



## Workshop Summary

**Title of Event:** *“Transportation Summit- Moving People From Welfare To Work”*

**Date(s):** August 5-6, 1998

**Location:** Sam Nunn Federal Center, Atlanta, Georgia

### I. Summary

The ACF Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network coordinated this workshop on behalf of the ACF Region IV office. The network is a contract from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance (OFA). The contractors for the network are AFYA, Inc. and Caliber Associates. The purpose of this two day technical assistance event was to identify the participating states' transportation priority challenges, to examine other state's initiatives that have addressed these challenges, to identify available resources, and to explore lessons learned that participants could use as a background for formulating next steps to address these challenges. Additional topics addressed included TEA-21 (Transportation Equity Act of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century), the role of Head Start, and the wealth of resources available via the National Transit Resource Center (operated by the Community Transportation Association of America). This summary highlights the main points from the workshop discussions in reference to these areas.

### II. Participants

Workshop participants included TANF representatives as well as various transportation and Head Start representatives from Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Maine, North Carolina, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Virginia, Vermont, and West Virginia. A representative from the Florida governor's office, the Georgia Department of Labor, and a Virginia public transportation provider participated. ACF Representatives from the Region IV office were present, and the ACF Central office was represented by Paul Maiers, Program Analyst, Technical Assistance Branch, Office of Self Sufficiency Programs, Office of Family Assistance. Speakers included Steven Golightly, Regional Hub Director, ACF Region IV; Susan Schruth, Regional Administrator, Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Region IV; Simpson Clark, Transportation Specialist, ACF Region IV; Glyn Lovely, ASPIRE Supervisor, Maine Department of Human Services- Family Independence; Kathy McGehee, Program Consultant, North Carolina Division of Social Services; Robert O'Leary, Governor's InterAgency Liaison, Florida Executive Office of the Governor; Jerry Ross, Director, Division of MultiModal Programs,

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet; Carol Lastowka, Welfare Reform Project Coordinator, JAUNT, Inc. (Charlottesville, VA); and Carolyn Jeskey, National Transit Resource Center, Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA).

## **I. Session Summary - Part One**

### State transportation challenges

State TANF representatives, transportation, and Head Start representatives teamed up to identify the top challenges their state currently faces in the area of transportation and welfare reform. ACF regional office representatives as well as the representatives from the governor's office, Department of labor, and transit also contributed their comments concerning their respective states. A summary of these challenges follows.

#### **State Transportation Challenges**

- Lack of public transportation modes to provide individuals with ways to purchase, lease, or borrow vehicles
- Odd hour shift worker needs (scheduling)
- Transportation to pre-employment activities (training, job search, etc.)
- Rural capacity- distances and unavailability of services
- Providing transportation for clients attending post employment services
- Managing the funding stream between transit providers and TANF offices
- Early head start needs: (0-3 yrs.) financial & logistical plus WTW demands
- Coordination within transportation providers and local agencies/state
- Commercial driver's licensed drivers needed to drive vans, buses, etc. (need to be flexible with hiring policies and training)
- Child care services for welfare recipients with special emphasis on transportation after clients leave the welfare rolls
- Community education & outreach
- Lack of ownership by state and local agencies, communities, etc.
- Lack of committed leadership - community, business, faith organizations, etc.
- How to handle "No Shows" by client riders (cost to providers of transportation services)
- Lack of trust between DSS & transit agencies (understanding regarding budgets, costs, etc.)
- Child care & job location differences in relation to commuting
- Collaboration between state agencies
- Lack of ownership- leading to excuses/barriers to cooperation (conflicting regulations)
- Lack of data to private sector (from state agencies regarding client transportation needs)
- Problem of "local control" versus the state's philosophy of control
- Cultural view of agencies (i.e. "DOT is only responsible for roads & bridges")
- State constitution only allows local money for roads and bridges
- Communication on guidelines for employer tax break programs for transportation (employer awareness)
- Need guidance on auto distribution programs, church van pools, and other programs (funding sources and operational specifics need to be identified)
- Access to reliable vehicles for automobile distribution programs
- Conflicting regulations, policies, and goals of funding groups (Medicaid, TANF, etc.)

