

TCRP

REPORT 64

Guidebook for Developing Welfare-to-Work Transportation Services

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TCRP REPORT 64

**Guidebook for Developing
Welfare-to-Work
Transportation Services**

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with

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TRANSIT COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM

The nation's growth and the need to meet mobility, environmental, and energy objectives place demands on public transit systems. Current systems, some of which are old and in need of upgrading, must expand service area, increase service frequency, and improve efficiency to serve these demands. Research is necessary to solve operating problems, to adapt appropriate new technologies from other industries, and to introduce innovations into the transit industry. The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) serves as one of the principal means by which the transit industry can develop innovative near-term solutions to meet demands placed on it.

The need for TCRP was originally identified in *TRB Special Report 213—Research for Public Transit: New Directions*, published in 1987 and based on a study sponsored by the Urban Mass Transportation Administration—now the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). A report by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), *Transportation 2000*, also recognized the need for local, problem-solving research. TCRP, modeled after the longstanding and successful National Cooperative Highway Research Program, undertakes research and other technical activities in response to the needs of transit service providers. The scope of TCRP includes a variety of transit research fields including planning, service configuration, equipment, facilities, operations, human resources, maintenance, policy, and administrative practices.

TCRP was established under FTA sponsorship in July 1992. Proposed by the U.S. Department of Transportation, TCRP was authorized as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). On May 13, 1992, a memorandum agreement outlining TCRP operating procedures was executed by the three cooperating organizations: FTA, the National Academies, acting through the Transportation Research Board (TRB); and the Transit Development Corporation, Inc. (TDC), a nonprofit educational and research organization established by APTA. TDC is responsible for forming the independent governing board, designated as the TCRP Oversight and Project Selection (TOPS) Committee.

Research problem statements for TCRP are solicited periodically but may be submitted to TRB by anyone at any time. It is the responsibility of the TOPS Committee to formulate the research program by identifying the highest priority projects. As part of the evaluation, the TOPS Committee defines funding levels and expected products.

Once selected, each project is assigned to an expert panel, appointed by the Transportation Research Board. The panels prepare project statements (requests for proposals), select contractors, and provide technical guidance and counsel throughout the life of the project. The process for developing research problem statements and selecting research agencies has been used by TRB in managing cooperative research programs since 1962. As in other TRB activities, TCRP project panels serve voluntarily without compensation.

Because research cannot have the desired impact if products fail to reach the intended audience, special emphasis is placed on disseminating TCRP results to the intended end users of the research: transit agencies, service providers, and suppliers. TRB provides a series of research reports, syntheses of transit practice, and other supporting material developed by TCRP research. APTA will arrange for workshops, training aids, field visits, and other activities to ensure that results are implemented by urban and rural transit industry practitioners.

The TCRP provides a forum where transit agencies can cooperatively address common operational problems. The TCRP results support and complement other ongoing transit research and training programs.

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NOTICE

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The members of the technical advisory panel selected to monitor this project and to review this report were chosen for recognized scholarly competence and with due consideration for the balance of disciplines appropriate to the project. The opinions and conclusions expressed or implied are those of the research agency that performed the research, and while they have been accepted as appropriate by the technical panel, they are not necessarily those of the Transportation Research Board, the National Research Council, the Transit Development Corporation, or the Federal Transit Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Each report is reviewed and accepted for publication by the technical panel according to procedures established and monitored by the Transportation Research Board Executive Committee and the Governing Board of the National Research Council.

To save time and money in disseminating the research findings, the report is essentially the original text as submitted by the research agency. This report has not been edited by TRB.

Special Notice

The Transportation Research Board, the National Research Council, the Transit Development Corporation, and the Federal Transit Administration (sponsor of the Transit Cooperative Research Program) do not endorse products or manufacturers. Trade or manufacturers' names appear herein solely because they are considered essential to the clarity and completeness of the project reporting.

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FOREWORD

*By Staff
Transportation Research
Board*

TCRP Report 64, "Guidebook for Developing Welfare-to-Work Transportation Services," provides information about the role of transportation in supporting welfare-to-work initiatives and identifies practical strategies to improve access to job opportunities for former welfare recipients making the transition to work. The Guidebook describes service approaches that include modifications to existing mass transit services, coordination between transportation services, ride-sharing programs, automobile ownership programs, and collaborations between faith-based and community-based groups. The report should be useful to transit planners, decision makers, and social service and transportation providers.

New welfare laws created needs and opportunities for states and local governments to provide improved access and mobility for poor and low-income persons, many of whom do not or cannot afford to drive. The new time limits and work-based requirements are forcing social service agencies and providers of both public and private transportation to rethink the way transportation services are provided.

Among the ideas that hold promise is better coordination and integration of existing transportation services including those offered by employers, social service agencies, faith-based groups, nonprofit organizations, schools, and transit agencies. The ability to leverage resources more effectively and efficiently can offer improvements in mobility.

It is also important that localities know which transportation strategies work and which do not. Research was needed to identify ways to enhance coordination and explore the critical factors that determine success or failure in providing employment transportation services.

Multisystems, Inc., in association with Ecosometrics, Inc.; Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates, Inc.; Mundle & Associates, Inc.; and Simon & Simon Research and Associates, Inc. formed the research team for TCRP Project H-15A and prepared the guidebook and the final report. To achieve the project objective of developing a practitioner's guide to evaluate methods and outcomes that promote and enhance mobility and access to job opportunities for former welfare recipients, the researchers explored how new partnerships could expand the ability of transportation providers to more effectively plan, operate, and finance services in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Additionally, to accomplish the project objective, the researchers identified and analyzed how best to leverage resources and services that most effectively respond to the transportation needs of welfare recipients and low-income persons.

Research activities included an extensive literature review, focus groups with stakeholders in welfare-to-work activities, and a series of on-site case studies.

The final report, the companion to this guidebook, is titled "Welfare to Work: Integration and Coordination of Transportation and Social Services." It can be found

on the TCRP web site (www4.national-academies.org/trb/crp.nsf) as *TCRP Web Document 16*. The report provides a review of the issues and needs related to welfare reform and 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. Further, the final report describes available funding programs as well as innovative programs on the state and local levels. Also, a program evaluation and the lessons learned from each case study are included.

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Executive Summary

This guidebook was developed as part of the 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. The advice presented in this guidebook is based on in-depth interviews with transportation providers, social service agencies, and nonprofit organizations across the country.

Issues and Needs

Welfare reform legislation changed the structure of the U.S. 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. Specifically, welfare recipients face a number of transportation barriers, including the following:

- 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 one-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.
- Welfare recipients may have difficulty using a bus schedule.

States, counties, and communities have responded to this challenge with a variety of traditional and innovative strategies. This document guides the reader through the planning and implementation process for developing welfare-related transportation services, using lessons from exemplary programs.

Partners in Change

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 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 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program benefits and support services (e.g., training, placement, and 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

Through the planning process, stakeholders can share their specialized knowledge as they develop transportation strategies that incorporate the best elements of their differing disciplines. The individuals and the organizations they represent must work together to move their ideas into reality. Strong and committed leadership can help ensure that the differences among participants work to enrich the process. The first test of the group process is achieving consensus on a set of goals and objectives to guide program development and implementation.

During the early phases of project planning, goals and objectives will help define the basic program elements – such as targeted customers – and guide the needs assessment process. During program implementation, goals and objectives will help define the evaluation process. And throughout program planning and development, the goals and objectives will help keep participants focused on the project outcome.

Identifying Data Elements

Planning a welfare-to-work transportation program typically begins with a needs assessment. A needs assessment is intended to answer the following questions:

- Who are the target transportation customers?
- Where are job opportunities located?
- Where are support services located?
- What transportation alternatives are available to them now?
- What transportation barriers do they face?

The data elements commonly associated with welfare-to-work planning can be readily obtained from a variety of sources, including local welfare agencies, transit operators, and the federal government.

Identifying Unmet Needs

After assembling information about travel patterns and transportation resources, stakeholders can begin to assess the transportation barriers and gaps in service that program participants encounter. Many tools and resources are available for defining these transportation needs and barriers. These include use of computerized mapping systems to represent the geographic relationships among program participants, travel destinations, and transit services; market research techniques like surveys to gather information about travel patterns and transportation resources; and techniques like focus groups, community meetings, and structured interviews to obtain personal accounts of travel needs and transportation barriers.

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. 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 employment centers, to meet work shifts, or to 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
- **Entrepreneurial** services that train welfare recipients to provide transportation services to other community members
- **Travel information**, including multilingual materials and computerized trip planning services
- **Child-care transportation**
- **Fare subsidies** and incentives
- **One-stop centers** that consolidate services for welfare recipients

Defining the Program

After deciding what type of service best suits the identified travel needs of the target market, planners can define the program in more detail.

A **service plan** outlines program resource requirements and can be used to develop a budget and funding plan. Elements of a service plan include the following:

- Target market
- Route or service area
- Service characteristics
- Service span
- Frequency
- Reservation policy
- Vehicle requirements
- Operating arrangements

- Maintenance
- Staffing
- Fare policy
- Coordination
- Organizational responsibilities

While these elements focus on transit operations a service plan can easily be adapted to other welfare-related transportation programs.

Based on the information in the service plan, program developers can estimate **costs**. Transportation costs traditionally fall into three categories: capital, operating, and administrative.

