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TRANSPORTATION- DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS

Many Federal Programs Fund Transportation Services, but Obstacles to Coordination Persist

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Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-03-698T](#), a testimony before the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Education and the Workforce, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

Numerous federal government programs provide assistance to “transportation-disadvantaged” individuals—those who are unable to provide their own transportation as a result of a disability, an age-related condition, or an income constraint. The assistance is provided to help these populations connect with services such as health and medical care, employment and training activities, and education programs. Coordination of this assistance—through such steps as pooling resources, consolidating transportation services under a single state or local agency, and sharing information about available services—has been found to improve the cost-effectiveness and quality of service. GAO was asked to identify (1) the federal programs that provide these transportation services and the amount spent on these programs; (2) the effect of coordination—or lack of coordination—on the delivery of transportation services for the transportation-disadvantaged; and (3) any obstacles that may impede effective coordination and potential ways to overcome such obstacles.

What GAO Recommends

This testimony is based on ongoing work being done for the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. GAO expects to issue a report in June 2003, at which time there may be recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-698T.

To view the full testimony, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Katherine Siggerud at (202) 512-2834 or siggerudk@gao.gov.

TRANSPORTATION-DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS

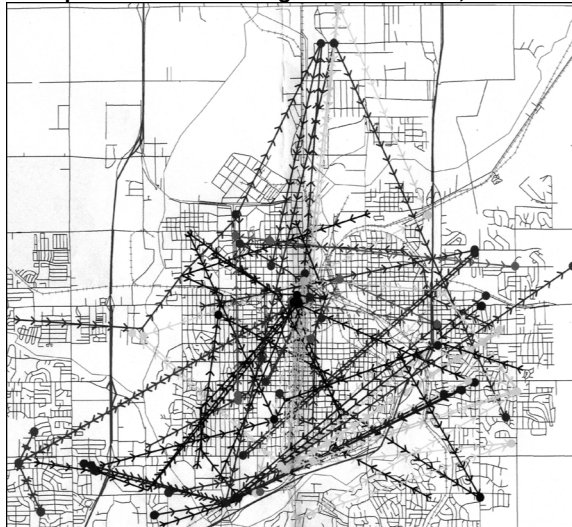
Many Federal Programs Fund Transportation Services, but Obstacles to Coordination Persist

What GAO Found

GAO found 62 federal programs—most of which are administered by the Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, Education, and Transportation—that currently fund a variety of transportation services for the transportation-disadvantaged. The full amount of spending for these programs is unknown because transportation expenditures are not always tracked separately from other program expenditures. However, available information (i.e., estimated or actual outlays or obligations) on 28 of the programs shows that federal agencies spent at least an estimated \$2.4 billion in fiscal year 2001 on these services.

Effective coordination can help avoid duplication of effort and inefficiency in providing transportation services. GAO’s preliminary results indicate that some jurisdictions have realized significant benefits, such as improved customer service and lower unit costs, and through coordination efforts such as sharing vehicles, consolidating services under one provider, or sharing information among programs. By contrast, GAO found several examples of overlapping, fragmented, or confusing services resulting from a lack of coordination.

Overlapping Routes of the Vehicles of Seven Agencies that Separately Serve the Transportation-Disadvantaged in Sioux Falls, South Dakota



Source: Sioux Vocational Services (reprinted with permission).

This graphic illustrates that many of these seven agencies’ routes have similar starting and ending points. Many of these routes represent trips serving similar populations and occurring within 30 minutes of each other.

GAO identified numerous obstacles impeding coordination, including: (1) reluctance to share vehicles and fund coordination; (2) differences in federal program standards and requirements; and (3) limited guidance and information on coordination. To mitigate these obstacles, officials and experts suggested harmonizing standards among federal programs to better share resources and serve additional populations, expanding forums to facilitate communication among agencies, providing and disseminating additional guidance, and providing financial incentives or instituting mandates to coordinate.

Messrs. Chairmen and Members of the Committees:

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on the coordination of transportation services for people with limited access to transportation. At the request of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, we have been examining transportation assistance that the federal government funds to benefit these individuals. Our work focuses on a population we call “transportation-disadvantaged”—that is, people who are unable to provide their own transportation as a result of a disability, an age-related condition, or an income constraint. This is a sizeable group. For example, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, 35.1 million people were over age 65, 44.5 million people over age 21 were disabled, and 33.9 million people were living below the poverty line. We have been studying the assistance available to help such people connect with the services provided through government programs, such as health and medical care, employment and training activities, and education programs. For many people in this group, traditional public transportation may not be an option to access such services.

Providing transportation services to these populations and coordinating them across program lines are becoming more critical issues as the transportation-disadvantaged populations grow and financial constraints on the federal government and other government levels increase due to budget deficits. With these trends, it will become more important to maximize efficiency wherever possible to avoid having to reduce services. The coordination of transportation services—through pooling resources, consolidating transportation services under a single state or local agency, or sharing information about available services—has been found to improve the cost-effectiveness and quality of service.

My statement today, which is based on the preliminary results of our ongoing work for the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, addresses (1) the federal programs that provide transportation services for transportation-disadvantaged populations; the types of services they provide; and federal, state, and local government spending for transportation through these federal programs; (2) the effect of coordination—or lack of coordination—on the delivery of transportation services for the transportation-disadvantaged; and (3) any obstacles that may impede effective coordination and potential options for overcoming such obstacles. We are continuing to examine these issues and expect to report on the final results of our work in June 2003.

Our work is based on an analysis of pertinent federal laws and regulations, available data on federal and state spending, and the research literature on coordination of transportation services. We also conducted an in-depth study of coordination efforts in five states—Arizona, Florida, New York, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. We selected these five states to include a cross-section of characteristics including the presence or absence of a state-level coordinating body and geographic dispersion. Appendix I contains more information about our scope and methodology.

In summary:

- Sixty-two federal programs—most of which are administered by the Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, Education, and Transportation—fund a variety of transportation services for the transportation-disadvantaged, and spending for these programs is estimated to be in the billions of dollars.¹ Most of these programs purchase transportation from existing public or private sources, such as providing bus tokens or passes, or contracting for service from private providers. Also, several programs fund the purchase or modification of vehicles for agencies to provide transportation for their clients. The full amount of spending for these programs is unknown because transportation is not always tracked separately from other program spending. Available information on actual or estimated spending shows that federal agencies spent at least an estimated \$2.4 billion in fiscal year 2001 on various transportation services. Department of Health and Human Services programs spent about three-quarters of this amount. State and local agencies also provide significant funding for many of these programs, often to fulfill matching requirements, which generally range from 5 to 50 percent of total program costs for these programs. However, estimates of state and local spending are not available because few agencies track such information at the federal or state level.
- We found some agencies that have realized substantial benefits by coordinating their transportation services through sharing vehicles, consolidating services under a single agency, or sharing information about available services, while others that do not coordinate have experienced overlapping, fragmented, or confusing services. In locations where coordination among programs has occurred, agencies and users are realizing significant benefits, such as improved customer service and

¹In this testimony, spending refers to actual or estimated outlays or obligations, depending on what information was available from the agency.

lower unit costs. For example, a transit agency in South Dakota consolidated the transportation services previously provided by both senior and medical centers as well as other federal, state, and local programs. This consolidation allowed the agency to increase the number of trips provided while reducing the average cost of providing each trip by more than 20 percent. The agency has also improved its services by coordinating with local taxi companies to provide night and weekend trips. In areas without coordination, local officials reported some examples of (1) overlapping services, such as the transportation provider who often runs two vehicles on the same route at nearly the same time to accommodate different paperwork requirements; (2) fragmented services, when transportation services provided by different counties or programs do not connect and riders have difficulty scheduling complete trips; and (3) confusion, when both providers and users are overwhelmed by the sheer number of programs and their different requirements.

