believed that longer-term support for transit costs was needed, particularly given the high percentage of their income that some recipients paid for transportation. Finally, participants commented favorably on an example cited in one focus group, where the job program

purchases tokens so that welfare consumers do not have the stigma of paying fare differently (via vouchers or chits) than other riders.

There was little discussion of options other than transit, such as taxi or subscription services or autos. A few participants commented strongly that auto options are not realistic. If consumers have a car, it is often not available to them for work trips or vehicles tend to be run down and unreliable.

When the idea of autos for welfare clients was raised, participants scoffed at the idea that this was a viable or practical approach to implement in any significant way. They doubted that it would make a real dent in solving the need for access to jobs, or that it would prove financially sound and effective for consumers over time. One social service provider commented wryly that, after getting a donated car, she would then need to get donated repair services, and would have to figure out ways to deal with insurance. When the car died, she continued, she would have to figure out a way to get it towed away.

Participants stressed the importance of communication and collaboration.

Participants said clearly that transportation providers and social service providers share the need to understand each other. They noted that even in the focus group discussions, people often did not understand one another's vocabulary, programs and mandates, and constraints on what they can or cannot do. Furthermore, people commented on the lack of communication channels between stakeholders like themselves that are unused to working with each other, and many social service providers said they lacked sufficient, clear information about FTA programs that could assist them.

In addition to the communication aspects of coordination, participants stressed the need for collaborative partnerships, where flexibility is an essential dynamic among all parties. One participant described it as the fingers of a hand needing to all be coordinated and flexible – transportation providers, employers, social service agencies, and clients. Everyone needs to be willing to help accommodate the needs of all partners. In one example, a job placement and transportation team had worked effectively to identify a concentration of job opportunities with a particular employer. However, the employer was unwilling or unable to adjust work hours to start and end fifteen minutes later, even though the transit provider would adjust schedules at the end of the day to make this work. In the end, the whole deal fell through.

Team approaches were cited as working well, though in general people indicated that transportation and social service agencies were still going

their own way a much of the time, rather than working in coordination with each other – much less jointly. Disconnects were also noted between levels of government within a given area – between states and regions, for example, having to do with different interpretations of mandates or roles, different priorities, conflicting schedules, and poor communication.

In the discussions, there was a sense that implementing welfare to work was a fast, huge, new, different, complicated, high pressure, high stress proposition. There was also the sense that people were working so hard, in the thick of the problems, that they did not have the “luxury” to step back and engage in coordinated, team planning and implementation.

Social service staffers believed that transportation providers needed to understand that their typical services would not work to meet the needs of many welfare-to-work consumers, no matter how good the services may be. They also believed that everyone involved needed to appreciate consumers’

Most welfare recipients had very little margin for error when making transportation arrangements.

life circumstances, and the demands and stresses they face every day. They needed to understand the degree to which welfare consumers were prepared to undertake work and the logistics of the work trip. They also said that most consumers have very little, if any, margin for error (i.e., if a work trip is missed, if transportation delays cause day care pick-up problems, if there is no extra money to take a cab, or move to a location better served by transit, and so forth). As welfare agencies meet their mandates to move clients into the work force, the people

remaining on welfare become harder to serve. These individuals facing multiple issues are the hardest challenges – those with substance abuse problems, mental health issues, family responsibilities, physical disabilities, and the like.

A number of participants also commented on the costs and inefficiencies facing social services agencies that attempt to institute their own transportation services, through running vans or having social workers drive consumers to their jobs. The participants sensed that many of these attempts, while well intentioned, involved social service providers doing things beyond their areas of expertise. Several transit providers commented that social service agencies often set up these types of van services without asking local transportation providers if they might be able to offer a service to meet consumers’ needs. They added that van services like this frequently fail when sponsors encounter problems and that these issues often could be avoided altogether if local transit operators were in the loop. They further thought that such services operated at higher costs or lower efficiency than those offered by transportation providers; and such approaches often make

use of staff and vehicles in ways that are not a cost-effective use of these social service agencies' resources.

Both social service and transportation providers commented on issues of turf getting in the way of meeting client needs. Some turf battles involved jurisdictions of neighboring transit providers, where one provider cannot or will not pick up riders, even if it makes the most sense from a service and rider standpoint to do so.

Other turf issues involve regulatory agencies that do not want to give up control of service approvals, even though this hampers the providers' ability to be timely and responsive to user needs, particularly for new users. Service modifications lag well behind the schedules and needs of consumers, employers and social service agencies attempting to get people into the work force and meet welfare-to-work mandates. Another turf issue was implied in discussions, as noted above, of social service agencies running their own vans or similar transportation services. While this was not stated explicitly as a turf issue, it can be directly interpreted as such.

Some successful programs chose to build on existing services rather than create entirely new ones.

Suggestions for Success

Participants cited the features of successful programs and the cooperative relationships necessary to produce them. These include building on existing services, rather than creating wholly new ones. In addition, effective transit services will often need to be modified to address the needs of welfare-to-work consumers. This includes modifying schedules and routes to better fit consumers' needs and the hours and locations of jobs.

Creating working partnerships between social service and transportation providers and employers is also key. Transportation and social service providers need to understand each other's language, programs, goals, needs, and constraints. Also key is allowing each service provider to do what it does best, rather than having social service organizations also try to be transportation operators, for example. These partnerships extend to employers as well. Employers need to regard themselves as teammates. All key stakeholders need to show some flexibility in order to arrive at solutions that meet all their requirements, constraints, and needs.

Focus group participants cited a few specific examples of highly successful programs. One in particular is the close collaboration and joint action efforts of the South Carolina Department of Social Services' Marion County Office of Job Development and Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority in Florence. This partnership has successfully targeted employment

concentrations in the Myrtle Beach area and developed integrated employment and transportation strategies for consumers from adjacent rural areas in Marion County.

Some of the key features of this example are a very close working partnership between the two key players in the social service and transit agencies respectively. They approach employers together when seeking jobs for consumers. They work together to identify necessary transit schedule modifications, and together they lobby potential employers to seek modest changes in work schedules so that all of the pieces of the program fit together. The transit property provides vehicles to take consumers on job application trips to a group of potential employers. Job program ads appear on the sides of buses. They help organize and sponsor job fairs to promote workers to jobs and jobs to workers. As he sums up the underlying dynamic of their partnership, the transportation manager quips “my job is to keep Paula (his social services counterpart) happy.” The nature and extent of this coordinated effort struck other focus group participants as a real-world application of the more general points and principles made throughout the discussions.

Case Study:

AdVANtage Van Service

Anne Arundel County is located in central Maryland, approximately 27 miles from both Washington, D.C., and Baltimore. In July 1996 the Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services (DSS) collaborated with the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County and the YWCA of the Greater Baltimore Area to develop and implement a transportation micro-enterprise program to address the region's unmet transportation needs. The program was designed to train and subsidize public assistance recipients to become entrepreneurs; they in turn would offer transportation services to other DSS recipients for job searches, commuting to approved job training programs, and work trips.

The specific program goals were to:

- Train and capitalize twelve cash assistance applicants or recipients as van company owners in Anne Arundel County
- Contract with the new entrepreneurs to provide transportation services to other public assistance recipients
- Develop a "how to" guide to help other jurisdictions replicate the welfare-to-work entrepreneurial model
- Expand the entrepreneurs' client base to include other low-income residents, private employers and the general public

The resulting program was funded in 1997-1998 by the Federal Transit Administration and sponsored by the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA).

Transportation Barriers to Employment

Annapolis Transit, the local transit operator, provides general purpose fixed-route service and route-deviation paratransit service, and coordinates with the Maryland Mass Transit Administration (MTA) and other private service providers for limited service to urban areas of the county. Taxicab operators fill gaps in the overall transportation service. Although nearly

every community in the county has some type of transportation service, existing service is either limited or available only to agency clients. A 1994 study conducted by the Maryland Department of Human Resources indicated that approximately 40 percent of Anne Arundel County residents stated that transportation was the major barrier to employment.

Two major hospitals, a university, a college, a naval academy, Baltimore-Washington International (BWI) Airport, Westinghouse and Fort Mead military base are located in Anne Arundel County. These employers offer a variety of entry-level jobs with multiple shifts, including late night shifts. However, the job sites are located five miles or more from residential neighborhoods and are in industrial areas along long stretches of highway.

Planning Process

DSS designed the AdVANtage program to address the local transportation barriers. The YWCA of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County and the YWCA of the Greater Baltimore Area contracted with DSS to develop the training curriculum. The YWCAs were responsible for designing a business training curriculum for transportation providers; conducting the training; providing social supports throughout the training period, including group therapy and individual counseling; and follow-up with the entrepreneurs during and after the project period. The CTAA provided technical assistance, relevant transportation information and contacts, and assisted the YWCAs in developing the transportation provider curriculum.

DSS Job Counselors helped market AdVANtage by advising recipients of its availability during initial Job Search enrollment and during appointments to re-determine the recipient's continuing eligibility for public assistance. Caseworkers told public assistance recipients about the AdVANtage program when they requested transportation for employment purposes. The program was also advertised through community presentations, brochures, Web sites, media and major newspaper coverage and word-of-mouth.

The AdVANtage Model

The AdVANtage project is a vehicle ownership program that trained and capitalized four DSS clients as entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs contracted with DSS to provide welfare-to-work employment transportation:

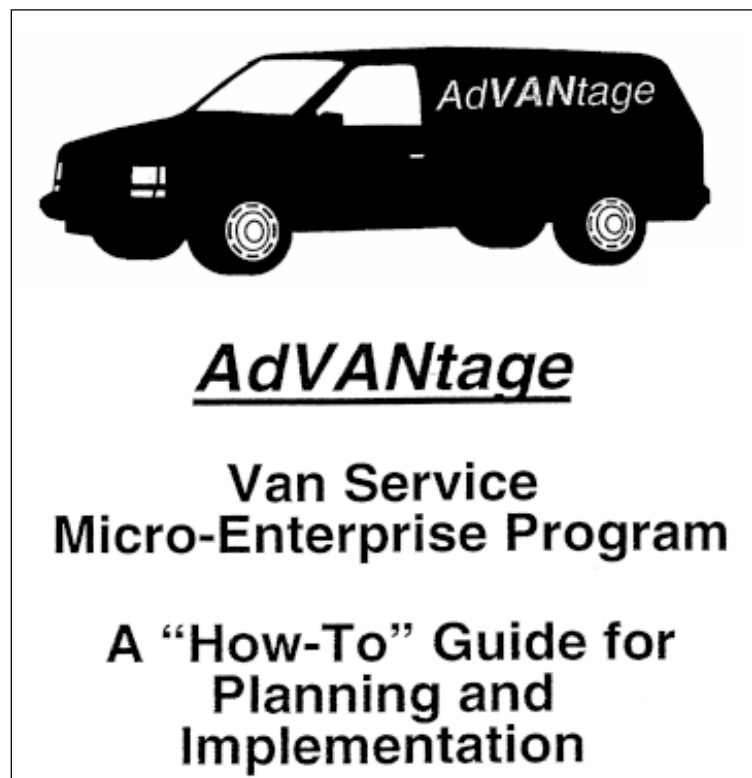
- To provide feeder service to public transportation, taking DSS clients to bus stops or park-and-ride lots
- To provide an alternative means of travel for DSS clients who need transportation for work, job training, or job search activities

After two mailings to nearly 2,000 welfare recipients and four months of marketing to hundreds of welfare applicants during their intake employability assessments, 80 interest forms were obtained. Of these, only seven were considered suitable candidates for the AdVANtage project. The selected participants were screened based on credit history, criminal background, health, and general interest in starting their own business. Six of the seven recipients were selected for enrollment in the AdVANtage program.

Following the selection process, the participants began a four-month training and development program. The training curriculum included computer training, business development, professional development, financial planning and management, communication, safe driving, and marketing. Six members from the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) served as mentors and advisors to the participants. Local businessmen served as speakers on a variety of topics throughout the project. Support and guidance was also available from the Annapolis Regional Transportation Management Association and the Public Service Commission. Other community support and recognition came from the County Executive, who honored the participants at a business reception attended by over 200 community members.

Although six participants entered the training and development program, only four were ultimately capitalized as entrepreneurs. Two of the participants were dismissed from the process for undisclosed reasons. While DSS anticipated that one employee-owned corporation would be formed, each of the participants started his or her own transportation business. This presented a significant challenge for the project team, since each business plan required a different approach. Nonetheless, the project team helped the entrepreneurs with various aspects of setting up and operating a business, including obtaining bank loans, purchasing, leasing and repairing vehicles, purchasing insurance, and bidding on contracts.

In December 1997, the first entrepreneur began transporting DSS clients, and



the other three began operating in early 1998. The entrepreneurs operate as sole proprietors assigned to a core regional county area, but not limited to a specific jurisdiction. One of the original four entrepreneurs stopped operations immediately after start-up, but a new entrepreneur began another operation in early 1999.

The AdVANtage Service

The entrepreneurs own and operate 15-passenger vans. DSS does not maintain records on the number of clients using the AdVANtage service, but estimates that 500-700 monthly trips are provided during the weekday peak hours. A total of \$2,000 is paid to the four entrepreneurs monthly.

County staff described the AdVANtage program as a “rest stop to the top.”

AdVANtage farecards are issued to recipients who have no other means of transportation. DSS encourages job counselors to consider other alternatives first because of the cost of this service. Eligible clients are issued an “intelligent” farecard, which pays for 40 one-way trips; each AdVANtage vehicle is equipped with a farecard reader. The client is responsible for reserving AdVANtage service 24 hours in advance. AdVANtage entrepreneurs are paid \$10 per trip up to 10 miles, \$13 per trip for 11-20 miles, and \$18 per trip for more than 21 miles. They receive an additional \$3 for each child riding with a parent. DSS does not provide ongoing financial or mentoring support to the entrepreneurs, but micro-grants of approximately \$3,500 will be available for service improvements and expansion.

Program Evaluation

DSS stated that the AdVANtage program has increased access to transit from the home to job sites, and “has eliminated the client’s excuse that lack of transportation makes them unable to work.” DSS could not indicate the number of clients who have obtained or retained jobs because of the AdVANtage program but reported a 75 percent decrease in its caseload due to welfare reform initiatives.

DSS considers the program a success and describes it as “a rest stop to the top.” The project has successfully:

- Trained and capitalized four cash assistance recipients as van company owners in Anne Arundel County
- Contracted with the new entrepreneurs to provide transportation services to other public assistance recipients
- Developed a “how-to” guide to help other jurisdictions to replicate the

AdVANtage program, which is available free of charge from the Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services

- Developed a replicable business training program combined with a transportation component¹
- Expanded the entrepreneurs' client base to include contracts to provide transportation service for private schools, United Cerebral Palsy, Department of Occupational Rehabilitation Services, Fresh Air Accessible Services (non-emergency), and Baltimore Washington International Airport

CTAA has commissioned a formal evaluation of the program, which is currently underway.

The Entrepreneur's Perspective

Entrepreneurs had a different perspective of the challenges and success of the AdVANtage program, summarized here. The entrepreneurs operate their business out of their homes as sole proprietors. Each is responsible for scheduling, dispatching, driving the vehicles, insurance costs, vehicle maintenance, repairs, soliciting contracts, writing proposals, and all other aspects of the business.

Contact was possible with only three of the entrepreneurs, who described the fourth entrepreneur as "having a hard time," "given up," "not doing well," and "has not operated for more than three months."

- **Vendor A** owns two vans, one 7-passenger and one 15-passenger vehicle. Service is operated during the morning and evening peak hours, Monday through Friday. The vendor reported transporting 549 DSS clients in the first month of service, 394 clients in the second month, and 353 in the third month. DSS referrals have dwindled to 30 trips per month. The entrepreneur attributes this decline to the fact that DSS gives its clients only one farecard. After the first month, the DSS client must find another way to travel.

The entrepreneur reported transporting an average of eight passengers per day. In July 1999, the entrepreneur was awarded a contract with a YWCA for 30 trips per month at a rate of \$2.50 per mile. In addition, to the management and operational responsibilities of the business, the entrepreneur also has to find new contracting opportunities.

The entrepreneur reported that no ongoing support from any source is

available. The mentor assigned from SCORE is “too busy to help” with problems encountered.

- **Vendor B** described the assigned core area as “remote and isolated.” She uses one 15-passenger van, fraught with mechanical problems, to provide service. Initially the entrepreneur scheduled and drove the vehicle, 10-12 hours Monday through Friday, but now receives occasional assistance from a relative. During the first year of operation, the entrepreneur earned \$40,000, but only netted \$15,000 to cover the living expenses for a family of four, including three young children.

One entrepreneur is struggling to stay in business despite high operating costs because the community needs transportation services.

The entrepreneur emotionally reported struggling to stay in business because of expensive overhead, high cost of insurance, vehicle maintenance and repair costs. Vendor B is not eligible for child support payments and, due to her precarious financial situation, it is highly likely that she will apply for food stamps.

The entrepreneur wants to stay in business because of the community’s need for some source of transportation. She receives support from a staff member at the YWCA.

- **Vendor C** operates one 15-passenger vehicle and is in the process of obtaining a second vehicle. The entrepreneur reports earning a small profit which covers personal expenses. In February 1999, the entrepreneur earned over \$11,000, but netted \$2,000 due to vehicle repairs.

Vendor C averages 177 DSS trips per month and is paid an average of \$1,860- \$2,000 monthly. The entrepreneur is licensed to provide pre-scheduled pick-ups at BWI Airport. (A BWI employee distributes the entrepreneur’s business card to airport customers.) Airport customers are charged \$1.50 per mile for service. Vendor C averages 350 trips per month.

The entrepreneur currently receives no cash support from DSS, but does receive Medicaid for the children and half of the original amount of food stamps. The entrepreneur reports receiving ongoing support and guidance from the YWCA trainer and mentor.

All entrepreneurs reported that the greatest challenge was the fact that the “cards are stacked against them” from the start due to bad credit, lack of transportation knowledge, lack of business expertise, low self-esteem, lack

of confidence, and the very real challenge of having to transition from welfare to work.

The challenge of a four-month training and development program proved to be overwhelming for the entrepreneurs, causing one of the original entrepreneurs to fold within one month of start-up. They reported that it was impossible to learn all that they needed to know to operate a business in a four-month period. Once the “glamour” of the project dissipated, so did ongoing support for the businesses.

Entrepreneurs faced challenges in starting their own businesses because of bad credit, lack of business experience, lack of transportation knowledge, and low self-esteem.

Lessons Learned

Social services departments need to be aware of the real life issues of public assistance recipients.

The issues should be resolved prior to enrolling them in a program such as AdVANtage.

Participant recruitment was difficult, because caseworkers were not trained to recognize the characteristics of successful entrepreneurs. Caseworkers also had difficulty locating participants who met the project’s criteria of “good” credit and “forgivable” criminal charges. As a result, DSS strongly advises that participants be screened closely to ensure that they do not have suspended driver’s licenses or poor driving records, are physically able to operate 12-15 passenger vans and do not have serious criminal histories or bad credit ratings.

Recipients faced multiple problems as they transitioned from welfare to owning and operating a business. The following **barriers to self-sufficiency** of entrepreneurs in vehicle ownership programs were identified.

- Inadequate screening of prospective participants, including educational and skills level, and personal circumstances prior to enrollment in the education and training program
- Lack of sustained transportation support for the recipients using the service
- Lack of ongoing support for the entrepreneurs in the form of funding, counseling, education and training, moral support
- Entrepreneurs’ inability to market service to others; i.e., to employers, community organizations, public transportation providers

- Lack of support from public transportation providers
- Limited distribution of farecards to potential DSS clients

Finally, **all of the entrepreneurs reported a need for ongoing emotional and professional support** from social services, local businesses, transportation associations, and local public transportation providers. Neither Annapolis Transit nor the Maryland Mass Transit Administration (MTA) offers any coordination with the AdVANTage service.

Notes

- ¹ Copies are available from the YWCA of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, 1517 Ritchie Highway, Arnold, MD 21012, at a cost of \$100 per copy.

Case Study:

AdVANtage II: Sojourner-Douglass College

Recognizing that many job opportunities are located in the outlying suburban areas, the Baltimore City Department of Social Services (BCDSS) formed partnerships with several agencies and community-based organizations to help bridge the gap between available jobs and eligible employees. BCDSS worked with Sojourner-Douglass College (SDC) and the Maryland Mass Transit Administration (MTA) to initiate a van service and entrepreneurial micro-enterprise program. The goal was to train public assistance recipients as entrepreneurs who, in turn, provided transportation services to other recipients as they searched for employment, attended job training and commuted to and from work. Sojourner-Douglass College is the State of Maryland's only predominately African-American, urban, baccalaureate institution and specializes in educating the "non-traditional student." The average age of the student body is thirty-eight. Most students work or volunteer full-time, in addition to raising families.

In collaboration with BCDSS, SDC launched the AdVANtage II program. This initiative was closely modeled after the AdVANtage Van Service project in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, which successfully produced four entrepreneurs in its first year. The Community Association of America (CTAA) provided technical assistance, relevant transportation information and contacts.

The AdVANtage II program was developed to meet the following objectives:

- Train and capitalize BCDSS benefit recipients as self-employed transportation service providers
- Contract with AdVANtage II providers to provide affordable transportation services for other BCDSS participants
- Expand the customer base of AdVANtage II providers to include other low-income residents, private employers and the public

- Develop a comprehensive manual for other jurisdictions to implement an AdVANtage II program

Service Area

Inner city Baltimore is home to over half of Maryland's welfare caseload, with the state's highest unemployment rate of 6.7 percent. Sojourner-Douglass College is located in East Baltimore, which has one of the city's highest rates of unemployment, crime, and drug abuse. East Baltimore is one of the impoverished areas that make up the Empowerment Zone; a federally funded community-driven planning process designed to rebuild and revitalize the city's most neglected neighborhoods. Once a city whose primary employers were factories, Baltimore has lost over 63,000 manufacturing jobs from 1970 to 1990. The metropolitan area has added hundreds of thousands of jobs, the majority of them in the service industry. Many of these low-paying jobs are in the suburban communities, making it difficult for city residents to gain access.

The Mass Transit Administration (MTA) is the public transportation operator in the Baltimore area. Although the MTA was willing to contribute to the welfare to work initiative, the agency was not able to meet the needs of transitioning welfare recipients who obtained employment beyond established routes. The MTA is required to cover 50 percent of its operating expenses through fares, and suburban routes are too expensive to operate.

Planning Process

AdVANtage II began its first phase in 1997, with the difficult task of participant recruitment. Caseworkers from the Baltimore City Department of Social Services were responsible for referring clients to the program during initial job search enrollment and eligibility screenings. However, most caseworkers were unfamiliar with the new program, as well as criteria necessary to identify future entrepreneurs. As a result, caseworkers gave priority referrals to job development/placement programs with which they were familiar. AdVANtage II received no applicants for the first two months of operation.

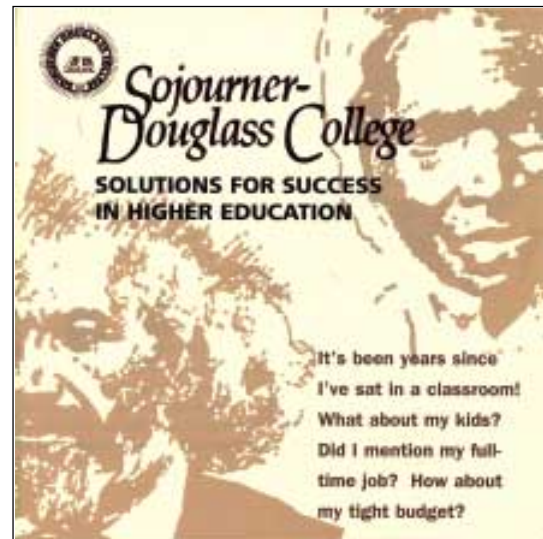
In response, AdVANtage II staff developed an aggressive marketing campaign targeting caseworkers and potential candidates. AdVANtage II staff conducted workshops, developed a procedural manual and promotional materials, and visited case managers to familiarize them with the project. They also marketed the program heavily to TANF recipients, often hand delivering flyers and promotional materials.

The AdVANtage II Model

Funded with a grant of \$650,600 from BCDSS, AdVANtage II intended to provide transportation services for up to 500 welfare to work recipients as they conducted job searches and traveled to training sites and job assignments. In addition, 24 selected welfare recipients would train as self-employed transportation providers, as well as certified Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) owners. The goals of the program were: (1) to transform welfare recipients into entrepreneurs and (2) to obtain capable, reliable and affordable vehicles to transport other transitioning employees.

Once applicants were identified, they were required to complete a two-step application process. After their basic reading, mathematical and comprehension skills were tested, applicants interviewed with two members of the project team. Twenty-five candidates were selected for the first incoming class.

Because the program was originally designed for applicants to lease vans themselves, applicants were required to be creditworthy. When the participants could not obtain individual bank loans, AdVANtage II had to acquire the vans. The project bought decommissioned sedans and station wagons from public and private companies. All of the vans are accessible to passengers with disabilities. The tax-exempt status of the college also allowed the acquisition of some vehicles at no cost. MTA helped launch the program by donating the first three vans of the fleet, as well as inspecting and refurbishing others. In addition, MTA technicians served as technical advisors to the project staff while they purchased five other vehicles from auctions.



Entrepreneurs participated in an intensive one-year training curriculum that covered basic business, transportation, and marketing skills, along with assistance with incorporation as MBEs. Experienced transportation industry consultants designed the curriculum specifically for the program. Members from the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) also served as consultants and mentors to the participants, helping them refine their business plans.

After its first year, AdVANtage II transformed 18 former welfare recipients into transportation owners/operators.

The AdvANTage II program provides reverse-commute services to low-income Baltimore residents.



AdvANTage II Service

AdvANTage II provides affordable transportation assistance for low-income individuals and welfare recipients traveling to job training, job searches and work sites. Ninety-five percent of the service is reverse commute. A fleet of 28 vans (including 10 spares) serves scheduled routes to Anne Arundel County, Cecil County, District of Columbia, Harford County, and Howard County. AdvANTage services operate on fixed route schedules and are designed in conjunction with MTA to fill in service gaps without competing with existing bus routes.