The next step, after estimating program costs, is to **identify funding opportunities** and to **develop a funding plan**. 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 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.

Measuring Success

Measuring the effectiveness of welfare-to-work transportation programs provides valuable feedback to staff, stakeholders and funding sources about the program's activities and results. The first step is to select an evaluation approach. This usually falls into one of three broad categories:

- **Program performance**, to track the resources used to support the program
- **Customer benefits**, to assess the direct impacts on program participants
- **Societal benefits**, to evaluate overall social costs and benefits

Performance indicators are characteristics that are tracked to measure how well a program achieves an outcome. Each indicator will have one or more **targets**, which are specific objectives for measuring indicators. The specific criteria used for evaluating a program may blend strategies traditionally associated with transportation programs with those used by human services providers.

Defining data needs is a critical – and often overlooked – step in the evaluation process. Program staff must determine what information best answers the evaluation questions posed for the project and how that information can be collected.

New Partnerships, New Opportunities

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.

Case studies are summarized in Chapters 9 and 10, describing exemplary programs that provide transportation services to welfare recipients and, in some cases, other low-income workers. The highlighted programs have used a variety of creative strategies to address customer needs and are organized by their sponsorship. In some cases, multiple agencies jointly sponsored a single program.

Programs that use the resources of community groups and faith-based organizations include the following:

- **AdVANTage II**, at Sojourner-Douglas College in Baltimore, Maryland, which helps students at this community-based college to provide transportation services as van operators.
- **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.
- **San Diego Workforce Partnership**, in San Diego, California, which coordinates resources from church groups and nonprofit organizations to provide work-related transportation.

Agency-based programs include the following:

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Santee-Wateree Regional Transportation Authority Flex Routes**, in Sumter, South Carolina, which coordinates work-related transportation with services for human service agency clients.
- **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. For example, two programs in Maryland trained participants to operate their own van services. Several programs incorporated participation from community-based and faith-based organizations, and others had extensive outreach programs to ensure that potential customers had a voice in program development. Even the programs sponsored by traditional transportation and social service providers included nontraditional elements. Several transit authorities have introduced late-night

shuttles to serve second- and third-shift workers, while a rural agency in South Carolina found a way to combine work trips with agency transportation.

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 the community, the complexity of the transportation barriers that welfare clients encounter, 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 shown in the case studies, 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. They fit into five general categories:

- Collaboration
- Leadership
- Communication
- Creativity
- Sustainability

The lessons learned from these programs are summarized here:

Foster collaboration among human service, transportation and other organizations. Joining forces enabled social service and transportation programs to translate their agency-specific experience into cooperative efforts. For several programs, the involvement from faith-based, community-based, and grass roots organizations was a key factor.

Start at the top. Building coordination into the process has the potential to narrow the distance between transportation and social services.

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.

Do not underestimate the importance of maintaining communication among program staff, participants, and stakeholders. Clear communication starts with consensus on program goals and extends throughout planning and implementation.

Incorporate creative approaches to welfare-related transportation. Because traditional transportation services do not easily meet the transportation needs of welfare recipients, many communities developed innovative responses to welfare reform. Despite their diversity, these programs share one common trait: Program planners were “thinking outside the box.”

Design programs for the long run. 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 organizations, especially transportation agencies, have built upon existing services and capitalized on available support 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. 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.

Part 1:

I *ntroduction*

Introduction

This guidebook was developed as part of the 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. Service approaches described in this guidebook include modifications to existing mass transit services, better coordination and integration of available transportation services, ridesharing programs, automobile ownership programs, and subsidies for transportation costs. Also of note are coordinated planning processes, which have fostered 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.

Information Sources

The advice presented in this guidebook is based on in-depth interviews with transportation providers, social service agencies, and nonprofit organizations across the country. Case studies profiled programs of the following agencies or organizations:

- AC Transit, in Oakland, California
- Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services in Annapolis, Maryland
- Contra Costa County Social Services Department, in Martinez, California
- East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, in Oakland, California
- Good News Garage, in Burlington, Vermont
- Metropolitan Transportation Commission, in Oakland, California
- Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization, in Clearwater, Florida
- San Diego Workforce Partnership, in San Diego, California

- Santee-Wateree Regional Transportation Authority, in Sumter, South Carolina
- Sojourner - Douglass College in Baltimore, Maryland
- State of New Jersey
- State of South Carolina
- Transit Authority of River City, in Louisville, Kentucky
- TransPac in Pleasant Hill, California

Key findings from the case studies are excerpted throughout this report, along with information and advice from other exemplary programs. In addition, the case studies are included in their entirety.

Road Map

This guidebook presents practical advice for developing and implementing welfare-related transportation services. Guidance is based on the experience of the transportation and social service providers interviewed. The book is organized into four parts, as summarized here.

Part 1 introduces the challenges of providing welfare-related transportation.

- **Chapter 1** provides background on TCRP Project H-15A and this guidebook.
- **Chapter 2** summarizes the issues and needs associated with welfare-to-work transportation.

Part 2 focuses on the practical aspects of developing a transportation program and includes a series of how-to chapters.

- **Chapter 3** describes the new partnerships and collaborations participating in planning welfare-related transportation.
- **Chapter 4** provides guidance on gathering basic background data on welfare participants and their transportation needs.
- **Chapter 5** describes various approaches to defining unmet transportation needs, including quantitative statistical analysis and qualitative data review.
- **Chapter 6** describes various strategies for service implementation.
- **Chapter 7** summarizes the steps needed to develop a service plan, program budget, and funding plan and highlights potential funding sources.

- **Chapter 8** discusses approaches to program evaluation and monitoring results.

Part 3 presents the case studies documenting exemplary welfare-related transportation programs.

- **Chapter 9** profiles the new partnerships that have emerged with community- and faith-based programs.
- **Chapter 10** highlights programs sponsored by transportation, planning, and social services agencies.

Part 4 synthesizes the research findings and summarizes elements common to successful programs.

- **Chapter 11** summarizes lessons learned.

Appendices include relevant source materials, sample forms, and guides to additional resources.

Issues and Needs

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 (AFDC) 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.

Welfare reform legislation changed the structure of the U.S. 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. Many welfare recipients have difficulty obtaining reliable, affordable, and convenient transportation alternatives. The majority of welfare recipients do not own a car, and many entry-level jobs are located in the suburbs, well beyond easy transit access. Compounding the problem, employers may require individuals to work night and weekend shifts, and parents may have to coordinate work transportation with child-care responsibilities.

Solving the transportation problem has required new collaborations among public agencies and private organizations, innovative services, and creative funding strategies. This section summarizes the transportation barriers that welfare recipients face and the implications for travel planning and program development.

Transportation Barriers for Welfare Recipients

The commuting difficulties faced by individuals making the transition from welfare to work have been widely documented. Some of the information is anecdotal; consider the following examples.

- 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.

- 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.¹
- 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 mid-day 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.²
- “Transportation is a problem because I have had a bad experience before,” said a Chinese-speaking woman in Oakland, California. “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.”³

Stories like these 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.

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 had an average reported value of \$895.⁴ This national average shows significant local variation, however. California alone accounted for more than one-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 \$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.⁵ 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.⁷ 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.⁸

Where Do Welfare Recipients Live?

Welfare recipients overwhelmingly live in the nation’s metropolitan areas, but not necessarily the center cities. 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.⁶

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.

Spatial Mismatch

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 500,000.⁹ 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 the 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.¹⁰ Nationally, nearly two-thirds of new jobs created during the 1980s were located in the suburbs.¹¹ And by 1990, the suburban share of jobs grew from 37 percent to 42 percent.¹²

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, they may require transfers, and the walk from transit to the job site may not be pedestrian friendly.

Researchers in Ohio were among the first to document this gap between suburban jobs and available transit services. Using geographic information systems (GIS) software, they examined transit routes serving Cleveland neighborhoods with high concentrations of public assistance recipients. Their 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.¹³

Other studies have identified similar examples of the “spatial mismatch” between suburban job opportunities and concentrations of unemployed city residents. In the Atlanta metropolitan area, researchers determined that only 43 percent of entry-level jobs in Cobb County were accessible by transit, and most of these required a 1- to 2-hour commute.¹⁴ Another study showed that welfare clients living in Boston could reach just 14 percent of employers in a job-rich suburban employment center within 60 minutes by transit – and none within 30 minutes. Even more discouraging, nearly one-half of these employers could not be reached by transit within 2 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.¹⁵ Such analyses indicate the importance of considering the role of flexible services in addition to conventional fixed-route transit when providing welfare-to-work transportation.

Temporal Mismatch

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, about 15.2 million people – almost 17 percent of full-time adult workers – normally worked a shift other than a regular daytime schedule in 1997.¹⁶ 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, 7 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.¹⁷

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. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, most welfare recipients are single mothers. As Table 2-1 shows, 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. Survey research has shown that 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.¹⁸ This action of linking one or more trips together, known to transportation planners 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. Not surprisingly, then, trip chaining has been associated with increased auto use.

Information Gaps

Information about transportation services may be difficult for welfare clients and their caseworkers to obtain or to understand. Such information gaps may result from the need to travel between jurisdictions or service areas or to understand complicated fare arrangements. Sometimes difficulties arise because welfare recipients have trouble reading bus schedules or route maps because of literacy or language problems.