- Decision makers face numerous obstacles in trying to coordinate services for the transportation-disadvantaged; officials and experts that we consulted offered several potential options to mitigate these obstacles and enhance coordination among federal, state, and local agencies. We grouped the obstacles that impede coordination into three categories: (1) reluctance to share vehicles and fund coordination activities; (2) programmatic differences, including fragmented administration and distinct reporting requirements among programs; and (3) limited guidance and information on coordination, as shown by the limited technical assistance provided by federal and state agencies on the possible techniques for coordinating services. To mitigate these obstacles, some officials and experts have suggested three potential options that may be undertaken to improve coordination. One option is to harmonize standards among federal programs—such as safety standards related to types of seat belts and driver training requirements—so that they may serve additional populations or better share transportation resources. Another option is to expand forums that would facilitate communication among agencies involved in coordination and to share additional technical guidance and information on coordination among federal and state agencies through a central clearinghouse or improved Web site. The third option is to provide financial incentives and mandates that would give priority in federal funding to those applicants that show a strong commitment to coordinate. Some of these options, however, would require extensive statutory or regulatory changes and may cause agencies to incur significant costs.

Background

Concern over coordinating transportation services for transportation-disadvantaged populations has been evident since the 1970s. In 1977, we issued a report on transportation coordination,² which concluded that the most significant hindrance to the coordination of transportation services under these programs was confusion at all levels of government as to how much coordination federally funded projects could engage in.

Since 1986, responsibility for coordinating transportation programs at the federal level has rested in the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility. This body is composed of representatives from program offices within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Department of Transportation (DOT), and its staffing needs are met, on a part-time basis, by employees of these agencies.

In a 1999 report on transportation coordination,³ we found that coordination efforts of the Coordinating Council, DOT, and HHS were ongoing but needed strengthening. This report also noted that the Congress had endorsed increased coordination as evidenced by several provisions in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21),⁴ and significant financial benefits had been realized through coordination. More recently, reports and agency officials have raised concerns over continuing duplication of effort among federal programs and certain sub-populations still not being served effectively.⁵

²U.S. General Accounting Office, *Hindrances to Coordinating Transportation of People Participating in Federally Funded Grant Programs: Volume I*, [GAO/RCED-77-119](#) (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 17, 1977).

³U.S. General Accounting Office, *Transportation Coordination: Benefits and Barriers Exist, and Planning Efforts Progress Slowly*, [GAO/RCED-00-1](#) (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 22, 1999).

⁴P.L. 105-178 (June 9, 1998).

⁵For example, a report prepared for the AARP found that transportation resources for the elderly, disabled, and other groups were often not coordinated and led to duplication of services. The services were also found to vary in quality and to fail to address the needs of individuals who did not meet specific agency or program eligibility requirements. See Jon E. Burkhardt, *Coordinated Transportation Systems* (AARP, Washington, D.C.: September 2000).

Sixty-two Federal Programs Fund Transportation Services for the Transportation-Disadvantaged, and Spending on Them Is in the Billions of Dollars

We identified 62 federal programs that fund a variety of transportation services to populations that are transportation-disadvantaged.⁶ The bulk of these programs are administered by 4 federal agencies—23 programs in HHS, 15 programs in the Department of Labor (DOL), 8 programs in the Department of Education, and 6 programs in DOT.⁷ The remaining 10 programs are administered by the Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Veterans Affairs (VA), Agriculture, and the Interior. A full listing of programs with their authorizing statutes, typical uses, types of trips provided, target populations, and available spending information is found in appendix II.

According to program officials, most of these 62 programs typically use existing public or private transportation services through such methods as contracting for services with private transportation providers, or through providing bus tokens, transit passes, taxi vouchers, or mileage reimbursement to volunteers or program participants. For example, DOL's Workforce Investment Act Adult Program typically provides participants with bus tokens, while HHS's Grants for Supportive Services and Senior Centers program most often contracts with local transportation providers to provide client transportation. Several programs, however, are typically used to purchase, modify, or operate vehicles. These include Head Start

⁶In addition to these 62 programs, it is likely that there are other federal programs that could be used to fund transportation improvements or other transportation services. Our scope included programs that provide nonemergency, nonmilitary, surface transportation services, targeted to transportation-disadvantaged populations. We excluded most programs that were strictly for research or demonstration activities or provided strictly cash assistance with no restrictions on use, as well as some economic development programs that benefit the general public and are not targeted to transportation-disadvantaged populations. Efforts by other researchers to inventory all federal programs that could conceivably provide transportation yielded additional programs not found in our inventory due to differing selection criteria. Community Transportation Association of America, *Building Mobility Partnerships: Opportunities for Federal Investment* (Washington, D.C.: March 2002).

⁷Two DOT programs that are included here, the Urbanized Area and Nonurbanized Area Formula Programs, are used to support mass transit intended for the general public, many of whom could conceivably provide their own transportation. We include them because the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 42 U.S.C. Chapter 126) requires that transit operators provide accessible paratransit service that is comparable to their regular service for disabled individuals who are unable to provide their own transportation or access the regular transit system, and TEA-21 allows a portion of these transit formula grants to be used to offset paratransit operating costs. Because it is impossible to determine the amount these programs spend to provide transportation to transportation-disadvantaged populations, who are among the general population that is served by these programs, we only report on the portion of these funds used for ADA paratransit.

and the Program for American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian Elders in HHS; the Vocational Rehabilitation Grants program in the Department of Education; and the Capital Assistance Program for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities, the Urbanized and Nonurbanized Area Formula Programs, and the Job Access and Reverse Commute program in DOT.

Spending by 28 Federal Programs Is Estimated at \$2.4 billion in Fiscal Year 2001

Information on federal spending for transportation is available for 28 of the 62 programs we identified.⁸ These programs spent an estimated \$2.4 billion on transportation services in fiscal year 2001.⁹ (Appendix II lists available spending data for each federal program.) Based on available information, HHS programs as a whole spent the most on transportation for transportation-disadvantaged populations in 2001—an estimated \$1.8 billion. Table 1 shows estimated transportation spending by the eight federal agencies that fund services for the transportation-disadvantaged.

⁸Of these 28 programs, 16 provided actual spending data for fiscal year 2001. Program officials for the remaining 12 programs provided an estimate of transportation spending for 2001.

⁹There was no spending information available on four programs viewed as important providers of transportation services. These programs included HHS's Program for American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian Elders and DOL's Workforce Investment Act Adult Program, Workforce Investment Act Dislocated Worker Program, and Workforce Investment Act Youth Activities. The Community Transportation Association of America, a national, professional membership association that conducts research and provides technical assistance for community transportation providers, identified the four programs, whose total obligations were \$3.7 billion in fiscal year 2001, as routinely used to provide transportation. While information was not available on the portion of the \$3.7 billion devoted to providing transportation services, we were able to analyze data on other human services programs which indicates that, on average, about 3 percent of total spending on those programs was devoted to transportation.

Table 1: Estimated Spending on Transportation Services for the Transportation-Disadvantaged by Eight Federal Agencies in Fiscal Year 2001

Agency	Amount spent on transportation (in millions)	Percent of total estimate	Number of programs included in estimate	Total number of programs that provide transportation
Department of Health and Human Services	\$1,771.0	72.9%	10	23
Department of Transportation	\$317.3	13.1%	6	6
Department of Veterans Affairs	\$160.8	6.6%	3	3
Department of Education	\$133.8	5.5%	2	8
Department of Labor	\$26.4	1.1%	3	15
Department of Agriculture	\$13.0	0.5%	1	1
Department of Housing and Urban Development	\$7.5	0.3%	3	4
Department of the Interior	Not available	0.0%	0	2
Total for 8 agencies	\$2,429.8	100.0%	28	62

Source: GAO analysis of HHS, DOT, VA, Education, DOL, Agriculture, HUD, and Interior data.

The amount spent on transportation services by the remaining 34 federal programs is unknown, mainly because the majority of programs do not require recipients of federal funds to report transportation spending information to the federal agency.