Baltimore City riders can access the service at five origination points throughout the city. Eighty-five percent of the riders are transitioning welfare recipients who use public transportation to reach the pick up points. Passenger fares range from \$4.00 to \$9.00. Actual costs average \$4.00 to \$11.00 daily, but may be subsidized by TANF or employers. The TANF assistance is temporary, usually terminating after two months of full-time employment. Employers occasionally contribute transportation costs, also on a time-limited basis.

AdvANTage II operates an average of 240 trips daily. Using a manual scheduling and routing system, service begins as early as 4:00 a.m. Monday through Friday and runs until 12:30 a.m. Weekend service begins operates between 10:30 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. During the summer, the drivers also carry an average of 60 children per day to recreational activities and field trips.

AdVANtage II has proven to be a successful venture, with 18 van enterprises still in operation. An evaluation process and customer satisfaction survey are in development. Staff is working to transition the training program into a business beyond the initial funding period.

Lessons Learned

After careful review of the project, the AdVANtage II staff recognized several problems and issues that needed improvement and tried to continue program development accordingly.

- **Unrealistic Start-Up Budget.** After assessing the needs of the program, the project staff realized that a more realistic budget would have been closer to \$1.5 million for the first year of operation. They based their funding need on the experiences of a suburban Maryland Department of Social Services program that managed a paratransit operation. Originally, they did not consider the geographic and demographic differences between urban Baltimore and suburban Baltimore County.
- **Institutional Support.** The project is still in partnership with Sojourner Douglass College. After the initial grant expired, AdVANtage II formed a company with SDC to keep the business afloat. AdVANtage II, LLC, is funded by Sojourner-Douglass College; drivers are subcontractors to AdVANtage II. “This project would not have been more than a pipe dream without the extensive support from Sojourner Douglass,” notes AdVANtage II Project Director Jamal Mubdi-Bey.
- **Subsidized Wages.** The college, as well as other outside sources, provides funds to supplement the drivers’ revenue. Through the limited liability corporation, operators are guaranteed an hourly wage of \$8.00 per hour and 20 hours per week, regardless of the number of trips they provide.
- **Business Development.** The project now markets the service to vendors (hired by BCDSS), economic development directors and employers, and negotiates contracts for the project. AdVANtage II staff develops reverse commute fixed route service in response to employer needs, and subcontracts with AdVANtage II van drivers to manage and serve a particular route. The MTA co-hosts monthly vendor meetings to discuss operational issues and business development with AdVANtage II and employers.
- **Continuous Training.** As the AdVANtage II service continues to expand, the project staff understands the need for additional driver

training and education. Drivers will be retrained in computer and customer service skills, especially when dealing with senior citizens and persons with disabilities. Whereas drivers completed some accounting training, the staff realized the need for more advanced computer training.

Challenges

The most demanding obstacles facing the project were by far, financial.

Acquisition of vehicles remained the most difficult challenge, due to the unsatisfactory credit histories of the clients. Financial constraints also forced the staff to reduce the number of entrepreneurs, but they were able to work more efficiently and effectively with a smaller, more qualified group.

Entrepreneurs need ongoing financial support during the transition from welfare to work.

Working with former welfare recipients also presented some cultural obstacles. BCDSS counsels some very difficult, “hard to place” clients. Baltimore City has the state’s largest number of residents who have remained on welfare for more than five years, making the transition even more difficult. Compared to the rest of the United States, Maryland ranks lowest with the percentage of residents who are transitioning off of welfare by actively job-hunting and working.

Staying in touch with van drivers also proved to be a challenge. In the initial stages of recruitment, many of the candidates were difficult to reach because they did not own cellular telephones. Project staff quickly understood the importance of supplying van operators with telephones. Time management became an issue with some of the transitioning clients, since being at work regularly and on time was a departure from their normal routine.

Finally, drivers need an ongoing source of financial support during their transition to self-sufficiency, perhaps for as long as three years. As a result, the AdVANtage II staff anticipates that it will expand the types of services it offers the van operators in the future, as well as continue the financial, training and mentoring support it currently provides.

Case Study:

Contra Costa County

Contra Costa County is located in the San Francisco Bay Area, in California. This suburban county received funding from the U.S. Department of Labor to develop a series of strategies to help participants in CalWORKs, the California welfare reform program, overcome the barriers associated with work-related travel. These include coordinating trips involving multiple transit operators (often with different fare structures and schedules) and lack of weekend and late-night service. The Department of Labor funded the following program elements:

- Train trip planners in one-stop centers (TransPac)
- Create owner/operator shuttle program
- Create children's transportation and fare voucher program
- Conduct GIS mapping analysis

TransPac Travel Information and Incentive Program

TransPac, the cooperative transportation planning committee for six jurisdictions in Central Contra Costa County, is using DOL funding to support a series of trip planning activities and ridesharing incentives. Five desktop kiosks (similar to computer terminals) will be installed at One-Stop Centers. These kiosks will allow caseworkers to access information on the Internet about transportation programs and services, including incentive programs to encourage transit use and ridesharing. In addition, through the grant, three welfare recipients will be trained to use the computer terminals and to serve as travel planning assistants at the One-Stop Centers.

The program also includes a series of incentives to support approximately 60 days of transit use or ridesharing activities. Recipients may receive transit passes, gasoline vouchers for carpool or "school-pool" participation, or vanpool fare subsidies.

Shuttle/Children's Transportation

The Contra Costa County Social Services Department (SSD) is administering both the shuttle program and children's transportation program. The program was designed to eliminate two of the biggest barriers preventing parents from getting jobs: transportation and child care. Through the van/shuttle program, CalWORKs participants are trained to operate vans to provide community transportation services, including transportation to school and child-care. The program was modeled after AdVANTage in Anne Arundel County, Maryland.

SSD contracted with a private transportation operator to lease 15-passenger vans for CalWORKs clients to operate. (The grant cannot be used to purchase capital equipment.) SSD caseworkers identify and refer candidate clients for the program, based on SSD and DOL criteria (under development). The private operator has responsibility to screen and train shuttle drivers. Screening is intended to identify those with felonies, outstanding warrants or DUI tickets. The operator fingerprints candidates, conducts drug and alcohol tests, and helps them obtain a commercial drivers license (CDL).

SSD used a GIS analysis and inventory of available transportation services to identify potential transportation service areas. Potential markets included social service agencies, public housing authorities, and Head Start. (Although Head Start already operates some transportation, this new program can complement existing service and address some unmet needs.)

The program initially focused on East County: Brentwood, Antioch, Pittsburg, and Oakley. This area has a high concentration of Hispanic welfare clients, and the fewest transit opportunities in Contra Costa County. In addition, many of the county's social service agencies are located in East County. With success, the program will be expanded to West County, which has the highest concentration of welfare clients. Eventually, the program would be expanded to Central County as well.

SSD is setting up a voucher system to cover fares for van passengers. Fares may be subsidized with funds from the participating community agencies and from CalWORKs. An evaluation program, not yet fully designed, may track the following:

- Cost per passengers
- Number of passengers
- Increased employment opportunities (GIS)



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Sponsored by TRANSPAC/TRANSPAN
Funded by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District
and the Contra Costa Transportation Authority

TransPac offers county residents incentives to use transit and ridesharing alternatives.

- Changes in travel time
- Changes in out-of-pocket costs.

The goals of the children's transportation component of this program are to carry at least 85 children (of hardest to serve clients) on the children's shuttle in the first year, and another 85 children. SSD will be able easily to track program use because children will be required to register for the transportation services.

Lessons Learned

Program staff believed that the restrictions of DOL funding, limiting program participation to a narrowly defined group of hardest to serve clients, "tied their hands." They questioned whether creating 10 jobs and transporting 85 children, out of the pool of "hardest to serve clients" was providing enough help for the community.

In retrospect, SSD would have prepared a market analysis earlier in the planning stages ("Know the market in advance."): (1) needs assessment, (2) understand the client base; and (3) identify markets. With this information in advance, SSD could have incorporated more detailed performance specifications in the request for proposal for a van operator.

Case Study:

Good News Garage

The Good News Garage, located in Burlington, Vermont, is a vehicle ownership program created and managed by Lutheran Social Services of New England, Inc. (LSSNE). The Good News Garage refurbishes automobiles donated by individuals from New England, New York, and New Jersey and sells them to eligible Vermont residents for the cost of the repairs. The concept of “transportation equity” for low-income families and individuals is central to the mission of the Good News Garage.

The Good News Garage began operation in July 1996 with a start-up grant of \$35,000 from Wheat Ridge Ministries. The garage was originally located in donated space in the Chittenden County Transportation Authority’s (CCTA) bus maintenance facility, but was moved to a former motorcycle repair facility in downtown Burlington. The program currently has an annual budget of \$415,000 and began to break last year. Funding for the Good News Garage comes from a variety of sources, including LSSNE, grants from private and public agencies, private donations, and revenues from the sale of refurbished cars. Administrative expenses are minimized and the program continues to rely on the help of a number of volunteer staff members. LSSNE provides payroll and other support services. Most of the program budget covers staff salaries, the expenses associated with operating the garage itself and related expenses such as vehicle transport.

Recipients

The Good News Garage’s donated wheels program targets low-income residents of Vermont. When the program started, individuals with a valid driver’s license, a monthly income that did not exceed 225 percent of the federal poverty level, and a need for transportation to work, training, medical care, or child care, were eligible to apply for a vehicle. Because of the growing waiting list for vehicles, however, eligibility is now limited to those with a monthly income that does not exceed 150 percent of the federal poverty level, and applications from individuals with a need for transportation to work are given priority. In the near future, access to public transit service (to the places and at the times that the applicant needs to travel to work or training) will also be considered as applications are

evaluated. The Vermont Department of Social Welfare (DSW) also refers participants in Reach Up, the job-readiness component of Vermont's TANF program, to the Good News Garage. In a satellite program in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom, the Good News Garage provides vehicles for individuals trained and hired through a program funded with a federal Department of Labor (DOL) competitive grant; in that region, the recipients of the Good News Garage vehicles will meet the more stringent DOL requirements for difficult-to-serve clients.



To date, 244 individuals have received cars from the Good News Garage. About 300 individuals are currently on the waiting list, with an average wait of about six months. While the program does not track ethnic or racial background of vehicle recipients, staff believes that program clients probably mirror the ethnic/racial make-up of the Burlington population, of which about 4 percent consists of people of color. Most vehicle recipients are single

white mothers. Over time, the Good News Garage has seen more applicants and recipients in tougher financial circumstances, and a growing number of refugees, particularly from Bosnia.

Vehicle Donation Process

The Good News Garage has no shortage of vehicles, most of which are donated by private individuals. The Good News Garage is a not-for-profit charity, so donors are entitled to receive a tax deduction for the retail value of their donated vehicle, as determined by the donor. The Good News Garage acknowledges receipt of each donation with a letter that can be used to claim the charitable deduction.

Only about half of the vehicles donated to the Good News Garage are worth repairing. Initially, all donated cars were accepted, but now only cars ten years old or less are considered (with some exceptions). Since the Good News Garage is typically responsible for transporting the vehicles to Burlington at an average cost of \$75¹, an initial assessment of the vehicle's condition is made, if possible, before it is accepted. About 5 percent of the vehicles donated to the Good News Garage are older model imported or luxury cars. Since such vehicles would not be economical for recipients to operate and maintain, they are reconditioned and sold to the public at market prices to generate additional revenue for the program.

A mechanic thoroughly evaluates each donated vehicle; the assessment may take several hours to complete. The Good News Garage recently began contracting with several local garages to conduct vehicle assessments, in an

effort to increase the efficiency of scheduling repairs and matching cars to applicants. (Plans are to begin outsourcing repairs, as well.) While the condition of donated cars varies, it takes an average of seven hours to make each vehicle reliable and to pass inspection. To keep repair costs low, no body work is included, and radios or air conditioning systems are not repaired. On average, repairs cost \$773; no mark-up for administration is added. The average length of time between a vehicle's initial assessment and delivery to a recipient is about one month.

The vehicle recipient gets a detailed, itemized repair bill. Since many recipients have never owned a car before, they also receive a packet developed by the Good News Garage's Shop Manager with information about proper operation and maintenance of an automobile, tips about dealing with repair shops, and suggested garages for ongoing maintenance.

In addition to the cost of repairs, vehicle recipients are expected to pay for registration, title, state inspection, sales tax, and insurance. As part of the Reach Up program the DSW can provide up to \$400 per client for assistance with transportation, which may be applied toward Good News Garage vehicle repairs.

Program Feedback

Several vehicle recipients offered the following comments about their experience with the Good News Garage.

- A reliable car, obtained at an affordable price, relieved a great deal of stress from their lives and made it much easier to take children to school or doctor's appointments, attend meetings, or get to work or training.
- All would recommend the Good News Garage without hesitation to a friend who needed transportation.
- Although the CCTA bus system could meet local Burlington travel needs, the service is neither extensive nor frequent enough to make it a useful alternative for traveling outside of Burlington. Without their Good News Garage cars, individuals would not be able to make necessary trips to other cities, including the state capital in Montpelier.
- Participants appreciated the inspection checklist and itemized bill they received with their vehicles. They felt they could trust the Good News Garage in a way they had not been able to trust mechanics or garages in the past. This was especially important to female recipients, who may lack the technical knowledge to deal confidently with automotive maintenance professionals, and to all recipients who do not have the

resources to replace or repair items unnecessarily or repeatedly until a problem is fixed.

- One recipient noted the need for a garage that low-income families can trust and expressed a desire to take her car to the Good News Garage for routine maintenance.
- Participants understood that the Good News Garage staff plainly wants to help them solve their transportation problems. That the mission of the program is so clearly communicated to applicants and vehicle recipients, and so sincerely felt by the Good News Garage staff, appears to have much to do with the personality of Director Hal Colston and the tone he sets for the organization.

Participants only had one suggestion for improving the program. They asked to be told where they stood on the waiting list and how long it would take to obtain a vehicle.

Program Planning

The Good News Garage emerged from an LSSNE social ministry outreach effort in New England. LSSNE organized a group of congregants to identify unmet community needs and to develop services and programs to address them. During this process, the assistant director of the Chittenden County Community Action Agency proposed the idea of a community garage that would make safe, reliable cars available to individuals and families in need. The primary goal of the program would be to provide people with basic transportation that they could use to get to work and other important destinations.



The congregants were enthusiastic about the concept, and a smaller group was charged with conducting a feasibility study and finding a location for the garage. The group then proceeded to enlist the support of the Vermont congregations, LSSNE and state and local organizations. A program committee meets monthly to provide guidance and advice. The committee includes members of the original task force that oversaw the planning and implementation of the program, representatives of DSW and the public housing authority, and volunteers. Vehicle recipients were involved initially, but are now represented by agency staff members.

Program Evaluation

In order to measure and evaluate the program's success, a survey questionnaire was distributed to the first group of vehicle recipients in January 1999. Nearly 90 percent of the 26 survey respondents had a gross monthly household income of \$1,500 or less. Nearly 70 percent needed a

Tips for Garage Operation

- Plenty of parking space on-site for storage of donated vehicles and used parts is essential.
- Be selective about the donated vehicles that are accepted. The ideal vehicle still has useful life remaining in it, has been properly maintained prior to donation, does not require substantial reconditioning, and is economical to operate and maintain.
- Individuals who need transportation may not be able to fill out an application or speak to program staff because they cannot communicate in writing or do not have telephones; drop-in centers may provide a means for reaching these potential beneficiaries.
- Ironically, the better the condition and quality of the car, the lower the cost to the recipient, because fewer repairs are needed.
- Many vehicle recipients have never owned a car, so providing information about the cost of properly maintaining a vehicle and tips for operation and maintenance is important.
- Private donations have proven more successful for the Good News Garage than fleet donations. Fleet vehicles tend to be newer than those donated by individuals, but they may not have been as carefully maintained
- The Good News Garage's waiting list is not due to a lack of donated vehicles; reconditioning donated cars and getting them to recipients has been more time-consuming.
- Good publicity in local, regional or national publications or broadcasts can help to inform not only potential vehicle recipients about the program, but also vehicle donors and funding sources. Active outreach is also necessary, however. A public service announcement can be a very effective means of soliciting vehicle donations.

vehicle to get a job, keep a job, or find a better-paying job, and 46 percent were single parents who needed a vehicle to transport children (multiple responses were allowed). When asked about the single most important benefit that they gained from having their Good News Garage car, over 63 percent identified access to a job or training. Other benefits included increased income and better access to medical care, child care, affordable housing, and economical shopping opportunities. The survey will be distributed to new recipients every six months, and the results accumulated.

Program Lessons Learned

Staff offered the following observations, which may apply to a variety of welfare-related transportation programs.

- The assistance of volunteers, both during start-up and ongoing operation of the program, is invaluable.
- Starting a new program or non-profit venture is a slow process with many logistical problems. Take the time to do formal planning. Start on a small scale and quietly, so that any issues that are likely to cause resistance to the program are not highlighted from the beginning. Give local support a chance to build.
- Collaboration among public agencies, the state legislature, and faith-based, community and non-profit organizations in Vermont was a major factor in the implementation of the Good News Garage and continues to be important to the program's growth. Gaining public support and funding has enabled the program to hire a critical mass of staff, which in turn generated and more opportunities for successful outcomes.
- Choose the right people to staff the program.
- The faith-based origin of the Good News Garage was important because of LSSNE's emphasis on developing and supporting programs to help people live meaningful lives, and the access to critical start-up funding, donated goods and services for start-up and a pool of volunteers.
- The program director's personal faith in the program's concept; his dedication to its creation, and his clear communication of its mission to program staff, vehicle recipients, agency partners and funding sources have been major factors in the success of the program.
- The simpler and more understandable the program is, the easier it is to implement and the more successful it will be.

- The results of a formal program evaluation process that measures success and tracks outcomes is very useful when approaching potential funding sources for support.

Notes

- ¹ Donors sometimes transport vehicles themselves or make a tax-deductible contribution to help defray towing costs, but the Good News Garage usually pays a volunteer's one-way travel expenses by bus or train, or pays a private transport company \$1.50 per loaded mile to pick up vehicles from around New England and bring them to Burlington.

Case Study:

Lower San Antonio Transportation Support Project

The East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC), created in 1975, works with community based groups, nonprofit organizations, churches, schools, and merchant associations in Oakland, California, and neighboring communities. In 1998 EBALDC convened the Lower San Antonio Welfare to Work Partnership, a collaborative of community-based organizations, interfaith organizations, and public agencies working to develop a welfare to work plan for this Oakland neighborhood. Lower San Antonio, which has a large concentration of Asian and Mexican immigrants, has one of the highest levels of unemployment in the area.

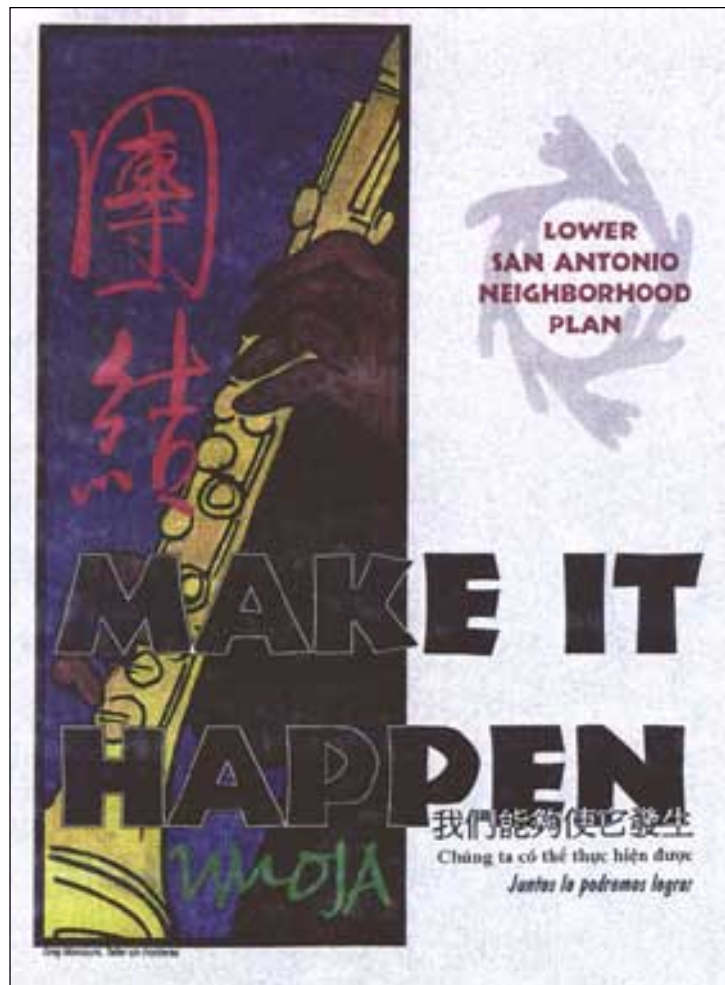
Program Description

As part of the initial needs assessment for the welfare to work plan, EBALDC coordinated 16 focus groups in and around the Lower San Antonio neighborhood. Focus groups were designed to identify both the job interests of TANF recipients and the barriers to employment that they encountered. Focus groups were held in seven languages: Cambodian, Chinese, English, Low Lao, Mien, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

EBALDC selected twelve community-based organizations to host the focus groups. EBALDC provided these organizations with technical assistance and the following research tools:

- Screener instrument to ensure that focus group participants were representative of the neighborhood population.
- Survey instrument to collect information about each participant's job interests, barriers to employment, and work experience.
- Focus group discussion outline to gather qualitative information about job interests and barriers to employment.

The focus groups consisted of 6-8 individuals who lived in the Lower San Antonio community and who had received TANF benefits for more than two



The Lower San Antonio Neighborhood Plan identified strategies for revitalizing this multicultural Oakland community.

years. The community organizations were responsible for recruiting and screening participants to ensure that they met the criteria, using the brief questionnaire provided by EBALDC. Each community organization provided a bilingual meeting facilitator and recorder, meeting space, and refreshments for participants. EBALDC provided training for meeting facilitators and recorders. The host organization was expected to prepare a set of English-language meeting notes within a week of each focus group. Each host organization received a stipend of \$900 for its efforts; every focus group participant received \$30 for his or her time.

Program Findings

Focus group participants identified three major barriers to employment: language, child care, and transportation. About half said that transportation kept them from finding a job. Among the transportation issues cited were cost, safety, and routing/scheduling problems, as highlighted below.

- Participants were frustrated with bus and rail schedules – especially lack of service for graveyard and swing shifts – and long travel times. Some focus groups summed it up neatly: “Jobs are too far away.”
- Some focus group participants indicated that commuting costs were too high (although others considered transit affordable).
- About 40 percent of the women in focus groups did not know how to drive or did not have a valid driver’s license.
- Women, in particular, were concerned about safety, especially when travelling at night or early in the morning. Some women recounted prior bad experiences: “One time, I was waiting for a bus for one and a half hour. Another time, I was waiting for the bus with my two small children and I got robbed.”

Transportation Support Program

Based on these focus group findings, EBALDC developed the Lower San Antonio Transportation Support Project.

Working in collaboration with RIDES for Bay Area Commuters, EBALDC is providing transportation support to five community-based organizations. Each organization designated a transportation counselor to provide trip planning services for CalWORKs clients.

RIDES provides training for the counselors, administers incentives for clients to use transit or ridesharing (e.g., vouchers), and tracks program use. The program also provided funding for computers with Internet access to support trip planning.

Counselors work with clients to identify transportation alternatives to help them move into the work force. Resources available to the counselors, who are bilingual, include area transportation resource guides, transit maps and schedules, fare information, regional telephone travel information, and – in the near future – Internet-based transit trip planning services. Counselors will be available to assist clients with new transportation needs when they change jobs.

What To Expect

The program’s goal is to remove transportation as a barrier to employment and to help community residents become self-sufficient. This program was designed to serve at least 35 clients per year; additional incentives were available to the community organizations for increasing their annual client base to 45.

Women were concerned about their safety – especially when traveling late at night or early in the morning.

EBALDC is conducting a qualitative assessment of the program to track the “rhyme and reason of success.” An intake form and log were developed to track client progress. For example, did clients miss work because of transportation? As part of the evaluation, counselors will track origin-destination pairs that clients cannot make.

Lessons Learned

- For EBALDC, an established nonprofit community development organization, working in transportation was a new experience. For RIDES, the Bay Area’s ridesharing organization, the challenge was learning about welfare-related issues.
- For both organizations, however, one of the major challenges of this project was understanding the complex requirements of available funding sources – the strings attached – and finding creative ways to tap into these resources.
- One of the advantages of working with community-based organizations is their responsiveness to their clients. These organizations are not constrained by bureaucratic requirements and “will not lose clients in the shuffle.” Moreover, members of the target population typically do not speak English, rarely leave their community, and find transit intimidating. But the transportation counselors at community organizations speak the same language as their clients and are sensitive to their cultures, increasing the level of comfort and trust. Clients, in turn, may find it easier to seek transit information from a member of their community than to call the bus company. And because community-based organizations are local, clients don’t have to leave their neighborhood to obtain help and support.
- Community organizations may have more leeway to combine funding sources than public agencies. But because the project took advantage of county and federal funds, planners had to respond to the challenges of coordinating efforts when funding arrived at different – and not always predictable – rates.