- Affordable and reliable transportation after clients are not receiving TANF funds
- Substance abuse affects on TANF clients (DUI, loss of license, etc.)
- Collaboration and cooperation needed for the use of multiple use transportation resource pools (i.e. schools, Head Start, medicaid, van pools, Agency on Aging, etc.)
- Examination of conflicting regulations that could be rewritten to better use the above multiple use transportation resources
- Childcare accessibility
- Need public school's involvement-collaboration with Dept. of Ed. on buses, drivers, facilities
- Agencies that do not provide transportation to working poor - conflict of regulations/policies
- Rural and suburban distances - long commutes
- Obtaining coordination between transit providers, DOT, DSS, Head Start, Dept. of Education, and with local organizations
- Collaboration needed between state agencies and local agencies
- Identification of funding for starting up collaborations
- Awareness of transit benefits tax breaks for employers (need to get the word out)
- Providing transportation to clients when they are no longer covered by subsidies
- Motivating business and faith communities to provide programs (non DSS) and need to educate clients as well as the community at large on these programs
- Identify transportation needs of clients with substance abuse problems, learning disabilities, clients with mental health problems, and other "hard to serve" TANF clients (develop a solution)
- Affordable housing and job site locations in relation to transit service locations
- Individual focused transportation (need for cars instead of vans to go to separate job sites)
- Federal funding flexibility (streamlining to states)
- Need for Federal government to allow States to be flexible in programs
- Federal encouragement of State/local initiatives
- Creating a community awareness/support campaign

#### B. Priority challenges and key learnings

After discussing a variety of initiatives taking place in various States, the implications of TEA-21, the Head Start perspective, and hearing about the resources and information available from the National Transit Resource Center, the State representatives identified what they would consider as their top priority challenges. They then cited lessons learned to assist them in addressing these challenges. The chart that follows summarizes State's comments. Specific names of States have been deleted in order to present a more concise overall picture to allow any State to gain insight from the information.

## State Responses

State Priority Challenges	State Key Learnings
Rural - long distance commutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Co-location of childcare with worksite</li> <li>▪ Transit long-line commute routes</li> </ul>
Rural capacity (conflicts in schedule/services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Entrepreneurial van services</li> <li>▪ Car donation programs</li> </ul>
Rural Capacity (individual - no mass transit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bring all state-wide key players to table</li> <li>▪ Wheels-to-Work programs</li> <li>▪ Unique needs for post -TANF employee support services</li> </ul>
Relationship with State DOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use of TEA -21 dollars for co-location of child care and transportation</li> <li>▪ Collaboration is critical between agencies</li> </ul>
Conflicting agency guidelines re: funding (Head Start, DOT, Dept. of Education, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coordination needed between DOT, Head Start, Dept. of Education, etc.</li> </ul>
Affordable/available transportation for clients without funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Subsidize low-income workers' fares</li> <li>▪ Interagency collaboration/communication regarding transportation</li> </ul>
Need for individual transportation (autos, bikes, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Examine various Cars-for-Work programs (NC, VT, etc.) (VA- - for-profit micro enterprise)</li> <li>▪ Sell State legislators on post-employment transportation initiatives</li> </ul>
Data collection (TANF population and other participants transportation needs; mapping and communication needs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key players at the table could come together to share data as a first step toward further information sharing</li> </ul>
Tax code benefit for employers (transit)-- raising awareness and marketing of the program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employer tax benefits (IRS Pub. 535)</li> <li>▪ Job fairs using videos</li> <li>▪ Marketing initiatives to employers</li> <li>▪ Sharing with local/State coalitions</li> </ul>
Coordinating transportation funding & services for pre/post employment activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Access to Jobs</i> funding possibilities (FTA: TEA-21)</li> </ul>

## II. Session Summary - Part Two

### A. Implications for Rural Communities

#### 1. North Carolina

- a. *Work First Employment Transportation Operating Assistance Program*- governor's recommended funding for demonstration proposals to meet the transportation needs of former recent Work First Program participants or the general public