Total State and Local Transportation Spending Is Unknown, but May Be Significant

Total state and local spending for transportation services, which supplements federal spending for such programs, is likely significant—reaching into the hundreds of millions of dollars at least—although the total is unknown because most programs do not require grantees to report these data. Matching requirements, which represent the nonfederal contributions to the program’s costs that come from state, local, or private funds, provide some information on state and local spending on transportation for the transportation-disadvantaged. For example, according to state officials, state and local spending for one program—Medicaid—made up between 32 and 50 percent of the total spending on nonemergency medical transportation in the five states that we visited,

totaling \$188.9 million in 2001 in those five states.¹⁰ Thirty-two of the programs that we identified have matching requirements that generally require states and localities to contribute between 5 and 50 percent of total program costs.

Coordination Has Led to Improvements, while Lack of Coordination Can Result in Overlap

Coordination Has Financial Benefits and Can Lead to Improved Service

Through coordination, some local agencies have realized both improved levels of service and financial benefits, such as reduced costs of providing each trip, as follows:

Improved customer service:

- A coordinated system in central Florida provides transportation for Medicaid, vocational rehabilitation, and other programs. According to local officials, vans used to show up late, if at all, and clients had difficulty finding out the status of their ride. Since consolidating services under a single provider and bringing scheduling and dispatch services in-house, officials report service improvement.
- Through collaboration, information-sharing, and cost-sharing among county agencies, the Clinton County transit system in New York serves both Medicaid and elderly populations, making it easier for those populations to access medical and community services because they only have to be familiar with one system.

¹⁰The amount that states are required to contribute depends on how states claim transportation under Medicaid. If states claim transportation as an optional medical expense, the state or local portion ranges from 17 to 50 percent of total costs, based on a measure known as the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage. If states claim transportation as an administrative expense, the state or local portion is 50 percent of total costs.

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- A federal regional official said that coordination can remove the stigma of specialized transportation because all recipients use the same service and are treated equally.

Financial benefits:

- Three New York counties joined in a transportation brokering service¹¹ that saved an estimated \$92,000 in 2001 by identifying a lower-cost alternative means of transportation, that is, moving groups of clients in buses rather than transporting individual clients in taxis. This brokerage service provides transportation to Medicaid patients, the disabled, veterans, and other client groups.
- In Aberdeen, South Dakota, the local transit agency consolidated the transportation services previously provided by both senior and medical centers as well as other federal, state, and local programs. This consolidation allowed the agency to increase the number of trips provided while reducing the average cost of providing each trip by more than 20 percent—from about \$5 to \$4. The agency has also improved its services by coordinating with local taxi companies to provide night and weekend trips.

Lack of Coordination Can Lead to Overlapping Services and Confusion

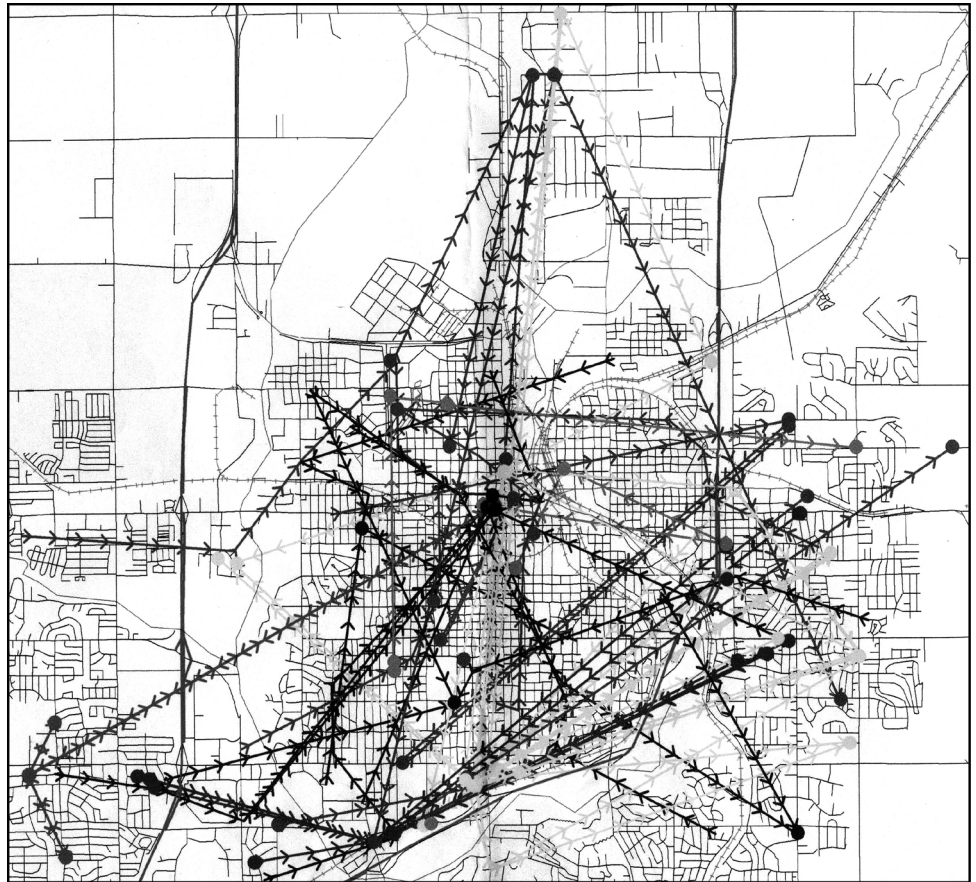
Although the various programs we reviewed target specific populations, some populations are eligible to receive transportation services from multiple programs, resulting in duplication and inefficiency in some cases. In our visits with state and local transportation and human service agencies and providers, we found examples of areas or programs that were not coordinating, resulting in overlapping services. A for-profit transportation provider in one state told us that he often has two vehicles overlap on the same route at the same time, one for medical trips and one for paratransit,¹² because it is too difficult to mix clients due to complicated fee structures and paperwork requirements imposed by the

¹¹The Community Transportation Association of America defines brokerage as a method of providing transportation where riders are matched with appropriate transportation providers through a central trip-request and administration facility. The transportation broker may centralize vehicle dispatch, record keeping, vehicle maintenance, and other functions under contractual arrangements with agencies, municipalities, and other organizations. Actual trips are provided by a number of different vendors.

¹²Paratransit most often refers to wheelchair-accessible, demand-response van service, according to the Community Transportation Association of America, and is more flexible than fixed route transit but more structured than the use of a private automobile.

state for the two programs. An official from a workforce development program in another state told us that many programs in his county use their own vans to deliver clients to the job center, but because the programs do not coordinate, only a few people ride in each van. In another area that has had difficulty coordinating, several human service providers hired a consultant to study the extent to which various agencies provide similar transportation services within a geographic region. This research showed substantial overlap in local services for the transportation-disadvantaged, as shown in figure 1. The consultant identified ways in which the number of routes could be substantially reduced through better coordination.

Figure 1: Overlapping Daily Routes of Vehicles Serving the Transportation-Disadvantaged in Sioux Falls, South Dakota



Source: Sioux Vocational Services (reprinted with permission).

This picture shows the daily routes of vehicles operated by seven different agencies in the same region of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Overlap occurs when routes have the same or nearby starting and ending points and are transporting similar clients at similar times. This graphic illustrates that many of these agencies have similar starting and ending points. Among the agencies shown in this graphic are two vocational rehabilitation agencies (serving the same general population) as well as agencies that serve low-income clients or clients with disabilities. While the graphic cannot show the time element, many of these routes represent trips occurring within 30 minutes of each other in the morning and afternoon.

We also found examples of fragmented services and confusion among users as a result of uncoordinated programs. One official said that a lack of coordination results in fragmented services, placing a burden on people who receive transportation through many different programs, depending on trip purpose, because they must be familiar with multiple systems, rules, and requirements. Fragmentation also occurs when adjoining counties do not coordinate their public transportation routes, leaving

riders stranded due to unconnected transit systems. For example, a local transit administrator said that a 62-year old woman regularly walks 1.5 miles from the northern border of the county to her job in the next county, along roads with no sidewalks, because the counties do not coordinate and the bus service does not connect across county lines. Another provider in the same state has contracts to provide transportation services for clients in multiple human service programs. Because of a lack of coordination among those programs, the transportation provider has to maintain two separate dispatching and reservation systems for its vehicles to comply with differing reporting and eligibility requirements. Vehicles can only operate under one dispatching system at a time, so the drivers cannot provide rides to more than one type of client at a time. In addition, the provider said that clients who call for rides are confused by the sheer number of programs, and the agents who make their reservations do not know for which program the clients are eligible.