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

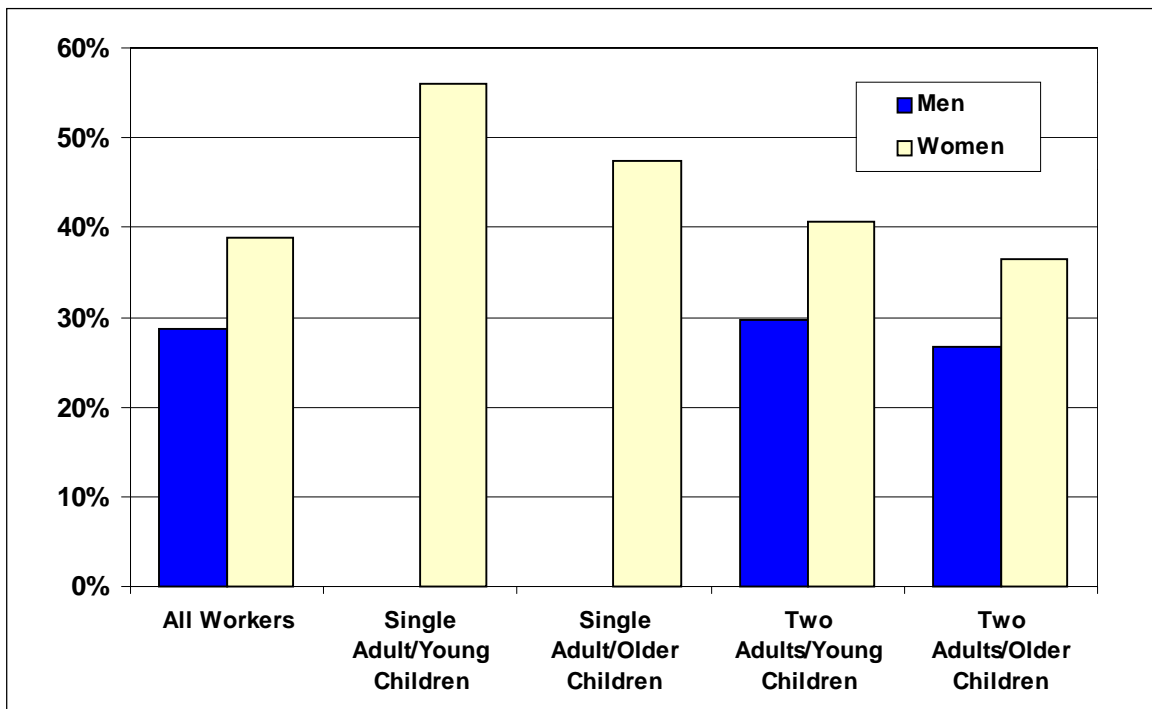


Table 2-1. Percentage of workers who add one or more stops between work and home trip.

Source: *Transit Markets of the Future: The Challenge of Change* (TCRP Report 28)

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.¹⁹ 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.²⁰

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.²¹ 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%).

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 one-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.
- Welfare recipients may 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.²²

States, counties, and communities have responded to this challenge with a variety of traditional and innovative strategies. The following chapters guide the reader through the planning and implementation process for developing welfare-related transportation services, using lessons from exemplary programs.

Notes

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Part 2: **P***rogram* **E***lements*

Partners in Change

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, departments of transportation, regional planning associations, community-based organizations, faith-based groups, workforce development agencies, employers, and educational institutions. Each group brings to the table a unique set of issues, perspectives, and skills. Initially these partnerships may be reluctant, perhaps created by mandate; sometimes they can be characterized by skepticism and self-interest. But over time, perhaps with the guidance of a committed leader, they can capitalize on common interests and diverse skills to develop innovative solutions that help individuals make the transition from welfare to work. This chapter identifies the range of potential partners in the planning process.

Coming to the Table

Identifying the right partners is the first step in a successful welfare-related transportation planning process. These partners, often known as “stakeholders,” include representatives from agencies and organizations that have a vested interest in the outcome of the program. In Hartford, Connecticut, jobs 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*. The expression has been widely copied and freely adapted. As one transit general manager put it, “Get everybody to the table who will come.” A planner at another agency added, “Err on the side of inclusion,” another planner added. “Invite individuals even if you don’t think they will participate. People come to the table throughout the process.”

Stakeholders in the transportation planning process should be recruited to ensure that the interests of both customers and service providers are both represented. Ideally, those at the table should include **decision-makers** – or those with direct access to decision-makers – since these individuals can move programs from plans to action. They 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, and 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 government (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.

These partnerships, especially those achieved between transportation and social services providers, can also help change the direction of policy and regulations. In states or localities where welfare reform plans do not incorporate transportation elements, the planning process may highlight the need to do so in the future. Opportunities for better data collection and information sharing may similarly be identified, along with strategies for on-going program collaboration and coordination.

Some of the potential stakeholders and lead organizations 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. 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

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 DOT 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 DOT 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. 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 (see Figure 3-1).



Figure 3-1. Example of van transportation provided by a faith-based organization.

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.

Achieving Consensus

Identifying stakeholders is just the first step in the planning process. These individuals and the organizations they represent must work together to move their ideas into reality. Strong and committed **leadership** can help ensure that the differences among participants work to enrich the process. Leaders may be appointed by the oversight organization (such as a state department of human services), or the stakeholders themselves may select a chairman. Sometimes the leadership of a single individual helps to carry the project; in other cases, an agency or organization can carry the banner. Regardless of who takes the lead, the right program champion can move a program from concept to success.

The first test of the group process is achieving consensus on a set of goals and objectives to guide program development and implementation. Goals and objectives serve two major purposes. First, they define the steps and actions needed to accomplish the program. And, second, they define specific measures for tracking program performance

Goals are intended to set overall direction for a program. For example, a program may have as a goal: "To provide TANF participants with affordable transportation alternatives."

Effective goals incorporate the following characteristics:

- **Be specific** – Can you determine whether you have accomplished the goal?
- **Be measurable** – Can you track progress toward the goal?
- **Reflect consensus** – Does the goal distill the diverse perspectives of the program stakeholders?
- **Set a time frame** – Does the goal include a target date for achieving the intended action?
- **Be realistic** – Does the group have the legal or jurisdictional authority to accomplish this goal?
- **Be challenging** – Does the goal encourage stakeholders to move beyond the status quo and realize new accomplishments?

Objectives are the steps taken to accomplish each goal. They are quite specific in nature and represent individual milestones along the path to accomplish a goal. For example, one objective associated with the preceding

goal might be: "To subsidize out-of-pocket expenditures for TANF clients." Objectives should be measurable by quantitative or qualitative means to facilitate on-going program evaluation.

During the early phases of project planning, goals and objectives will help define the basic program elements – such as the targeted customers – and guide the needs assessment process. During program implementation, the goals and objectives will help define the evaluation process. And throughout program planning and development, the goals and objectives will help keep participants and stakeholders moving along a single path and focused on the project outcome. The next several chapters describe these steps in program planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Identifying Data Elements

Planning a welfare-to-work transportation program typically begins with a needs assessment. A needs assessment is intended to answer the following questions:

- Who are the target transportation customers?
- Where are job opportunities located?
- Where are support services located?
- What transportation alternatives are available to them now?
- What transportation barriers do they face?

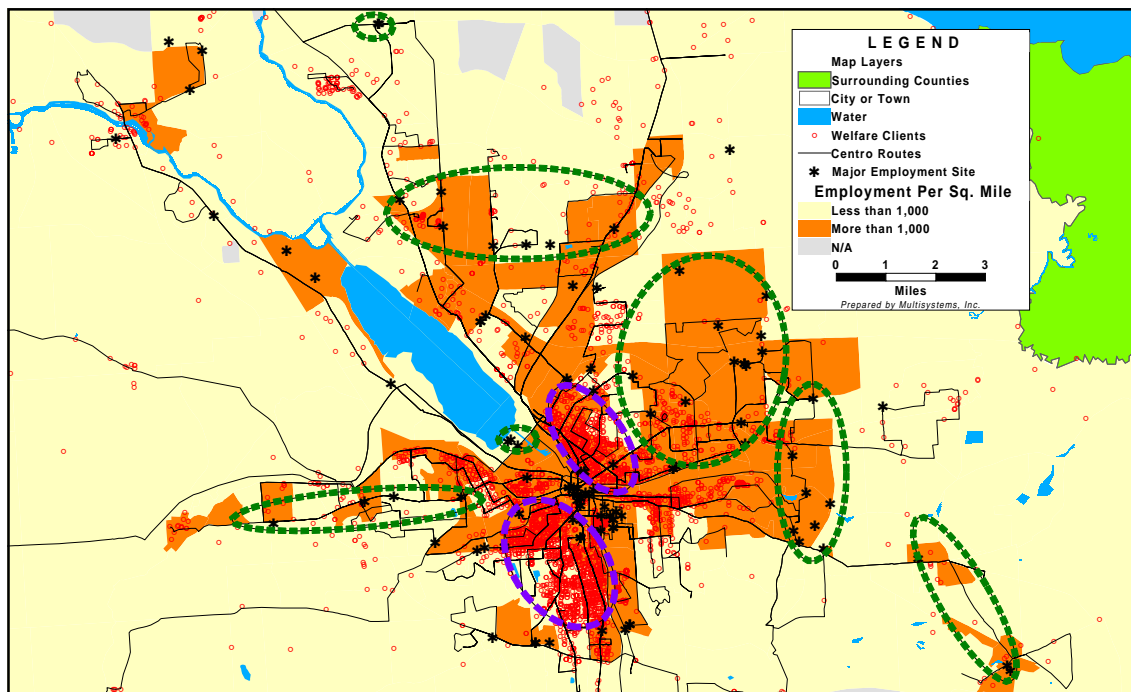
This chapter summarizes the data elements commonly associated with welfare-to-work planning and potential data sources. This information will allow planners to assess travel patterns and needs of welfare recipients and to identify the transportation resources currently available to them.