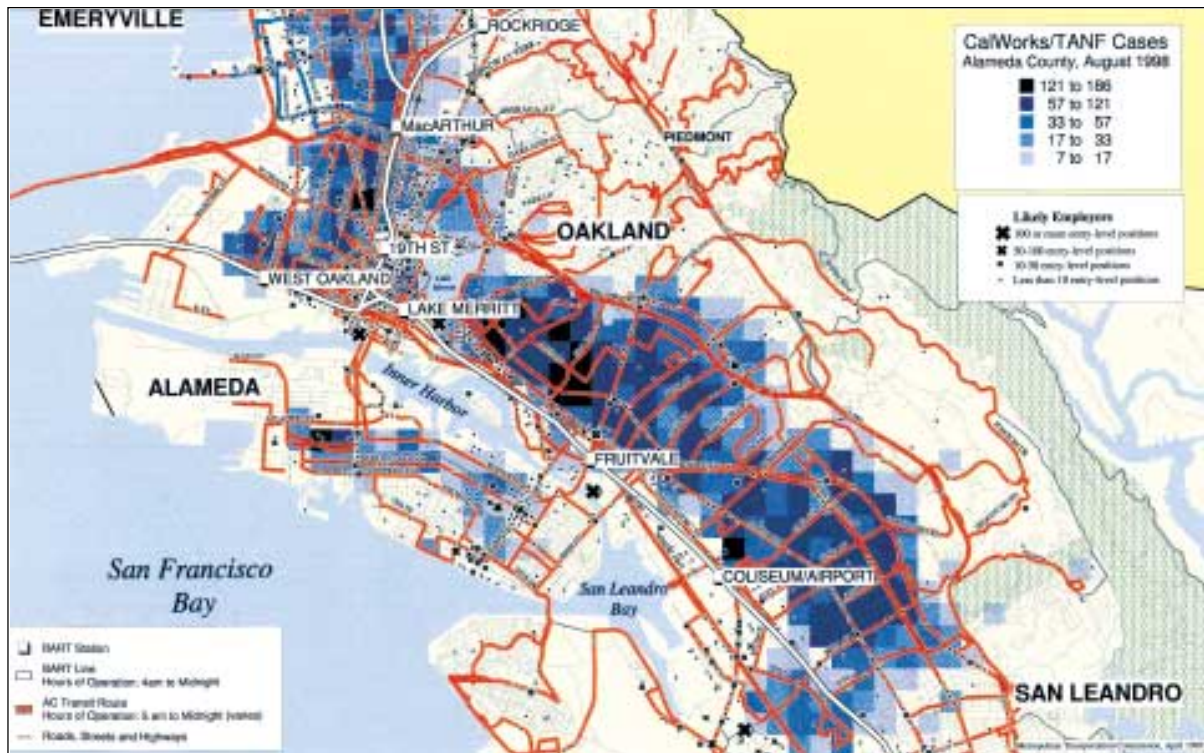
Case Study:

Metropolitan Transportation Commission/ AC Transit

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is the transportation planning, coordinating and financing agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. Created by the state legislature in 1970, MTC functions as both the regional transportation planning agency and as the region's metropolitan planning organization (MPO). As such, it is responsible for the Regional Transportation Plan, a comprehensive blueprint for the development of mass transit, highway, airport, seaport, railroad, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The Commission also screens requests from local agencies for state and federal grants for transportation projects to determine their compatibility with the plan.

MTC has undertaken a number of initiatives to address transportation issues facing participants in the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids program (CalWORKs). MTC has worked with transportation planners, social service agency staff, Private Industry Councils, community-based organizations and other stakeholders to identify transportation-related barriers for the CalWORKs population and to develop practical solutions. MTC projects include the following:

- **Regional Transportation Working Group.** MTC has created a staff-level working group comprising transportation providers and county social service agencies from each of its nine counties. Members of the working group review the status of welfare-to-work transportation planning at the county level, share ideas for local implementation, and identify planning and implementation activities that may be best approached from a multi-county or regional perspective. MTC has disseminated information on state and federal welfare-to-work funding opportunities related to transportation to members of the working group for use in their local planning.
- **Transportation Resource Guides.** MTC is developing Transportation Resource Guides for each of its nine counties. The guides provide detailed information on all available transportation services in each



Welfare recipients, potential employers, and transit services in northern California.

county, including highway, transit, employer and private shuttles, and bicycle programs. The guides are designed to be used by CalWORKs program staff to help program participants make decisions on their transportation options.

- **County-Level CalWORKs Transportation Plans.** MTC is funding county-based activities to develop transportation plans for CalWORKs programs. The planning process is designed to bring together the key participants involved in implementing welfare reform in each of the counties (e.g., social service agency staff, private industry councils, and job training and education providers) with their counterparts in transportation and with CalWORKs participants to identify potential transportation-related barriers to obtaining and retaining a job and develop workable options to eliminate these barriers.
- **GIS Maps for CalWORKs Planning.** To support county planning activities, MTC is creating GIS-based maps showing the home locations of welfare recipients, potential job sites, licensed child care facilities, subsidized housing sites, job training locations, major medical facilities and transit routes and bus stops in each county. These maps illustrate the extent of transit coverage and highlight service gaps.

- **Regional Transit Trip Planning System.** The Regional Transit Trip Planning System will provide a computer-generated itinerary for reaching any destination served by public transit in the Bay Area based on origin, destination, time of day, and fare. This user-friendly tool will help CalWORKs participants plan public transit trips to jobs and programs and also identify trips where transit is not a viable alternative.

County Transportation Plans

MTC used planning funds to support county-based transportation plans: \$150,000 was budgeted in FY99 and \$200,000 for FY00. As a first step, an advisory committee was established for each county with representation from the following:

- Transportation operators
- Paratransit operators
- Ridesharing coordinators
- CalWORKs program staff
- Child care agencies
- Job developers/trainers
- Private industry councils

The planning effort relied heavily on public involvement and made special efforts to involve CalWORKs clients in the process. In Alameda and San Francisco Counties, for example, MTC held focus groups with CalWORKs clients. Meetings were scheduled during the day and lasted two hours. Clients received \$30 for participating in Alameda County and “good marks” were noted in their CalWORKs files; in San Francisco County they received a supermarket gift certificate and child care was provided during the meeting. According to an MTC planner, “I’m paid to attend these meetings; so should they.” In Santa Clara and Alameda Counties, clients helped identify transportation barriers to employment and participated in brainstorming sessions to find solutions. MTC considered appointing clients to project Advisory Committees, but the required time commitment was too burdensome; instead, community-based organizations represented the client voice on the Advisory Committee. Throughout the process, MTC considered client participation “invaluable.” Clients offered very practical solutions (“They cut to the chase.”), asking for telephones at bus stops and identifying language barriers in gaining access to transportation information.

For each county, MTC prepared GIS maps to illustrate transit services, employment, and welfare transportation needs. To protect client confidentiality, information about the location of CalWORKs clients was aggregated to the street level and mapped by quarter-mile grid. Employment information was screened to eliminate jobs that were not appropriate for CalWORKs clients, most of whom are women; the analysis did not present information about heavy industrial and construction jobs, as well as jobs with no permanent address (e.g., temporary jobs, landscaping).

Not only did the maps support the analysis of transportation needs and service gaps, but it helped gain political support for the project. MTC distributed the maps to various stakeholders in the planning process, which helped build good will and support. In addition, AC Transit, which provides service in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, was able to use GIS maps to build a case to restore 24-hour service on key bus routes.

AC Transit Neighborhood Circulator

The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) serves Western Alameda and Contra Costa Counties in the San Francisco Bay Area. Representatives from the community of North Richmond approached AC Transit to ask for additional service in this low income area near Oakland.

In response to this request, AC Transit worked with the Richmond Jobs Collaborative to design Route 376. The route ran once an hour from 7:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. and provided location circulation with limited route deviation in a residential neighborhood. Connections were provided to the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) rail station and to a major commercial district. Ridership started at about 200 trips per night, and decreased to about 150.

AC Transit received an FTA Access to Jobs grant for \$143,000, allowing the transit agency to increase service to 30-minute headways. AC Transit allocated \$300,000 in operating funds, and county sales tax revenues covered the local match for the federal grant. The federal grant also supports additional route planning and evaluation and marketing efforts.

Challenges

One of the biggest obstacles in the planning process was the lack of information on employment placements for CalWORKs clients. Job developers, including those in the private industry councils and municipalities, proved to be the best source for this information.

One of the biggest challenges was engaging employers in the process. Employers were willing to participate in transportation programs if it benefited

all their employees – not just CalWORKs clients. MTC found that the most receptive employers were those who were already providing benefits like transportation vouchers and transit passes. But frequently, transit agencies encountered a “reality gap” when working with employers on transit alternatives – employers simply did not understand how much it cost to modify existing transit services.

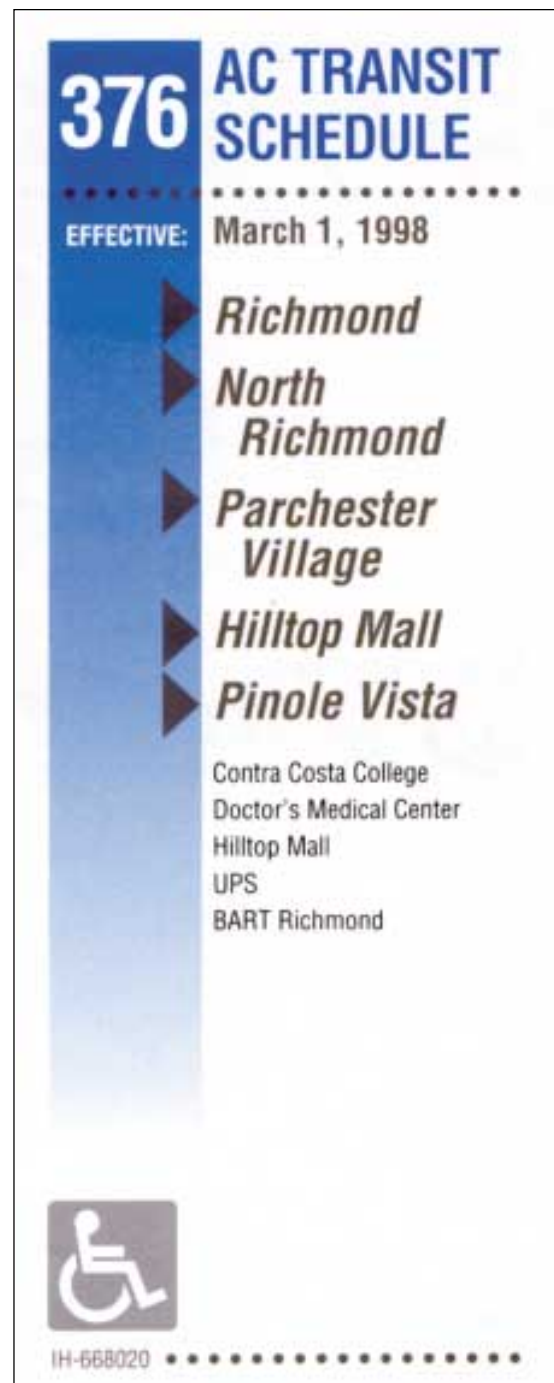
Traditional service from a transit operator is one solution, but not the only one. Participants have to be receptive to other people’s ideas and not summarily dismiss them because they are not fixed route solutions. There has to be flexibility – give and take – on both sides.

Issues/Sustainability

Looking toward the future, planners were debating the advantages of subsidizing individuals versus funding systems improvements. Should MTC advocate policy changes in the CalWORKs legislation that address the difference between a systems and an individual approach? Transportation is one element of this debate, but it extends to other support systems as well, including child care and job training. “Do you focus on providing trackable individual subsidies or open the process up to fund a more enriched service for everyone?”

A major concern among planners was sustainability of the program benefits. What happens when the targeted CalWORKs population moves off welfare. As the “working poor” these individuals still need transportation and other support services, but there are no funding programs to support them.

MTC is working with the counties to help move the plans toward implementation. In Alameda County, transportation planners are working with social service agencies to identify potential funding sources for the recommended strategies. In Contra Costa County, the final plan included commitment letters from key players. In addition, the county social service agencies have hired transportation coordinators, which has helped provided a centralized source of information and establish a mechanism for following through with recommendations.



Lessons Learned

Program planners and staff offered the following advice.

- Agencies learned to build on what they have. No one wants the social service agencies to take the lead on transportation. It has been a benefit for the social service agencies to see the transportation options available – transit, ridesharing, commuter check. MTC has developed resource guides to provide this information.
- The process should err on the side of inclusion. Invite individuals even if they are not expected to participate. People come to the table throughout the process; until the process begins, no one knows who they are. Have clients as intimately involved as possible. Use any mechanism – pay them – to encourage their participation.
- Expect to encounter both a lack of information and misinformation. The job of the group is to ferret out the truth – on how to get information, how to get involved, and demand and need.
- In many urbanized areas, fixed route services have been cut back over the years, especially at off-peak times. In these locales, people may not want innovative services – they just want to get their bus back. Fixed-route service has a permanence that jitneys or shuttles do not have, and riders are looking for something that will be around after their first entry-level job.

Case Study:

New Jersey Statewide County and Community Transportation Plans

The State of New Jersey conducted a year-long planning process to address the transportation needs created by the Work First New Jersey welfare reform initiative. With coordination and direction at the state level, each of the state's 21 counties developed a community-based transportation plan.

The project included four major phases: (1) Develop goals and objectives; (2) Conduct inventory of existing transportation services; (3) Identify transportation needs and service gaps; and (4) Develop service alternatives. At the conclusion of the planning process, the state incorporated selected county-level plans into its application for FTA Access to Jobs funding.

Planning Process

A Project Oversight Group (POG) was convened at the state level. Original representation included New Jersey Department of Transportation, New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ TRANSIT, the statewide transit operator), and New Jersey Department of Human Services. As the project moved forward, the New Jersey Department of Labor and the State Employment & Training Commission joined the committee. The state hired a consultant team to facilitate the planning process and to provide technical assistance to the county steering committees.

Each county set up a local steering committee to oversee the planning activities. Steering committee membership varied among counties, but was intended to include representation from county and local transportation/planning offices, social service agencies, transportation providers, child-care providers, workforce investment board staff, and major employers. Committees met periodically throughout the planning process to set direction and to review technical materials prepared by the consultant.

Two statewide "transportation summit" meetings were convened during the course of the project. Meetings were intended to disseminate information

about the progress of the project and to build county-level support. The first summit served as the project kick-off meeting and was designed to introduce the project to county planners. At this all-day meeting, representatives from the state summarized the overall goals of the project and asked each county to complete, with the assistance of the consultant team, the following four tasks:

- Establish a county steering committee to oversee the planning process; adopt planning goals and objectives; identify barriers to service coordination.
- Prepare an inventory of existing transportation services; identify Work First and transit dependent populations; identify major origins and destinations for these groups.
- Identify transportation service gaps; estimate demand for transportation services.
- Develop transportation service design and service delivery alternatives; prepare final plan for selected alternatives.

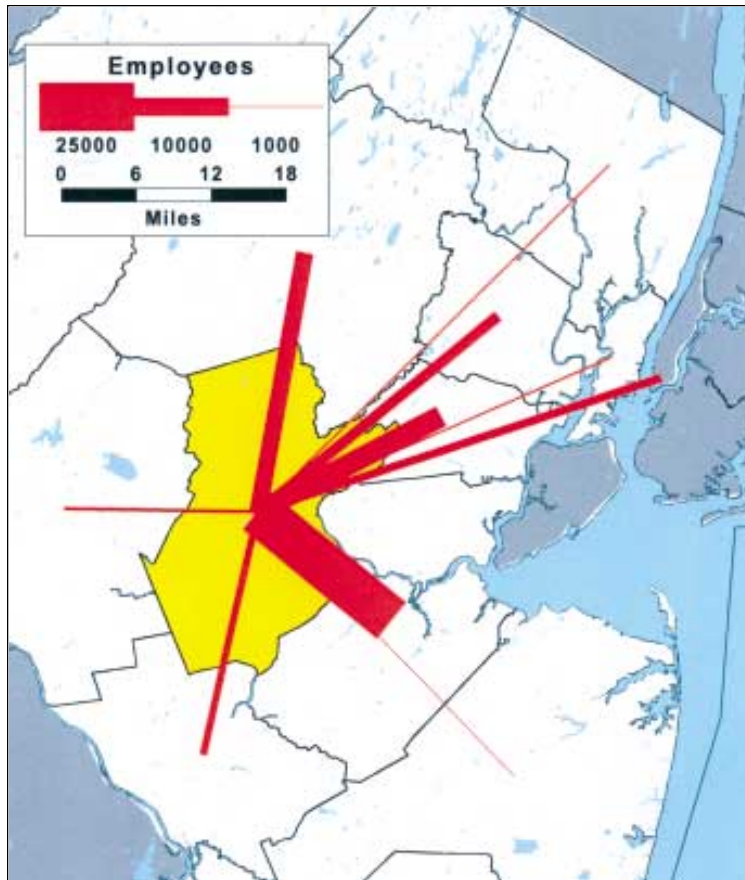
These would form the basis of each county's coordinated transportation plan.

Needs Assessment

As part of the planning process, local steering committees evaluated the mobility needs of Work First New Jersey clients, along with other transit-dependent groups, including seniors, persons with disabilities, and other clients of human service agencies. This project incorporated several strategies for identifying these transportation needs, including extensive use of geographic information systems (GIS) software to map the location of welfare clients and travel destinations, surveys and focus groups with Work First participants, and interviews with transportation stakeholders.

GIS software was used to map locations of welfare clients, major employers, support services, and day care facilities, along with public and private transit routes. This provided a visual and statistical comparison of travel patterns and transit availability that enabled counties to identify transit needs and potential solutions. Of particular value were the computer-generated maps showed differences in service availability by time of day or day of week; this information helped target areas with limited access to jobs with non-traditional shifts.

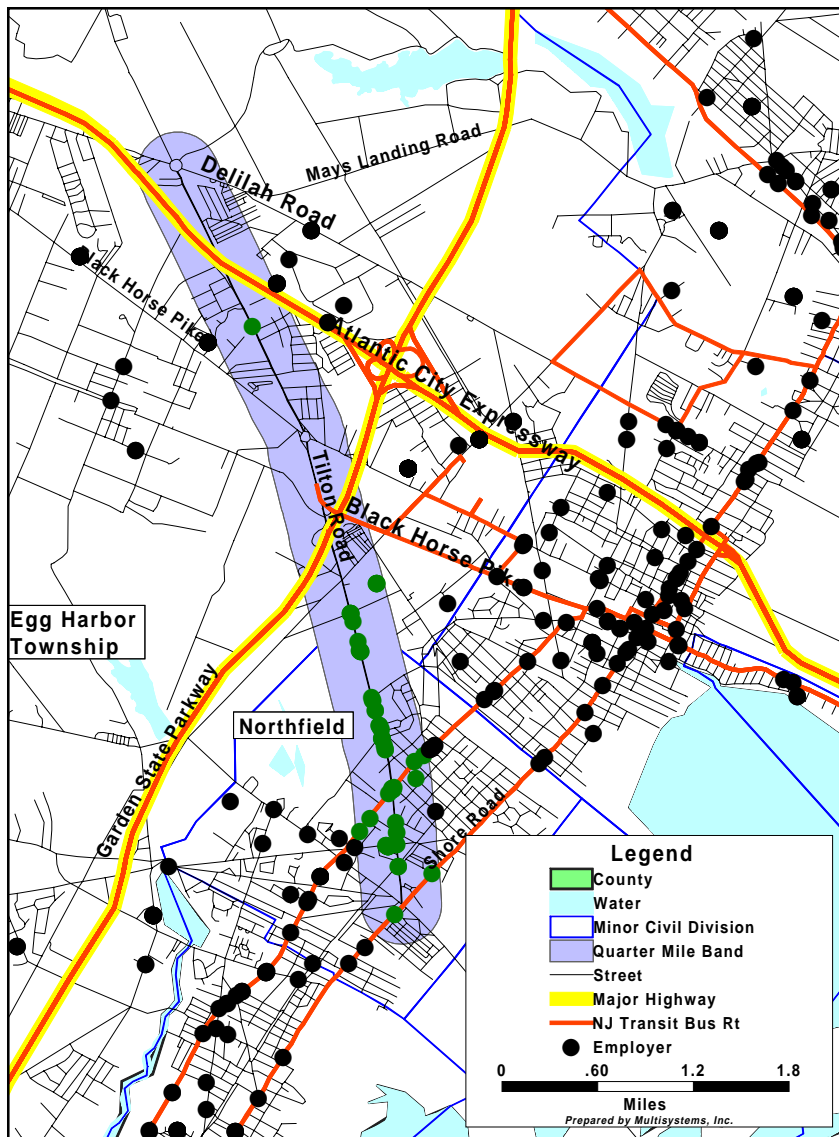
Several counties distributed brief written surveys to Work First clients to assess their transportation needs. In Atlantic County, for example, a survey



GIS analysis highlighted inter-county commuting patterns.

was distributed over a four-week period at two county welfare offices with the following questions:

- Do you have a valid driver's license?
- Do you own a car that you can use to travel to work or program activities?
- If you do not own a car, does someone in your household own a car that you can use to travel to work or program activities?
- If you own a car, is it in good working order?
- If you own a car, is it registered and insured?
- Is there a bus stop or train station within a 5-10 minute walk of your home?
- Will you need transportation to child care for more or all of the days you will be working?



This commercial corridor in Atlantic County was not well-served by transit.

Survey findings were used to help estimate demand for new transit services in each county. Among these individuals in Atlantic County, for example, about one in five had access to a road-worthy vehicle and more than 40 percent said they would or might need child care transportation.

When steering committees compared the availability of existing transit services to the identified mobility needs, a picture of transportation service gaps emerged. Although New Jersey has an extensive network of bus, rail, and paratransit services, especially in the state's urbanized areas, the needs assessment showed service schedules and frequencies did not necessarily accommodate the travel needs of Work First New Jersey participants. Major service gaps included the following:

- Lack of transit services in rural and suburban communities

- Lack of service at night to accommodate third shift work trips
- Lack of weekend service in some communities
- Inadequate service frequency
- Long travel times, especially for regional trips

In addition, existing paratransit or human service agency transportation systems were widely used, but often operating at capacity and unable to meet the growing demand for services. Other concerns included the high costs of transportation and limited information about transportation alternatives.

Service Recommendations

Steering committees developed a wide range of services and programs to respond to the identified service gaps. Typical strategies included the following:

- Modifications to existing bus routes to increase frequency, add destinations, or provide connections to other services
- New services, operating on fixed or flexible routes and schedules, to link county residents with regional transit services or major destinations
- Increased coordination of existing paratransit services, including establishment of transportation brokers
- Expansion of paratransit systems to offer service to new user groups or during additional hours
- Programs to help low-income individuals purchase and operate vehicles
- Employer shuttles
- Increased distribution of public transportation information to passengers, including trip planning services
- Introduce incentives for using transit passes
- Encourage ridesharing

Each county plan summarized the projected demand for each service recommendation, estimated costs, and implementation issues.

Lessons Learned

The support of the Governor was key to the success of the project.

One key factor in the success of the program was the strong support from the Governor. Her support meant that commissioners and senior policy staff members were at the table from the beginning and met regularly throughout the course of the project. At the same time, finding or developing local leadership was critical. Some places already had a strong local leader and vision. But for some, the process created the structure to build leadership at the county level. In addition, the most successful local programs developed a real partnership between transportation and social services.

While the state did not encounter turf issues at the department level, some counties did not welcome state involvement. It took a long time to overcome local resistance to this project in several counties. One incentive for participation was financial. The state established a Transportation Innovation Fund to support selected programs developed through the planning process. Counties were required to complete their local transportation plans in order to apply for those funds. Peer pressure was another incentive. Eventually, even the most reluctant counties participated in the process once it became clear that their colleagues in other counties were on-board.

The state identified the following conditions for success:

- Establish a very specific – and not too lengthy – product-oriented process.
- Establish clear goals.
- Nurture relationships to support the development of leadership.
- Set up parallel management structures at state and local levels (i.e., the state-level POG and county-level Steering Committees had representation from the same types of agencies and organizations).

Finally, welfare reform was a very visible issue with a diverse constituency and the timing was right to support this planning initiative.

Case Study:

Pinellas County Transportation Disadvantaged Program

Pinellas County is a narrow peninsula located on Florida's west coast. Tampa Bay borders the County on the east and the Gulf of Mexico on the west. Pinellas is the second smallest county in Florida and the most densely populated; major cities are St. Petersburg and Clearwater. WAGES clients are concentrated in St. Petersburg, along with areas of Seminole, Largo, Clearwater, and Tarpon Springs. Jobs tend to be scattered throughout the county, with concentrations in Clearwater and Oldsmar in the northern part of the County; some residents commute into Hillsborough County/Tampa.

The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) provides extensive route coverage in St. Petersburg, but service outside the city is more limited. Moreover, commercial sites are typically designed with the buildings set back toward the rear of the property with no access for pedestrians traveling from a nearby bus stop or sidewalk. The lack of adequate pedestrian access, such as sidewalks or walkways connecting bus stops to nearby buildings, presents a considerable mobility challenge.

Pinellas County WAGES Transportation Program

In 1996, Florida enacted the Work and Gain Economic Self-sufficiency Act (WAGES). Like many statewide agencies in Florida, WAGES operates in a decentralized fashion and WAGES coalitions are free to develop and implement local plans and programs, subject to the approval of the State Board.

The Pinellas County WAGES Coalition elected to use a one-stop approach for providing welfare-reform services. WAGES clients are referred to one of three WAGES One-Stop Centers located in the county. WAGES case managers are responsible for developing a plan for each client including support services such as transportation and childcare. Case managers are

programmed to have about 75 active clients; however, they have been overloaded with more than 100 clients apiece. As of June 1999, there were 1,200 active WAGES clients in Pinellas County.

During the intake process, case managers interview WAGES beneficiaries to determine their needs. According to one of the One-Stop Center case managers interviewed as part of this case study, about 80 percent of Pinellas County's WAGES recipients have transportation needs,

particularly involving daycare transportation. Many of the problems relate to schedule conflicts between work hours and available transportation. Others have no vehicle available for transportation or have travel patterns that make it difficult to use the bus.



According to all three One-Stop Center directors, the biggest transportation issue relates to coordinating daycare and after school transportation with work trips. In many cases single mothers with several children might have to make two or more drop-offs and pick-ups related to childcare or school before and after work. These

multiple stops make it virtually impossible to use public transportation, particularly in an area as spread out as Pinellas County.

The One-Stop Centers also reported problems with the available transportation services. Some of the issues relate to the spatial mismatch between where people live and where the jobs are. In some cases, a bus might be available to get to work, but does not run late enough to get home from work. In other cases, jobs are available across the Bay in Tampa; however, there is limited transportation available between the two counties. Finally, the Pinellas Suncoast Transportation Authority (PSTA) system focuses around timed transfers, often centered at area shopping malls. While this route structure makes it convenient for shopping trips, the multiple layovers for timed transfers (sometimes two or more on a single run) can add 20 minutes to the route, making bus service a less attractive option for workers and those coordinating multiple trips.