Officials Cited Numerous Obstacles to Successfully Coordinating Services and Provided Potential Options to Mitigate Them

Although some federal, state, and local agencies encourage the coordination of services for the transportation-disadvantaged and some coordination efforts have been established, officials representing these agencies and experts in the area cited numerous obstacles that impede more effective coordination of transportation services among agencies, as well as potential ways for overcoming these obstacles.

Obstacles Related to Sharing Vehicles and Providing Financial Resources for Coordination

Officials pointed out that agencies may be reluctant to share vehicles or may give low priority to funding coordination activities. In addition, some areas have limited transportation services available, thus limiting any opportunities to benefit from coordination.

Apprehension About Sharing Available Financial Resources and Vehicles

Administrators of federal programs may be apprehensive about sharing vehicles for coordination due, in part, to their concerns about a loss of control over the quality of client services or their concerns about mixing frail, sick, and healthy populations in one coordinated system. According to a report on coordinated transportation systems, this reluctance among

providers to cooperate can lead to an underutilization of vehicles.¹³ Likewise, some human service clients may be apprehensive about using coordinated transportation because they may be uncomfortable mixing with members of other populations with whom they are unfamiliar or they may fear a loss of accommodation or convenience, such as having to adjust from door-to-door service to curb-to-curb service or public transit.

Low Priority Given to Funding Coordination Activities

Despite the per unit cost-savings that some agencies have experienced through coordinating, the overall cost of coordination can be significant. For example, a transportation brokerage firm in one state faced substantial added costs when it began providing transportation to human service programs due to requirements to meet more stringent state and federal safety standards. However, some officials stated that the low priority given to funding coordination activities could impede coordination efforts. For example, according to officials in one state, although recipients of funds from DOT's Capital Assistance Program for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities are required to coordinate with other local transportation services provided from federal sources, DOT does not currently encourage the use of these funds for administration of the program and, thus, the current allotment for administrative expenses would not support any staff to work on coordination activities.

Limited Availability of Transportation Services

Coordination may not be an effective strategy in those communities that have limited transportation services available, particularly in those communities that are not served by public transportation. For example, in some remote areas—such as the northwestern part of South Dakota where services available to many communities are 40 to 60 miles away—there are few transportation services available to transport individuals to hospitals or other services. In these areas, coordination may not be a workable or cost-effective option.

Obstacles Related to Programmatic Differences

Coordinating multiple programs administered at various levels of government is complicated because the programs have different requirements with respect to eligibility, funding, reporting, and safety; and they differ in their programmatic goals and missions.

¹³Moss Adams LLP, Community Transportation Association of America, *The Coordination Challenge* (Seattle, WA: June 2000).

Different Eligibility Rules

Federal program rules that specify the eligible populations that each program can serve may limit opportunities for collaboration. For example, DOT officials in one region stated that they were unable to combine DOL and DOT funds for a DOT transportation program for migrant farm workers because DOL funds are designated for U.S. citizens, while there is no such restriction on the use of DOT funds. In addition, some liability insurance policies specify that a program's vehicles may serve only a certain population, thus those programs face additional insurance costs to transport individuals other than program clients. Such restrictions can lead to inefficient transportation services within a community. For example, an official in one state we visited commented that one federal agency's vehicle provided medically related trips three times per week to that agency's clients, but would not transport other individuals seeking similar medical services provided under other federal programs due, in part, to liability insurance restrictions. Safety requirements also vary by program and jurisdiction, thus complicating efforts to transport multiple client groups. For instance, different standards for roof strength, types of seat belts, and driver qualifications pose problems for schools, human service agencies, and public transit providers interested in sharing vehicles. Some areas have been able to overcome specific program rules to share vehicles. For example, a Head Start grantee in one state we visited was able to transport students using vehicles supplied by the local public transit provider because these vehicles met the same safety standards as school buses.

Varying Funding Streams and Cycles

Funding streams and cycles vary across federal programs, making coordination more difficult. For example, DOT funds generally flow from the state to counties or cities, while DOL funds flow through the states to local workforce investment boards. In addition, funding for programs such as Head Start flows directly to grantees rather than going through states, making it more difficult for the states to directly manage the coordination activities of local grantees, according to an official in one state. There is also complexity in working with different funding time frames and cycles under multiple federal programs. For example, although DOT's Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program encourages grantees to use other federal funds to provide the local "match" required to obtain JARC funds, the funding time frames and cycles of these other funding sources are different, complicating efforts to combine financial resources.

Lack of Uniform Data Collection and Reporting Requirements Among Programs

Different reporting requirements among programs can create excessive paperwork in a coordinated system and may make it difficult for agencies to determine their true transportation costs and the benefits that may be realized from coordination. For example, one report commented that a

transit provider was required to give each of several human service agencies a separate type of bill for services provided, which reflected the unique requirements imposed by each of those agencies.¹⁴ In addition, human service agencies and providers may not be required or accustomed to collecting complete and uniform transportation data for their programs, even though such information may enable administrators to estimate their transportation-related costs and re-evaluate how best to provide transportation. For example, when Florida's statewide coordination program was established, state and local agencies in Florida reported their total estimated annual transportation-related expenditures at \$8 million. However, once reporting requirements were in place for all agencies providing services to the transportation-disadvantaged, actual expenditures were estimated to total \$224.9 million—much higher than the initial estimate. Such information has helped human service agencies in Florida understand their true transportation costs, which has encouraged some of these agencies to be more interested in coordination as they realize the potential for cost savings.

Distinct Purposes and Goals Among Agencies

Unlike transportation agencies, human service agencies provide transportation as a secondary service so that their clients may access primary human services. Therefore, while DOT-funded transportation agencies have specific and relatively uniform federal requirements for transportation planning, human service agencies do not typically conduct transportation planning or collect transportation-related data for their programs, making the planning of coordinated transportation services between transportation and human service agencies challenging.¹⁵ In addition, human service, transportation, medical, and workforce agencies all have distinct technical languages and cultures, which may inhibit collaboration among these agencies. In one state we visited, the labor and transportation departments experienced difficulty collaborating because some common terms have completely different meanings within each agency. For example, transportation officials interpreted the term “cost-allocation” as an accounting methodology to estimate the overall cost of operating transportation services in order to determine the appropriate rate to charge for these services, while state labor officials interpreted the

¹⁴Ecosometrics, Inc., *Recommended Framework for Developing State and Local Human Services Transportation Planning Guidance* (Bethesda, MD: Sept. 22, 1998).

¹⁵Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, *Innovative State and Local Planning for Coordinated Transportation* (Washington, D.C.: February 2002).

term as a way to determine what proportion of overall costs will be funded by each agency.

Obstacles Related to Limited Federal and State Guidance and Information on Coordination

Although some federal and state agencies have recognized the potential offered by coordination and provided some assistance toward this end, some state officials we interviewed expressed concerns about the amount and effectiveness of the guidance they have received on coordination. In addition, the absence of interagency forums or other mechanisms to develop and share information about initiatives to coordinate services limits the support that local providers receive to effectively coordinate.

Limited Federal Guidance and Information on Coordination

Officials in some states we visited said that they receive little federal guidance on potential strategies to coordinate services. As a result, they develop their own approaches without the benefit of guidance on the most effective way to coordinate services. For example, officials in one state said that there was insufficient guidance on how to share costs among programs for projects funded jointly by DOT's JARC grants, HHS's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and DOL's Welfare-to-Work program funds. Instead, they had to seek advice from other states. In addition, the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility is not directly funded and has limited visibility for agencies actually involved in implementing coordination efforts. For example, although the Council has developed a Web site¹⁶ that is accessible through a link on the Federal Transit Administration's section of DOT's Web site, there is no similar link from HHS's Web site, possibly limiting human service agencies' awareness of and ability to access the site. In several states, human service program administrators with whom we spoke were not aware of the Council or its Web site.