Target Population

The project should clearly define its target market. Potential customers for welfare-related transportation services may include any or all of the following:

- Current TANF clients participating in job search and work-related activities
- Former TANF clients who have made the transition to employment
- “Hard-to-serve” TANF clients eligible for U.S. Department of Labor Welfare-to-Work programs
- Children of current and former TANF clients
- Agency clients, including recipients of General Assistance and Medicaid
- Low-income individuals

Figure 4-1. Residential distribution of welfare clients in relation to employment opportunities in greater Syracuse, New York.



The best sources of information about the numbers and locations of these individuals are likely to be state or county agencies administering TANF and other assistance programs. As the benefit administrators, these agencies can be expected to have the most up-to-date information on program participants. Because they manage sensitive data, these welfare departments are legitimately concerned about maintaining the confidentiality of client information. Nevertheless, most agencies are willing to participate in planning efforts and will release data files after first removing or masking personal identifying information. (See Figure 4-1 for an example from the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority.)

Should detailed client information not be readily available, local or regional planning organizations may compile statistics about various indicators of poverty (such as median household income or automobile ownership). Finally, the U.S. Bureau of the Census (www.census.gov) compiles detailed information, which is available in computerized files, about the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of geographic areas across the county.

Employment Opportunities

Information about employment opportunities is another critical data element for welfare-to-work transportation planning and service delivery applications.

Two types of employment data are usually available: information about specific employers and overall employment summaries. Information about specific employers typically includes information about the type of employer and the number of jobs on site. In some cases, information may be available about actual and potential job openings. In contrast, information about overall employment may include data about the total number of jobs in a geographic area and, possibly, recent or projected employment trends.

Sources of information on employment range from job openings listed in the newspaper to extensive databases maintained by public and private organizations. Some readily available sources include the following:

- **Local Agencies.** Local sources are a good starting place for compiling employment data, although data quality will vary in timeliness and accuracy. Many regional and local planning agencies, transit authorities, chambers of commerce, labor departments, libraries and other organizations may have compiled employment information for various purposes.
- **ES-202.** The Covered Employment and Wages program of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov) collects and aggregates data to countywide summaries by industry. This information, commonly referred to as ES-202 data, does not include information about specific companies and is most useful for general planning efforts.
- **Census Bureau.** The U.S. Bureau of the Census (www.census.gov) collects and maintains information about employment and commuting patterns for different geographic units, including census block groups, cities, and counties. Summary Tape Files (STF) contain statistical data, including employment for different industries and job classifications. The Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP) contains detailed data about commuting patterns by transportation mode.
- **Private Databases.** Data on employers may be purchased from several private sources. **R.L. Polk & Company** provides information to a wide variety of corporations. Polk collects employment data via a variety of means, including telephone directories and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. The **Dun and Bradstreet** Million Dollar Database contains employment information on over 1,260,000 U.S. public and private businesses (www.dnbmdd.com). Information includes company address,

contact, number of employees working at each particular address, Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code system, sales volume and other information. Data sources include Dun and Bradstreet associates as well as third-party business and government sources.

Employment databases often contain information about the industry or job classifications, which may be helpful in targeting jobs for welfare participants. Most databases use the SIC Code or the new North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), which classify establishments by type of economic activity. The NAICS is replacing the SIC system and was developed to provide new comparability in statistics about business activity across North America.



Transportation Resources

Collecting information about available transportation resources will enable planners and policy-makers to better understand the relationship between travel needs and service alternatives (see Figure 4-2). The inventory of transportation services may include some or all of the following:

- Public and private transit services (e.g., bus, rail, demand-response, paratransit)
- Ridesharing services (e.g., commuter vanpools)
- Taxis
- Private shuttles (e.g., employers)
- Supporting services (e.g., park-and-ride facilities, fare voucher programs, guaranteed ride home services)

The following information should be collected for each type of transportation service operating in the study area:

- Route or service area
- Schedule, including frequency, days and hours of operation
- Fare structure and payment options
- Wheelchair accessibility
- Service access (e.g., fixed-route, reservation, subscription)

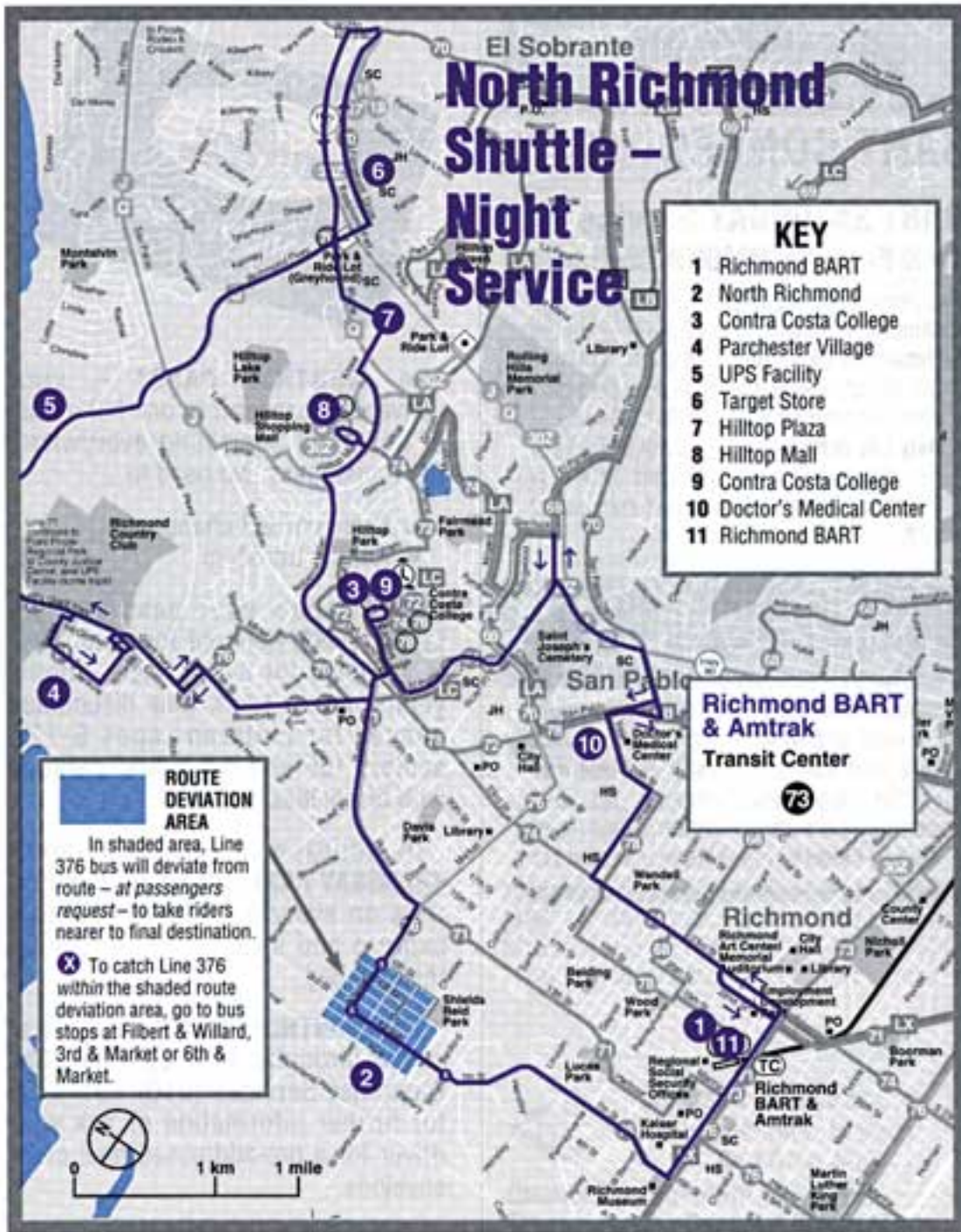


Figure 4-2. AC Transit route map showing service area for its new night shuttle.

Figure 4-3. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission in Oakland, California, mapped child-care providers for county-based welfare-to-work transportation plans.



Finally, it may be desirable to collect information about the specialized transportation services in the community. These may include agency-provided transportation for clients (such as Medicaid) or services operated by faith-based groups, community organizations, and schools. While this information may not be easy to collect, these specialized services can offer great potential for addressing welfare-related transportation needs. In South Carolina, for example, the Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority was able to incorporate work transportation into its existing Medicaid transportation services at no additional cost to the authority.

Available transportation data may range from paper schedules and maps to computerized GIS files with route, stop, and schedule information. In some cases, especially when collecting information from specialized transportation services, planners may want to develop a standardized questionnaire. Sources of transit data include the following:

- **Local Agencies.** Not surprisingly, transit agencies are often the best source of information about their services. In addition to maps and schedules, many transportation agencies may be able to share route and stop data in an electronic format. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) both maintain electronic links to transit properties at their web pages (www.apta.com). Sometimes, metropolitan planning organizations and similar agencies maintain transit-related geographic data on behalf of the local transit providers.