Transportation Disadvantaged Program

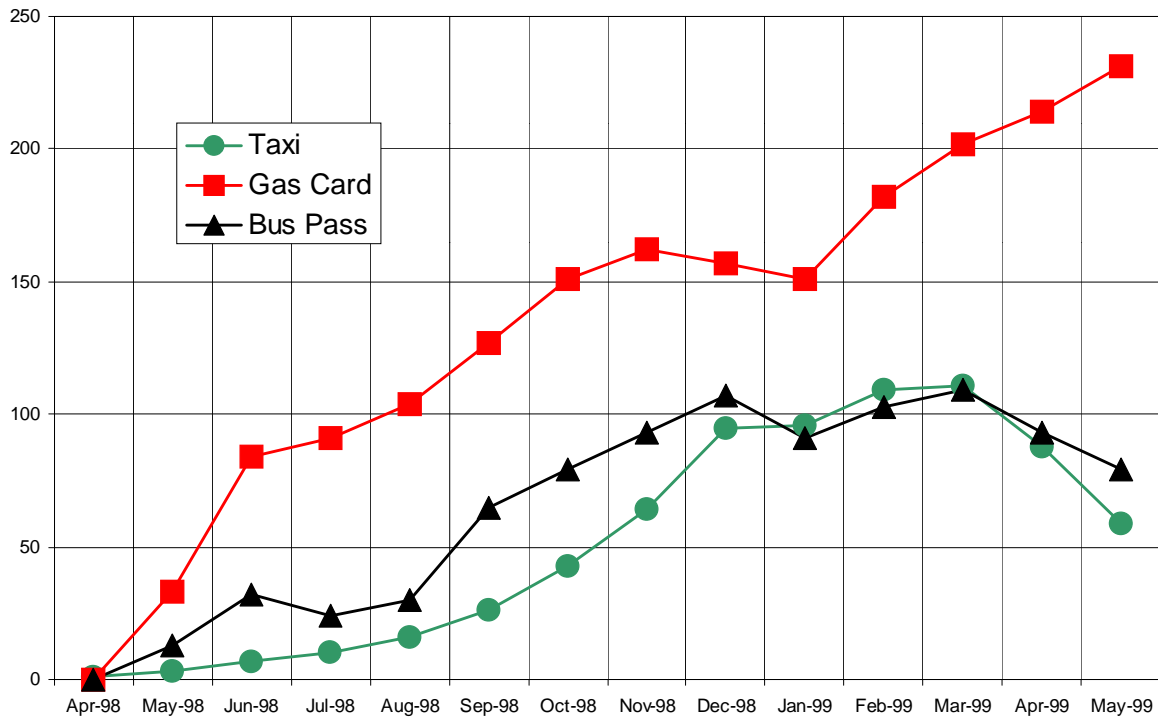
The Pinellas County Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Program was established in 1979.¹ In 1990, the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged designated the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as the "Community Transportation Coordinator" for Pinellas County. In addition to its planning role, the MPO then became responsible for managing the County's TD Program and for coordinating the provision of all TD services in Pinellas County.

In 1992, the MPO contracted with Greater Pinellas Transportation Management Services (GPTMS) to broker transportation services for the TD Program. Under the contract, GPTMS brokers TD transportation services provided by 10 local taxicab companies and other private for-profit and non-profit transportation providers. Later that year, the local Medicaid office started to place its clients through the brokered system as well.

In 1997, the local WAGES Coalition became the second agency, along with Medicaid, to purchase transportation through the GPTMS service brokerage. The Pinellas County WAGES transportation allowance covers the cost of the following transportation services for program participants for up to a year (unless otherwise indicated):

- **PSTA Bus Pass Program.** Free 31-day bus passes are provided through the PSTA Bus Pass Program. The passes are good for unlimited trips on any of more than 40 local fixed routes operated by PSTA. About 100 passes a month are distributed to WAGES clients.
- **Gas Credit Cards.** A \$50 per month gas credit card is provided for eligible WAGES clients who own cars. These gas cards may be used at Shell service stations. About 210 gas cards a month are distributed to WAGES clients.
- **Vanpooling.** Bay Area Commuter Services (BACS), a non-profit organization based in Tampa, has been working to develop vanpooling as an option for WAGES clients. One of the difficulties has been finding qualified drivers who are able to pass the required credit check. Another issue has been whether the vanpools may transport children. There were no active vanpools serving WAGES clients at the time of this case study. During the summer of 1999, three vanpools were started: two for employment trips and one for training trips. Two additional vanpools were planned for training trips.
- **Mileage Reimbursement.** Under this program, owners of vehicles used to transport WAGES clients are reimbursed at the rate of 29 cents per mile for employment-related transportation. Before June 1999, the reimbursement was only 13 cents per mile and few participated. There currently are no participants in this program; however, once the new reimbursement rates are advertised the MPO expects to see individuals take advantage of this option.
- **Ridesharing Allowance.** Ridesharing allowances of \$50 per month are provided to drivers who rideshares (this allowance may be provided in addition to the mileage reimbursement described above). Initially, this

Program Participation



Source: GPTMS

program was only funded for \$15 per month and few persons took advantage of it. As is the case for mileage reimbursement, there currently are no participants in this program; however, once the new reimbursement rates are advertised the MPO expects to see individuals take advantage of this option.

- Taxi Transportation.** Taxi transportation is provided for employment-related trips (including job interviews and day care and after-school transportation). At the time of the site visit, taxi service was being granted for up to 30 days. After 30 days, additional trips may be authorized on a case-by-case basis. During the summer of 1999, the Pinellas County TD Program negotiated an agreement with the Hillsborough County Community Transportation Coordinator to allow Hillsborough taxicabs to be reimbursed for returning Pinellas County's WAGES clients home from work. WAGES clients currently make about 500 taxi trips per month.
- Charity Cars.** From August 1998 until June 1999, 55 Charity Cars² were provided to WAGES participants who needed an auto. Fifty-three are still on the road (one was returned and one broke down and

was not repaired). The vehicles were particularly useful for persons working second shifts who needed transportation at night. Although the program was well received in Pinellas County, the Charity Cars contract ended in June 1999 and this option was withdrawn from the list of available transportation services included under the WAGES program. Charity Cars is no longer participating as a WAGES contractor anywhere in Florida. Since Charity Cars ceased operating in Pinellas County, the TD Program has been exploring ways to develop a new vehicle voucher program and hopes to implement a similar program in the near future.

- **New Service: Tri-County Initiative.** One of the fastest growing employment hubs in the Tampa Bay region is the Oldsmar area, located in northeastern Pinellas County. Including the incorporated City of Oldsmar and the area extending two miles north and one mile east of it, are approximately 1,200 companies and 7,500 employees. The area includes the Tri-County Business Park where the largest concentration of employers is located. In response to the area's need for workers, in June 1999, the MPO launched a Tri-County Initiative to establish express van and bus services to Oldsmar from lower income urban centers in Pasco, Pinellas and Hillsborough counties. The service, which began in November 1999, will transport newly trained clients of the region's WAGES programs from these areas to job sites within the Oldsmar area. The Tri-County Initiative is being funded by grant funds drawn from a state appropriation intended to support welfare-to-work initiatives such as this one.

Program Planning

In Florida, the stated goal of the WAGES program is to promote "self-sufficiency." That goal has served as a cornerstone for the development of the WAGES transportation program in Pinellas County. In 1999, the local WAGES Coalition received \$6.5 million through the state for the provision of WAGES-related services. About \$400,000 was earmarked for transportation.

The Pinellas WAGES Transportation Program results from the combined efforts of a number of people and agencies working together to plan and implement a diversified strategy of providing transportation resources to WAGES clients. The group included representatives from the MPO's TD Transportation Program, GPTMS, the WAGES coalition, Lockheed-Martin (which provides case management), and others. The Pinellas Program closely follows common transportation planning models that:

- Identify goals (to promote self-sufficiency)

- Establish the transportation needs (for a variety of transportation programs)
- Develop programs to meet those needs (through cooperation and flexibility)

The Pinellas WAGES coalition selected the MPO's TD Transportation Program for several reasons. First, the TD Transportation Program had been in existence since 1990, and GPMTS had been the broker since 1992. Both had a proven track record of working with the TD Program and Medicaid. Second, the coalition was looking for a program that was broader than the PSTA bus service, which provides only fixed-route and ADA complementary paratransit service for persons who have disabilities. Finally, the program offered flexibility and a willingness to adjust as the needs became apparent.

The WAGES transportation program continues to evolve in Pinellas County. Programs are modified and added, as needed. For example, when the ridesharing allowance failed to attract WAGES clients, the MPO, in consultation with the other stakeholders, decided to increase the incentive from \$15 per month to \$50 per month in order to pique interest. When Charity Cars dropped out of the program, the MPO began looking for other options and is in the process of developing a vehicle voucher program modeled after Charity Cars.

Program Evaluation

In 1998, the MPO was awarded the "Innovation of the Year Award" from the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged for its work with the local WAGES Program.

Although there has been no formal evaluation, on the whole, those interviewed agreed the Pinellas WAGES Transportation Program is very successful. Much of the credit was given to David McDonald of the MPO staff for his ongoing effort to make the program work for the agencies and WAGES clients.

There also is a Transportation Subcommittee of the WAGES Coalition that includes representatives from Lockheed-Martin, Goodwill Industries, BACS, PSTA, and social service agencies. There also is participation by WAGES Program clients representing transportation and childcare issues. The subcommittee will be working with the MPO to further evaluate and monitor program successes and problems.

A few problem areas have already been identified, such as poor taxi driver attitudes; these are being addressed. Some other programs are

underutilized; however, modifications have been made to stimulate interest and participation. The MPO is actively working with BACS to develop vanpool opportunities, both for training and employment transportation. The five areas most in need of attention, according to McDonald, include:

- Need to implement vanpools (in process).
- Need to develop more commuter express routes.
- Need for more employer involvement (e.g., supporting vanpool programs).
- Need to raise incentives for rideshare and mileage allowances (in process).
- Need to replace Charity Cars with a new vehicle voucher program (in process).

Case managers can draw from a variety of strategies to address transportation needs for their clients. This gives them an advantage over programs that rely on a single approach.

Lessons Learned

Providing transportation choices has been a key element in the success for the Pinellas County WAGES Program. Developing and implementing a variety of transportation programs rather than a one- or two-dimensional approach to providing service has proven very effective. According to the WAGES Coalition, case managers have a good set of tools from which to draw on for providing transportation services. Other coalitions that rely on simple solutions – such as gas credits or vehicle fix-up programs – appear to be at a disadvantage because they can only offer one type of strategy, according to a One-Stop Center director.

Another key element in the success of the Pinellas County WAGES Program appears to be the ability of the program to reinvent itself on an as-needed basis. According to everyone interviewed for the case study, the keys to success in Pinellas County center on the cooperation and flexibility exhibited by all of the agencies involved in the process of developing and implementing the transportation program. When a strategy does not work, such as the rideshare allowance, staff works to make improvements. When a service provider drops out of the program, like Charity Cars did, staff develops an equivalent approach to provide a comparable level of service.

Notes

- ¹ Chapter 427, F.S., defines “Transportation Disadvantaged” as those persons who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation. These individuals are dependent upon others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, shopping, social activities, or other life-sustaining activities. Transportation disadvantaged, as defined in Statute, also includes children who are disabled or high-risk or at-risk as defined in Chapter 411.202, F.S.
- ² Charity Cars, based in Florida, was founded to provide fixed-up automobiles to persons who were economically disadvantaged and needed a car. It precedes the WAGES programs. When WAGES began, Charity Cars was under contract to several WAGES coalitions to provide Charity Cars to eligible WAGES clients. According to Charity Cars’ found, David, the experience was an “abysmal failure,” as it was difficult to work within the WAGES program guidelines. Charity Cars is no longer a vendor for the WAGES program, although it continues to provide fixed-up automobiles to persons who are economically disadvantaged.

Case Study:

San Diego Workforce Partnership

The San Diego Workforce Partnership, Inc., was created in 1974 through an official agreement between the City and County of San Diego. Serving as San Diego's regional Private Industry Council, the Partnership provides comprehensive training, placement and career planning for individuals throughout San Diego.

In July 1998, the Partnership collaborated with several local faith-based, community, and state organizations to develop a welfare-to-work program to address child-care and transportation issues, develop employment opportunities, and enhance the community's capacity to support residents who are transitioning from welfare to the workplace. The resulting program received \$5 million from the U.S. Department of Labor Welfare to Work competitive grant program. The 18-month project was initiated in October 1998.

The project targets residents of an impoverished inner city area in southeastern San Diego. Nearly 15,000 residents in the service area receive public assistance, of whom about 5,000 are eligible for the project. About 60 percent of the residents in this diverse community are Hispanic, 23 percent are African American, 11 percent are white, and 5 percent are Asian. The community is also home to a significant percentage of refugees from Central Africa and East Asia. Major employment centers are at least five miles from the targeted neighborhood and are difficult to reach without specialized transportation. Limited near-by job opportunities, a lack of adequate culturally appropriate child-care services, and inadequate transportation services further compound the barriers to employment among targeted program participants.

The San Diego Regional Welfare to Work Transportation Coalition was formed to address these transportation needs. Coalition members include the City and County of San Diego, the American Red Cross, regional transportation planners and operators, San Diego Department of Health and Human Services, San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and the San Diego Workforce Partnership, Inc. The Coalition developed a transportation network to support the Work First Community Resource

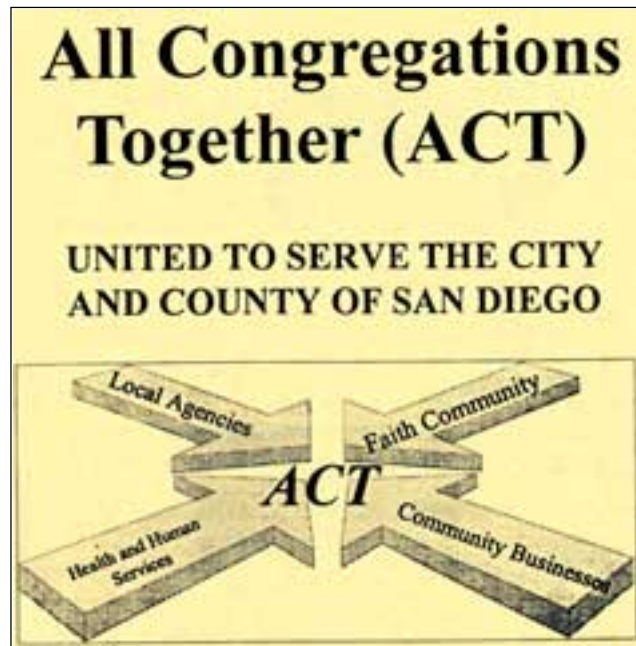
Center, using the resources of two experienced transportation providers: San Diego/Imperial Chapter of the American Red Cross and All Congregations Together (ACT).

The San Diego/Imperial Chapter of the **American Red Cross** has provided transportation for more than 60 years and driver training for the past 19 years.

As the Coordinated Transportation Services Agency for San Diego (CTSA), the Red Cross maintains a fleet of 80 buses that are owned and operated by regional social services agencies, and uses a computerized scheduling and dispatch system to coordinate the regional paratransit services.

Recognizing the potential powerful role of the faith community, the San Diego Health and Human Services Agency collaborated with local churches to establish **All Congregations Together (ACT)** in 1996. This nonprofit organization was established to develop and implement community projects that promote self-sufficiency. Among its programs, ACT established Community Link (ComLink) to meet the transportation needs of welfare recipients

who are making the transition to the workplace. In the program, member churches lease their vans to ACT during down times to transport recipients and their children to and from childcare, training, and/or employment.



Service Description

The collaborating organizations worked to develop non-traditional transportation services that would build on ACT's existing ComLink service. The member churches were eager to help and learn how their contributions could be best utilized. Research through local census data and maps indicated that fixed route service would be the most efficient and effective way to transport workers from the target community to the region's major employment areas. The Red Cross and other Coalition members designed fixed routes to three major employment centers:

- Factory jobs along the Mexican border
- Ship-building, manufacturing, and service jobs along the Pacific Coast
- Manufacturing, high tech, entry-level corporate and service jobs in the central city

Routes originate at the Community Resource Center at Chollas View, which serves as a transportation hub. The Red Cross uses 20-passenger buses to provide transportation 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Red Cross/CTSA worked with ACT to integrate the existing ComLink transportation services with the new program. ACT transports program participants and their children to and from the hub in 16-passenger church vans. For some, child-care services are available at the Chollas View site; for others the ACT van service transports children to their designated care takers. At the hub, recipients board their respective buses for work. The ACT van feeder service operates from 6:00 a.m. Monday to 10:00 p.m. Saturday. The Red Cross fills in with curb-to-curb or public transit feeder service when the vans are in use for church purposes. Funded as part of the DOL grant, the transportation service is provided at no cost to the recipients until they have successfully maintained unsubsidized employment for six months.



Transition to Public Transportation

To encourage self-sufficiency after the grant funding period, the Red Cross provides monthly seminars at Chollas View covering the region's transportation options, including vanpools and carpools. Session attendees also learn how to access transportation information. Project staff also attend in-service training seminars that focus on accessing transportation information and providing transportation information to project participants.

Project staff will approach the public transit operator about transportation sustainability in the target community after the program ends. It is anticipated that the project ridership will establish on-going demand for public transit service, enabling the operator to view welfare to work transportation as a opportunity for increasing ridership.



Training for Transportation-Related Jobs

In addition to providing transportation services, project staff intend to place 100 recipients in unsubsidized jobs in transportation-related occupations, including delivery, shuttle, and bus drivers. Jobs will be developed at a regional shuttle van operator, the American Red Cross, San Diego Transit, and United Parcel Service (UPS).

The Red Cross is training qualified participants to obtain Commercial Driver licenses (Class B Driver). Both the Red Cross and ACT are providing participants with paid work experience (subsidized by the project) in a shuttle service setting. Participants learn how the driver deals with multiple stops and handling passengers. Participants will also obtain work experience in clerical and community settings to learn how to dispatch and track shuttle runs and schedules. Participants with Class C licenses and good driving records are being trained to drive ACT vans to transport recipients and their children to and from the hub or public transportation routes. ACT will also provide post-employment and job retention services at the Community Resource Center.

Lessons Learned

Although the Community Resource Center will open later than anticipated, transportation service is currently operating as planned. Thus far the project appears to be a success; the following points and lessons learned are offered as advice to others seeking to establish similar programs.

The key component for success is collaboration. The Coalition evolved into a group with a shared mission because of the relationships that developed between the individuals representing the various organizations. According to a Coalition member, “It’s people and relationships, not organizations...”

- In the beginning there was considerable overlap of services among the providers, and numerous turf issues had to be resolved. The partners had to learn to “own” the project and how to cooperate as a group to achieve the intended goals. This process required a lot of team-building exercises. The Workforce Partnership was able to help many of the other organizations to sort out their turf issues, by focusing not only on what each group wanted but also what each group could contribute.
- The learning process is dynamic and ongoing. Not every issue can be anticipated at the start.
- Some partners will play a larger role than others, but ownership is still shared among all participants.
- At the same time, however, it is important to recognize that liability is also shared. Accordingly, it is important to review arrangements and agreements to ascertain liability (such as insurance and leases).

The participation of the churches was a key ingredient for success.

Consistent with their “helping mission,” the churches wanted to participate in welfare reform efforts and also sought to make more efficient use of their vans. They were eager to contribute as well as learn about efficient transportation service delivery.

- When meetings got a little off kilter, “the reverends were able to step in and calm everyone down.” In addition, the churches are willing to accept trainees as potential employees that traditional employers may not accept. In several instances, participants seemed more comfortable with the mentoring style of the churches.
- It can be difficult for secular organizations to work with faith-based groups. The challenge for the church groups was to move beyond “thinking and acting from the heart” to deal with the realities of grant rules and regulations.
- Because many agencies do not want to fund religious groups, some church organizations have attached themselves to a collaborative or formed a nonprofit corporation to create an umbrella organization for community service. For example, ACT is a nonprofit, public benefit organization. The majority of the members of its board of directors are community representatives, rather than religious leaders.

Programs must be tailored to meet the unique needs of each community.

Efforts should be concentrated in an area where everyone wants to participate. It is critical to have a community that really cares about its future and shares a core set of goals. For example, the intent of the Work First project was not to take the participants out of the community, but to build the community's capacity to better serve and redevelop their own community.

- It is important to listen to the community residents and recipients; they have first-hand knowledge of concerns and needs. This project had to be reality-based, taking into account the concerns, fears, and issues of the recipients, recognizing that many individuals were unaccustomed to travelling outside of their own community.
- Early involvement is key; the community must be brought before critical decisions are made.
- Communication with community residents and neighborhood organizations was honest and straightforward. The Workforce Partnership had worked previously to develop trust within the community, making it easier to obtain community buy-in and support.

Build on existing programs and relevant initiatives. Learn how to leverage other funding sources. The project was built on an existing community initiative, Healthy Start Project, which was familiar to the community. It had established collaboration with community organizations and the school system. In addition, the Healthy Start office is located directly across the street from the Chollas View complex.

Sustainability should be the ultimate project goal. It is extremely important to build a lasting infrastructure to continue service delivery beyond the term of the project. It is critical to build capacity within the community for sustainability. For example, Metro United Methodist Urban Ministry will continue project management and solicitation of funding sources. The Childcare Institute has capacity for 36 placements. The income from paid childcare services will serve as program operating revenue. The public transit operator will be approached for continuing support of the fixed route service, and consumers will be educated to identify other transportation options.

Case Study:

Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority

The Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) serves four counties in central South Carolina: Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, and Sumter. The service area is predominantly rural, with the exception of the City of Sumter. The RTA provides fixed route, demand response, subscription, and commuter services; the fixed route system is oriented around the City of Sumter. In addition, the authority has contracted with state and local human service agencies to provide client transportation throughout its four-county area. Finally, implementation of the Family Independent Act (FIA), South Carolina's welfare reform initiative, has allowed the RTA to serve new markets.

In an effort to reduce costs and to serve its markets more efficiently, the RTA introduced a Flex Route system. These routes combine the RTA's traditional door-to-door transportation for eligible agency clients with newly designed fixed-route service for the general public. The fixed route component, which required no additional resources, allows the RTA to serve the work transportation needs of low-income area residents.

Although they are adjacent, Kershaw and Lee counties have different economic and demographic characteristics. Kershaw County's economic makeup closely mirrors state averages, and less than 1 percent of the workforce is participating in the Family Independence welfare reform program. Lee County is far less affluent, however, with higher rates of unemployment, food stamp use, and participation in the state's welfare reform program. Finally, only 18 percent of Lee County's residents work within the county. Thus, not only are the jobs located outside this small county, many of the county's low-income residents may not have the resources to access those jobs.



*The Santee Wateree Regional
Transportation Authority
introduced three flex routes
that combined work trips and
medical transportation*

Service Description

Three routes are currently in operation:

- **Kershaw Connection**, which serves the county's Route 1 corridor and the county seat in Camden
- **Lee County Connection**, which serves the corridor from Lynchburg to the county seat in Bishopville
- **Columbia Connection**, an inter-county route, which provides service three days a week to Bishopville, Camden, and the state capital in Columbia.

This Kershaw Connection began operation in July 1998 after six months of planning and design. The system provides demand response service for clients of human service agencies, including Medicaid transportation, in combination with scheduled service for the general public at designated bus stops. In addition, there is limited curb-to-curb demand response service for the general public with 48-hour advance notice. Agency-funded participants still receive curb-to-curb transportation service, but they now must conform to scheduled transportation times; previously service was available on demand. Human service agency recipients residing outside the Kershaw Connection service zones continue to receive demand response service as they always have. In emergencies or unusual instances, where program participants cannot make the time scheduled arrangements, the system has promised to provide demand response service (the "old fashioned" way); this has taken away the concerns that some agencies and recipients may have. Four round trips operate daily, Monday through Friday, from approximately 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The Kershaw Connection did not require any additional resources. The demand response and Flex Routes are operationally integrated via the scheduling and dispatching system so that drivers and vehicles are intermixed between the two types of service.

Service was expanded to Lee County and to Columbia in 1999. Four weekday round trips were established in Lee County, and three daily round trips serve Columbia on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

Design and Implementation

Santee Wateree RTA began its planning process for flex route services by observing a system in Putnam and Flagler Counties in Florida. Back in South Carolina, they began to discuss potential service with their member counties. After Clarendon County failed to provide needed local support, the RTA initiated discussions with Kershaw County. Discussions with the initial

The Kershaw County Transportation Subcommittee worked with medical service providers to coordinate appointments with scheduled bus arrival times.

county, Clarendon, failed to provide the needed local support, so the system initiated discussions with Kershaw County. The county had already expressed interest in better interagency service and took a strong interest in the flex route approach. In January 1998, the Kershaw County Collaborative, including the County Department of Social Services (DSS), formally requested that their county become a pilot project for the Santee Wateree Flex Route System. An interagency transportation subcommittee was formed to work with the RTA on the detailed service approach.

The RTA used a GIS system to locate the residences of the human service agency recipients using the existing transportation system and found that most were located along the Route 1 corridor.¹ A system was developed that enabled one vehicle on a fixed route schedule to provide both:

- Residence-to-destination agency funded trips, with the terminal destination located in Camden, the county's largest town, on Route 1 near the center of the county
- Time- and location-specific bus stops along the Route 1 artery, consisting of four inbound and four outbound routes terminating at Camden

The Kershaw County Transportation Subcommittee participated fully in this process, working to establish routes and schedules, inform recipients and medical service providers, involve the community, and so forth. The Subcommittee even took on the unusual task of getting medical service providers, and other agencies, in Camden to schedule appointments within 15 minutes after scheduled bus arrival at the nearest stop. This collaborative planning effort facilitated a smooth implementation of the system.

Role of Interagency Transportation Subcommittees

All parties to the Kershaw Connection's development believe that the leadership and direction provided by the Transportation Subcommittee were crucial to the system's development. Further, the Kershaw County DSS Director and the Santee-Wateree planner were instrumental in soliciting Lee County's interest in participating in the system.

Human service agency collaboration has been underway in Kershaw County for several years. This collaborative spirit and process has helped to facilitate the Kershaw Connection planning and implementation process. In 1992, some of the county human service agencies initiated the Kershaw County At-Risk Collaborative as a community coalition to assist children and families to improve

the quality of life. Over time, this effort grew and its interagency activities increased. In February 1996, four county staffers from four agencies participated in a month long Primary Prevention Conference in Columbia; following this, they returned to Kershaw County and applied the skills learned to human service agency planning. One of the first things that they discovered was that lack of transportation was a major barrier to service delivery.