Limited State Guidance and Information on Coordination

In the five states we visited—even in those states with a coordinating body—there was limited state guidance to help local areas implement coordination, and some officials stated that the lack of leadership and commitment at the state level was a major obstacle to local coordination. In addition, while some states have established coordinating councils or bodies or have designated a lead agency for coordination, nearly one-half of the states have no coordinating body, according to one report.¹⁷ Officials

¹⁶www.fta.dot.gov/CCAM/www.index.html

¹⁷Westat, *Toolkit for Rural Community Coordinated Transportation Services*, Transit Cooperative Research Project of the Transportation Research Board, Project B-24, Interim Report (Rockville, MD: March 2002).

in one state explained that the lack of a coordinating body that requires various agencies to discuss and resolve transportation issues is the main obstacle toward a more coordinated system.

Potential Options to Improve Coordination

Federal, state, and local officials, as well as experts in the area, have suggested a number of potential ways to improve coordination of transportation services among federal programs. We are still in the process of collecting additional information and reviewing it with stakeholders, but three key options have emerged thus far.

Harmonizing Program Standards and Requirements

Officials and experts expressed a need to harmonize requirements among federal programs, such as providing more flexible regulatory language that would allow providers to serve additional client groups, creating consistent cost accounting methods, and adopting common safety standards. For example, one official commented that federal program regulations could include language permitting other client groups to make use of available transportation options. Also, some officials believed that adopting standard accounting procedures could provide a consistent measure for comparing services, allowing administrators to evaluate how best to provide transportation services and determine the savings they could achieve through coordination. Likewise, making standards for safety (e.g., types of seat belts) and driver training uniform among federal human service programs, as appropriate, may facilitate the shared use of vehicles and drivers in one coordinated system, according to some officials. Finally, some officials suggested that federal grant programs that allow the use of funds from multiple sources should be under the same funding cycle or time frame so that these funds may be combined more easily. However, differing program standards exist to ensure that the distinct needs of specific target populations are adequately served and that agencies maintain accountability for providing these services. Thus, the benefits from any change in standards or requirements would need to be balanced against continuing to properly meet client needs and sufficiently control funds distributed to grantees. In addition, harmonizing program standards and requirements among 62 federal programs authorized by more than 20 pieces of legislation would necessitate extensive legislative changes and could impose additional costs for agencies to meet new requirements.

Expanding Forums and Providing and Disseminating Additional Guidance and Information on Coordination

Some officials advocated expanding the number of agencies involved in coordination, establishing interagency forums, and improving central clearinghouses as ways to better develop and disseminate guidance on coordination. To enhance coordination efforts at the federal level, some

officials suggested expanding the membership of the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility to include additional agencies so that a broader array of agencies that serve the transportation-disadvantaged are represented. This could include agencies such as DOL and the Department of Education that we identified as being significant because a large number of their programs authorize the funding of transportation services for the transportation-disadvantaged. In addition, establishing state-level forums may also facilitate communication among agencies involved in coordination and can lead to benefits. For example, one state has established an interagency task force on transportation coordination, which has resulted in a number of benefits—including the pooling of vehicles and the expansion of services—in some areas of the state. Some officials and experts suggested that federal agencies provide additional guidance and other information that result from forums or other sources to clearly define the allowable uses of funds, assist agencies in developing cost-sharing arrangements for transporting common clientele, and encourage the establishment and participation in interagency forums. This additional guidance and information could be better disseminated through a central clearinghouse, such as the Coordinating Council’s Web site.

Providing Financial Incentives or Mandates

Some officials and experts believed that incentives or mandates could help improve coordination, although others expressed concerns that such actions would have negative effects on the ability of local agencies to respond to community needs. Officials provided several examples, including the following:

- Federal grant applications could contain provisions giving priority in funding to those grantees committed to coordination efforts.
- Current funds allotted by multiple federal sources could be combined into one state or local fund for transportation services for the transportation-disadvantaged.
- Funding opportunities could be tied to federal or state coordination mandates so that there are financial consequences for a failure to coordinate.

However, officials pointed out that these options also had some potential downsides that would need to be carefully considered. For example, combining funds into a single source could result in some populations being unfairly overlooked because smaller agencies would be at a disadvantage in competing for funding with larger agencies serving larger numbers of clients. In addition, several officials also raised concerns about

mandates to coordinate. For example, some officials said that mandates might reduce the flexibility of agencies to design and deliver transportation services that specifically address their communities' needs. In addition, some officials noted that state efforts or mandates might not guarantee successful local coordination. For example, a city in one state we visited was unsuccessful in coordinating its multiple transportation services despite state encouragement to do so and despite losing some federal funding as a result.

Messrs. Chairmen, this concludes my prepared statement. I would be happy to respond to any questions you or Members of the Committees may have at this time.

Contact and Acknowledgments

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Appendix I: Scope and Methodology

Our scope of work included federal programs that provide transportation services to the transportation-disadvantaged. To provide information on the purposes and types of such federal programs, we first determined the universe of programs by reviewing an existing inventory produced by the Community Transportation Association of America¹ and a report prepared for the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility.² We then supplemented and modified this inventory of programs based on interviews with agency officials and searches of the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance. We included only those programs that provide nonemergency, nonmilitary, surface transportation services of any kind, targeted to transportation-disadvantaged populations. We interviewed program administrators to identify the general target population and the types of transportation services and trips that are typically provided under each program.

To address the issues related to program funding, effects of coordination, and coordination obstacles and strategies, we: (1) conducted interviews and document reviews in the pertinent federal agencies; (2) conducted five case studies in Arizona, Florida, New York, South Dakota, and Wisconsin; (3) reviewed the literature on the challenges encountered in providing and coordinating services to the transportation-disadvantaged; and (4) interviewed industry representatives and advocacy groups representing elderly and disabled populations. We did not verify spending data or estimates received from federal agencies for accuracy.

At the federal level, we interviewed officials from the headquarters of the Federal Transit Administration in the Department of Transportation; the Administration on Aging, the Administration for Children and Families, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Health Resources Services Administration, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in the Department of Health and Human Services; the Employment and Training Administration in the Department of Labor; the Department of Agriculture; the Department of Education; the Department of Housing and Urban Development; the Department of the Interior; and the Department of Veterans Affairs. We also interviewed federal officials from the 10 regional offices of the Federal Transit

¹Community Transportation Association of America, *Building Mobility Partnerships: Opportunities for Federal Investment* (Washington, D.C.: March 2002).

²Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility, *Planning Guidelines for State and Local Coordination* (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 20, 2000).

Administration and some regional officials in the departments of Health and Human Services and Labor. The federal officials we met with included representatives of the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility from the Federal Transit Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services.

In conducting our case studies in the five states, we reviewed documentation and interviewed officials from state and local transportation and human service agencies and service providers, as well as consumers of transportation services. We judgmentally chose the states to include three states without a state mandate or state coordinating body and two states with such conditions. We also chose states on the basis of relative concentrations of elderly, disabled, and low-income populations, and for some, geographic dispersion.