- **Federal Transit Administration.** FTA maintains a geographic database of nearly all transit systems across the country. Several different databases have been developed, including fixed-route systems, level of service (e.g., frequency, schedule information, fare structure, and wheelchair accessibility), and ADA complementary paratransit service. Information is available, in spreadsheet format, for more than 550 transit agencies, using 1994-1997 data. Users can download any of these transit networks directly from the site at geolab.moakley.bridgew.edu/ftp_site/ftp.htm.

Support Services

Some TANF clients will require transportation for certain support services, including child care, job search activities, and job training. The complex trip chains that result for these individuals may be difficult to serve with conventional transit. State or county welfare and social service agencies are a good starting point for information about **child-care programs and services**. At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (www.acf.dhhs.gov) can provide state contacts. Several sites on the Internet contain information about child-care services. For example, the Child Care Parent Provider Information Network, a nationwide service, lists information at www.childcare-ppin.com; a search directory of this site allows parents to locate child-care providers in their city. (See Figure 4-3 for a sample map showing child-care providers.) Likely sources of information about **job training sites** include private industry councils, workforce investment boards, and state and county welfare offices.

Identifying Unmet Needs

After assembling information about travel patterns and transportation resources, stakeholders can begin to assess the transportation barriers and gaps in service that program participants encounter. While these will vary from location to location, typical needs and issues include the following:

- Work schedules that require late-night or weekend commuting
- Mismatch between residential locations and employment centers
- Long travel times because of multiple transfers or infrequent service
- Concerns about safety walking to or waiting at train stations or bus stops
- Difficulties of balancing multiple destinations for child care and employment
- Complexities of coordinating multiple operators, schedules, and fare levels
- Affordability of transit fares and passes
- Difficulty obtaining or understanding information about transportation services because of language or literacy barriers
- High costs of acquiring, registering, insuring, and maintaining automobiles

Many tools and resources are available for defining these transportation needs and barriers, including statistical data analysis, computerized maps, interviews with TANF recipients and service providers, surveys, and focus groups.

This chapter highlights the analytical tools available for quantitative and qualitative assessment of transportation needs and service gaps. These include use of computerized mapping systems to represent the geographic relationships among program participants, travel destinations, and transit services; market research techniques like surveys to gather information about travel patterns and transportation resources; and techniques like focus groups, community meetings, and structured interviews to obtain personal accounts of travel needs and transportation barriers.

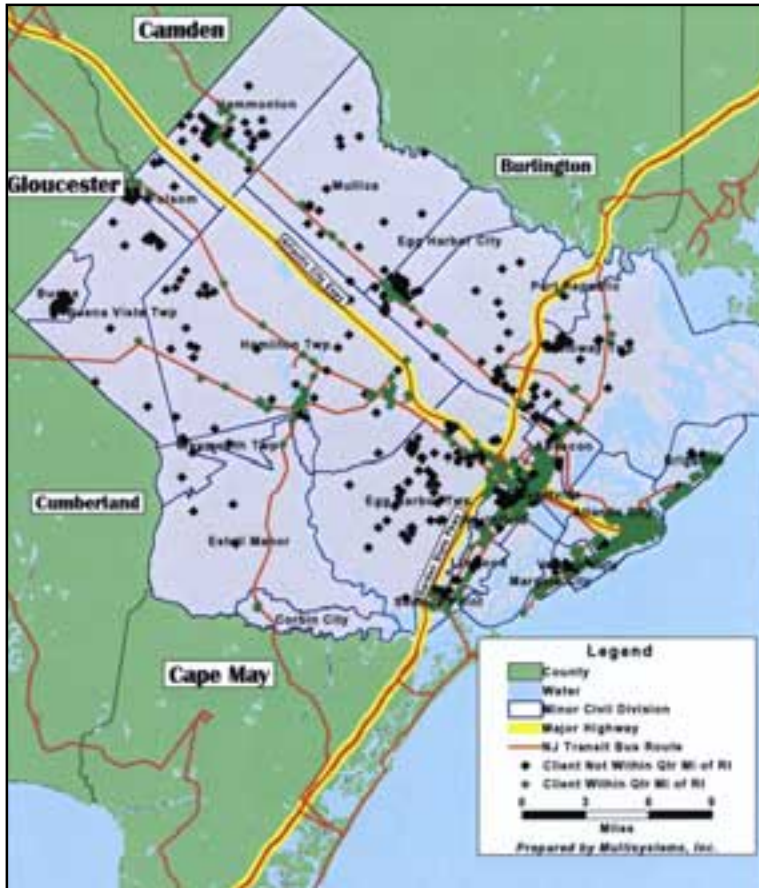


Figure 5-1. The State of New Jersey made extensive use of GIS mapping. The top map shows the location of Atlantic County welfare recipients in relation to fixed-route transit. Different colored squares were used to compare clients who lived within walking distance of a bus route or train station and those who lived farther away. The bottom map shows inter-county commuting patterns for residents of Somerset County. The lines indicate the direction and volume of work trips based on the 1990 U.S. Census.

Use of Geographic Information Systems

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) link databases with computer mapping capabilities, allowing the information to be displayed graphically. Because of this ability to display complex data in an easily understood form, GIS analysis has become a widely used tool for planning and implementing welfare-to-work transportation programs. By mapping the location of TANF participants, jobs, day care, and other support services in relation to current fixed-route transit system, analysts and policy-makers can begin to assess the spatial mismatches between transit services and transportation needs. With additional information about transit, jobs, and services such as hours of operation, shift times, and day care program hours, temporal mismatches can also be identified and displayed. Most of the data sources described in Chapter 4 can be used for GIS analysis.

GIS analysis can assist in policy development by identifying the potential of transit services to meet access to jobs needs. In the San Francisco Bay Area, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) used GIS analysis to identify transportation barriers and service gaps for participants in the state's CalWORKs program. MTC plotted the home location of welfare clients, fixed-route transit services, and potential employers. To protect the confidentiality of welfare clients, individual addresses were not shown on the maps; instead addresses were geocoded to a one-quarter-mile grid. (Geocoding assigns geographic coordinates, usually latitude and longitude, to a data element so that it can be represented on a map.) In New Jersey, GIS analysis was used to calculate the number of welfare recipients who had convenient transit access to jobs and support services – and those who did not – based on the distance between their homes and a bus stop or train station (see Figure 5-1). In cities, where transit access was generally good, the state focused on improving existing transit services and expanding its transit pass program. In rural and suburban areas, where residents had more limited transit access, the state concentrated its planning efforts on nontraditional solutions, including flexible and demand-response services.

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 can yield enormous benefits. Their experiences juggling the complexities of their own commuting trips with the travel requirements of one or more children can provide detailed and practical guidance to those developing service strategies. In some cases, TANF clients have participated directly in planning transportation alternatives; in other situations, caseworkers or job counselors represented the interests of their clients through stakeholder meetings and participation on advisory panels. Some strategies for involving welfare recipients in the planning process are summarized here.

When convening focus groups . . .

- **Schedule the meeting at convenient times** for participants.
- **Consider meeting with an existing group**, such as a job training workshop, to maximize participation.
- **Provide child care** if necessary.
- **Make sure that the location is transit accessible**, or provide transportation to the meeting site.
- **Offer incentives to encourage participation.** These may include cash stipends, supermarket vouchers, or a letter of commendation to be placed in a participant's case file.

Surveys and Questionnaires

Surveys can be 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. A sample questionnaire is included in Appendix E.

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, the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (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 multiethnic and multilingual neighborhood.

Stakeholder Participation

Stakeholders in the welfare-related transportation planning process can be an important resource during program development and implementation. As discussed in Chapter 3, stakeholders may include transportation operators, social service providers, public agencies, elected officials, community organizations, faith-based groups, job councils, and employers. These representatives often have first-hand knowledge of the unique challenges of serving the needs of TANF participants. Planners can tap into this experience in several ways. First, interviews with stakeholders, either one-on-one or in small groups, can yield detailed information about specific transportation needs, service gaps, and barriers. Second, when stakeholders sit on project steering committees, they can help facilitate access to data, review program alternatives, and help build consensus and support. Finally, stakeholders may be invited to attend community meetings to discuss transportation needs and potential solutions in a larger setting.

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.

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 – an increasingly popular option – programs to sell or lease donated vehicles to welfare clients. Some welfare-to-work programs have integrated multiple strategies to better serve the diverse needs of their clients. The following sections describe a variety of 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 designed to serve reverse commuters – city residents who work in the suburbs. In North Richmond, California, the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) worked with the local private industry council to design a new community-based route. Route 376 ran once an hour from 7:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. to connect a rail station, commercial district, and residential neighborhood. 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, 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. Two examples highlight the range of service configurations and operating arrangements possible for these services.



Figure 6-1. Example of suburban circulator service outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

SEPTA has introduced new bus routes that use small buses to serve suburban office parks and shopping malls in metropolitan Philadelphia (see Figure 6-1). 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.

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, TARC 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 local 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 (see Figure 6-2).



Figure 6-2. Promotion for service coordination.

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 will provide participating TANF clients with a monthly subsidy to offset the vanpool fare.