Simultaneously, the Santee-Wateree RTA was interested in developing the Flex Route approach. Joint meetings between the Kershaw human service agencies and Santee-Wateree RTA led to agreements between RTA and the agencies to pursue a Flex Route system to better meet the human service needs of Kershaw County. In this way, the Kershaw Connection was born in January 1998.

The Kershaw Connection was nurtured from the start by a Transportation Subcommittee comprising key officials from the Department of Social Services (DSS), the Board of Disabilities and Special Needs, Vocational Rehabilitation, other human service agencies, and Santee Wateree RTA. This subcommittee met monthly; it was a real working subcommittee with homework assignments that contributed to progress along a time line.

The RTA added fixed route trips using the same system resources that were previously used in this county for demand response agency service only – essentially creating a “free” benefit.

The Director of the Kershaw DSS and the SWRTA Planner met with the Director of Social Services in Lee County to promote the Kershaw Connection and to advise her on developing a flex route for Lee County. Lee County adopted and implemented the human services and community approach suggested; service for the Lee County Connection began in June 1999. At the same time, service began to Columbia, the state capital and a principal destination for medical trips, including a major medical center and the Veterans Administration Hospital .

Operating and Service Characteristics

In the first 10 months of service (August 1998 through May 1999), the Kershaw Connection provided 39,743 agency trips and 3,634 fixed route trips. The fixed route trips were achieved using the same system resources that were previously used in this county for demand response agency service only – essentially a “free” benefit from the Flex Route system. Ridership is expected to increase to 4,500 or 5,000 trips per year. At approximate system costs of \$10 per trip, this is a savings of \$36,340 in the first year to county residents. The second year’s savings promise to be even greater, with anticipated ridership increases.

The RTA has not collected detailed information about its Flex Route riders. Accordingly, it is not known how many of these fixed route trips represent

additional travel by existing clients of human service agencies and how many are new trips taken by the general public. Also, while the overall level of use for welfare-related travel is not known, agency personnel know that two FIA “graduates” now ride the Flex Route for work trips. Future on-board surveys may be needed to identify characteristics of fixed-route riders.

The State’s Constructive Role

The State of South Carolina has undertaken a number of activities that provide support for the local coordination demonstrated between Kershaw human service officials and the SWRTA. In the mid-1990s, the South Carolina Department of Transportation initiated the Interagency Steering Committee on Coordinated Transit. The goals of this Committee were “to enhance transportation services through improved, cost efficient and stable transportation delivery; to promote coordinated transit through the provision of transit services by a public transportation provider or a designated human service agency.” The Steering Committee represents a consortium of state governmental entities and statewide organizations formed through mutual agreement with the purpose of analyzing “critical issues affecting public transportation services and, through cooperative action, seeking to promote and encourage a stable transportation environment.” The Steering Committee meets monthly to share activities and concerns. It provides recommendations to the state Department of Transportation on demonstration coordination projects as well as recommendations on legislative action affecting coordination of transportation resources. The Committee has been instrumental in getting support for coordination demonstrations and in getting legislation to encourage and support coordination.

The state Steering Committee has specifically recognized and supported the Santee Wateree RTA Flex Route project. The Transportation Subcommittee, in December 1996, requested that Kershaw County’s federal program funds be used to develop the Flex Route system – particularly the GIS mapping and other technology to be used – instead of the usual use of these funds for vehicle purchase. The Steering Committee supported this request and the funding change was made.

The South Carolina Department of Social Services has established a Transportation Resource Office which has been instrumental in developing information and policy to support welfare-to-work transportation, statewide transportation coordination, and other transportation issues. Using a National Governors Association grant, this office developed *The State of South Carolina Final Progress Report and Work Plan on Transportation Coordination for Welfare Reform*. Among other items, this document includes a county-by-county directory of qualified transportation providers; forms and

procedures for Family Independence Program transportation service authorization and payment, and a county-by-county presentation of best practices in welfare-to-work transportation (including a discussion of Flex Route service in Kershaw County). The Resource Office director has served on the state Steering Committee and has strongly supported transportation coordination in general and the Flex Route approach in particular.

Vanpooling

The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for Lee County participated in the planning process for the Lee County Connection. He strongly supported this transportation approach, and saw a need for inter-county employment transportation to serve several major employers in adjacent Sumter County. Determining that vanpools would meet some of the transportation needs of his Vocational Rehabilitation clients, the counselor met with Santee Wateree RTA and a major employer. The RTA agreed to furnish the van to support employment trips from Bishopville, in Lee County, to this employer's plant on a demonstration basis, providing that sufficient ridership be developed to support the van (about 12 employees). Vocational Rehabilitation had four of the needed participants; the others would have to come from other employees via bulletin board notices and word of mouth at the industrial plant. Initial results indicate that about 10 persons are now paying to ride the van (\$2 each way to work), so that this vanpool appears to be on the road to self-sufficiency. The next step is to train one of the riders to drive the van in order to reduce transportation costs. Other industrial employers are being identified and asked to participate in vanpools.

Aggressive local leadership helped move the project forward quickly and efficiently.

Lessons Learned

Implementation of the Flex Route system in Kershaw and Lee Counties has shown that, when local conditions favor interagency participation and when all parties participate, system development can be expedited and efficient. In Kershaw, aggressive local leadership spearheaded by the Director of the Department of Social Services and the Director of the Board of Disabilities and Special Needs took actions that seemed to say: "We will do this in the best interest of our clients and our community and we will accept no excuses." The Santee Wateree planner's GIS mapping and technology enabled agency staff to plan the system from the ground up in only six months. (Drawing on the Flex Route experience of the Florida counties further gave the planners feeling that this was feasible and the right thing to do.) So strong were the commitments and interest that the DSS Director helped the RTA to sell the system to adjacent Lee County.

The Flex Route has limited potential for contributing to welfare-to-work

transportation in Kershaw County because there are so few employable Family Independence Program participants (only about 17 in 1998). The potential is higher in Lee County, however, where there are far more participants and a greater incidence of poverty, low income, and dependence on out-of-county jobs. The new Connection to Columbia will provide even more opportunities particularly if and when this connection expands from three to five days per week.

Notes

- ¹ In the summer of 1999, DSS moved its facility to a location near the terminal point of this new transportation service.

Case Study:

Transit Authority of River City

The Transit Authority of River City (TARC), in Louisville, Kentucky, has been involved in numerous efforts to serve low income residents by providing public transportation resources in support of community goals. These efforts preceded the national welfare reform initiative and were tied to local programs to aid families at risk and support economic development. This case study focuses on two specific programs:

- **Nia Travel and Employment Center**, in the West Louisville empowerment zone, which is a one-stop center with employment resources, small businesses, and transit services
- **Nia Night Owl Service**, which provides door-to-door service between 11:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. in the empowerment zone

Both programs build on the concept of coordination among organizations. The Nia Center puts related agencies under one roof, offering “one-stop shopping.” After obtaining a job through Career Resources, for example, an individual can walk across the hall and get information on TARC bus service or apply for the Nia Night Owl.

Service Area

TARC was formed in 1974 and is the primary provider of transit services in the five county Kentuckiana region: Jefferson (including the City of Louisville), Bullitt and Oldham counties in Kentucky and Floyd and Clark counties in Southern Indiana. TARC serves approximately 15 million people a year on 67 routes. Its network includes express and local service to suburban job locations, and special routes in cooperation with United Parcel Service to serve its hub in Louisville and its Metropolitan College Program.

Transportation Barriers to Employment

TARC has committed itself to collaborating with the community to eliminate the lack of transportation as a barrier to accessing job opportunities in the metropolitan area. As is the case in many urban areas, there is a mismatch

You should use the Nia Center . . .

- If you have a business or are preparing to start a business
- If your business has outgrown your garage, basement, or spare room
- If you are in need of some professional business advice
- If you are an employer wanting to identify potential employees
- If you are a job seeker looking for employment
- If you are an Empowerment Zone resident interested in training for a career path
- If you work late and typical bus services do not meet your needs
- If you are dreaming of owning your own home

between workers and employment opportunities. The Louisville metropolitan area has decentralized to the point that traditional transit approaches are limited in their ability to meet all needs. This is extremely evident in most of the outlying portions of the region where service hours on regular routes have been reduced, due to low density resulting in low ridership. These areas were prime candidates for non-traditional approaches to the delivery of transit services such as the Nia Night Owl. In addition, the better paying jobs tend to be on the night shift. Often the shift differential will be enough to enable the person to become self-sufficient, but individuals may not be able to take these jobs because bus schedules do not match work hours.

Nia Travel and Jobs Center

The Nia Travel and Jobs Center is a one stop facility in the West Louisville Empowerment Zone that provides public transportation connections, job training, small business development, and access to capital funding. The word Nia means “purpose” and is one of the seven principles of Kwanzaa. The purpose and mission of the Nia Center is:

- To provide a seamless one-stop environment that builds on the strengths of area residents
- To enhance business growth and development
- To cultivate a marketable workforce
- To improve mobility through increased access to public transportation

The center is open from early morning until 12:30 a.m. Some of the current tenants include small business and employment resource centers, the Louisville Business Resource Center (U.S. Small Business Administration), Service Corps of Retired Executives, TARC, and a local recruitment office for United Parcel Service.

TARC operates a customer service center in the Nia Center, which provides pass and ticket sales, transit routing and service information. The Nia Night Owl service also is managed from this location. The facility includes a small transit center and an interior waiting lounge. Seven fixed routes serve the Nia Center, including two of TARC's most heavily traveled fixed bus routes, two other fixed-routes, two circulator routes, one express route, and Nia Night Owl buses that transport pre-registered passengers directly from their homes to their places of employment. Approximately 20 percent of TARC's ridership uses the routes that serve the Nia Center.

Passengers also can find TARC bus schedules and other informational materials at the customer service center, purchase monthly passes and discount tickets, and obtain identification cards. A TARC Coordinator and Transit Center Specialist are on site and serve as a liaison to other tenant partners and the community, including employers and government agencies serving the surrounding area.

Nia Night Owl Service

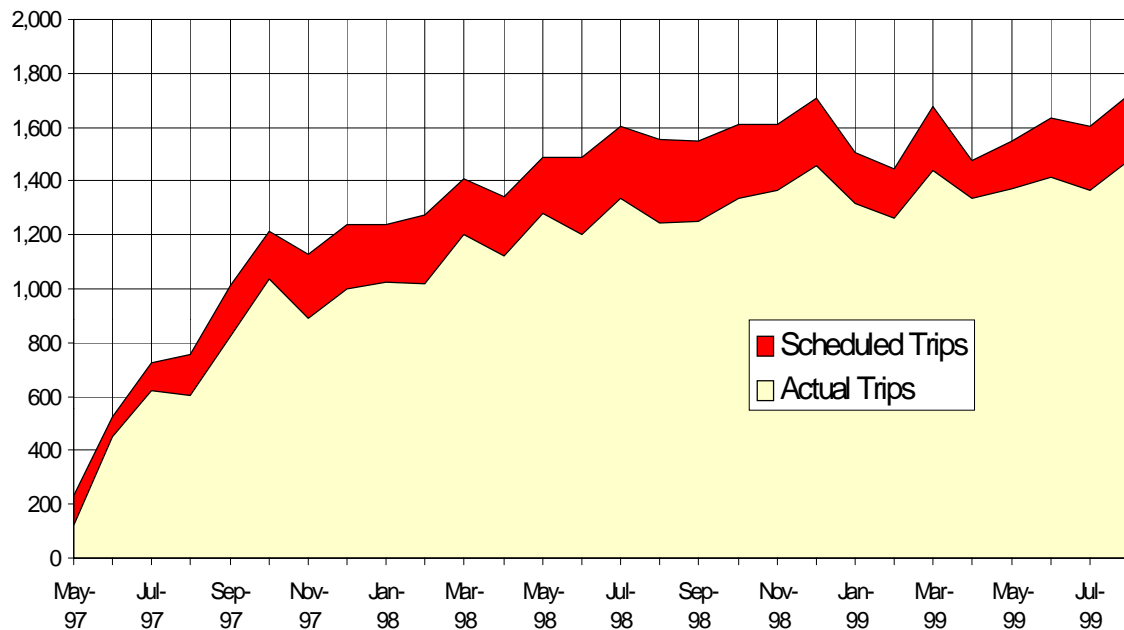
TARC began operating the Nia Night Owl service in May 1997. The Night Owl provides door-to-door service for work trips for people living or working within the boundaries of the empowerment zone in West Louisville who cannot rely on a TARC bus. Service operates seven days a week from 11:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m., when few or no other TARC buses are on the street. The Nia Night Owl is intended for second- and third-shift workers, many of whom can use the bus for only part of their trip. The fare is \$1.50 per trip.



Trips on the Nia Night Owl are available through application. To date, virtually all trips have been accommodated if they met the parameters of the program. The coordinator has the ability to add vehicles to the service when capacity warrants. Once the trip is entered on the schedule, TARC treats it like a standing order. Passengers call the TARC staff at the Nia Center only when their work schedule changes. Otherwise, the trip is operated as scheduled.

Nia Night Owl

Scheduled and Actual Trips, 1997-1999



Source: Transit Authority of River City

Night Owl ridership turns over frequently and has been described as a “fluid” population. Some change their schedules from week to week. Others change job locations and may no longer need the program (e.g., the new location is served by a TARC bus). TARC staff indicates there are about five new riders each week. Between three and four riders drop out of the program each week, primarily because of a change in job or access to an automobile.

The Nia Night Owl does not serve those with jobs that start earlier than the prescribed hours, those who lack convenient home to child care to work connections, or those living outside the boundaries of the Louisville Empowerment Zone. TARC is expanding the program with an FTA Access to Jobs Grant, which was awarded in May 1999. Beginning in September 1999, TARC began accommodating requests for origins and destinations throughout Jefferson County. An expansion of service hours is planned next year.

Drivers bid on the Nia Night Owl like any other route in the TARC system. It has attracted the system’s most senior drivers, and no regular or substitute driver has less than 20 years of experience. The drivers in the program like

the work hours, as well as the fact that the run is an “eight-hour straight.” They enjoy the interaction with the passengers, the satisfaction of knowing how much their services are appreciated, the lack of traffic, and the independence they have operating a demand-responsive service.

When the Night Owl service was planned, TARC needed to extend dispatcher shifts to provide coverage during the additional service hours. It also now keeps the operating division open at all hours. This expansion also was required for TARC service to UPS during these hours. The dispatchers are available to assist drivers and take calls regarding cancellations. The service policy specifies 24-hour advance notice for cancellations, though emergency cancellations will be accepted by midnight prior to service pick-up. Since the schedule is fixed each night, there is little flexibility to respond to riders who finish early or have to stay late. The operating policy in effect is that the driver will wait up to five minutes for a passenger. The vehicle is considered “on-time” using a 15-minute window around the scheduled pick-up time. Staff and riders indicate on-time performance has not been a problem.

Ridership

TARC developed the Nia Night Owl to serve transit dependent individuals who had no alternatives during the overnight period when buses were not running. Today, nearly 100 individuals use Nia Night Owl service nightly to get to and from work. For the twelve months ending August 1998, TARC provided 16,395 trips on the Nia Night Owl. As the figure shows, monthly ridership has increased steadily, though the rate of increase has slowed. This reflects the constant turnover of the ridership base.

Not counting the first month of operation, the passenger productivity levels for the Nia Night Owl have ranged from 1.3 to 2.5 passengers per hour and 0.12 to 0.20 passengers per mile. More recent performance has been around 2 passengers per hour and 0.18 passengers per mile. With the expansion to all of Jefferson County, this was expected to drop somewhat.

Operating Expenses

TARC incurs on-going costs for both its role as a tenant at the Nia Center and its operation of the Nia Night Owl service.

- **Staff for Nia Center.** A total of \$99,180 is incurred per year for the salaries and fringes for two positions.
- **Nia Center Operating Expenses.** TARC pays \$18,972 per year for its share of the operating expenses of the center. This covers services such as utilities, maintenance, and security.

- **Nia Night Owl Operations.** TARC's marginal cost per hour is \$43. In the twelve months ending August 1999, TARC operated 8,643 hours of service on the Nia Night Owl. Thus, it incurred operating expenses of \$371,649.
- **Operational Supervision.** TARC had to create a new night supervisor position to cover Nia Night Owl road operations and UPS contract service, as well as early fixed-route service. The Night Owl is estimated to be approximately 40 percent of these expenses, or \$22,496.

Night Owl expenses total \$394,145, or less than one percent of TARC's annual operating expenses. Operating costs were \$24.04 per actual trip and \$20.65 per scheduled trip. This is slightly higher than TARC's ADA paratransit service, which is contracted out to a private firm. However, TARC chose to operate the Nia Night Owl service in-house because it afforded more control over this experimental program and because it would help send a consistent message to customers.

Although the Nia Night Owl serves a relatively small number of people, it makes a major contribution to the lives of those it serves. The Nia Night Owl enables individuals without transportation options to take jobs during the more lucrative night and swing shifts, in locations throughout the region. Moreover, it provides this critical service while incurring only incremental costs to the transit system.

Project Planning

The Nia Travel and Jobs Center resulted from ten years of community-based planning to address the needs of the Louisville's poorest residents. TARC was one of the many agencies and individuals that participated in the effort to obtain an empowerment zone designation and associated funding in Louisville. Jobs and transportation, supported by training and child care, were identified as critical in this process. Through this grass-roots approach, the City of Louisville identified the need for a single entity to respond to these concerns. The concept of bringing multiple agencies into a single physical location, serving as a one-stop employment and economic development campus within the target community, grew out of this project planning.

Despite its extensive planning and foresight, Louisville's application was not successful in the empowerment zone competition. Locally, a decision was made to continue referring to the empowerment zone, even without formal designation. Soon thereafter, the Federal Transit Administration announced its Livable Communities Initiative (LCI). The City of Louisville and TARC, in particular, were well-positioned to pursue this funding and

Nia Night Owl

Operating Statistics, 1997-1999

Month	Riders	Revenue	Hours	Miles	Pax/Hour	Pax/Mile
May-97	125	\$ 188	225	2,206	0.56	0.06
Jun-97	451	\$ 677	345	3,912	1.31	0.12
Jul-97	621	\$ 932	363	4,643	1.71	0.13
Aug-97	602	\$ 902	433	4,605	1.39	0.13
Sep-97	823	\$ 1,235	519	5,804	1.59	0.14
Oct-97	1,037	\$ 1,556	534	6,349	1.94	0.16
Nov-97	889	\$ 1,334	513	5,630	1.73	0.16
Dec-97	998	\$ 1,497	534	5,377	1.87	0.19
Jan-98	1,025	\$ 1,535	521	5,494	1.97	0.19
Feb-98	1,021	\$ 1,532	484	5,048	2.11	0.20
Mar-98	1,202	\$ 1,803	534	6,112	2.25	0.20
Apr-98	1,125	\$ 1,688	526	6,238	2.14	0.18
May-98	1,279	\$ 1,919	506	6,654	2.53	0.19
Jun-98	1,204	\$ 1,806	526	7,368	2.29	0.16
Jul-98	1,338	\$ 1,961	731	8,056	1.83	0.17
Aug-98	1,245	\$ 1,865	697	8,317	1.79	0.15
Sep-98	1,248	\$ 1,872	681	7,704	1.83	0.16
Oct-98	1,338	\$ 2,007	702	8,200	1.91	0.16
Nov-98	1,365	\$ 2,048	676	7,549	2.02	0.18
Dec-98	1,455	\$ 2,183	718	7,526	2.03	0.19
Jan-99	1,319	\$ 1,961	676	7,964	1.95	0.17
Feb-99	1,265	\$ 1,844	844	7,772	1.50	0.16
Mar-99	1,442	\$ 2,162	723	8,581	1.99	0.17
Apr-99	1,334	\$ 1,983	694	7,670	1.92	0.17
May-99	1,373	\$ 2,031	684	7,701	2.01	0.18
Jun-99	1,414	\$ 2,070	702	8,140	2.01	0.17
Jul-99	1,367	\$ 2,051	788	7,681	1.73	0.18
Aug-99	1,475	\$ 2,213	755	7,966	1.95	0.19

Source: Transit Authority of River City

received a \$3 million grant. This allowed TARC to purchase and restore an building in the heart of West Louisville into the Nia Center. Also as part of the grant, TARC purchased 10 shuttle vehicles to provide neighborhood access to the center and to link the center to outlying employment areas through the Nia Night Owl service.

TARC staff planned the Nia Night Owl service. The need for the service became apparent as part of TARC's participation in community activities, both on-going and specific to the Nia Center. Staff received many requests for service to outlying growth areas, where most of the entry-level jobs were, and for service for later shifts, which paid higher wages. The final catalyst for the service came when staff heard about a rider who could not leave his job when he finished around 3:00 a.m. because there was no bus service. He would sleep at the work site for a few hours until the buses resumed operation, then travel home and continue his sleep. After hearing this, the TARC Executive Director responded, "everyone is entitled to a one-pillow sleep."

████████████████████
"Everyone is entitled to a
one-pillow sleep."
████████████████████

Introducing the Nia Night Owl service was one way for TARC to begin to reinstate late-night service for transit dependent passengers. Like many transit systems, TARC was forced to cut service to meet budget constraints in 1994. The agency followed traditional service planning methodologies and eliminated service on trips and routes with the lowest productivity levels. Many of the cuts were to late night or weekend service. Though these trips carried only a few passengers, they were passengers without transportation alternatives. So while only a relatively small number of individuals was inconvenienced, the impacts on each individual were large. With the Nia Night Owl, access was reintroduced in a customized door-to-door manner, providing a more secure ride for its transit-dependent riders.

TARC is expanding the Nia Night Owl, with funds made available from an FTA Access to Jobs and Reverse Commute Job. Welfare-to-work grant funds received by the local Workforce Investment Board from the U. S. Department of Labor will support this program as well, providing a portion of the local matching funds. The service area was expanded in September 1999 and an expansion of service hours is planned.

Funding Sources

The FTA Livable Communities Initiative grant provided the start-up capital funding for the Nia Center and Nia Night Owl Service. The \$3 million project received \$2.4 million in federal funding, which was used to acquire the building that became the Nia Center. The grant also included \$1.4 million to reconstruct the building and to build the transit center. The grant also provided \$610,000 to purchase ten small vehicles.

TARC has paid for the operating costs for the Nia Night Owl service through its operating budget and federal Congestion Management and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds. TARC's local funding comes from an increase in the local payroll tax of one-fifth of one percent.

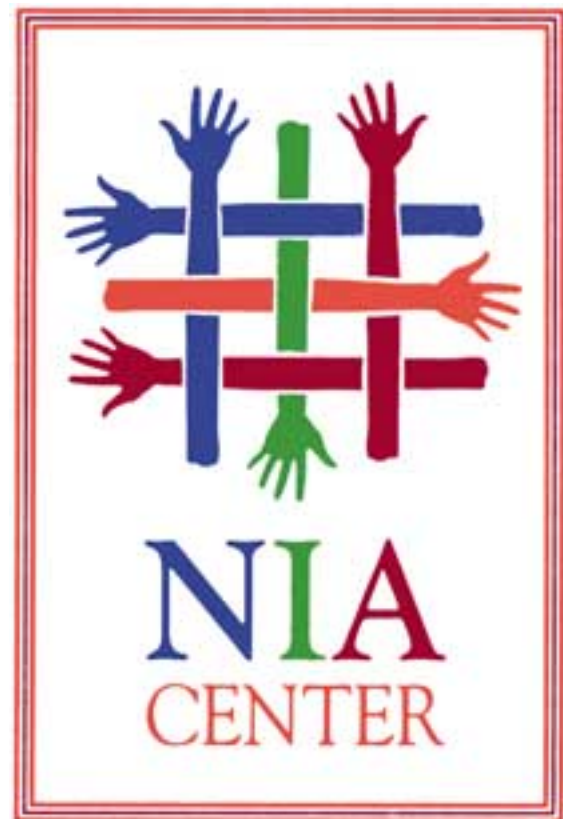
TARC is expanding service using an FTA Access to Jobs Grant. The project totals \$2,065,876, of which the federal funding covers half. Matching funds are being provided from several sources, including \$300,000 from the Workforce Investment Board as part of its grant for infrastructure improvement (not specifically welfare to work) from the U. S. Department of Labor.

Program Evaluation

Though all involved judge the Nia Center and Nia Night Owl service to be successful, there have been no formal evaluations of these programs. Most of the written materials about the programs have been prepared primarily as promotional pieces or for grants seeking additional funds.

The Nia Center provides a wide range of services under one roof. While many welfare-related programs have created one-stop centers, they rarely include transit staff who can provide one-on-one trip planning information. This provides a far higher level of service than installing a schedule rack and expecting potential workers to plan their own itineraries.

Individual tenants are pleased with their role in the center and their individual successes. The tenants would like to see more people use the center and to have more of the space occupied. To this end, there may be a need for further publicity and outreach. The Nia Center was set up as a partnership, with all participants having equal roles. Nia partners attend monthly meetings; TARC's on-site coordinator attends on behalf of the transit authority. In retrospect, some participants believe that a lead organization or individual should have been charged with the overall management and promotion of the Center. Presently, each program is promoted separately to the extent the individual program can. Most advertising is word of mouth. The relationship among the tenants is described as casual and neighborly.



There is no central point of intake at the Nia Center. Instead of a receptionist, there is a directory of tenants. Since the TARC customer service counter and offices are closest to the center of the first floor, TARC staff often intercepts and assists visitors who are unfamiliar with the building.

Prior to expanding the service area in September 1999 to all of Jefferson County, the Nia Night Owl was able to accommodate all trip requests that met the service parameters (within the operating hours with either origin or destination in the empowerment zone). Staff anticipates a need to establish trip by trip eligibility in the future to ensure that the service is carrying only trips that cannot be made on transit.