Finally, we interviewed representatives of professional, industry, and advocacy organizations that are part of the National Consortium on the Coordination of Human Services Transportation, a group that represents a broad spectrum of stakeholders involved with coordination of transportation for the disadvantaged. We conducted our work from July 2002 through April 2003 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Appendix II: Inventory of Federal Programs

Program	Popular title of authorizing legislation	U.S. Code provisions authorizing funds for transportation	Typical uses as reported by program officials	Types of trips as reported by program officials	Target population as defined by program officials ^a	FY 2001 spending on transportation ^b
Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service						
Food Stamp Employment and Training Program	Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended	7 U.S.C. § 2015(d)(4)(l)(i)(I)	Reimbursement or advanced payment for gasoline expenses or bus fare	To access education, training, employment services, and employment placements	Low-income persons between the ages of 16 and 59	\$12,952,956 ^c
Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education						
21st-Century Community Learning Centers	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001	20 U.S.C. § 7173(a)(10)	Contract for service	To access educational services	Students from low-income families	\$84,600,000 (estimate) ^d
Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement						
Voluntary Public School Choice	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001	20 U.S.C. § 7225a(a)	Contract for services, purchase and operate vehicles, hire bus drivers & transportation directors, purchase bus passes, redesign transportation plans including new routing systems, offer professional development for bus drivers	To access educational services and programs	Students from under-performing schools who choose to transfer to higher performing schools	New program, no actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services						
Assistance for Education of All Children with Disabilities	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	20 U.S.C. §§ 1401(a)(22), 1411(a)(1)	Purchase and operate vehicles, contract for service	To access educational services	Children with disabilities	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Centers for Independent Living	Workforce Investment Act of 1998	29 U.S.C. §§ 796f-4(b)(3) and 705(18)(xi)	Referral, assistance, and training in the use of public transportation	To access program services	Persons with a significant disability	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind	Workforce Investment Act of 1998	29 U.S.C. § 796k(e)(5)	Referral, assistance, and training in the use of public transportation	To access program services, for general trips	Persons aged 55 or older who have significant visual impairment	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency

Program	Popular title of authorizing legislation	U.S. Code provisions authorizing funds for transportation	Typical uses as reported by program officials	Types of trips as reported by program officials	Target population as defined by program officials ^a	FY 2001 spending on transportation ^b
Independent Living State Grants	Workforce Investment Act of 1998	29 U.S.C. §§ 796e-2(1) and 705(18)(xi)	Referral, assistance, and training in the use of public transportation	To access program services, employment opportunities	Persons with a significant disability	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Supported Employment Services for Individuals with Severe Disabilities	Workforce Investment Act of 1998	29 U.S.C. §§ 795g and 705(36)	Vehicle modifications, bus tokens	To access employment placements, employment services, and vocational rehabilitation services	Persons with a significant disability	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency ^c
Vocational Rehabilitation Grants	Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended	29 U.S.C. § 723(a)(8)	Vehicle modifications, bus tokens	To access employment placements, employment services, and vocational rehabilitation services	Persons with physical or mental impairments	\$49,200,000 (estimate) ^e
Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families						
Child Care and Development Fund	Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, as amended	42 U.S.C. § 9858c	States rarely use CCDF funds for transportation and only under very restricted circumstances	To access child care services	Children from low-income families	\$0 (estimate) ^f
Community Services Block Grant Programs	Community Opportunities, Accountability, Training, and Educational Services Act of 1998	42 U.S.C. § 9904	Taxi vouchers, bus tokens	General trips	Low-income persons	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Developmental Disabilities Projects of National Significance	Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000	42 U.S.C. §§ 15002, 15081(2)(D)	Transportation information, feasibility studies, planning	General trips	Persons with developmental disabilities	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency ^g
Head Start	Augustus F. Hawkins Human Services Reauthorization Act of 1990	42 USCA § 9835(a)(3)(C)(ii)	Purchase and operate vehicles, contract with transportation providers, coordinate with local education agencies	To access educational services	Children from low-income families	\$514,500,000 (estimate) ^h

Program	Popular title of authorizing legislation	U.S. Code provisions authorizing funds for transportation	Typical uses as reported by program officials	Types of trips as reported by program officials	Target population as defined by program officials^a	FY 2001 spending on transportation^b
Refugee and Entrant Assistance Discretionary Grants	Refugee Act of 1980, as amended	8 U.S.C. §§ 1522(b)(7)(D), 1522(c)	Bus passes	To access employment and educational services	Refugees	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Refugee and Entrant Assistance State Administered Programs	Refugee Act of 1980, as amended	8 U.S.C. §§ 1522(b)(7)(D), 1522(c)	Bus passes	To access employment and educational services	Refugees	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Refugee and Entrant Assistance Targeted Assistance	Refugee Act of 1980, as amended	8 U.S.C. §§ 1522(b)(7)(D), 1522(c)	Bus passes	To access employment and educational services	Refugees	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Refugee and Entrant Assistance Voluntary Agency Programs	Refugee Act of 1980, as amended	8 U.S.C. §§ 1522(b)(7)(D), 1522(c)	Bus passes	To access employment and educational services	Refugees	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Social Services Block Grants	Social Security Act, as amended	42 U.S.C. § 1397a(a)(2)(A)	Any transportation-related use	To access medical or social services	States determine what categories of families and children	\$18,459,393
State Councils on Developmental Disabilities and Protection and Advocacy Systems	Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000	42 U.S.C. §§ 15002, 15025	States are encouraged to provide transportation services instead of vehicles	Attendance at meetings, conferences, trainings	Persons with developmental disabilities and family members	\$786,605 (partial outlay) ⁱ
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, as amended	42 U.S.C. §§ 604(a), (k)	Any transportation-related use, matching portion of JARC grants	General trips	No assistance is provided to families without a minor child, but states determine specific eligibility	\$160,462,214 (partial outlay) ^j
Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging						
Grants for Supportive Services and Senior Centers	Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended	42 U.S.C. § 3030d (a)(2)	Contract for services	To access program services, medical, and for general trips	Program is targeted to persons aged 60 or over	\$72,496,003

Program	Popular title of authorizing legislation	U.S. Code provisions authorizing funds for transportation	Typical uses as reported by program officials	Types of trips as reported by program officials	Target population as defined by program officials ^a	FY 2001 spending on transportation ^b
Program for American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian Elders	Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended	42 U.S.C. §§ 3057, 3030d(a)(2)	Purchase and operate vehicles	To access program services, medical, and for general trips	Program is for American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian elders	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services						
Medicaid	Social Security Act, as amended	42 U.S.C. §§ 1396a, 1396n(e)(1)(A)	Bus tokens, subway passes, brokerage services	To access health care services	Recipients are generally low-income persons, but states determine specific eligibility	\$976,200,000 (estimate) ^k
State Children's Health Insurance Program	Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Benefits Improvement Act of 2000	42 U.S.C. §§ 1397jj(a)(26), (27)	Any transportation-related use	To access health care services	Beneficiaries are children from low-income families, but states determine eligibility	\$4,398,089
Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration						
Community Health Centers	Public Health Service Act, as amended	42 U.S.C. § 254b(b)(1)(A)(iv)	Bus tokens, vouchers, transportation coordinators, and drivers	To access health care services	Medically underserved populations	\$4,200,000 (estimate) ^l
Healthy Communities Access Program	Public Health Service Act, as amended	42 U.S.C. § 256(e)(B)(iii)	Improve coordination of transportation	To access health care services	Uninsured or underinsured populations	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Healthy Start Initiative	Public Health Service Act, as amended	42 U.S.C. § 254c-8(e)(1)	Bus tokens, taxi vouchers, reimbursement for use of own vehicle	To access health care services	Residents of areas with significant perinatal health disparities	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
HIV Care Formula Grants	Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act of 1990	42 U.S.C. §§ 300ff-21(a), 23(a)(2)(B)	Bus passes, tokens, taxis, vanpools, vehicle purchase by providers, mileage reimbursement	To access health care services	Persons with HIV or AIDS	\$19,500,000 (estimate) ^m
Maternal and Child Services Grants	Social Security Act, as amended	42 U.S.C. § 701(a)(1)(A)	Any transportation-related use	To access health care services	Mothers, infants and children, particularly from low-income families	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency

