



# FRAMEWORK for ACTION

Building the Fully Coordinated  
Transportation System

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- Self Assessment Tools for
- Communities
  - States



# Introduction

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# A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

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## Building the Fully Coordinated Transportation System

Leaders in communities and states across the country have greatly improved mobility for millions of people over the last several decades. The shift away from providing rides to managing mobility is driving the success of fully coordinated transportation systems.

The strategy coordinates human service agencies that support transportation with public and private transit providers. Such systems have gone far in meeting the needs of consumers who must have access to healthcare, jobs or job training, education and social networks. Coordinated transportation systems also increase the ability of government officials, at all levels, to make the most efficient and effective use of limited resources.

### A Framework for Action: Assessment Tools

The Assessment Tool for Communities and States can help local and statewide transportation agencies work toward achieving their mobility goals – as well as their financial goals.

### Greater Mobility, Bigger Impact

Transit agencies benefit when they coordinate services with local human service and community providers.

As the following examples demonstrate, these strategies can help save money and improve services at the same time.

#### SMART

The Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) is the transit agency for three counties in southeast Michigan near Detroit. SMART combines innovative technologies with community partnering to provide \$7 million in transportation funds to 50 communities for cost-effective and flexible local transportation services. If SMART provided all of these services directly, the cost would be nearly 40 percent more – or \$2.7 million every year.<sup>1</sup>

#### Kentucky Takes Lead

Coordinating human funding resources to deliver coordinated service programs is also paying dividends. In Kentucky, the governor established a single coordinated human service transportation fund from among several state-administered human service programs. The model established a series of transportation brokers throughout the state whose job it was to secure the most cost effective transportation delivery for the human service clients of the various programs involved. According to a University of Kentucky study, the cost per ride was reduced by almost 20 percent with significantly more rides available to clients. The riders report the new transportation service is as good as the service they received from providers hired by individual programs.

#### Miami Saves Money

Specific strategies such as transit passes can result in savings as well. In Miami, Florida, coordinating Medicaid transportation with public transportation resulted in a win-win situation for the local Medicaid agency and the transit provider and Medicaid customers.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all cost saving data are drawn from the *Economic Benefits of Coordinating Human Services Transportation and Transit Services* by Jon E. Burkhardt, David Koffman, and Gail Murray (Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences, Transportation Research Board, 2003). This report can be found at [http://gulliver.trb.org/publications/tcrp/tcrp\\_rpt\\_91.pdf](http://gulliver.trb.org/publications/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_91.pdf).

By issuing transit passes to allow some Medicaid customers to use less-expensive fixed route transit instead of more expensive paratransit or taxi trips, the Medicaid agency saves more than \$7 million in transportation costs every year.

If the nation's 20 largest cities would institute similar transit pass programs for appropriate clients who could use transit conveniently, a savings to the Medicaid program of \$100 to \$200 million could be generated annually. Additionally, this strategy provides an opportunity for riders to benefit from existing transportation systems, offering greater mobility and independence.

### Riverside County TRIP Provides Mobility

Finding informal providers can save money and improve services. In Riverside County, California, just east of Los Angeles, the Transportation Reimbursement and Information Project (TRIP) complements public transportation by reimbursing volunteers to transport individuals where no public transportation service exists or when an individual is too frail to use other transportation. Public transportation services would cost at least \$1.5 million more than the transportation services provided by TRIP.

### A New Tool for Building Shared Understanding and Action

In each of these efforts there was a roadmap, a framework for action, which brought group partners together around a strategy.

Forming a partnership and marshalling efforts toward a single goal takes dedicated leadership and participation from all partners. Partners in coordinated efforts – providers, client agencies, sister agencies, public officials, advocates and others – must be able to see the big picture to achieve the group's goals. Too often, individuals are knowledgeable about their particular system but lack a full understanding of the big picture. Building shared understanding is essential to solving problems together.

### About the Self Assessment Tool for Communities and States

This new tool, the Framework for Action: Building the Fully Coordinated Transportation System helps stakeholders realize a shared perspective and build a roadmap for moving forward together. The Framework for Action was developed by analyzing the transportation coordination efforts in states and communities and successful models, with the advice and guidance of an expert panel.

This assessment tool can be used by itself, or it can be an essential element of developing a work plan, a strategic plan, or some other plan.

What you are reading now is one part of the toolkit. The Federal Coordination Council on Access and Mobility web site (<http://www.fta.dot.gov/CCAM/www/index.html> or [www.ccam.gov](http://www.ccam.gov)) has a full set of resources to assist you in your effort, including: a facilitator's guide that can help you design and manage the group process and a set of informational resources keyed to the topics in the toolkit.

Most importantly, the Framework for Action is not just another planning tool. It is a planning and action tool that helps states and communities understand where they are, define their priorities, and move towards specific actions.

### How it Works

The self-assessment tool focuses on a series of core elements that are represented in categories of simple diagnostic questions to help groups in states and communities assess their progress toward transportation coordination based on standards of excellence.

There are actually two tools: one for communities and another for states. Each follows a similar process. A group is convened to work together. This can be an existing group like an interagency council, an agency board of directors, or a standing advisory group. It can also be a group of stakeholders such as transportation providers, client agencies, human service advocates, and others.

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|---------------|--|
| <b>Step 1</b> | <b>Individual Assessments</b><br>The first step is for each person to individually assess the system using the progress ratings to answer each of the questions.   |
| <b>Step 2</b> | <b>Discuss Individual Assessments</b><br>After the individual assessments are complete, the group partners share their findings, notes, and solutions for improvement. The conversation explores questions such as: Where are we doing well? Where do we need to do much better? What does it take to get to the next level? Inevitably, everybody will not agree. That's where the learning occurs. Why do some think we work well together and others not? Why do some think we have used technology well and others not? Discussion can help increase people's understanding of the big picture as well as identify progress and problem areas. |
| <b>Step 3</b> | <b>Develop an Action Plan and Take Action</b><br>Once the group achieves clarity on its assessment, the next step is to take action, focusing on the areas where the group agrees it needs to do better and developing strategies and steps for moving forward. This goal becomes the community's or the state's Framework for Action, bringing focus and strategy to the efforts of the group.  |

### Why Your Participation is Vital

The direct benefits of more effective coordination are clear. Nationally, \$700 million could be saved, according to a conservative estimate from a study conducted by the National Academy of Science's Transportation Research Board. The examples given illuminate how services can be improved at the same time.

The indirect benefits are equally important. Transportation is a lifeline. Without the ability to reach jobs, health care, and other community support services, it is difficult for citizens to join the economic mainstream or to fully participate in community life. Individuals can't get a job if they can't reach a job. Individuals can't avoid acute care medical costs if they can't reach routine, preventive health care facilities. The lack of affordable and useable transportation options frustrates the ability of many citizens to achieve economic and personal independence.

More progress at all levels – federal, state, and local – is critical. Millions of riders across the country depend on human service agencies, public transportation systems and private transit providers to implement financial and bureaucratic strategies to build a seamless system that is convenient, safe, and cost effective. The Framework for Action can help you make that journey successfully.