As noted earlier, the Nia Night Owl service has a profound impact on the lives of those who use it. Jobs in outlying areas on shifts with the highest differentials now are available. For someone living in the empowerment zone, virtually any job in the TARC service area now is a possibility. With the expansion of the program, other City of Louisville and Jefferson County residents will have the same opportunities. The availability of reliable transportation also enhances job retention. Ironically, the greater job retention may lead to fewer Night Owl riders. As riders achieve financial self-sufficiency, many purchase an automobile. Others may move on to better paying jobs in locations or hours that are served by TARC fixed-route buses, again obviating the need for the Night Owl service.

The grass-roots planning approach helped build a sense of ownership among community participants.

TARC has identified both short-term and long-term constraints to the Night Owl operation. In the short term, the authority has limited flexibility to respond to unplanned changes in work schedule (e.g., finishing early or staying later). As a prescheduled standing order, the Night Owl has limited ability to change a pick-up time once the schedule has been established. Over the long term, the agency needs to identify funding sources to sustain the operation. In the early stages, TARC relied on the FTA Livable Communities

Initiatives grant for the capital funds for both the center and the small vehicles. Operating support for the Nia Night Owl has come from CMAQ funds. Expansion of the program is supported with an FTA Access to Jobs grant. The WIB's US DOL Welfare to Work grant is providing some of the matching funds.

The Nia Night Owl service costs TARC less than one percent of its operating budget to provide. The current program demonstrates performance that is typical among demand-responsive services, particularly those serving scattered sites during off-hours. The Night Owl carries about 2 passengers an hour and is operated at TARC's marginal operating cost of \$43 per hour. With the additional costs for operations supervision, the Night Owl costs approximately \$24 for each passenger trip completed.

Lessons Learned

Participants view the programs as successful, primarily because they were conceived by the community for the community. This grass roots style was very appealing and created a sense of ownership by all involved. While the emphasis has been on coordination among the many participating entities, some say that communication was more essential than cooperation. One key to success was getting people at the table who were interested in helping, not just those who were at the table just to be there. At the same time, TARC cites the critical need to implement new programs thoughtfully and to make sure that they are sustainable.

TARC strives to be an active participant in many community activities. Through their extensive networking, the staff members are able to hear and respond to comments regarding the lack of transportation. In some cases, erroneous statements have to be corrected. For example, transportation often is cited as the reason a company has difficulty attracting employees. Sometimes, transportation is available but the jobs may not be attractive in terms of wages, hours, and responsibilities. It is easier for these employers to use transportation as a scapegoat rather than assessing their own characteristics and competitiveness. By being present in the community, TARC has the opportunity to correct and counteract these misconceptions.

Part 3: **P**roject **F**indings

Project **F**indings

The first two parts of this report summarized the challenges of providing welfare-to-work transportation and highlighted the experience of service providers and program stakeholders. This section synthesizes that information, reviewing the data gathered through the literature review and field research to identify indicators of successful enterprises. Chapter 17 discusses aspects of program evaluation and presents cost-benefit analyses for four of the programs profiled through the case studies. Chapter 18 identifies lessons learned from the experience of the stakeholders and service providers contacted throughout this study.

Program Evaluation

This chapter discusses general approaches to evaluating welfare-to-work transportation programs and analyzes the benefits and costs of four case studies presented in previous chapters. This research project was originally intended to evaluate each profiled program in order to identify elements of program success and to extrapolate those findings to other similar programs. Unfortunately, the detailed data to needed support that level of analysis was not available, so this review focuses on a more limited assessment of program activities and outcomes at four sites using available information about program costs and benefits. From these observations, the research team derived some conclusions regarding strategies that could be effective in other communities. The next chapter complements this analysis with a qualitative assessment of the results that welfare-related transportation programs have achieved thus far and what others might learn from their efforts.

An evaluation of welfare-to-work transportation can be a two-stage process. The **primary** goal is to determine the extent to which transportation helps TANF clients obtain and keep jobs. This phase of the evaluation would use information that tracks the success of welfare clients over time. The **secondary** goal is more specific and is intended to determine what particular strategies are most effective in moving individuals from welfare to work. This approach to program evaluation is summarized in the following sections.

Assessing the Role of Transportation

The primary goal of evaluating these programs is to determine the extent to which transportation access helps TANF participants get and keep jobs. An evaluation of the role of transportation access would likely include, at a minimum, the following elements:

- *TANF population without reliable transportation options*
- *Percentage of TANF clients served*
- Overall program costs

- Transportation program costs
- Perceptions of service quality (from clients, employers, and counselors)
- Ease of implementation
- Barriers to implementation
- *Stability of funding sources*
- *Impacts of other program elements on transportation performance*

Information noted by *italics* was almost always unavailable from the programs contacted through this research; other information was sometimes unavailable as well.

Very few states and communities have followed their program participants to determine long-term employment results. Most of those that have done so have collected data at a broad level independent of the transportation services provided. While this information no doubt helps these programs assess overall success, on a practical level, program evaluators cannot isolate the costs and benefits of transportation elements.

In order to assess the role that transportation has played in supporting overall employment goals, programs would have to incorporate participant follow-up into their evaluation efforts. One way to achieve this is the following:

- Inform program participants that they will be contacted as to job status and transportation access on a regular basis after they “graduate” from the welfare-to-work program so they need to keep program apprised of their contact information
- Follow up to determine job status and the contribution of transportation access (positive and/or negative) to that job status, including access to child care

To assess the contribution of transportation to continued employment, the participant would be asked the following:

- Do you have adequate transportation access to work and child care?
- If so, what is the transportation access and how does it support your need for access to work?

- If not, what is your work access requirement and how do you feel it can be met?
- Are transportation alternatives available in the case of emergency or do you have to rely on a single approach for access?

This follow up survey should be very short and can be conducted at low cost, by telephone if that alternative is available to participants. Making sure that former TANF clients keep their contact information up to date will contribute substantially to the success of the survey.

Assessments of Specific Transportation Strategies

The secondary evaluation goal looks at different types of transportation alternatives to identify the specific approaches and strategies that are most effective in providing access to work. Those responsible for directing welfare-to-work projects need to know what approaches or strategies work in other communities and whether they are adaptable to their situation.

To assess particular transportation strategies at a regional or national level, local approaches being pursued across the country need to be defined and grouped into reasonably defined categories. Those that would actually be incorporated into the evaluation would likely be those that are believed to be exemplary or most successful in each of these categories. The category definitions should include not only the types of transportation strategy being applied but also the principal elements of the community approach accompanying the transportation strategy, such as collaboration among agencies (including faith based agencies and local governments) in planning and implementing transportation services. To make these categories more definitive, they would also need to reflect differences in local settings such as community size, job market characteristics, poverty levels, and other geographic/demographic features.

After identifying the transportation approach categories and the apparent exemplary projects in each, the evaluation of the impacts of projects in each category would follow the approach outlined above for the general assessment of the role of transportation. Some of the specific elements to measure should be tailored to the program and may include trends and changes in the following.

- Percentage of jobs located within one-quarter mile of fixed route transit
- Number of bus passes issued

- Passengers per revenue-hour
- Operating costs per passenger
- Number of transit itineraries prepared by caseworkers
- Number of cars delivered to TANF clients
- Average length of job retention
- Number of passengers who require transfers
- Average out-of-pocket transit costs
- Average transit travel time for work trips
- Number of individuals to operate van services

The results of a benefit-cost analysis conducted for four of the profiled case studies are presented in the following section.

Benefit-Cost Analyses

The research team was unable to fully evaluate the costs and benefits (or effectiveness) of the initial welfare-to-work projects because they neither were they **designed** to facilitate evaluation structure, data collection, and analysis. Also, they have not been formally **evaluated** (and may never be). In the absence of detailed information about program results, a general benefit-cost analysis was conducted, using the available program data. While this is not the only possible approach to evaluating program benefits, it allows comparison among programs using limited data.

These benefit-cost analyses require some additional data on benefits. Since the principal benefits measure is **income from employment**, these data would be obtained from participants as part of the follow-up information obtained through a follow-up survey, as described earlier. The benefit obtained from reduced government payments after people find jobs would be obtained from special studies, combined with asking people at follow-up what government benefits they still receive. On the cost side, the total costs of the project (both reimbursed and donated) would be tallied for each project assessed. It is important that all costs be included since otherwise the costs would be “skewed” in favor of the projects with the greatest donations. Finally, based on the above, benefit-cost ratios could be obtained for all projects enabling a ranking of projects within and between groups, enabling an assessment of which achieve the greatest benefits (relative to costs) for each of the transportation approaches/strategies that

have been defined.

The general methodology to be used in estimating benefits and cost is as follows:

- Estimate the number of persons using transportation assistance from the local program to access work or work-related activities, annually.
- Estimate the annual value of that benefit per person.
- Multiply number of persons by benefit per person to obtain total benefit estimate.
- Estimate the total cost of providing this benefit and compare total costs with total benefits achieved.

Using these steps, it is possible to make some at least initial estimates of a program's impacts in relation to its costs.

Approximate Benefit-Cost Estimates

Program costs and benefits were estimated for four welfare-to-work transportation programs: Pinellas County Transportation Disadvantaged Program, Good News Garage, AdVANTage II (Sojourner-Douglass College), and the Nia Night Owl.

Pinellas County Transportation Disadvantaged Program

Four types of transportation services have been used to provide transportation service under this program. Services under each started in April 1998, but it was not until October 1998 that they reached a level close to equilibrium. For October 1998 through May 1999, the number of clients receiving transportation services were:

- **Taxi** – Average 1,254 trips per month for October 1998 - May 1999. Assuming 40 round trips per month equal a full time job; these trips would provide work-related transportation for **31** clients.
- **Gas Credit Cards** – Average of 181 gas cards issued each month (October 1998 - May 1999) to **181** WAGES clients.
- **Bus Passes** – Free 31-day bus passes to average of **94** WAGES clients
- **Charity Cars** – 53 cars provided to **53** WAGES clients since beginning of program.

Pinellas County Transportation Disadvantaged Program
Program Participation , 1998-1999

	Taxi Trips			Gas Cards	Bus Passes
Month	Clients	Trips	No-Shows	Number	Number
Apr-98	1	1	0	0	0
May-98	3	10	19	33	13
Jun-98	7	129	43	84	32
Jul-98	10	262	34	91	24
Aug-98	16	268	34	104	30
Sep-98	26	787	356	127	65
Oct-98	43	1,171	169	151	79
Nov-98	64	1,038	158	162	93
Dec-98	95	1,230	285	157	107
Jan-99	96	1,209	204	151	91
Feb-99	109	1,658	182	182	103
Mar-99	111	1,759	225	202	109
Apr-99	88	1,348	128	214	93
May-99	59	616	52	231	79

Source: GPTMS

Thus, **359 clients** are receiving transportation service under the WAGES Program on an average monthly basis. Since these clients are, by eligibility, welfare-to-work clients, it can realistically be assumed that 100 percent of these clients are eligible for, and using transportation for, welfare to work.

In all of the cases, the average annual earnings of a welfare to work client is estimated at \$10,000 per year. This is calculated as 200 eight-hour work days times \$6.25 per hour (per hour wage based on several surveys of actual earnings of this population). To this an estimate of the reduced benefits from public support (all types) is added, conservatively estimated as \$6,000, for a total benefit of \$16,000 per person per year from the overall WAGES program. Further, the analysis assumes that, for those persons needing transportation service for jobs and job related activities (including child care), 50 percent of this benefit is attributable to the transportation service and the remainder attributable to the rest of the WAGES Program. Thus, the **benefit per client** is estimated to be **\$8,000 per year** (50 percent of \$16,000).

The case study indicates that \$400,000 was earmarked for transportation services in FY 1999. To this amount, an additional \$600,000 was added to cover the costs of case manager services associated with tailoring available transportation resources to the needs of clients. Total costs for the transportation program are estimated at \$1,000,000 per year.

Total benefits were provided for 359 transportation-assisted clients. At \$8,000 in benefits estimated per client, the total benefit is \$2,872,000. The costs of achieving this benefit were conservatively estimated at \$1,000,000. Program benefits exceed costs by \$1,872,000 – for a **benefit to cost ratio of 2.87 to 1.00**.

The Good News Garage

To date, **244 low-income clients** have received donated cars via the Good News Garage Program.



As for St. Petersburg, Florida, it can be estimated that low-income clients obtain jobs earning \$10,000 per year and that reduced government payments for welfare and other programs are \$6,000 per year for a total benefit of \$16,000 per person per year. Further, it may be assumed that some of these persons may have been able to obtain jobs without their cars – say 40 percent. Thus, Good News Garage receives credit for 60 percent of these jobs. The average benefit per client receiving a car is then estimated to be \$16,000 times 60 percent, or **\$9,600 per client per year**. Further, if it is assumed that the average Good News car has a three-year life span, the total benefit per client is \$9,600 per year for each of three years or \$28,800 per client, per car. Total benefits for all 244 clients are estimated as \$28,800 multiplied by 244 clients receiving cars, or **\$7,027,200**.

The costs of administering the garage were \$415,000 in FY 1998. Assuming that the administrative costs were \$300,000 in FY 1997 and \$200,000 in FY 1996, total administrative costs for the three years would total \$915,000.

Costs associated with the cars include the following:

- \$773 per car to repair and place cars in operating condition after donation
- An estimated \$1,250 per year to operate each car for employment related purposes (including linked day care trips), which is derived from an estimate of 5,000 miles driven back and forth to work per year

times \$.25 per mile to operate. (This cost is borne by the driver of the vehicle.)

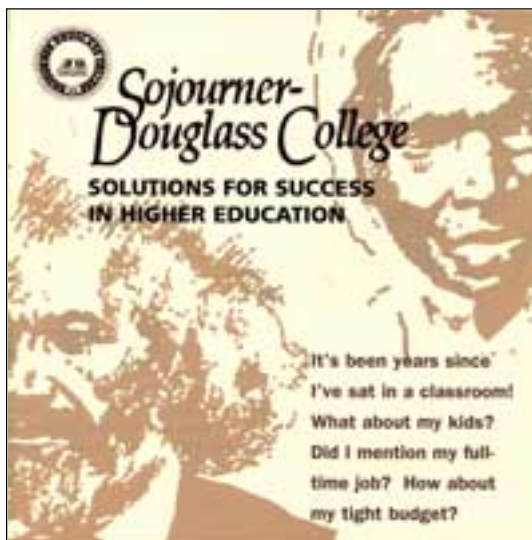
For the assumed three-year life of these vehicles, this cost would total \$3,750 for each vehicle. Since 244 vehicles have been provided to date, the total cost would be \$915,000.

Thus, total costs are estimated to be \$915,000 administrative costs plus \$915,000 vehicle costs, or \$1,830,000.

Total benefits of \$7,027,200 compare favorably with total costs of \$1,830,000, giving a **benefit to cost ratio of 3.84 to 1.00.**

AdVANtage II: Sojourner-Douglass College

For this case study, two categories of benefits were calculated: **transit entrepreneur** benefits, for those individuals trained as entrepreneurs, and **transit user** benefits, for TANF clients using van service to get to and from work.



AdVANtage II operates an average of 240 trips daily. Since these are out-of-city trips at commuting times, we can assume that 90 percent of these trips are work or work related. Dividing by 2 to account for a daily round-trip, we obtain an estimate of 108 low-income persons using this system daily. If we assume that 80 percent are transit-dependent persons who would likely not have jobs without the transit access, we get an estimate of 86 persons who get access to jobs via this system.

Eighteen persons have been trained to be entrepreneurial drivers through this program. If we assume that two-thirds of these would not have jobs without this program, then we get an estimate of 12 persons who owe their jobs to this program. However, since these persons are

trained and invested by the program, the benefit to these individuals would be expected to accrue over several years; we will assume 4 years as the benefit period.

- **Users** – \$16,000 in benefits per person per year for 86 transit-dependent users provides a user's benefit of \$1,376,000.
- **Entrepreneurs** – \$16,000 in benefits per person per year for 12 entrepreneurs for a four-year benefit period equals an entrepreneur's benefit of \$768,000.

- **Total benefit** – \$1,376,000 (users) plus \$768,000 (entrepreneurs) totals \$2,144,000.

The total costs of this program were not clear since the start-up grant of \$650,600 was supplemented by several additional activities for which costs were not available (including MTA technicians serving as advisors, three MTA vans donated to the program, and apparent college support provided). If it is estimated that these additional costs total \$200,000, we obtain \$850,600 as an estimate of the total costs of this program.

Total benefits are estimated to be \$2,144,000 relative to total costs of \$850,000; the **benefit to cost ratio is 2.52 to 1.0**.

Nia Night Owl

Nightly service via the Night Owl reached 1,237 trips by May 1999. This analysis will assume that 100 percent of these trips are for employment. Dividing 1,237 trips by twenty work days per month, yields 62 one-way trips per night. If each individual makes one round trip, 31 persons use this service to access employment nightly.



Using the same assumptions as the benefit calculations described earlier, each passenger is assumed to generate \$16,000 in benefits per year. With 31 system users, total benefits are \$480,000. This is a conservative estimate, since some passengers use available transit services for half of their work trip and rely on the Night Owl for the segment of their shift that falls outside regular bus service hours.

Estimated annual costs are \$474,392 as detailed below.

- **Staff** – \$99,180
- **Nia Center Rent** – \$18,972
- **Night Owl Operations** – \$300,000
- **Operations/Administration** – \$56,240

Total benefits are estimated to be \$480,000 relative to costs of \$474,392 for a **benefit to cost ratio of 1.01 to 1.00 – a break-even proposition**. If the estimates of individual passengers (rather than trips) is conservative, as suggested above, then the calculated benefits along with the benefit-cost ratio would be higher.

Challenges

There are two major evaluation questions in this project regarding welfare to work projects that coordinate and integrate transportation and social services:

- How effective are such programs in getting people to work and keeping them employed?
- How can the programs examined be adapted to other settings?

The analysis for selected sites suggested that benefit-cost ratios in the range of 2.5 to 1.0 were possible. Furthermore, it was clear from reviewing the case studies that data collection poses a set of challenges for welfare-related transportation programs. Many communities – including most of those profiled in this guidebook – do not collect sufficient data to evaluate their progress. Organizations may choose to target limited staff and funding resources on providing transportation and related services rather than documenting their efforts. In some cases, the information resides in different agencies in different formats, making analysis unwieldy. When programs do collect information, they tend to focus on documenting specific elements of program performance, such as customer participation and service costs. They are less likely to collect data about the employment status of program participants over time, which limits their ability to answer questions about overall benefits of their program.

Nevertheless, the case studies provided many valuable lessons that should assist transportation components of welfare to work programs elsewhere. These lessons are summarized in the next chapter.

Lessons Learned

Communities have responded to the challenges of moving people from welfare to work with a wide range of strategies, from modest bus route extensions to creative collaborations with community-based organizations. Approaches to welfare-related transportation generally reflect the characteristics of TANF participants and the community, the complexity of the transportation barriers encountered, and sometimes the requirements of the funding sources. Many cities already have extensive transit networks; in these locations programs have often focused on transporting individuals from urban neighborhoods to suburban job sites. Rural and suburban programs have faced a different challenge: providing a means for people living in widely dispersed locations to access urban and suburban job centers. Irrespective of operating setting, many programs have also addressed the specialized transportation needs of shift workers and parents with young children.

Because traditional transportation approaches often do not address these needs, communities have developed creative transportation strategies. Innovations, as discussed throughout this report, range from late night subscription shuttles to automobile donation programs to transportation services operated by TANF clients themselves. Although the program details vary substantially, the lessons that have emerged from these programs are quite similar. This chapter summarizes the major findings and themes that have emerged from this research and reflect the current state of the practice.

The challenges of welfare reform extend well beyond transportation.

While this research project by definition examined the role of transportation in moving people from welfare to work, stakeholders emphasized the need to review the problem in a larger societal context. Certainly they saw the importance of creating strong, effective coordination between transportation and social service providers – real working partnerships around consumer needs and shared provider goals and agendas – if they are to successfully solve the complex problem of welfare to work. But they further stressed the importance of understanding the influence of land use and development patterns and the nature of poverty in this county – conditions and dynamics that make a challenging problem even more difficult to solve. Stakeholders

Unless planners see the transportation problem in a holistic and cross-disciplinary way, they will miss essential links.

saw links between poverty and a host of other factors, including race, single-mother families, generational poverty, age, multiple physical and social problems, lack of education, lack of work and life skills, and inadequate cultural and experiential supports. Moreover, as welfare agencies successfully move clients into the workforce, those remaining on welfare become harder to serve. These individuals facing multiple issues are the hardest challenges – those with substance abuse problems, mental health issues, family responsibilities, physical disabilities, and the like. Unless planners see the problem in this holistic and cross-disciplinary way, they will miss essential links and will be less effective in finding solutions for the transportation component.

Welfare clients have complex transportation needs.

Individuals making the transition from welfare to work often have different mobility patterns than those with traditional nine-to-five work trips. TANF recipients tend to live in center cities, while job growth has been in the suburbs. Most do not have cars, although the percentage varies greatly by location, which means they must rely on transit or alternatives to get to work activities. Yet most transit systems were not designed to serve suburban trips and instead are oriented around urban travel or suburb-to-city commuting. Furthermore, many of the entry-level jobs that welfare recipients are likely to obtain require work at night or on weekends, when many transit systems operate minimal service or none at all. Women with young children, who make up the majority of welfare recipients, are especially likely to incorporate one or more stops into their work trip, further straining the capability of transit to address their transportation needs. Also, welfare clients may be unaccustomed to using public transit, particularly if trips have many links that cross transit jurisdictions. TANF recipients may have difficulties accessing and using available information about transit services because of language or literacy limitations. Finally, most TANF participants have very little if any margin for error; they risk losing their jobs if they arrive late at work because of transit delays, day-care problems, or mechanical problems.

Welfare reform has created new roles for transportation and social service providers. From the federal government to the local welfare office, welfare reform has shifted responsibilities and redefined roles. The federal government, which historically defined national welfare policy, has transferred that role to the states. The result is 50 separate welfare programs trying to respond to differing local conditions. Increasingly this new environment has created great demands on all the key players trying to link people with jobs. Social service providers have been called upon to

develop and use new sets of information, to interact with new partners, and to help their clients make what could be a tremendously challenging transition into the workplace. They are also facing the challenges of coordinating all elements of welfare reform: training, social service coordination, job placement, employer recruiting, coordinating transportation to work (and, for many clients child care trips), and financial support. Transportation providers, too, are exploring new roles. Many are testing services designed to serve the new market of welfare clients, including reverse commute options, expanded hours of service, and more flexible services.

Welfare reform has fostered new cooperative relationships and collaborations among organizations. While some of these relationships have been mandated, others have emerged as creative responses to the challenges of welfare reform. These collaborations are frequently a practical necessity. In many areas transportation planners and human service providers might as well speak different languages – if they communicate at all. After all, transportation providers may be well-versed in the intricacies of TEA-21 and its predecessor ISTEA, but social service staffers understand TANF eligibility requirements and mysteries of SDAs. New partnerships are particularly common at the planning stages when representatives from various agencies may meet for the first time to identify transportation needs and funding sources. Oftentimes agency representatives could serve as guides to the regulatory and programmatic elements of their respective fields. Joining forces has enabled social service and transportation programs to translate their agency-specific experience into cooperative efforts.

Of particular note is the participation of private sector organizations, especially nonprofits, community-based organizations and faith-based groups. The “helping” mission of these organizations guided program development and allowed program staff to tap into a ready-made network of volunteers, donations, and supporters. Community-based organizations, like Soujourner-Douglass College or the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, often shared a cultural or linguistic background with their clients, facilitating close connections and understanding.



The new spirit of cooperation associated with welfare reform has spilled over into the funding arena. On the federal level, both DOL and DOT require grant recipients to demonstrate collaborative efforts, and DOT allows localities to use federal funds from non-transportation programs for their local match. Similarly, on a smaller scale, welfare to work programs are assembling funding from a number of public and private sources, including municipalities, foundations, and a combination of state and federal grant programs.

Stakeholders stressed the importance of teamwork and flexibility in building successful partnerships. Program participants need to work together – transportation providers, employers, social service agencies, and clients – to see projects move from concept to implementation.

Unfortunately, much of the time, transportation and social service agencies were perceived as not working in coordination with each other – much less

Disconnects were sometimes noted between levels of government within a given area. States and regions, for example, may have had different interpretations of mandates or roles, different priorities, conflicting schedules, and poor communication.

jointly. Disconnects were also noted between levels of government within a given area – states and regions, for example, may have had different interpretations of mandates or roles, different priorities, conflicting schedules, and poor communication. In some cases turf battles got in the way of meeting client needs. Some stakeholders noted the problems involved with neighboring transit jurisdictions, where one provider cannot or will not pick up riders, even if it makes sense from a service standpoint to do so. Other turf issues involve regulatory agencies who do not want to give up control of service approvals, even though this hampers a provider's ability to be timely and responsive to user needs, particularly for new users. Service modifications lag well behind the schedules and needs

of clients, employers and social service agencies attempting to get people into the work force and meet welfare to work mandates.

Building coordination into the process has the potential to eliminate some of these disconnects. For example, state TANF plans could be modified to require supporting transportation plans. California planners lobbied vigorously for this approach; the result was a requirement for each county to develop a welfare-to-work transportation plan. New Jersey as well required each county to develop a transportation plan to support the needs of welfare recipients and other low-income residents and – perhaps more important – provided the technical assistance to support their efforts. Beyond the purely practical benefits – facilitating data collection and expanding funding opportunities among others – such collaboration encourages creative and holistic approaches to addressing the needs of welfare recipients.

Transportation programs incorporate innovative solutions. Because traditional transportation services do not easily meet the transportation needs of welfare recipients, many communities developed innovative responses to welfare reform. The strategies profiled in this report exemplify the best of these creative approaches. These include the following:

- New broad-based planning efforts
- Programs designed to provide welfare recipients with the skills they need to operate their own transportation services
- New or modified transportation services tailored to serve reverse commuters and late-night shifts
- Service coordination to take advantage of the capacity of existing services
- Ridesharing to provide low-cost flexible transportation
- Automobile donation programs
- Fare subsidies, especially to ease the initial transition from welfare to work
- One-stop centers that concentrate support services, including transportation, in a convenient location
- Child-care transportation to support the needs of working parents
- New sources of information about transportation services



Service providers have moved beyond the traditional transit and human service agencies and include community organizations, houses of worship, and even welfare participants themselves. Despite their diversity, these programs share one common trait: Program planners were “thinking outside the box.”