Program	Popular title of authorizing legislation	U.S. Code provisions authorizing funds for transportation	Typical uses as reported by program officials	Types of trips as reported by program officials	Target population as defined by program officials ^a	FY 2001 spending on transportation ^b
Rural Health Care, Rural Health Network, and Small Health Care Provider Programs	Health Centers Consolidation Act of 1996	42 U.S.C. § 254c	Purchase vehicles, bus passes	To access health care services	Medically underserved populations in rural areas	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration						
Community Mental Health Services Block Grant	ADAMHA Reorganization Act, as amended	42 U.S.C. § 300x-1(b)(1)	Any transportation-related use	To access program services	Adults with mental illness and children with emotional disturbance	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant	ADAMHA Reorganization Act, as amended	42 U.S.C. § 300x-32(b)	Any transportation-related use	To access program services	Persons with a substance related disorder and/or recovering from substance related disorder	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development						
Community Development Block Grant	Housing and Community Development Act of 1974	42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(8)	Purchase and operate vehicles	General trips	Program must serve a majority of low-income persons	\$6,761,486 (partial outlay) ⁿ
Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS	AIDS Housing Opportunity Act	42 U.S.C. § 12907(a)(3)	Contract for services	To access health care and other services	Low-income persons with HIV or AIDS and their families	\$73,000 (estimate) ^o
Supportive Housing Program	McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, as amended	42 U.S.C. § 11385	Bus tokens, taxi vouchers, purchase and operate vehicles	To access supportive services	Homeless persons and families with children	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency ^p
Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Public and Indian Housing						
Revitalization of Severely Distressed Public Housing	Housing and Community Development Act of 1992, as amended	42 U.S.C. § 1437v(l)(3)	Bus tokens, taxi vouchers, contract for services	Trips related to employment or obtaining necessary supportive services	Residents of the severely distressed housing and residents of the revitalized units	\$700,000 (estimate) ^q
Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs						
Indian Employment Assistance	Adult Indian Vocational Training Act, as amended	25 U.S.C. § 309	Gas vouchers	To access training	Native American persons between the ages of 18 and 35	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency

Program	Popular title of authorizing legislation	U.S. Code provisions authorizing funds for transportation	Typical uses as reported by program officials	Types of trips as reported by program officials	Target population as defined by program officials^a	FY 2001 spending on transportation^b
Indian Employment, Training and Related Services ^c	Indian Employment, Training and Related Services Demonstration Act of 1992	25 U.S.C. § 3401	Gas vouchers	Employment-related	Low-income Native American persons	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration						
Job Corps	Workforce Investment Act of 1998	29 U.S.C. §§ 2888(a)(1), 2890	Bus tickets	To access Job Corps sites and employment services	Low-income youth	\$21,612,000
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers	Workforce Investment Act of 1998	29 U.S.C. §§ 2801(46), 2912(d)	Mileage reimbursement	To access employment placements or intensive and training services	Low-income persons and their dependents who are primarily employed in agricultural labor that is seasonal or migratory	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Native American Employment and Training	Workforce Investment Act of 1998	29 U.S.C. § 2911(d)(2)	Bus tokens, transit passes	To access employment placements, employment services	Unemployed American Indians and other persons of Native American descent	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Senior Community Service Employment Program	Older Americans Act of 1965	42 U.S.C. § 3056(c)(6)(A)(iv)	Mileage reimbursement, reimbursement for travel costs, and payment for cost of transportation	To access employment placements	Low-income persons aged 55 or over	\$4,400,000 (estimate) ^e
Trade Adjustment Assistance - Workers	Trade Act of 1974, as amended	19 U.S.C. § 2296(b)	Mileage reimbursement, transit fares	To access training	Persons found to be impacted by foreign trade, increased imports, or shift in production	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Welfare-to-Work Grants to Federally Recognized Tribes and Alaska Natives ^f	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996	42 U.S.C. § 612(a)(3)(C)	Any transportation-related use, though purchasing vehicles for individuals is not allowable	To access employment placements, employment services	American Indians and other persons of Native American descent who are long-term welfare recipients or are low-income	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency

Program	Popular title of authorizing legislation	U.S. Code provisions authorizing funds for transportation	Typical uses as reported by program officials	Types of trips as reported by program officials	Target population as defined by program officials^a	FY 2001 spending on transportation^b
Welfare-to-Work Grants to States and Localities ^c	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996	42 U.S.C. § 603(a)(5)(C)	Any transportation-related use, though purchasing vehicles for individuals is not allowable	To access employment placements, employment services	Long-term welfare recipients or low-income individuals	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Work Incentive Grants	Workforce Investment Act of 1998, as amended	29 U.S.C. §§ 2801(46), 2864(d)(2)	Encourage collaboration with transportation providers	To access one-stop services	Persons with disabilities who are eligible for employment and training services under WIA	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Workforce Investment Act Adult Program	Workforce Investment Act of 1998, as amended	29 U.S.C. §§ 2801(46), 2864(e)(2)	Mileage reimbursement, bus tokens, vouchers	To access training	Priority must be given to people on public assistance and low-income individuals	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Workforce Investment Act Dislocated Worker Program	Workforce Investment Act of 1998, as amended	29 U.S.C. §§ 2801(46), 2864(e)(2)	Transportation allowance or reimbursement, bus/subway tokens	To access transition assistance in order to find or qualify for new employment	Includes workers who have been laid off, or have received an individual notice of termination, or notice that a facility will close	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Workforce Investment Act Youth Activities	Workforce Investment Act of 1998, as amended	29 U.S.C. §§ 2801(46), 2854(a)(4)	Public transportation	To access training and other support services	Youth with low individual or family income	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Youth Opportunity Grants	Workforce Investment Act of 1998, as amended	29 U.S.C. §§ 2801(46), 2914(b)	Bus tokens	To access program services	Youth from high poverty areas, empowerment zones, or enterprise communities	\$415,000 (estimate) ^v
Department of Labor, Employment Standards Administration						
Black Lung Benefits Program	Black Lung Benefits Reform Act of 1977	30 U.S.C. § 923	Mileage reimbursement, transit fares, taxi vouchers	To access health services	Disabled coal miners	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency ^v

Program	Popular title of authorizing legislation	U.S. Code provisions authorizing funds for transportation	Typical uses as reported by program officials	Types of trips as reported by program officials	Target population as defined by program officials ^a	FY 2001 spending on transportation ^b
Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service						
Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Project	Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act of 2001	38 USCA §§ 2011, 2021	Bus tokens	To access employment services	Homeless veterans	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Veterans' Employment Program	Workforce Investment Act of 1998, as amended	29 U.S.C. §§ 2801(46), 2913	Bus tokens, minor repairs to vehicles	To access employment services	Veterans	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration						
Capital and Training Assistance Program for Over-the-Road Bus Accessibility	Title 49 Recodification, P.L. 103-272	49 U.S.C. § 5310	To make vehicles wheelchair accessible and training required by ADA	General trips	Persons with disabilities	\$2,877,818
Capital Assistance Program for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities	Title 49 Recodification, P.L. 103-272	49 U.S.C. § 5310	Assistance in purchasing vehicles, contract for services	To serve the needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities	Elderly persons and persons with disabilities	\$174,982,628
Capital Investment Grants	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century	49 U.S.C. § 5309	Assistance for bus and bus-related capital projects	General trips	General public, although some projects are for the special needs of elderly persons and persons with disabilities	\$17,500,000 (estimate) ^w
Job Access and Reverse Commute	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century	49 U.S.C. § 5309	Expand existing public transportation or initiate new service	To access employment and related services	Low-income persons, including persons with disabilities	\$85,009,627
Nonurbanized Area Formula Program	Title 49 Recodification, P.L. 103-272	49 U.S.C. § 5311	Capital and operating assistance for public transportation service, including paratransit services, in nonurbanized areas	General trips	General public, although paratransit services are for the special needs of persons with disabilities	\$0 (partial obligation) ^x

Program	Popular title of authorizing legislation	U.S. Code provisions authorizing funds for transportation	Typical uses as reported by program officials	Types of trips as reported by program officials	Target population as defined by program officials ^a	FY 2001 spending on transportation ^b
Urbanized Area Formula Program	Title 49 Recodification, P.L. 103-272, as amended	49 U.S.C. § 5307	Capital assistance, and some operating assistance for public transit, including paratransit services, in urbanized areas	General trips	General public, although paratransit services are for the special needs of persons with disabilities	\$36,949,680 (partial obligation) ^y
Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration						
Automobiles and Adaptive Equipment for Certain Disabled Veterans and Members of the Armed Forces	Disabled Veterans and Servicemen's Automobile Assistance Act of 1970	38 U.S.C. § 3902	Purchase of personal vehicles, modifications of vehicles	General trips	Veterans and service members with disabilities	\$33,639,000
Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration						
VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program	Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Service Programs Act of 1992	38 U.S.C. § 7721 note	20 vans were purchased under this program	General trips	Homeless veterans	\$565,797
Veterans Medical Care Benefits	Veterans' Benefits Improvements Act of 1994	38 U.S.C. § 111	Mileage reimbursement, contract for service	To access health care services	Veterans with disabilities or low-incomes	\$126,594,591
Total spending on transportation services for the transportation-disadvantaged						\$2,429,835,887

Source: GAO analysis of information from the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Labor, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs; the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility; the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance; the U.S. Code; the Code of Federal Regulations; and the Community Transportation Association of America.