1. the state reviewed proposals from across the state and awarded six demonstrations
  2. a major benefit is that the program does not trigger the family's five year TANF time clock
  - b. Use of school buses- the state allows Work First participants who are working in the local school systems to ride school buses to work when there are no other alternative methods of transportation available
  - c. Proposal for NC Wheels-to-Work demonstration program  
(Wheels to Work has been implemented by over a dozen in various versions. The basic premise of the program is to provide automobiles at reasonable or no cost to welfare clients whose only impediment to holding meaningful employment is transportation.)
    1. program sponsors are the Department of Transportation, Public Transportation Division and the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services
    2. potential participants must be pre-qualified, enter into a contractual agreement with the county program administrator, and remain in compliance with the program requirements
2. Kentucky
- a. *Empower Kentucky Re-engineering Project*- one of the nation's most comprehensive and aggressive state-level re-engineering initiatives
    1. Over 200 state staff reviewed and evaluated twenty processes used across seven cabinets of state government
    2. Approved the implementation of the Transportation Delivery Process
  - b. Human Transportation Delivery System
    1. Delivery Team included representatives from the Cabinet for Human Services, Cabinet for Families and Children, Workforce Development Cabinet, and the Transportation Cabinet
    2. Delivery Team's mission is to formulate new business procedures, policies, and technical provisions necessary for a statewide coordinated human transportation delivery service network and to implement the process
    3. Programs involved in the coordinated Human Transportation Delivery System include, but are not limited to, Medicaid Non-emergency Medical, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Vocational Rehabilitation, Department for the Blind, Aging Services, Job Training Partnership Act, Mental Health/Mental Retardation, and the general public
    4. Kentucky has been divided into sixteen regions and actual transportation is provided through a system of transportation brokers/providers
  - c. The entire process has had the support of the governor and cabinet secretaries since its inception
  - d. Kentucky's efforts reflect the types of major reform changes (i.e., reorganization, cultural change, etc.) that many states may want to consider implementing. They also demonstrate the affect that committed leaders can have in implementing new statewide initiatives.

### 3. Vermont

- a. Vermont Loan Transportation Program- loan fund program that will provide current and recent TANF recipients with loans for the purchase and repair of personal vehicles (scheduled to start up in September 1998)
- b. *Good News Garage*- a program of Lutheran Social Services bringing transportation equity to people in need
  1. The first program of its kind nationwide
  2. Awards donated automobiles to qualified individuals who want the chance to be employed
  3. The program operates on a sliding fee scale for all customers- fees are dependent on an individual's income and ability to pay
  4. Automobile repair services are also offered at the competitive market rate

### B. Implications for Cities

#### 1. Virginia (JAUNT, Inc.)

- a. JAUNT is a public transportation provider in central Virginia serving the city of Charlottesville and four counties with urban as well as rural transportation services
- b. JAUNT combines public, fare paying passengers with clients of human service agencies to maximize resources and provide as much transportation as possible
- c. Receives grant funding from the state department of social services to pay for transportation of TANF clients in the Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW) Program
- d. VIEW clients are referred to JAUNT by their social services caseworker
- e. Clients ride for free
- f. Transportation is always provided to clients within 24 hours, or sooner, when needed
- g. Average cost per trip has been \$8.91
- h. Virginia has over 14 other transportation initiatives for VIEW clients in urban and rural areas

#### 2. Florida

- a. LYNX WAGES Transportation Program (public/private partnership)
  1. Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority (LYNX) entered into an agreement with the Central Florida Work and Gain Economic Self-Sufficiency (WAGES) Coalition to provide transportation services to participants in the WAGES Intensive Services Program
  2. LYNX is responsible for providing at least one viable mobility option for each WAGES "customer" within 72 hours of notification of need by a representative of the WAGES Intensive Services Program
  3. LYNX uses Geographic Information System (GIS) software in support of its Mobility Network (a database of transportation services offered in its region) to locate services available in the customer's area
  4. LYNX has developed a Communications / Outreach plan which allows information available services to be distributed to customers, potential employers, and WAGES case managers