Figure 6-3. The AdVANtage II program at Sojourner-Douglass College has successfully trained low-income residents to provide transportation services.

Entrepreneurial Services

Some programs train welfare recipients 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 Entrepreneurs 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. As shown in Figure 6-3,

Sojourner-Douglass College in Baltimore and Contra Costa County in California have set up similar programs.

Automobile Strategies

Driving is still the most convenient mode of transportation for many welfare recipients, especially for 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 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. Finally, a number of localities have developed programs to enable welfare recipients 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 welfare participants after a year, provided they meet certain conditions.

Travel Information

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 (see Figure 6-4).

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 Massachusetts, New York, and Michigan, among other places (see Figure 6-5 on the following page).

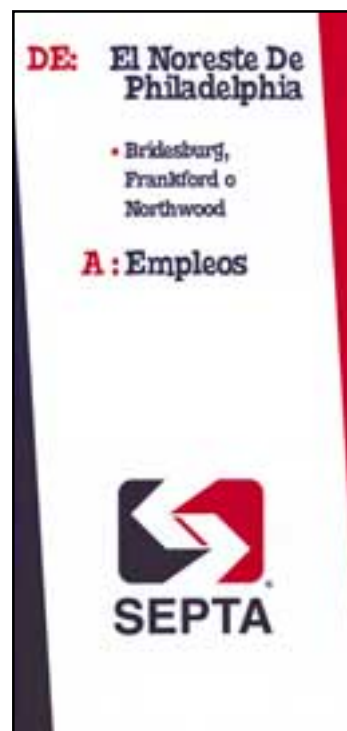
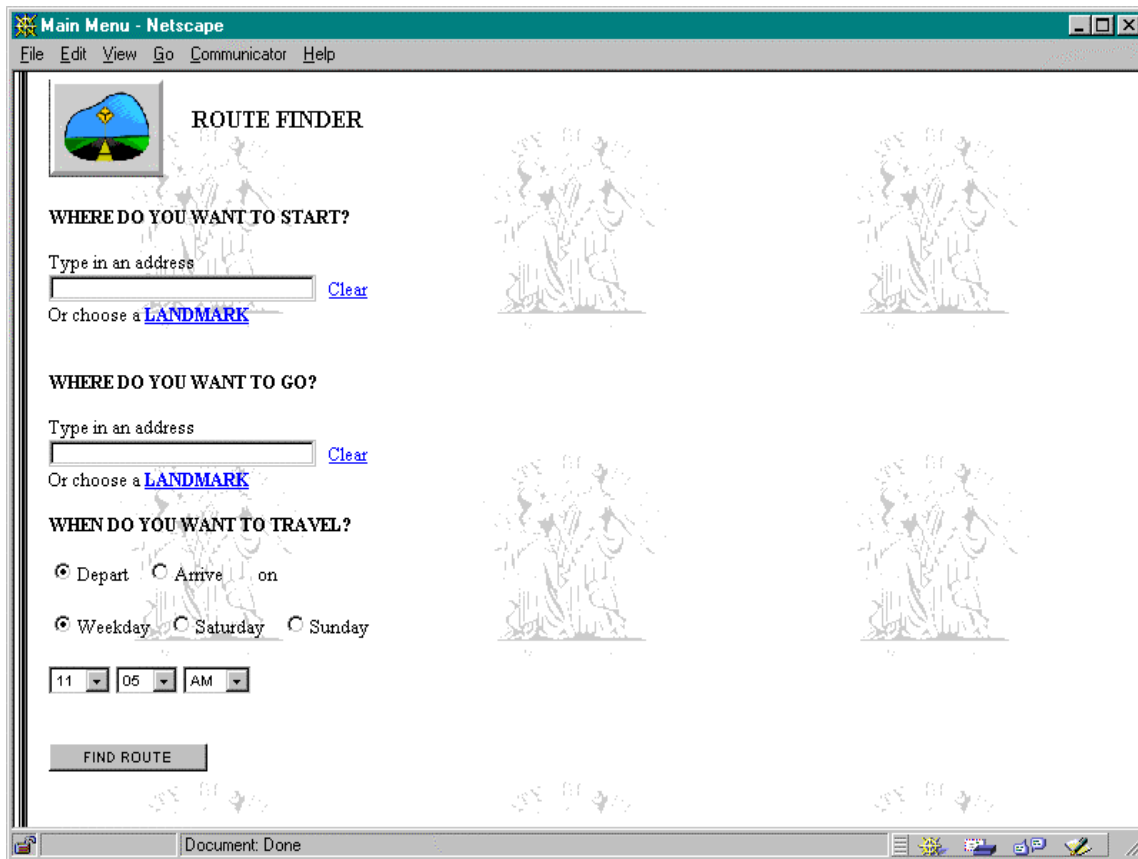


Figure 6-4. Spanish-language transit services brochure.

Figure 6-5. Employment counselors in Detroit can use an on-line trip planner to develop transit itineraries for their clients.



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.

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.



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 automobile insurance, driver's license fees, car loans, leases, and repairs for donated vehicles.

Defining the Program

After deciding what type of service best suits the identified travel needs of the target market, planners and stakeholders can define the program in more detail. A service plan outlines program resource requirements and can be used to develop a budget and funding plan.

Develop a Service Plan

A service plan identifies the program operating approach and resource requirements. Traditionally used as part of the transit planning process, a service plan can be adapted to different approaches to meeting welfare-to-work transportation needs. A transit service plan includes the following elements.

- **Target market** – Who will use the service? TANF recipients, low-income individuals, or other groups?
- **Route or service area** – Where will the service operate?
- **Service characteristics** – Is this fixed, flexible, or demand-response service?
- **Service span** – What days of the week does the service operate? At what times does it start and end?
- **Frequency** – How often does the route run?
- **Reservation policy** – If service is flexible or demand-response, what is the policy for making reservations? How far in advance? Whom do patrons call?
- **Vehicle requirements** – How many vehicles are required? Does the plan call for full-size conventional buses, mini-buses, vans, automobiles, or something else? Do the vehicles need to accommodate passengers in wheelchairs? Is special equipment required, like radios/cellular telephones for drivers? Would vehicles be leased or purchased?
- **Operating arrangements** – Who will operate the service? The existing transit operator, human service agency, nonprofit organization, or a private

contractor? Does the provider have legal authority to operate within the selected service area?

- **Maintenance** – Who will maintain the vehicles and facilities?
- **Staffing** – How many bus drivers are required? What are the staffing requirements for maintenance, administration, planning, dispatching, counseling, reservations, marketing, and other program activities?
- **Fare policy** – Will passengers pay fares or a fee for service? How will revenues be collected? Are fareboxes required?
- **Coordination** – What kind of coordination is needed with other programs, agencies, organizations, and community groups?
- **Organizational responsibilities** – Who will be responsible for implementing each element of the program?

While these elements focus on transit operations, a service plan can easily be adapted to other welfare-related transportation programs. For example, staffing requirements for a vehicle donation program might include mechanics to assess and refurbish donated vehicles. A trip planning program would not need buses, but it likely would require new computers, specialized software, and Internet access. Service span could be translated into office hours for some programs; service area could mean site location for a one-stop center.

Estimate Program Costs

Based on the information in the service plan, program developers can estimate program costs. Transportation costs traditionally fall into three general categories: capital costs, operating costs, and administrative costs.

Capital Costs

Capital costs are one-time or infrequently recurring costs of long-term assets, such as vehicles, land, stations, and buildings. These costs often include related expenses, such as depreciation and property taxes. Capital costs may include:

- Vehicles, including purchase or leasing cost
- Vehicle depreciation
- Other assets, including purchase or leasing cost for maintenance equipment, buildings, and other major assets
- Depreciation on other assets

Operating Costs

Operating costs are recurring costs associated with system operations and maintenance. Operating costs usually exclude such fixed costs as depreciation on plant and equipment, interest paid for loans on capital equipment, and property taxes on capital items. Operating costs may include the following:

- Labor and fringe benefits for operators, dispatchers, maintenance staff, and others
- Services, such as contracts for security
- Materials and supplies, including fuel, oil, tires, and parts
- Rent and utilities at operating facilities
- Casualty and liability costs
- Taxes, including vehicle registration fees
- Purchased or contracted transportation services
- Miscellaneous expenses, including tolls

Administrative Costs

Administrative costs are recurring costs not directly related to operations and maintenance. They may include costs associated with program management, administration, marketing, and similar functions. Administrative costs may include the following:

- Labor and fringe benefits for management and administrative staff
- Professional and technical services
- Materials and supplies, including office supplies
- Rent and utilities for office space
- Insurance for professional services
- Taxes
- Miscellaneous costs, such as travel and meetings, advertising, dues and subscriptions for professional associations

The next step, after estimating program costs, is to identify funding opportunities and to develop a funding plan.

Identify Funding Opportunities

Transportation strategies developed to support welfare-related transportation needs can be expensive to provide. Many operate in low-density areas outside traditional commuting hours without the economies of scale that allow efficient provision of transit service. The federal government is making some funds available, but localities have been exploring other funding sources as well. 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 (FTA), 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.

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. One-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 one-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.

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 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 nontraditional 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 nonurbanized 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 Appendix A.