Automobiles are part of the solution. Not only were new collaborations forged among unlikely partners, but also in many cases the concept of publicly supported transportation services was redefined to include new modes – specifically automobiles. Despite the wide range of transit solutions developed in response to welfare reform, driving to work will always be the preferred mode of choice for some welfare recipients. For those living in areas without transit, for women with child care responsibilities, and for those working late-night or weekend shifts, automobiles can provide the flexibility and access to make the transition to work. In recognition of this fact, some communities have developed automobile-based programs. In addition to the more conventional ridesharing programs found in places like Pinellas County, Florida, automobile ownership programs have been developed to make long-term transportation available to welfare recipients. These programs are especially well-suited to rural areas with few transit alternatives and provide an ideal opportunity for public/private collaboration. Programs can be

administered by nonprofit agencies, and they may accept donated vehicles or labor. As one of the most successful automobile donation programs, the faith-based Good News Garage provides personal mobility to a small but growing group of welfare recipients.

The committed leadership of an individual or organization can help to carry a project from planning to implementation. While steering committees and advisory groups play a critical role in planning welfare-related transportation, a strong leader can motivate diverse stakeholders and ensure that their differences enrich the planning process. Sometimes an individual has inspired and encouraged program participants to work toward a common goal. The Good News Garage attributes much of its success

A strong leader can motivate diverse stakeholders and ensure that their differences enrich the planning process.

to its director, citing his personal faith and dedication to the program and its mission. And, on a day-to-day basis, some programs found that religious leaders were well positioned to resolve conflicts when meetings ran off course. Committed institutional leadership can also encourage broad-based program participation and at the same time garner political and financial support. In New Jersey, the governor's strong support ensured participation from senior policy staff throughout the course of the project, and similarly in Kershaw County, South Carolina, aggressive local leadership from county agencies helped move the project to implementation and expand its service area to a

neighboring county.

Successful programs maintained ongoing communication among program staff, participants, and stakeholders. Clear communication starts with consensus on program goals and extends throughout planning and implementation. Thanks in part of its director's clear communication of the program mission to all involved, the Good News Garage was able to build support for its innovative approach to welfare-related transportation. Besides building support, clear communication can address misunderstandings and correct misconceptions. AC Transit viewed the planning process as an opportunity to "ferret out the truth" about transportation services, information, and needs. And TARC used its extensive community network to address concerns and comments about work-related transportation as they arose.

Communication with potential participants allows planners to tailor programs to address real-life concerns and challenges. To maximize client participation in the planning process, some programs tailored outreach efforts to the specific needs of their clients. EBALDC, for example, conducted focus groups in multiple languages and MTC made child care available during its meetings; both groups compensated focus group participants for their time. Maintaining on-going communication with

program participants can identify areas of strength and weakness. For example, some of the entrepreneurs capitalized through the AdVANTage program were less than positive about the program's success in contrast to the perceptions of the sponsoring agencies. Feedback from these individuals included frustration with the lack of long-term support; such information can be an important component of program review and evaluation.

Progress has been slower than expected. The myriad challenges of moving individuals from welfare to work, coupled with regulatory requirements, have slowed progress for some programs. For example, the AdVANTage program in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, has been able to capitalize only four entrepreneurs despite an extensive outreach effort. Some program planners have questioned the value of restricting some funding streams to certain narrowly defined participant groups. In particular, programs using Department of Labor Welfare to Work grants have targeted relatively few individuals rather than systems that could serve a larger population.

Communication with program participants allowed planners to tailor solutions to address real-life concerns and challenges.

Many communities have not collected sufficient data to evaluate their progress. Despite the apparent benefits of many of these programs, formal evaluations have been rare. For many service providers, the need to respond to welfare reform mandates and deadlines was so immediate and so high-pressured, they simply did not have the opportunity – or the resources – to develop an evaluation plan. Some organizations chose to target limited staff and funding resources on providing transportation and related services rather than documenting their efforts. In some cases, the information resides in different agencies in different formats, making analysis unwieldy. When programs did collect information, they were more likely to document specific elements of program performance, such as customer participation and service costs. They were less likely to collect data about the employment status of program participants over time, which limits their ability to answer questions about overall benefits of their program. This situation can be expected to change over time, as more programs must meet the data reporting and evaluation requirements of federal funding sources. Nevertheless, data collection and performance evaluation may well remain an after-thought for certain programs.

Successful programs have incorporated strategies to ensure that results can be sustained over time for targeted TANF clients and in some cases the general public. Some programs learned that they have to extend support services to clients beyond the initial project period. The AdVANTage programs in Anne Arundel County and at Sojourner-Douglass College both identified the need for on-going support for entrepreneurs, including

mentoring and financial support. The San Diego Workforce Partnership has worked to build capacity within the community to sustain the program beyond the start-up grant; a faith-based organization will take over program management and some income sources have been identified.

Successful programs have developed the capacity to sustain program results over time.

Some organizations, especially transportation agencies, have built upon existing services and capitalized on available support services. For example, AC Transit complemented an existing bus route with night service; the Santee Wateree Transportation Authority made more efficient use of available medical transportation services by incorporating work trips into existing services. Transit agencies, in particular, may be able to adapt transportation services to serve community transportation needs beyond welfare-to-work. Given

recent changes in the job market – including the growth of suburban employment, service industries, and the “24/7” culture – many transportation strategies designed for welfare recipients can easily serve other commuters as well. Reverse commuting, in particular, reflects changes in land use and economics that affect individuals beyond welfare recipients. Moreover, as welfare recipients become self-sufficient, they lose their eligibility for services targeted to TANF participants and have to rely on transportation alternatives available to the general public. While some may buy automobiles, others will choose transit. This new market (sometimes referred to as the “working poor”) can help support transit programs designed originally to serve welfare-related transportation needs. As ridership grows, transit agencies may be able to integrate these new welfare-related services into their agency operating plans, providing passengers with long-term stability.



Appendices

Resources

Federal Agencies

United States Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families

The Administration for Children and Families administers the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families block grants. This site provides information and statistics about welfare reform and guidance on using TANF funds.

www.acf.dhhs.gov

United States Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration

The Department of Labor funds workforce development activities and administered Welfare to Work formula and competitive grants. The Employment and Training Administration site provides information about federal funding sources and welfare to work program support.

wtw.doleta.gov

United States Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration

The Federal Transit Administration provides funding to U.S. transit systems and oversees the Job Access and Reverse Commute grant program.

www.fta.dot.gov

United States Census Bureau

The Census Bureau is a clearinghouse for U.S. demographic and economic data. Census statistics include population characteristics, poverty indicators, income, employment, and commuting data; statistical files to support GIS analysis are also available.

www.census.gov

Transportation Organizations

American Public Transportation Association

APTA is a membership organization for transit systems and the organizations responsible for planning, designing, constructing, financing and operating them. This site has links to transportation agencies, associations, advocacy groups, and private businesses supporting the transportation industry.

www.apta.com

Community Transportation Association of America

CTAA is an association of organizations and individuals committed to improving mobility. The association offers technical assistance on transportation issues through its National Transit Resource Center and has conducted research on welfare-related transportation.

www.ctaa.org

Welfare and Urban Policy Organizations

American Public Human Services Association

The American Public Human Services Association is a nonprofit, bipartisan organization of individuals and agencies concerned with human services. The organization focuses on welfare, health care reform, and other issues involving families and the elderly. (The organization was previously known as the American Public Welfare Association.)

www.aphsa.org

Welfare Information Network

This site serves as a clearinghouse for information, policy analysis and technical assistance on welfare reform. Resources includes issue papers and links to an extensive network of organizations, current research, and welfare-related information.

www.welfareinfo.org

Welfare to Work Partnership

This national not-for-profit organization was created to encourage and assist businesses hiring individuals from public assistance without displacing current workers. Founded by several major employers, The Partnership supports small, medium and large businesses hiring former welfare recipients.

www.welfaretowork.org

The Urban Institute

The Urban Institute is a nonprofit research organization that focuses on economic and social policy. The Urban Institute has prepared numerous papers and policy briefs about welfare reform that are available on-line through this site.

www.urban.org

Government Organizations

National Governors' Association

NGA is a bipartisan national membership organization for the governors of U.S. states, commonwealths, and territories. The association provides an opportunity for governors to exchange views and experiences; assistance in solving state focused problems; information on state innovations and practices; and a bipartisan forum for Governors to establish, influence, and implement policy on national issues

www.nga.org

National Association of Counties

NACo is a national organization representing county governments. The association acts as a liaison with other levels of government, works to improve public understanding of counties, serves as a national advocate for counties and provides them with resources to help them find innovative methods to meet the challenges they face.

www.naco.org

U.S. Conference of Mayors

The United States Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. Each city is represented in the Conference by its mayor; member mayors contributes to developing national urban policy in economic development, transportation and communications, jobs, education, and workforce development, health and human services, and other issues.

www.mayors.org

Federal Funding

Several federal government departments and agencies sponsor programs that include funding for eligible transportation projects. The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) has identified approximately 90 programs available from over 17 federal agencies. These programs are detailed in CTAA's *Building Mobility Partnerships: Opportunities for Federal Funding* and some are described below.¹

- **U.S. Department of Agriculture**
 - Rural Community Advancement Program
- **U.S. Department of Commerce**
 - Economic Development Grants
- **U.S. Department of Education**
 - Vocational Rehabilitation Grants
 - Independent Living Programs
 - Office of Elementary and Secondary Education*
 - Even Start
- **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**
 - Administration for Children and Families*
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
 - Social Service Research and Demonstrations
 - Refugee Resettlement Programs
 - Community Services Block Grants
 - Head Start
 - Native American Programs
 - Developmental Disabilities Grants
 - Social Services Block Grants

Administration on Aging

- Supportive Services and Senior Centers
- Programs for Native American Elders
- Research, Demonstration, Training and Discretionary Projects for the Elderly

Health Care Financing Administration

- Medicaid
- Health Care Research and Demonstrations

Health Resources and Services Administration

- Consolidated Health Centers
- Healthy Start
- Maternal and Child Health Services Grants
- Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Grants
- Rural Health Services Outreach Grants
- Ryan White CARE Act Grants

- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development**

Office of Community Planning and Development

- Community Development Block Grants
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS

Office of Housing

- Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities
- Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program

Office of Public and Indian Housing

- Public Housing Drug Elimination Program

- **U.S. Department of Labor**

Employment and Training Administration

- Senior Community Service Employment
- Workforce Investment Act Programs

- **U.S. Department of Transportation**

Federal Highway Administration

- Highway Planning and Construction

Federal Transit Administration

- Transit Capital Improvement Grants
- Metropolitan Transit Planning Grants
- Transit Capital Grants for Urbanized Areas
- Public Transportation for Non-Urbanized Areas
- Capital Assistance for Elderly and Disabilities Transportation
- Transit Planning and Research
- Rural Transit Assistance Program
- Jobs Access and Reverse Commute Grant Program

- **Corporation for National Service**

- National Senior Service Corps

- **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Veterans Health Administration

- Veterans Hospitalization and Outpatient Care

Notes

- ¹ The report is available free of charge from CTAA's National Transit Resource Center at 1-800-527-8279 or www.ctaa.org. A more detailed description of these programs can be viewed at www.ctaa.org/ct/resource/funding_resources.shtml and a matrix of funding tables can be found in PDF format at www.ctaa.org/ct/resource/funding_tbl.shtml.

Focus Groups

Focus Group Locations and Dates

Detroit, Michigan

Warren Conner Development Coalition
11148 Harper Avenue
Detroit, Michigan 48213
(313) 571-2800

Monday, October 19, 1998

1:00 p.m.

Tuesday, October 20, 1998

9:00 a.m.

Oakland, California

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Joseph P. Bort Metro Center
101 8th Street
Oakland, California 94607
(510) 464-7700

Tuesday, November 17, 1998

9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Columbia, South Carolina

Richland County Council
2020 Hampton Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29202
(803) 748-4641

Wednesday, December 2, 1998

9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Sample Invitation Letter

Dear Transit Provider Representative/Employer/Agency Representative,

As you may already know from our telephone conversation, Howard/Stein-Hudson (HSH) is working in conjunction with the Transit Cooperative Research Program to research and identify transportation options for welfare to work individuals. This is part of the new national welfare program Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

Our research involves gathering information concerning transportation issues, through focus groups in different areas around the United States. We are interested in urban as well as suburban and rural transportation issues. This will help both to identify potential case study locations and to develop the evaluation methodology.

Two focus groups will be held at each of the following locations: Oakland, California; Columbia, South Carolina; and Detroit, Michigan. The purpose of the focus groups is to identify and discuss issues associated with access to jobs and to highlight potential solutions. All focus group discussions will be led by an HSH representative and will include a heterogeneous mix of participants drawn from social service agencies, transit providers, employers, private non-profits, and clients.

Two focus groups will be held in (city) at the following location:

(address)

The two focus groups will be held on (dates and times). Each focus group session will last approximately two hours. If you can attend one of these sessions or have any questions or comments, please contact me. Please make every effort to attend and share your insights with us.

Thank you very much.

Focus Group Guide

This focus group guide is excerpted from a memorandum to the Principal Investigator from Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates. The guide addresses four main areas:

- Agenda and timing guide, which presents an overview of the focus groups and will assist the facilitators in conducting them;
- Topic guide for each module of the focus group, outlining the points and types of questions to be posed by the facilitator to guide the discussion and elicit comments and discussion from participants (*The topic guide is shown in parentheses under each major agenda item.*);
- Advice and guidance to agencies that will be assisting project staff in recruiting participants for the focus groups; and
- Special features of the focus groups and how they will be dealt with as the focus groups are planned and conducted.

Agenda and Timing Guide

The focus groups are planned for a duration of three hours maximum; the agenda is scoped for two and a half hours to allow flexibility if discussion extends beyond the time scheduled. (See Table C-1.) While times are shown for each module, the facilitator will have flexibility in adjusting timing to fit the circumstances in each focus group as discussion develops. In particular, we don't want to cut off fruitful discussion which may address issues in more depth than anticipated or which may touch on sub-topics we had not anticipated. In instances where participants do not have as much to say as we anticipated, the facilitators will continue to probe through rephrased and targeted questions to be sure that we get as much comment as possible from them.

Recruiting Participants

Once locations for the focus groups were selected, the team identified the local and regional agencies that recruited participants for the focus groups. We identified a specific individual in each organization who was responsible for the recruitment. To help them, HSH prepared a recruitment memorandum and also talked with them by phone before and during the period of recruitment. The following points were addressed:

- Select and agree on time and location for the focus groups.
- Specific stakeholder types/groups and the number of participants to be recruited within each group.

- Total number of people to be invited to yield 9-12 participants.
- What to tell potential participants about purpose, role, and compensation; follow up correspondence.
- Other advance preparation and troubleshooting advice.

Special Features

Heterogeneous focus groups like these have special needs because of the mix of participants and the sometimes very different knowledge and perspectives they have on the topics under discussion. Having both service providers and welfare clients in the same focus groups compounds this challenge. To deal with this issue, the following modifications were proposed:

- Strongly emphasize the roles of participants in the focus group, and the confidentiality of what is said.
- Do not have providers and their current clients in the same group.
- Consider using first names only.
- Consider omitting videotaping and just use the audiotaping. Ask permission if any recording is done and if anyone objects, don't record. Emphasize that recordings will be used only by project team and destroyed after the focus group report is complete.
- Offer to send all participants a copy of the focus group report on its completion.

The topics in the agenda are arranged so they build on each other through the successive topics. We think this will help to give the discussion more focus, specificity, and concreteness, given the very broad scope of the discussion topics. The structure lends itself to developing a giant matrix on the wall and filling it out over the course of the discussion. We think this visual way of organizing the information and opinions that are generated will help participants chart their way through the discussion and keep on the topics. It also will help us identify gaps and points not discussed, so we can have as complete coverage as possible within a short time. Finally, we think this will help members of the group with different levels of knowledge and different experiences to see and build upon the insights of others.

Focus Group Meeting Agenda

Minutes: **Topic:**

0 - 15 Introduction of participants; purpose of the focus group;
 procedures; review of the agenda

- *Facilitator welcomes participants*
- *Self introductions*
- *Purpose of the focus group and use of results*
- *Roles of members and facilitator; observers*
- *Confidentiality; disposal of tapes and notes*
- *Procedures, breaks, questions*
- *Review of topics and timing*

10 – 20 Role of transportation in supporting access to jobs

10 – 20 Identifying key stakeholders

- *Identify major stakeholder groups and sub-groups within them (transportation providers, social service agencies, non-profits, clients, employers, etc.)*
- *Board on large sheets to expand in following modules*

20 – 50 What are the needs/requirements of stakeholder groups

- *For each stakeholder group, list needs and requirements*
- *Highlight critical/essential needs and requirements*
- *Identify major distinctions/differences between stakeholders*
- *Identify common needs/interests and links across stakeholder groups*

50 – 65 What are the hallmarks of success; what criteria would we
 use to judge effectiveness and usefulness of different
 strategies to support access to jobs

- *What are the hallmarks different stakeholders might use to measure a transportation-jobs program or service successful and effective*
- *Are some of these criteria more important than others*
- *Are there conflicts/contradictions between different measures for different stakeholders*

65 – 95 Obstacles to overcome in meeting stakeholders' needs and requirements

- *For each stakeholder group, list major obstacles that need to be overcome to reach goals and be successful*
- *Identify priorities among obstacles*
- *Identify common obstacles across groups*

95 – 100 “7th Inning Stretch”

- *During the break, the facilitator will confer informally with observers to get suggestions on additional questions, missed points, etc.*
- *At the end of the break, the facilitator will ask the group how things are going and if any changes are needed to process or content of discussion*
- *Agenda and procedures will be changed as needed*
- *Schedule will be extended if needed and with okay of participants*

100 – 115 Examples of strategies and programs that work

- *Brainstorm examples of effective programs/strategies that have been used successfully*
- *Draw on any area, use experience of participants*
- *How have they been used to overcome the kinds of obstacles identified and meet similar needs*
- *What made the particular examples work successfully*
- *What can we learn from these examples for transportation-jobs programs*

115 – 145 Suggested ways to address the specific obstacles and needs from above

- *Facilitator will share examples of some programs being tried in other locations in transportation-jobs programs*
- *What other strategies could we suggest, drawing on examples from our previous brainstorming*
- *Which of the strategies address particular needs and obstacles we've identified (flag)*
- *What needs and/or obstacles have we not yet addressed and what ideas might work for them*
- *Any other ideas*

145 – 150 Closing comments and thanks

- *Recap main points of discussion*
- *Restate next steps and how input will be used*
- *Thank participants*

150 – 190 Optional time available for expanded discussion of any
points on agenda

Case Study Contacts

The following individuals were contacted for the case studies:

AdVANtage Van Service Entrepreneurs Project

Vesta Kimble, Deputy Director
Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services
80 West Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
(410) 269-4603
(410) 974-8566 fax

AdVANtage II: Sojourner-Douglass College

Jamal Mubdi-Bey, Director
Office of Community Outreach
Sojourner-Douglass College
500 North Caroline Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21205
(410) 276-0306 x241
(410) 276-1572 fax
mubdi@host.sdc.edu

Contra Costa County

Bob Patrick
Transportation Projects Coordinator
Contra Costa County Social Services Department
Children's Services
40 Douglas Drive
Martinez, CA 94553-4068
925-313-1702
925-313-1758 fax
rpatrick@ssd.co.contra-costa.ca.us

Contra Costa County

Corinne Dutra-Roberts
Transportation Analyst
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925-609-8853 fax
cdutra-roberts@traks.org

The Good News Garage

Hal Colston
Lutheran Social Services of New England, Inc.
One Main Street
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Glossary

The following glossary defines commonly used transportation and welfare reform terms.

Accessible

An accessible vehicle or facility is one that is fully usable by persons with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs.

Access to Jobs

Access to Jobs is the name given to the current initiatives by the Federal Transit Administration and regional transit agencies nationwide to provide transportation to unemployed and underemployed individuals as part of Welfare-to-Work initiatives by health and human services departments at federal, state and local levels. (See *Welfare-to-Work* as well.)

Advance Request Service

Transportation service that requires individuals to reserve a trip at a specific time, usually 24 hours after the request.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ADA Complementary Paratransit

The ADA is a civil rights law, passed by Congress in 1990, which makes it illegal to discriminate against people with disabilities in employment, services provided by state and local governments, public and private transportation, public accommodations and telecommunications.

Under U.S. Department of Transportation regulations, public entities (or private entities acting on their behalf) who provide fixed-route transit must also provide “ADA Complementary Paratransit” where and when fixed-route transit services are provided to persons who are unable to use or access such service because of their disability. Most ADA complementary paratransit services allow reservations to be placed one to 14 days in advance of the trip date; some allow same-day reservations, but usually on a space-available and/or emergency basis. Most ADA complementary paratransit services provide curb-to-curb service, although some provide door-to-door service. ADA complementary paratransit fares are typically (and must be no more than) twice the fixed-route transit fares.

Under the broader scope of the ADA, public entities that provide services, including transportation services, for residents or more specialized groups (e.g., seniors) must ensure that all persons with disabilities who are eligible for those services receive “equivalent” service. For example, if a municipality has a user-side subsidy taxi program for its senior residents, it must ensure that this service is accessible to its seniors with disabilities, or arrange for some other service that provides equivalent service.

Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)

AFDC is one of several federal welfare programs that were combined into a single new program called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) by the passage of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. Under TANF, funds are distributed to states in a single block grant. (See also *TANF*).

Aid To Families With Dependent Children (AFDC)

Provides cash grants to needy children under the age of 18 whose families cannot meet their basic needs. When AFDC was established in 1935, assistance was meant primarily for single mothers who had been widowed or whose husbands had abandoned them. At that time, it was expected that a mother’s primary responsibility was to work in the home, including raising her children, and the AFDC cash grant allowed a single mother to do just that.

Ambulette Service

Non-emergency medical transportation service provided by wheelchair-accessible vans.

Articulated Bus

A bus usually 55 feet or more in length with two connected passenger compartments that bends at the connecting point when the bus turns a corner.

Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) System

A computer-based vehicle tracking system based on location technology, such as the global positioning system (GPS).

Brokerage

A coordinated transportation system in which one entity (the broker) directly or indirectly arranges for carriers (usually under contract to the broker) to serve trips sponsored by different organizations and/or funding services. Consolidating trips in this fashion and accommodating these trips through one service delivery network often results in enhanced economies of scale and other benefits that reduce the cost of providing service for

each sponsor that chooses to participate in the coordinated system. The broker provides consolidated management of the system, typically by performing such functions as customer/client registration; contracting for the operation of transportation services with public, private for-profit and private non-profit operators; record keeping and accounting; and quality assurance and customer relations. Other broker functions may also include reservations, scheduling, dispatching, the provision or procurement of vehicles and insurance, driver training, the provision of maintenance services and fuel; and even the operation of vehicles. The broker may be housed within a public or private organization, and staffed with in-house employees or a professional brokerage management firm.

Block Grants

A new sorting of public purposes and programs among federal, state, and local governments. Block grants place federal funds, decision-making authority and increased flexibility in the hands of state and local officials and hence reduce federal regulation and oversight.

Capital Assistance

Financial assistance for transit capital expenses (not operating costs); such aid may originate with federal, local or state governments. (See also *Section 5311*.)

Capital Expenses

Costs of long-term assets of a public transit system such as property, buildings, vehicles, computer hardware/software, etc.

Central Business District (CBD)

The downtown retail trade and commercial areas of a city or an area of very high land valuation, traffic flow, and concentration of retail business offices, theaters, hotels and services.

Circulator Service

A public transit service typically confined to a specific locale, such as a downtown area or suburban neighborhood, and which provides intra-neighborhood service, feeder service to inter-area public transit service, and possibly connections to other local circulators. May be fixed-route transit, flexible transit, or paratransit.

Circumferential Network

A system of transit routes designed to transport passengers between suburban locations without requiring travel through the central city downtown area. Also called *Crosstown* service.

Community Jobs Program

Community jobs is generally intended to describe a program in which participants do work that benefits their community, and as such, positions are likely to be limited to public or nonprofit entities. The use of the term “job” in the name is intended to convey that participants will be paid wages for hours worked, and have employee status. A participant’s wages may be wholly financed with the welfare benefit the family is eligible to receive, i.e., Grant Diversion (see below) or such welfare benefits might be supplemented with other welfare funds, other public funds, or by the entity for which work is performed.

Community Bus Service

Also known as a service route, this is a fixed-route, fixed-schedule transit service designed to better match the common trip origins and destinations of specific customer groups (e.g., elderly persons and persons with disabilities) and to minimize the distance that customers have to travel to get to and from bus stops. Smaller and low-floor, accessible vehicles are typically used. Service is usually on neighborhood streets and to mall or hospital doorways to reduce walking distances. Pick-ups and drop-offs are typically designed so that they are as close to entryways of common destinations as possible. While routes are designed to better meet the needs of persons with disabilities and elderly persons, they are open to the public. Community bus services can be planned as feeders to other fixed-route services and can include a “route deviation” option. (See also *Service Routes*.)

Community Service

Community Service is one of the listed work activities under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Section 407(d)(7). As used in TANF, community service has generally been understood to mean an activity involving work that benefits the community, typically at either a public or nonprofit agency, during which the participant continues to receive a regular welfare grant. However, as the term is not defined in the statute, nor by regulation, there is nothing to bar a structure in which participants are paid wages based on the hours they work.

Community Service Employment (CSE)

Community Service Employment is generally intended to describe a program in which participants are paid wages to perform work that benefits their community, typically in positions at public or nonprofit agencies. The use of the term “employment” is intended to convey that participants will be paid wages for hours worked, and have employee status. A participant’s wages may be wholly financed by the welfare benefit the family is eligible to receive, i.e., Grant Diversion (see below) or welfare benefits might be supplemented with other welfare funds, other

public funds, or by the entity for which work is performed. There is no substantive difference between the terms Community Service Employment and Community Jobs (above).

Community Transportation

Community transportation includes services that address all transit needs of a community, including general and special populations, such as persons with disabilities and seniors.