- b. Other Florida innovative strategies include van pooling (West Florida), carpooling, para-transit service, the Wheels-to-Work car purchase program, WAGES recipients riding on school buses and acting as bus monitors, Charity Cars, and several other regions utilizing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software to conduct site mapping and match clients' transportation needs with service providers
  - c. Florida's 24 WAGES coalitions are evidence that coordination is the best strategy for providing transportation services for clients
    - 1. Coalitions found collaboration is critical to success in addressing client transportation needs
    - 2. Collaboration between federal, State, and local agencies has been successful in implementing several initiatives in Florida
    - 3. Legislatures and the governor's office have supported many initiatives that show evidence of collaboration
- C. Coordination and Resource Utilization
- 1. Maine
    - a. *Cooperative Agreement between Maine Department of Transportation and Maine Department of Human Services (5/96-9/97)*
      - 1. A joint initiative to provide work experience for clients participating in the ASPIRE (Additional Support For People In Retraining and Employment)-JOBS Program
      - 2. Provided opportunities for clients to work at Maine Department of Transportation road crew construction sites statewide
      - 3. Offered a cultural challenge to be overcome as 90% of ASPIRE-JOBS Program recipients were women (who would be working in the non-traditional arena of highway related work)
      - 4. Required detailed planning and communication between the two agencies
    - b. Aspire Transportation Survey- Aspire Program surveyed its households in early 1998 to identify transportation needs of that population
  - 2. Coordination examples mentioned by CTAA's representative
    - a. Bridges-to-Work demonstration sites  
(Bridges to Work is a national demonstration program that was launched in 1996 by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (along with private foundations) in cooperation with the FTA. The program's intent is to explore new ways to link urban welfare recipients with suburban jobs. There are currently five demonstration project sites nationwide in the states of MD, IL, CO, WI, and MO.)
    - b. JOBLINKS
      - 1. ( JOBLINKS is a national demonstration program that was launched in 1995 by the FTA. Its focus is on incorporating transportation and human services interventions into one package. It is sponsored by CTAA and has sixteen demonstration projects in twelve states.)
      - 2. factors of success identified in JOBLINKS sites:
        - a. The presence of a committed local leader
        - b. Willingness of employers to participate

- c. Presence of jobs in a community
- d. Cooperation between local DSS and transit
- e. Cooperation was most successful when there was already a history of cooperation
- c. JOBLINKS projects discussed (representatives not present):
  1. DARTS- Mississippi (targeted ridership)
  2. Rochester, New York
    - a. coordinated a fixed route transit system for reverse commuters
    - b. Jumpstart- Wheels-to-Work program
  3. AdVANtage- Anne Arundel County, Maryland
    - a. van service entrepreneurs project for former cash assistance clients
    - b. the county also operates a Wheels For Work pilot program
    - c. Brokerage approaches discussed (representatives not present)
      1. Tulsa Transit (Oklahoma) and the department of social services- operating as “mobility managers” who help coordinate transportation between welfare clients and transit providers
      2. Tennessee- transportation brokers coordinate transportation within service delivery areas by coordinating with private industry councils, community organizations, faith organizations, local service services, and local transportation providers

D. Implications of the “Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” or “TEA-21” (\$217 billion plan)

1. The bill maintains the long standing structure of a transit program split among:
  - a. formula grants to states and urbanized areas
  - b. major capital grants for rail and bus transit modes
  - c. grants for transit planning and research
2. The bill maintains the long-standing practice of using both mass transit account trust funds (\$29.34 billion) and general federal revenues (\$6.66 billion) for financing the transit program.
  - a. The total allocated for transit is \$41.0 billion with \$36 billion of this amount guaranteed or “walled off.” (The remaining \$5.0 billion is unprotected or not guaranteed.)
  - b. These “firewalls” assure transit an estimated 80 % return on authorized funding levels. (This is the first time in the transit program’s history that it has received guaranteed funding.)
3. The total transit funding by the bill increases by 31%, with formula funds growing by 24% and capital grants swelling by 42 %. (The definition of capital now includes *preventative maintenance* as well as operating expenses.)
4. *Access to Jobs* provision in TEA-21- \$150 million allocated for this new program over the next six years
  - a. \$10 million must be spent on reverse commute projects- for the purpose of developing transportation services to carry residents from urban suburban and rural locations to suburban employment centers
  - b. Community transportation providers in all 50 states will be able to apply for funding

1. 60% for urbanized areas over 200,000
  2. 20% for urbanized areas under 200,000
  3. 20% for rural areas (under 50,000)
- c. The Federal Transit Administration will use the following considerations regarding *Access to Jobs* grant requests:
1. the population of welfare recipients in the project target area
  2. the extent to which the applicant demonstrates coordination with existing public and human services transit agencies
  3. the innovativeness of the approach
5. Tax implications- several changes to the Internal Revenue Code (IRC)
- a. transit and vanpool benefits are now considered qualified transportation benefits
  - b. employers may continue to provide transit or vanpool benefits to employees in addition to their current compensation paid
  - c. employers may now provide these benefits *in lieu of* their existing compensation
  - d. transit and vanpool benefits now have the same tax treatment as parking benefits were given under the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997
6. The Federal Transit Administration plans to hold several hearings and focus groups soon to gather State input regarding how the new bill should be implemented. Questions for State input and more information will be published and posted on the Federal Transit Administration's web site at <http://www.fta.dot.gov/wtw/>
- a. main issue is whether to give the money directly to states (states must provide matching funds) or to make the allocations competitive based on a formula (similar to DOL's WTW funds)
  - b. FTA will make its decision on October 1, 1998