^aA supplemental source for the target populations was the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.

^bActual outlays or obligations on transportation are given for programs that track this information. All data are outlays, except for the following programs, which are obligations: Capital Investment Grants, Urbanized Area Formula Program, Nonurbanized Area Formula Program, Job Access and Reverse Commute, Capital and Training Assistance for Over-the-Road Bus Accessibility, Capital Assistance Program for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities, Automobiles and Adaptive Equipment for Certain Disabled Veterans and Members of the Armed Forces, and Veterans Medical Care Benefits. Actual data and estimates are the total for the program, unless otherwise noted as partial outlays or obligations in the table. When actual information was not available, estimates are given based on information provided by program officials or the officials agreed with an estimate made by another source.

^cAccording to a program official, outlays for the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program have increased due to changes in the program from the 2002 Farm Bill. The 2002 Farm Bill eliminates the \$25 per month cap that the Department of Agriculture will reimburse the states for transportation and other work costs incurred by participants. In fiscal year 2002, federal outlays for transportation were \$18,523,535.

^dA program official said that 10 percent of total program outlays would be a conservative estimate of transportation outlays.

^eAccording to a program official, grantees report total transportation outlays for Vocational Rehabilitation Grants, Supported Employment Services for Individuals with Severe Disabilities, and other rehabilitation sources together. The program official reports that transportation outlays for Vocational Rehabilitation Grants are approximately 90 percent of the total amount reported, but did not provide a similar estimate for Supported Employment Services for Individuals with Severe Disabilities.

^fA program official said that, while transportation is an allowable use of funds, using funds for transportation is not encouraged. Program officials estimate that transportation expenditures are zero or close to zero for this program.

^gFiscal year 2001 data are not available because transportation was not an area of emphasis until fiscal year 2002. The preliminary fiscal year 2002 outlays for transportation projects totaled \$1,084,798.

^hA program official estimated that transportation outlays were 8.3 percent of total outlays.

ⁱThis is a partial outlay based on voluntary reporting by grantees. Full outlays are not available because, according to a program official, grantees were not required to report transportation outlays prior to fiscal year 2002. Fiscal year 2002 data are incomplete, however preliminary data on transportation outlays from 46 of the 51 grantees totaled \$2,215,498.

^jThis is a partial outlay based on the amount grantees reported as non-assistance outlays in a category exclusively for transportation. States reported an additional \$356.5 million as outlays on assistance in a category that includes transportation and supportive services, however program officials were unable to determine what percentage of the outlays on assistance were spent on transportation.

^kProgram officials indicate that federal data on nonemergency medical transportation are not available. Estimate assumes that transportation outlays are 0.73 percent of total program outlays, based on previous research, including a survey of state Medicaid programs.

^lAccording to a program official, grantees report total outlays for transportation and it is not possible to distinguish between federal and nonfederal funds. The official said 22 percent of total transportation outlays would be a good estimate of the federal portion of fiscal year 2001 transportation outlays.

^mEstimate of transportation outlays is based on data from grantee's budget allocations, as suggested by an agency official.

ⁿThis is a partial outlay for transportation through the Community Development Block Grant program. This figure includes transportation outlays for the Entitlement program, but excludes the State Administered program.

^oThis is a partial estimate because, according to a program official, data on transportation outlays are only available from competitive grantees; formula grantees are not required to report outlays for transportation. The program official could not provide an estimate of outlays for transportation through the formula grant program. The program official said that fiscal year 2001 data for the competitive grant program are incomplete and the agency is still collecting fiscal year 2001 data from approximately one-third of its competitive grantees, due to differing reporting schedules. As of March 2003, competitive grantees reported outlays of approximately \$60,000 on transportation, and the program official expects total outlays for transportation to reach the level of outlays on transportation in fiscal year 1999 (approximately \$73,000) or more after all competitive grantees report data.

^pData on outlays for transportation are not available. The agency does collect data on the amount that grantees request for various supportive services, including transportation. These requests may cover 1, 2, or 3 years; a program official said that they could not easily determine for how many years grantees are requesting money. In fiscal year 2001, grantees requested \$12,973,992 for transportation.

^qEstimate of outlays for transportation is based on a program official's review of the budgets from 15 grantees who renewed their grants in fiscal year 2001. The official projected total transportation outlays for the program based on these 15 grantees.

⁴Public Law 102-477 allows tribal governments to consolidate funding from several federal programs. These include: the Department of Health and Human Services's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Child Care and Development Fund programs; the Department of Labor's Native American Employment and Training, and Welfare-to-Work Grants for Federally Recognized Tribes programs; and the Bureau of Indian Affairs's Employment Assistance, Indian Social Service and Welfare Assistance, Adult Basic Education, and Higher Education programs. The Indian Social Services and Welfare Assistance Program is not used for transportation outside 102-477. The Adult Basic Education and Higher Education programs do not target transportation-disadvantaged populations as defined in this study outside of 102-477. The Employment Assistance program and the HHS and DOL programs can provide transportation assistance separately from 102-477.

⁵A program official estimated that transportation outlays were approximately 1 percent of total program outlays.

⁶Program funding from FY 1998 and 1999 may still be spent, but the program no longer receives funding.

⁷Estimate of transportation outlays is based on a program official's review of grantee obligations.

⁸According to a program official, fiscal year 2001 data are not available due to changes in the program's reporting system. The official reported that transportation outlays for fiscal year 2002 totaled \$478,408.

⁹According to a program official, there are three distinct allocations of funds under the Capital Investment Grants: the New Starts allocation, which funds new rail projects; the fixed-guideway modernization allocation, which provides funding to maintain and update aging rail systems; and the bus allocation, which provides funding for the purchase of buses, bus-related equipment and paratransit vehicles, and for the construction of bus-related facilities. Because the Capital Investment Grants fund projects that provide services for the general public, the transportation-disadvantaged likely benefit from many projects funded through each of the three allocations, but information was not available to estimate what portion of these funds for the general public benefit the transportation-disadvantaged. However, the program official said that the bus allocation would likely provide the most direct benefit for the transportation-disadvantaged and the obligation level could be estimated by totaling allocations to purchase vans, buses for the elderly or disabled, or paratransit vehicles and equipment.

¹⁰The Nonurbanized Area Formula Program funds projects that provide services for the general public, however grantees can use up to 10 percent of their funds to provide complementary ADA paratransit services. Although grantees did not report obligations for complementary ADA paratransit, a program official said that transportation-disadvantaged populations might benefit from other services provided through this grant, such as demand-responsive services. However, the program official could not identify the amount of spending that directly benefits the transportation-disadvantaged.

¹¹According to a program official, the Urbanized Area Formula Program funds projects that provide services for the general public, however grantees can use up to 10 percent of their funds to provide complementary ADA paratransit services. The figure listed in the table is the total obligations that grantees reported for providing complementary ADA paratransit services. Although grantees may benefit from other services provided through this grant, such as demand-responsive services, the amount spent on complementary ADA paratransit is the only portion that program officials could identify as directly benefiting the transportation-disadvantaged.