State Funding Programs

Some states have used federal TANF block grant 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. Multiagency, multicounty, 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. DOL 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 on-going 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 on-going 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. DOL 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 automobile 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, Indiana; Kansas City, Missouri; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; 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 2 years.
- UPS 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 jointly issued *Training and Guidance Letter* (see Appendix C):

All projects funded under this program must be the result of a collaborative planning process that includes transportation providers, agencies administering TANF and WtW 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 a FTA Job Access and Reverse Commute grant.
- TARC 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, Pennsylvania, 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. DOL 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.

Develop a Funding Plan

The cost information developed earlier will form the basis of a funding plan that outlines the strategy for financing the proposed services. As the previous section outlined, numerous public and private funding sources are available to support welfare-to-work transportation. For each relevant funding source, planners should document the following:

- **Funding level** – How large is this funding source? How large are typical grants?
- **Eligibility requirements** – Is the program eligible to receive funding through this source? Is the organization eligible to receive funding from this source?
- **Matching requirements** – Does the funding source require the applicant to match a percentage of the funds? What is the share?
- **Timing** – When are the funds available? What is the application deadline?
- **Sustainability** – Is the source available for start-up funding only, or can it be used for on-going program support?

- **Program elements** – What program elements are eligible for funding? Operating? Capital? Administrative? Planning?
- **Target users** – Does the funding source target particular program participants, such as TANF clients only?
- **Application requirements** – What is the process for applying for funding? What information is required?
- **Coordination requirements** – Does the funding source require evidence of collaboration among agencies?
- **Reporting requirements** – What information are funding recipients required to collect and report to the funding agency?

After assessing the different financing sources, planners can develop a strategy for pursuing one or more funding programs to support the proposed welfare-related transportation program.

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. [Online] Available at www.fta.dot.gov.

Measuring Success

Measuring the effectiveness of welfare-to-work transportation programs provides valuable feedback to staff, stakeholders, and funding sources about the program's activities and results. Documenting activities and measuring outcomes can offer insight into the program's performance and can help staff answer questions like the following:

- Does the program make a difference in the lives of participants?
- How can the program be improved?
- Does the program comply with the rules and requirements of funding sources?

Moreover, quantifying program progress can position program staff to seek on-going sources of funding. According to an executive at the United Way, "Today's donors require more than just a warm feeling in return for their contribution. They want to be sure their investment produces a result, that it makes a measurable difference in their community."¹

This chapter discusses the basic steps in evaluating a welfare-to-work transportation program: deciding what to measure, how to measure it, and how to collect the data to do so.

Deciding What To Measure

The first step for program staff is to select an evaluation approach. This usually falls into one of three broad categories:

- **Program performance**, to track the resources used to support the program ("Is this the most efficient strategy to meet client needs?")
- **Customer benefits**, to assess the direct impacts on program participants ("Has this service expanded access to jobs?")
- **Societal benefits**, to evaluate overall social costs and benefits ("How has county TANF participation changed?")

The evaluation direction should reflect the goals and objectives developed earlier in the planning process and incorporate input from program staff, stakeholders, participants, and other interested parties.

Selecting Indicators

For each question or program outcome to be evaluated, one or more performance **indicators** will be defined. Performance indicators are characteristics that are tracked to measure how well a program achieves an outcome. Each indicator will have one or more **targets**, which simply are specific objectives for measuring indicators.

The specific criteria for evaluating a program may blend evaluation strategies traditionally associated with transportation programs with those used by human services providers. For programs receiving federal grants, the first step is to review the regulations governing the relevant funding program. Welfare-to-Work grants, for example, focus on employment and require recipients to track various aspects of job placement. Job Access and Reverse Commute grants focus instead on monitoring improvements in access to employment; organizations receiving these FTA grants are asked to monitor service performance characteristics and changes in accessibility to employment opportunities. Other indicators will reflect the program performance relative to its goals and the evaluation questions. Finally, selection of performance indicators should take into account the availability of data and the staff resources to collect and analyze the required information.

For example, managers assessing program performance may choose to track program participation ("How many clients use the service?") or costs ("How much does it cost to serve the program's customers?"). Assessments of customer service may review changes in access ("Does the program help clients reach more jobs?") or convenience ("Has commuting time changed?"). Finally, assessments of social benefits may identify changes in TANF participation ("Have county expenditures on TANF benefits changed?") or regional economic impacts ("Have statewide sales tax revenues increased?").

After identifying the elements that will be measured, program staff has to define targets for assessing program performance, costs, and benefits. The specific targets will vary with the size and scope of the program and can be expected to change over time.

How To Measure Program Performance

Traditional transit programs often use three types of indicators to measure program performance: cost efficiency, service effectiveness, and cost effectiveness.

- **Cost efficiency** measures the amount of transportation services produced in relation to the resources expended. Widely used measures include total operating cost per vehicle service hour and total operating cost per vehicle service mile. In other words, how much does it cost – including labor, materials, and supporting services – to make service available to passengers for one hour or one mile? Capital costs are excluded from this measure. The lower the unit cost, the greater the efficiency achieved.
- **Service effectiveness** measures consumption of transportation services in relation to the amount of service available. Typical measures include passengers per vehicle service hour and passengers per vehicle service mile. The more passengers per mile or hour, the higher the level of service effectiveness.
- **Cost effectiveness** measures service consumption in relation to resources expended. Measures may include operating cost per passenger or total revenue as a percentage of operating cost. The lower the cost per passenger, or the greater the revenue in relation to expenditures, the more cost-effective the service.

These measures can easily be adapted to nontraditional programs. For example, a vehicle donation program may calculate cost effectiveness as total program cost to assign a vehicle to a TANF recipient. A resource center, on the other hand, might track service effectiveness as intake interviews per staff hour. Some sample performance indicators that may be used to assess performance of welfare-related programs are presented below:

- Number of bus passes issued
- Passengers per revenue-hour
- Operating costs per passenger
- Number of transit itineraries prepared by caseworkers
- Number of personal vehicles delivered to TANF clients
- Number of passengers who require transfers
- Number of individuals to operate van services

How To Measure Customer Benefits

Measures of customer benefits may include a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators. Program managers may choose to track changes in service quality, access to employment, and job retention. Service quality, which can be defined as the difference between service delivery and customer

expectations, includes numerous attributes. In the context of welfare-related transportation, these may include travel time, number of transfers, reliability, and safety. Managers may also choose to track improved access to transit; GIS analysis can easily be used to calculate factors like the change in jobs within walking distance of a new shuttle or route extension. Sample performance measures to track changes in customer benefits are listed below:

- Percentage of jobs located within one-quarter mile of fixed-route transit
- Change in out-of-pocket transportation costs
- Average length of job retention
- Number of passengers who require transfers
- Change in average travel time

How To Measure Societal Benefits

One way to measure overall societal benefits of welfare-related transportation is to conduct a benefit-cost analysis. Calculating a benefit-cost ratio allows projects to be ranked and compared, facilitating an assessment of which transportation strategies achieve the greatest benefits relative to costs.

The principal measure of program benefits is **income from employment**, which could be assumed based on prevailing wage rates or obtained from participants as part of a follow-up survey. The benefit obtained from reduced government payments after people find jobs could also be estimated or, alternatively, obtained from special studies and surveys. On the cost side, the total costs of the project (both reimbursed and donated) would be tallied for each project that is assessed. It is important that all costs are included because the costs would otherwise be skewed in favor of the projects with the greatest donations. The general methodology to be used in estimating benefits and cost 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 estimate a program's impacts in relation to its costs.

Data Requirements

Defining data needs is a critical – and often overlooked – step in the evaluation process. Program staff must determine what information best answers the questions posed above and how that information can be collected.

Data sources can range from simple checklists to sophisticated surveys and statistical analysis. Examples include the following:

- **Client intake forms or visitor log** to collect information about client visits, distribution of bus passes or vouchers, travel planning requests, and the like
- **Passenger reservation and trip assignment records** to track ridership on demand-response and subscription services
- **GIS analysis** of changes in access to transit services
- **Survey** of program participants to assess changes in travel conditions or factors affecting job retention

Organizations may already collect this information in response to external reporting requirements from funding and regulatory agencies. For example, the FTA requires certain transit operators to report key operating statistics annually. Other statistics may be readily available from divisions within the organization. Table 8-1 identifies potential sources for typical transit evaluation measures. The evaluation plan should indicate the type of information that will be collected,

Table 8-1. Potential Sources of Data for Typical Transit Evaluation Measures.

Data Elements	Potential Sources
Dollars, labor hours	Accounting, payroll, financial management
Vehicle hours, vehicle service hours	Drivers, dispatchers, supervisors
Vehicle miles, vehicle service miles	Drivers, schedulers, dispatchers, service maintenance shop
Passenger boardings, passenger trips	Drivers, schedule checkers, dispatchers, surveys

Adapted from TCRP Report 6, *Users' Manual for Assessing Service-Delivery Systems for Rural Passenger Transportation*, Transportation Research Board, Washington, DC, 1995.

determine whether a system is already in place to collect that data, identify the data source, and assign responsibility for collecting the data. A sample data collection form is included in Appendix F.

Challenges

The evaluation process must take into account the unique characteristics of welfare-related transportation, many of which result from the need to consolidate elements of transportation and social service programs. A fundamental difference between transportation and social service programs is how they define their client base. Transportation programs generally focus on overall ridership, while social service programs historically have tracked the progress of individuals. This difference is reflected in funding and evaluation practices. TANF funds, including those disseminated by the U.S. DOL, target individuals; FTA programs address programs and services. The respective evaluation requirements for programs funded through these sources mirror these different missions. Organizations combining these funding sources to support a single program will have to design an evaluation plan that takes both sets of requirements into account.