#### E. The Head Start Perspective

1. challenges
  - a. Region IV Head Start transports over 100,000 children operating over 2,700 vehicles daily- addressing problems of vehicle procurement and maintenance, driver training, and operation of the routes
  - b. Head Start buses are used only an average of three hours per day, five days per week, nine months per year- they spend the rest of their time locked up in garages for large blocks of time during which many disadvantaged citizens lack transportation of needed services
2. vehicle usage
  - a. A recent STN (School Transportation News) / Head Start National Transportation Survey was published in 1998
    1. 45.3% of the vehicles owned by Head Start agencies are school buses
    2. 98.7 % of the agencies surveyed (150 agencies nationwide) supply transportation
    3. every agency surveyed had written policies and procedures in place for transporting children
4. complete survey results are available for review on the STN Website at <http://www.stnonline.com>
3. Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)- first published in June 1995

- a. Head Start is seeking to develop regulations governing the transportation of more than 700,000 children
- b. DHHS, the National Head Start Bureau, FTA, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Head Start user community, school transporters, and school bus manufacturers are all debating the issues under the aegis of the Federal Coordinating Council
- d. one of the key issues from the NPRM- “establish requirements for the involvement of Head Start programs in Coordinated Transportation Systems”
- c. the main issue is the amount of complexities involved with transportation coordination to achieve better productivity and efficiency in the delivery of services while maintaining safety standards that will protect children who are participating in the Head Start program
- d. the original NPRM is available in STN’s Head Start section of its Website (see above)
- 4. considerations for utilizing Head Start vehicles
  - a. the government-wide “common rules” on the fiscal and administrative aspects of grants require that first priority for use of the equipment (vehicle) or facility go to the project supported by the grant to which the cost of the equipment or facility is charged
  - b. local regulations issued by county school systems concerning non-routine use of school buses and whether there are any restrictions on transporting adults
- 5. considerations regarding negotiations concerning formation of a consolidated transportation system
  - a. cost-effectiveness of the system- both long and short term
  - b. safety and supervision of children
  - c. transportation needs of Head Start parents for program participation
  - d. use of vehicles for field trips, health care, etc.
  - e. maintenance of vehicles
  - f. adequate reimbursement for shared equipment

F. Potential role of the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA)

- 1. CTAA is an association of organizations and individuals committed to improving mobility for all people.
- 2. CTAA maintains an active member services and development office.
- 3. CTAA’s nationwide network of State Delegates enables it to maintain an active presence in each state and to rapidly distribute information to its members.
- 4. Under contract with the Federal Transit Administration, CTAA operates the Federal Transit Resource Center offering a vast amount of welfare related transportation information.
- 5. CTAA has recently published *Access to Jobs-A Guide to Innovative Practices in Welfare-to-Work Transportation: A report that summarizes welfare reform transportation challenges and reviews the welfare-to-work activities in several states, metropolitan planning organizations, and public mass transit agencies. In addition, the report details the most pertinent research relating to welfare transportation, federal funding sources for welfare transportation, and highlights the current technical assistance efforts on the subject.*

6. CTAA coordinates and reports on the various nationwide JOBLINKS demonstration projects.

7. Points of contact for CTAA:

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### **III. Final Remarks**

Workshop attendees agreed that there are many more promising initiatives and programs taking place nationwide for welfare reform in the area of transportation than they previously realized. They were pleasantly surprised to find that they had peers across the nation struggling with similar transportation issues. The group concluded that the key to fully utilizing this technical assistance is to select the transportation initiatives being implemented in states that best address their current situation. The critical challenge will be to implement a version of these newly learned initiatives that is tailored to match their state's specific challenges. For more information on the state initiatives mentioned in this report, TEA-21, Head Start, CTAA, or the ACF Peer Technical Assistance Network, please contact either Blake Austensen (ext. 215) or Paul Purnell (ext. 214) of AFYA, Inc. at (301) 270-0841. The Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network is pleased to be contributing to the progress that states are making in this critical area of welfare reform.