Community Work Experience Program (CWEP)

CWEP, as defined in the Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) statute and regulations, was a program in which a participant performed work at a public or nonprofit entity in exchange for his or her welfare benefits. CWEP is frequently described as Workfare, see below. A CWEP participant could not be required to work more hours than the number derived by dividing the welfare grant (minus any amounts reimbursed to the welfare agency as child support paid by a non-custodial parent) by the higher of any applicable state minimum wage or the federal minimum wage. (A different calculation was specified for individuals if participation continued beyond nine months.)

Payments to participants were made through the regular welfare grant, and participants did not typically receive any additional payment from either the welfare agency or the entity for whom the work was performed. The JOBS statute specified that a CWEP participant was not entitled to a salary under any other provision of law, and that benefit payments made were not to be considered compensation for work performed. As a result of these provisions, participants were generally not considered to be employees under federal minimum wage laws, and the benefits they received while participating were not considered to be wages for Social Security purposes, nor taxable income for purposes of federal income tax or the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Coordinated Transportation Services

A cooperative arrangement between or among organizations providing transportation for customers, clients, constituents, or employees and/or transportation providers to combine or consolidate some or all transportation functions or activities of the different organizations, in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of these services. Many types and degrees of coordination exist, from vehicle sharing or the joint procurement of equipment or services to the performance of centralized administration or other functions by a single entity acting as a transportation broker. (See also *Brokerage*.) One of the primary intended results of coordination is lower unit costs for participating organizations through greater efficiency.

Corridor

A broad geographical band that follows a general directional flow connecting major sources of trips that may contain a number of streets, highways and transit route alignments.

Curb-to-Curb Service

A level of service provided within the context of a paratransit service in which driver assistance (if needed) is limited to assisting the passenger into or out of the vehicle, and does not extend beyond the boarding/alighting point. (For “higher” levels of service, offering driver assistance beyond the curb. (See also *Door-to-Door Service* and *Door-Through-Door Service*.)

Deadhead

Movement of a bus without passengers, e.g. from bus yard or garage to first pick up, and from last drop-off back to bus yard or garage.

Dedicated Service

Transportation service purchased by sponsor from a carrier in which vehicles serve only the sponsor’s clients during the designated service period.

Demand-Responsive Transportation

See *Dial-A-Ride* and *Paratransit*.

Dial-A-Ride

This is often used as a synonym for paratransit, but may be used to connote that the paratransit service is available to the general public. A more limited eligibility criteria may be used in conjunction with the term, e.g., Senior Dial-A-Ride, to describe eligibility limitations. As with paratransit, Dial-A-Ride services typically require an advance request, although some permit same-day reservations if not immediate reservations. Some Dial-A-Ride systems allow riders to request subscription trips, also known as standing orders, for recurring service; this is a convenience to both the rider and the reservation/scheduling staff because these riders do not have to place a reservation for each individual trip. Dial-A-Ride services are typically provided on a curb-to-curb, door-to-door, or door-through-door basis. There are three basic types of Dial-a-Ride: “many-to-one,” in which transportation is provided from multiple origins to a single destination; “many-to-few,” in which transportation is provided from multiple origins to a few designated destinations (e.g., major activity centers); and “one-to-one,” in which transportation is provided between any two points within the service area. (See also *Paratransit*.)

Door-to-Door Service

A level of service provided within the context of a paratransit service in which the driver escorts the passenger between the vehicle and the front entrance of the building at both the origin and the destination of the trip. Sometimes, this assistance is limited to traversing a specified number of steps and/or to carrying a specified number of packages.

Door-Through-Door Service

A level of service provided within the context of a paratransit service in which the driver escorts the passenger between the vehicle and the front entrance to the building at both the origin and destination and provides assistance beyond the threshold of the building (e.g., into the hall or lobby) if requested. Limits are often imposed regarding the number of steps traversed, the packages carried, and how far into the building a driver may go.

Downtime

A period during which a vehicle is idle, or is inoperative because of repairs or maintenance.

Driver Training

Instructional program designed to impart and improve the skills necessary for bus drivers, including but not limited to knowledge of the vehicle, safe or defensive driving practices, emergency procedures, and passenger control.

DHHS

United States Department of Health and Human Services.

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

The EITC is a subsidy to low-wage workers. This policy essentially makes a minimum wage job paying \$4.25 worth \$6.00 an hour for a family with two or more children. Together with food stamps, the expanded EITC can lift families with full-time workers out of poverty.

EA (Emergency Assistance)

This program is one of several federal welfare programs that were combined into a single new program called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) by the passage of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. Under TANF, funds are distributed to states in a single block grant. (See also TANF.)

Express Bus Service

A bus that operates a portion of the route without stops or with a limited number of stops. (See also *Fixed-Route Transit Service*.)

Employment Center Shuttle

A transportation service in which vehicle operate frequently over a short distance between one or more employment sites and a designated locations such as a transit center, station or stop. Typically, such service is sponsored at least in part by the employer or employment center management.

Farebox Recovery

The degree to which fare revenue covers operating cost of a transportation service. This is usually expressed as a percentage of total operating cost.

Feeder Service

Feeder service provides transportation to and from a fixed-route bus stop or train station. Feeder service might be provided by paratransit, flexibly routed transit or fixed-route transit.

Fixed-Route Transit Service

Sometimes referred to as “main line” service, fixed-route transit service includes public transit bus or rail service that runs on regular, predetermined routes, usually on a fixed schedule with designated, scheduled bus stops. Different types of fixed-route transit include express, local, owl, revenue, and skip-stop service.

Flag-Stop Service

Flag stop service allows patrons to request a bus by waving it down anywhere along a route. See also *Request-A-Stop*.

Flexible Transit or Flexibly Routed Transit

This is generally defined as transit (as opposed to paratransit) that involve flexibility in scheduling or routing of service. Examples include route deviation, point deviation, flag stop services, and on-call bus service.

Food Stamp Program

The Food Stamp Program is an uncapped entitlement with need-based national eligibility and benefit provisions. Benefits are financed entirely by the federal government, although states have to contribute 50 percent of the program’s administrative costs. Begun as a pilot program at local discretion in 1961, food stamps became a national program when federal eligibility criteria and benefit levels were established in 1970.

Geographic Information System (GIS)

These are software programs designed to store, manipulate and illustrate geographic and other data. GIS analysis may be used to plot data (such as addresses or bus routes) on a map providing a visual display of community characteristics.

Grant Diversion

Grant Diversion means the use of funds that would otherwise be paid to a program participant's family as a welfare grant to reimburse some or all of an employer's costs for the wages and benefits paid to the participant, and in some cases, for some of the additional costs of employment-related taxes and insurance.

Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA)

HCFA is the agency within the federal Department of Health and Human Services which oversees the federal Medicaid program.

Headway

Time interval between (or frequency of) vehicles moving in the same direction on a particular transit route.

Hub

A hub is the focal point of a transit network, where several services meet and passengers can make convenient transfers. Hubs include transit centers, transportation terminals, major rail stations and park-and-ride facilities.

Intercity Bus

A bus with front doors only, high-backed seats, separate luggage compartments, and usually with restroom facilities for use in high-speed long-distance service.

Jitney

Privately owned, small or medium-sized vehicle usually operated on a fixed-route but not on a fixed schedule.

Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) Program

The centerpiece of the 1988 Family Support Acts, its primary objective was to enroll welfare recipients in education and training programs. JOBS is one of several federal welfare programs that were combined into a single new program called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) by the passage of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. Under TANF, funds are distributed to states in a single block grant. (See also *TANF*.)

Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)

The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) provides job-training services for economically disadvantaged adults and youth, dislocated workers and others who face significant employment barriers. The act, which became effective on October 1, 1983, seeks to move jobless individuals into permanent self-sustaining employment.

Light Rail

Light rail is a form of electric railway with a light volume travel capacity. This form of urban rail transit typically uses smaller cars than conventional rapid transit (singly or in multi-car trains) and is powered via overhead catenary rather than third rail. As a result, light rail often operates on surface at least for a portion of its right-of-way and may operate in exclusive or shared rights-of-way. Also known as a streetcar, trolley car or tramway.

Line-Haul Transit Service

Transit operations, often express service, along a single corridor or variety of corridors.

Local Service

Fixed-route service involving frequent stops and consequent low speeds, the purpose of which is to pick up and deliver passengers close to their origins and destinations.

Medicaid

A program established in 1965 by Title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide medical assistance for certain individuals and families with low incomes and resources. The program is funded jointly by the federal and state governments and ensures adequate medical care for approximately 36 million individuals, including children, seniors, persons with disabilities, and persons who are eligible to receive federally assisted income maintenance payments. Although the federal government has established general program requirements, states have the flexibility to define eligibility requirements, determine the nature and scope of services provided, set payment rates for services, and administer their own Medicaid programs.

Under Medicaid, transportation to and from eligible Medicaid providers is funded. This is subdivided into emergency transportation, typically accommodated by ambulance, and non-emergency medical transportation, which includes the reimbursement of auto mileage for self-drivers, family or friends, and volunteer drivers; reimbursement for transit trips (or the provision of tokens, tickets, or passes); and arranging trips on taxis, livery operators, and/or private for-profit and non-profit carriers operating accessible vehicles (often called chair cars or ambulettes).

Medium Size Bus

A bus from 29 to 34 feet in length.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Local decision-making body charged with approving plans for spending federal transportation funds in its region. MPOs typically have regional planning responsibilities for transportation, land-use, and economic development.

Minor Civil Division (MCD)

A definition used by the U.S. Census, MCD describes places that are smaller than counties (e.g., city, town or village).

Mobile Data Terminal (MDT)

MDTs are in-vehicle hardware that are linked to the vehicle's two-way radio system and provides a means of non-voice communication between drivers and dispatchers. MDTs typically consist of a screen that displays text and/or graphics and a set of keys that can be used for data entry. Using MDTs, dispatchers can relay special instructions, notice of trip cancellations, and other information to drivers, while drivers can transmit information about the disposition of trips back to the dispatch center. MDTs can also be linked to the vehicle's odometer, a card reader (for passenger ID or fare cards), a printer, and/or an AVL receiver.

Mobility Aid

A wheelchair, walker, cane or other device, either battery-powered or manual, that is used to support and convey a person with a physical disability.

Mobility Coordinator or Mobility Manager

An entity responsible for managing the transportation programs of the organizations with which it contracts. Also includes developing and managing a coordinated paratransit service delivery system to accommodate the trips sponsored by these organizations. This could also include managing local circulator services, employer-based services, and ridesharing services. (See also *Brokerage*.)

Mobility Disadvantaged

Mobility disadvantaged refers to any person who cannot carry out a reasonable level of desired activity outside the home because of a lack of available vehicle, road facility, or transportation service. These persons are also sometimes referred to as "transit dependent," or those who cannot drive: the young, the poor, the unemployed, the carless members of suburban families, the physically or cognitively disabled, and those elderly for whom public transit is totally nonexistent.

Motor Bus

A rubber-tired, self-propelled, manually steered vehicle with fuel supply carried on board the vehicle. Types include transit bus, articulated bus, standard-size bus, medium-size bus, small bus, suburban bus, and intercity bus.

On-Call Accessible Fixed-Route Bus Service (also called "Call-A-Bus")

On-call accessible fixed-route bus service, also known as call-a-lift bus service, allows individuals who need to use accessible fixed-route vehicles to call in advance and request that an accessible bus be placed on a particular route at the time they wish to travel. On-call service is particular to routes that are not already 100 percent accessible.

Operating Assistance

Financial assistance for transit operating expenses (not capital costs); such aid may originate with federal, local or state governments.

Operating Expense

Monies paid in salaries, wages, materials, supplies and equipment in order to maintain equipment and buildings, operate vehicles, rent equipment and facilities and settle claims.

Orientation and Mobility Training

Training provided for people who are blind or visually impaired, which teaches skills in traveling, including orienting one's self to environment, navigation (walking, crossing streets, recognizing landmarks), and using public transportation.

Owl Service

Transit service provided during the late night and early morning hours.

Paratransit

This is often used as a synonym for dial-a-ride service, but is often used to connote a more limited eligibility criteria, such as persons with disabilities, seniors, low-income, clients of specific, sponsoring human service agencies, etc. Paratransit services typically require an advance request, although some permit same-day reservations if not immediate reservations. Some paratransit services allow riders to request subscription trips, also known as standing orders, for recurring service; this is a convenience to both the rider and the reservation/scheduling staff because these riders do not have to place a reservation each time. Paratransit services are typically provided on a curb-to-curb, door-to-door, or door-through-door basis. There are three basic types of paratransit services: "many-to-one," in which transportation is provided from multiple origins to a single

destination; “many-to-few,” in which transportation is provided from multiple origins to a few designated destinations (e.g., major activity centers); and “one-to-one,” in which transportation is provided between any two points within the service area. (See also *Dial-A-Ride*.)

Paratransit is sometimes also used as an umbrella for more personal transportation services including any form of transportation service that falls between the privately owned, self-operated automobile and scheduled, routed transit services. In addition to dial-a-ride services, this would include carpools, vanpools, subscription bus service, and other forms of ridesharing; taxis, jitney service, livery and other private for-hire services, including employer shuttles.

Park-and-Ride

Park-and-Ride is when transit users drive, park and transfer to a bus or rail service. The term may be used to describe the mode of travel, the bus service or the parking facility.

Passenger Miles

The total number of miles traveled by passengers on transit vehicles; determined by multiplying the number of unlinked passenger trips times the average length of their trips.

Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA)

Federal law that eliminated the AFDC program and replaced it with TANF block grants to states. See *AFDC* and *TANF*.

Planned Demand Routes

These are routes in rural areas which do not operate everyday to the same locations. Service is provided to different places on different days of the week so as to offer more coverage at a reasonable cost. Such service is geared to senior citizens who do not make daily trips and can plan their trips to match the service.

Point Deviation Transit Service

In a point deviation service, a vehicle operates on a fixed schedule with specific stops but without a fixed route. Vehicles will accommodate requests for pick-ups and drop-offs at locations other than specified stops or “points” as long as they can be accommodated within the fixed schedule. Note that there is no designated route between specified stops. As with route deviation service, point deviation service operates in one of two ways: riders may be required to call in advance, or the service may be drop-off only. See *Flexible Transit*.

Private Industry Council (PIC)

Private Industry Councils are appointed by local elected officials to guide and oversee job and training programs at the Service Delivery Area. PICs serve as key mechanisms for bringing the private sector into the active management of job training programs. Membership includes representatives from business, education, organized labor, rehabilitation agencies, community-based organizations, economic development agencies and public employment services. The majority of the members must represent business and industry within the Service Delivery Area, and the chairperson must be a business representative.

Private, Non-Profit Corporation

A private corporation organized under Section 501(C)(3).

Public Service Employment (PSE)

Public Service Employment was the term used to describe the publicly - funded jobs component of the CETA program during the mid and late-1970's. The program as operated at that time was generally consistent with the definition of Community jobs and Community Service Employment, above.

Public Transportation

Transportation provided by or through a public entity by bus, rail, or other conveyance that provides the general public with general or special service, including charter service, on a regular basis.

Purchase of Service Agreements

Agreements between a sponsor and a carrier (directly or through an intermediary) to arrange for the provision of transportation to meet particular travel needs.

Request A Stop Service

Request-a-stop service allows a person on a bus to request to get off at any location along a route. See also *Flag Stop* service.

Radial Route

Transit routes that connect the central city downtown area with outlying locations. Generally, these routes serve trips from outlying residential origins to destinations in the downtown.

Request-A-Stop Service

Request-a-stop service allows a person on a bus to request to get off at any location along a route.

Revenue Service

Normal service during which paying passengers are permitted on-board, as opposed to deadheading.

Reverse Commuting

Movement in a direction opposite the main flow of traffic, such as from the central city to a suburb during the morning peak period.

Ridematching

The function of identifying and matching commuters with similar travel patterns for the purpose of identifying prospective carpoolers, vanpoolers, or subscription bus riders.

Ridesharing

A form of transportation, other than public transit, in which more than one person shares the use of a vehicle, such as a car or van, to make a trip. Includes “carpooling” and “vanpooling.”

Ridership

The number of passengers using a transportation system during a given time period, typically measured in one-way passenger trips.

Risk Management

Practices and procedures designed to protect against losses from accidents, passenger and worker injuries, vehicle damage and other losses and reduce insurance costs.

Rolling Stock

The vehicles in a transportation system. Also known as a *fleet*.

Route-Deviation Transit Service

In a route deviation service, a vehicle operates along a fixed-route, making scheduled stops along the way. Vehicles may deviate from the route, however, to pick up and drop off passengers *upon request*. *The vehicle then returns to the fixed-route at the point at which it departed to accommodate the request.* Route deviation service operates in one of two ways: riders may be required to call in advance, or the service may be drop-off only (with riders requesting the deviation service as they board the vehicle). Several variations of route deviation also are possible, including client-specific route deviation, and site-specific route deviation. See *Flexible Transit*.

Safety Net

The concept that the federal government should unconditionally provide for and take care of the poor.

Seating Capacity

The number of designated seating positions provided in a vehicle, including the driver's position. In an accessible vehicle, the seating capacity is often identified in the context of the number of wheelchair tie-down positions and the collective number of permanent and fold-down seats (if any) that are available if the wheelchair tie-down position is not being used. For example, in a vehicle that has two wheelchair positions, the seating capacity might be defined as 10+0, 8+1, 6+2, where the first number is the number of seats, and the second number is the number of occupied wheelchair positions.

Section 5310

Formerly known as Section 16, this federal transportation program provides capital assistance to agencies serving seniors and people with disabilities for the purchase of vehicles for transporting clients. Funding recipients apply to the state (or designated agency) for funds, 80 percent of which are provided by the federal government, and 20 percent of which are provided locally. There is a limit of one vehicle per agency. Section 5310 is primarily used by private, not-for-profit agencies, although public agencies can qualify.

Section 5311

Formerly known as Section 18, this federal transportation program provides 50% operating assistance, 80 percent assistance for capital and administration, and 100% assistance for planning for rural public transportation service. Funding recipients apply to the designated agency, usually the state, for funds, which cannot be used for providing urban transit service.

Sensitivity Training

See Disability Awareness Training.

Service Delivery Area (SDA)

Service Delivery Areas are designated by governors to receive federal job training funds under the Job Training Partnership Act. Areas where local governments have populations of 200,000 or more are automatically eligible to be SDAs.

Service Route

Also known as a Community Bus Service, this is a fixed-route, fixed-schedule transit service designed to better match the common trip origins

and destinations of elderly persons and persons with disabilities, and to minimize the distance that they have to travel to get to and from bus stops. Smaller and low-floor, accessible vehicles are typically used. Service is usually on neighborhood streets and to mall or hospital doorways to reduce walking distances. Pick-ups and drop-offs are typically designed so that they are as close to entryways of common destinations as possible. While routes are designed to better meet the needs of persons with disabilities and elderly persons, they are open to the public. A service route can be planned to feed other fixed-route transit services and can include a “route deviation” option. (See also *Community Bus*.)

Shuttle

A public or private vehicle that travels back and forth over a particular route, especially a short route or one that provides connections between transportation systems, employment centers, two schools, etc.

Skip-Stop Service

Transit service in which not all trains or vehicles stop at all stations or stops along a route; usually, “A” and “B” trains or vehicles alternate their respective stops, with both stopping at major stops or stations.

Small Bus

A bus 28 feet or less in length.

Specialized Transportation

Transportation designed to meet the special needs of specific market groups, in particular senior citizens and persons with disabilities. These transportation services are usually provided with smaller vehicles that are usually wheelchair accessible. They vary in the degree of assistance provided by the driver ranging from curb-to-curb to door-through-door assistance.

Standing Order or Subscription Trip/Service

A trip that occurs at regularly scheduled times, either every day or on particular days of the week or month. Subscription passengers typically do not need to call to confirm this pre-arranged service.

Subscription Bus Service

A commuter bus express service operated for a guaranteed number of patrons from a given area on a prepaid, reserved seat basis.

Subsidized Employment

Subsidized private sector employment and subsidized public sector employment are among the listed work activities under TANF. (Section 407(d)(2-3)) Although not defined in the statute or by regulation, these

terms are general generally understood to describe programs in which welfare funds, and perhaps other public funds as well 1, are used to reimburse an employer for all or a portion of the wages, benefits, and employment-related tax and insurance payments made to or on behalf of a program participant. Funds used to provide the subsidy might, but need not include funds made available through Grant Diversion. The use of the word employment indicates that participants in such positions would have regular employee status.

Suburban Bus

A bus with front doors only, normally with high-backed seats, and without luggage compartments or restroom facilities for use in longer-distance service with relatively few stops.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Provides cash benefits to low-income elderly people and low-income people with disabilities.

Supported Work

Supported Work was a program operated in the late 1970's in various sites as a demonstration project, and subsequently under the WIN statute and regulations pursuant to OBRA of 1981. The initial demonstration and subsequent state programs provided paid employment to long-term AFDC recipients. (The demonstration program also served other disadvantaged groups.) The program placed participants in wage-paying jobs in public and nonprofit agencies as well as private companies, and in some instances businesses were created specifically to provide jobs for program participants. Participants received intensive supervision, with graduated increases in workplace expectations designed to improve work habits and job-related skills, and job search and job placement assistance to promote transitions into unsubsidized employment. Participants generally had employee status. The wages, benefits, and costs of employment-related taxes and insurance were paid for with a combination of funds, including Grant Diversion, and in various instances included other welfare funds, other public funds, funds provided by foundations, and contributions from employers.

Standard Size Bus

A bus 35 to 41 feet in length.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

A new federal welfare program created by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, which delivers federal welfare funds to states in a single new block grant and replaces the former

Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Emergency Assistance (EA) and Job Opportunities and Basis Skills Training (JOBS) programs.

Transportation Management Association (TMA)/Transportation Management Organization (TMO)

A nonprofit corporation that coordinates local commuter transportation services (e.g., transit, ridesharing, bicycling, and walking) with trip reduction strategies, such as alternative work schedules and telecommuting.

Travel Demand Management (TDM)

TDM or Travel Demand Management incorporates efforts to modify travel behavior including the choice of travel mode and travel time. The goals of TDM are generally to reduce use of single occupant vehicles and thereby mitigate traffic congestion and air pollution problems. Also called *Trip Reduction Strategies*.

Time Limits

Time limits are designed to convert welfare into a transitional system designed to provide short-term financial, educational, and social support for families in need of such assistance and minimum-wage jobs for families who exhausted their transitional support.

Timed Transfers

The coordination of bus arrivals and departures and several routes so that passengers transferring between routes can make convenient connections and enjoy reduced wait times.

Title IIIB

This is a program for supportive service for senior citizens made possible by the Older Americans Act and used by local area agencies on aging for transportation.

Transit Bus

A bus with front and center doors, normally with a rear-mounted engine, low-back seating and without luggage compartments or restroom facilities for use in frequent-stop service.

Transit Dependent

Travelers whose auto ownership, geographic or socio-economic characteristics cause them to rely largely or fully on public transportation for their mobility.

Transit Mode Share

The percentage of travelers who use transit for their trip.

Transportation Related Expenses (TRE)

Daily vouchers issued to welfare recipients as reimbursement for transportation expenses.

Travel Training

Instruction used to supply seniors, individuals with a physical disability, and persons with mental retardation or a cognitive disability with the information, skills and confidence they need in order to use fixed-route transportation services safely and independently. Individuals can receive training that enables them to travel from a specific origin to a specific destination (for a work or school trip, for example). This type of route-specific training is often used to increase the mobility and independence of persons with mental or cognitive disabilities. A more general form of travel training can be used to teach an individual to utilize a fixed-route system to make any trip that meets his/her travel needs. Persons with a physical disability often make good candidates for general travel training.

Trip Reduction Strategies

See *Travel Demand Management* or *Transportation Management Association*.

Trip (or Passenger-Trip)

A trip is defined as a one-way movement of one person between two points for a specific purpose.

Trunk Route

The portion of a transit network in which high frequency service can be provided based on demand (or where several branches of single transit route or several transit routes would coincide).

Urbanized Areas

The U.S. Census defines Urbanized Areas as one or more places and the adjacent densely settled surrounding territory ("urban fringe") that together have a minimum population of 50,000 persons. The urban fringe generally consists of contiguous territory having a density of at least 1,000 persons per square mile.

Vehicle Hours of Service

The total number of hours vehicles are in use to provide transportation service. For example, if three vehicles are used to provide transportation and each is in operation 40 hours per week, 52 weeks a year, there would be 6,240 vehicle hours of service provided.

Vehicle Miles of Service

The total number of miles traveled by vehicles providing transportation service. For example, if three vehicles are used to provide transportation and they each travel 30,000 in a given year, there would be 90,000 vehicle miles of service provided.

Wage Subsidy

Wage subsidy means the use of public funds to reimburse an employer, public or private, for all or a portion of the wages, compensation, and tax/insurance payments made to or on behalf of a program participant. Funds used to provide wage subsidies might be made available from Grant Diversion, from other welfare funds, other public funds, or some combination of these sources. A position for which an employer received a wage subsidy would fit within the definition of Subsidized Employment (above) if the position was made available to a TANF participant.

Welfare to Work Initiative

The current national and local efforts to shift more welfare recipients into employment, in response to the passage of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.

Work Experience

Work Experience is another of the listed work activities under TANF. (Section 407(d)(4)) As used in TANF, work experience has generally been understood to mean an activity in which the participant does some type of work that provides experience designed to improve employability. Work might be performed for any public or private agency or company. The term is generally understood to mean a program in which a participant would continue to receive a regular welfare grant. However, as the term is not defined in the statute, nor by regulation, there is nothing to bar a structure in which a participant is paid wages for hours worked.

Work Supplementation

Work Supplementation, as defined in the JOBS statute and regulations, was an activity in which funds that would ordinarily be paid as welfare benefits were used to reimburse, in whole or in part, the wages paid to a participant by an employer. Employers could be public, private for-profit, or private nonprofit entities; however, in practice positions were predominantly in the private, for profit sector. These programs were sometimes referred to as Grant Diversion programs, because they involved diverting the welfare benefits that would otherwise be paid to the recipient as a welfare grant, to an employer to reimburse for wages. Welfare agencies were also permitted to use JOBS funds for work supplementation purposes. These programs were also sometimes referred to as Wage Subsidy programs because the wages paid to participants were subsidized by welfare funds.

Workfare

Workfare is a program in which participants perform work in exchange for their welfare benefits. Sometimes the term is used more broadly to refer to any program in which a recipient is required to participate in employment-related activities.