Data collection also poses a set of challenges for welfare-related transportation programs. Many communities – including some 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 societal benefits of their program.

Nevertheless, an effective approach to program evaluation can help sustain success. First, evaluation allows staff to track progress over time and to modify the program in response to identified trouble spots. For example, in Pinellas County, Florida, program staff reassessed the level of incentive payments after data showed low use of carpooling services.

Second, quantifying program progress can position program staff to seek on-going sources of funding. Program funding sources want to see results, and a well-defined evaluation process can produce the information that potential sponsors want to see. This is a particular benefit to welfare-related transportation programs, many of which receive start-up funding for limited periods of time.

Notes

- ¹ Gary Ostroke, "Investing in Results." News and Views: United Way of America's Executive Newsletter (vol. 2, issue 7), October 6, 1997. [Online] Available at www.unitedway.org.

Part 3:

N*ew P**artnerships,*

N*ew O**pportunities*

Working with the Community

This chapter summarizes four case studies describing exemplary programs that provide transportation services to welfare recipients and, in some cases, other low-income workers. The programs highlighted here have all benefited from collaborative relationships with community groups, educational institutions, and faith-based organizations to address welfare-related transportation needs. They include the following:

- **AdVANTage II**, at Sojourner-Douglas College in Baltimore, Maryland, which helps students at this community-based college to provide transportation services as van operators.
- **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 five community-based organizations in this multicultural community.
- **San Diego Workforce Partnership**, in California, which coordinates resources from church groups and nonprofit organizations to provide work-related transportation.

All of the profiled programs responded to the transportation needs of their clients by developing innovative partnerships with community programs, nonprofit organizations, and religious institutions. Some of the programs incorporated extensive outreach efforts to ensure that potential customers had a voice in program development. Finally, each program worked to empower welfare recipients and other low-income individuals by helping them obtain the skills and resources they needed to be self-sufficient – and to remain that way.

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 address this challenge. 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 "nontraditional student." The average age of the student body is 38. 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 and Micro-Enterprise Project in Anne Arundel County. (See Chapter 10.) The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) provided technical assistance, relevant transportation information and contacts.



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 owners.

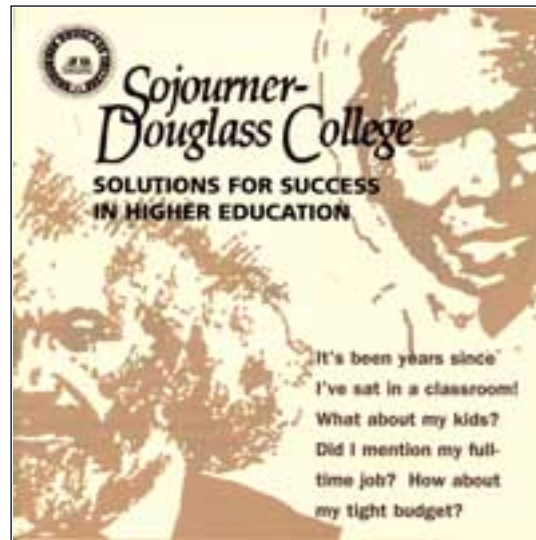
Once applicants were identified, they were required to complete a two-step application process. After their basic reading, mathematical, and comprehension skills were tested, applicants interviewed with two members of the project team. Twenty-five candidates were selected for the first incoming class.

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 Minority Business Enterprises.

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.



AdVANTage II Service

AdVANTage II provides affordable transportation assistance for low-income individuals and welfare recipients traveling to job training, searches, and sites. Ninety-five percent is reverse commute service. 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 (see Figure 9-1).

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 at 10:30 a.m. and runs until 9:00 p.m. During the summer, the drivers also carry an average of 60 children per day to recreational activities and field trips.

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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.
- **Corporate Structure.** The project is still in partnership with Sojourner-Douglass College. After the initial grant expired, AdVANTage II formed a company with the College 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.



Figure 9-1. Riders taking advantage of community-based transportation provided in association with Sojourner-Douglass College.

- **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. MTA co-hosts monthly vendor meetings with AdVANTage II and employers to discuss operational issues and business development.
- **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. They completed some accounting training initially. However, the staff realizes the need for more advanced computer training also.

Challenges

Although there were many successes, managing the transition from welfare recipient to business owner is very challenging.

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.

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 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 on-going 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.

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.

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The Good News Garage began operations in July 1996 with a start-up grant of \$35,000 from Wheat Ridge Ministries. The program currently has an annual budget of \$415,000. Funding sources include LSSNE, grants from private and public agencies, private donations, and revenues from the sale of refurbished cars. The garage is located in a former motorcycle repair facility in downtown Burlington.



Recipients

The Good News Garage's donated wheels program targets low-income residents of Vermont. Eligibility is 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 DOL competitive grant.

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 are people of color. Most vehicle recipients are single 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 recognized by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as 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. With some exceptions, the project considers only cars 10 years old or younger. 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.

On average, it takes 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 vehicle recipient gets a detailed, itemized repair bill. Since many recipients have never owned a car before, they are also given 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 on-going 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 doctors' 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 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 destinations, 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 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 vehicle to get a job, keep a job, or find a better-paying job, and nearly 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 on-going operation of the program, is invaluable.
- Starting a new program or nonprofit 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 nonprofit 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 more

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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.

**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,

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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. (Figure 9-2 illustrates one of the planning initiatives for this community.)

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 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; focus group participants received \$30 for their time.

Program Findings

Focus group participants identified three major barriers to employment: language, child care, and transportation. About half said that transportation is



Figure 9-2. The Lower San Antonio Neighborhood Plan identified strategies for revitalizing this multicultural Oakland neighborhood.

keeping 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.”

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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 TANF 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 will 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.

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. The transportation counselors at community organizations speak the same language as their clients and are sensitive to their cultures, thus 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 from the bus company. Also, because community-based organizations are local, clients do not 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.

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.

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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 *Work First Community Resource Center* received \$5 million from the U.S. DOL Welfare-to Work competitive grant program. The 18-month project began in October 1998.

The project targets residents of an impoverished inner city area in southeastern San Diego. 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 number 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 child care, training, and/or employment.

Service Description

The collaborating organizations worked to develop nontraditional 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 3 major employment centers:

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

As shown in Figure 9-3, 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, 7 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 6 months.



Figure 9-3. The Chollas View Community Center serves as a transportation hub.

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 an opportunity for increasing ridership.

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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 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 on-going. 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.
- It is important to recognize that liability is also shared. Accordingly, it is important to review arrangements and agreements to ascertain liability (i.e., insurance, lease agreements, etc.).

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.
- On the other hand, 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 capacity among individuals to better serve and redevelop their own community (see Figure 9-4).

- 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 in 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.

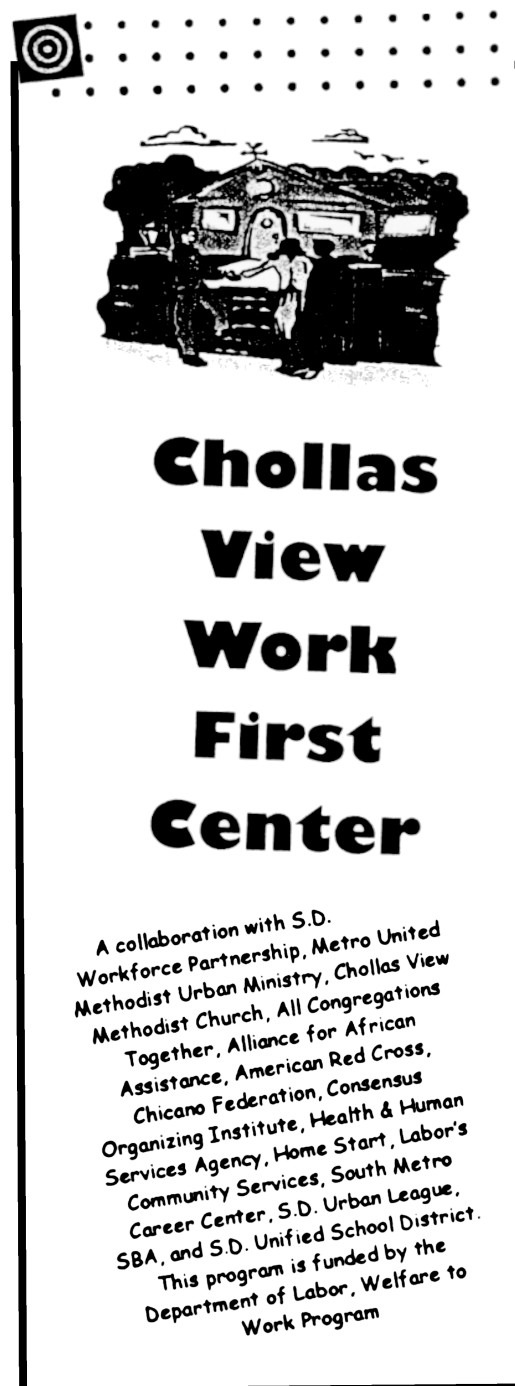


Figure 9-4. The Work First Center was tailored to community needs.

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 child-care 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.