

**ACF Region IX
State and Territorial
TANF Strategic Session**



**Transportation
and TANF**

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ACF Region IX State and Territorial TANF Strategic Session

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Transportation and TANF

The Good News Mountaineer Garage

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The Good News Mountaineer Garage (GNMG) receives funding from the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services (DHHR) to provide vehicles to families who need transportation to get to work and job training so they can become self-sufficient. Serving families state-wide, the majority of their clients are from rural areas. GNMG is able to repair approximately 70 percent of the cars that are donated, which is one of the highest rates for donated car organizations in the nation.

To receive a vehicle, a family must be referred by their DHHR case manager with approval by the regional supervisor. When GNMG receives the referral, a staff person will contact the family to explain the program and determine what kind of vehicle best meets their transportation needs. Before a family or individual can be placed in a vehicle, they must provide proof of liability insurance and participate in GNMG's maintenance and car care training. To be eligible for a referral a family must: be receiving TANF benefits; be actively participating in the West Virginia WORKS program; and have no access to other forms of transportation (i.e., without any access to public transportation).

Based on their survey answers, participants are matched with vehicles based on their transportation needs: for example, GNMG will match a four wheel drive vehicle for someone who drives regularly on rougher country roads. GNMG offers a warranty for all the cars, and delivers them all over the state to the clients who are in need, as determined by their case worker. In addition, GNMG has strong faith-based and community-based support, as partners and as board members. A former GNMG car recipient who is now off welfare also serves on the board.

GNMG operates state-wide and has helped more than 700 families become self-supporting. A follow-up study found that one year after receiving a GNMG vehicle, 70 percent of the families went off public assistance; 80 percent were working; and 13 percent were in job training. In January 2008, GNMG was honored by the Martin Luther King, Jr. West Virginia Holiday Commission for the "Living the Dream" Service Organization Honor Roll awardee.

Shore Transit

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Shore Transit is the local public transportation provider in the Tri-County Region and in partnership with the Tri-County Council for the Eastern Shore has developed specific transportation programs to serve TANF recipients and other low income individuals in the region. The three counties that make up the region are mainly rural with a few urban towns in which many of the employment opportunities are located. Shore Transit was developed and funded in response to a lack of transportation options for disadvantaged individuals in the counties as well as a documented need for more transportation. The Tri-County Region created a document that outlined the unmet needs transportation needs of the specific populations in their communities.

The funding used to provide transportation to TANF and other low income families is from the federal Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) administers the funding to the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) which is the state transit agency, which then filters the funding down to the region.

Community Resource Group

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The Community Resource Group (CRG) makes zero-interest loans available to welfare recipients and other low-income residents who could not otherwise purchase a vehicle. Eligible welfare recipients purchase cars through the state's down payment assistance program. CRG also accepts donated vehicles, which are reconditioned and sold to low-income families for \$1,000. Zero-interest loans are made available through a revolving loan fund supported by coalition members. Members are organizations funded by the Arkansas Department of Human Services to provide support services to low-income residents in a four-county area. As loans are repaid, funds are redeposited.

JAUNT Program

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JAUNT is a regional public transportation system providing service to residents in six counties in central Virginia. Federal Transit Administration funds support the program, along with state and local funding. Agencies pay an hourly fee of \$45 for the service and non-agency users pay an average of \$3.00 per ride. The program began providing transportation for human service agencies in 1975. In fiscal 2008, JAUNT provided over 270,000 trips for passengers traveling to medical appointments, work, and nutrition and other support services. About one third of JAUNT users reside in rural areas. For nearly five years, JAUNT provided free transportation for clients participating in the Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW), the state TANF program, using Job Access Funding from the Federal Transit Administration and state TANF funds. Using this program, VIEW

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participants were provided with transportation to and from job readiness and training classes, employment, day care, and approved educational classes.

JAUNT's award-winning system earned the Virginia Transit Association's Outstanding Public Transportation System Award for Non-Urbanized Areas and the National Community Transportation System of the Year award from the Community Transit Association of America.

KEYS (Keeping Employment equals Your Success) Program

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The KEYS Auto Loan Program is intended to provide auto loans to help CalWORKs participants, including those on retention services, to purchase a vehicle. The loan has a maximum dollar amount of \$4,000 and a 2-year term. This auto loan program targets those participants for whom an automobile is the only practical means of transportation to employment or training, and who would otherwise not be able to obtain an auto loan.

In its first year, 17 CalWORKs participants received KEYS Auto Loans averaging \$2,725 each. Once a participant is approved for a KEYS Loan, KEYS can help them select a car and the program pays for a diagnostic report on the automobile they selected. In addition, participants must attend classes on budget management and basic automobile maintenance to help ensure success as a new car owner.

Zuni Entrepreneurial Enterprises, Inc. (Z.E.E.)

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The Zuni Entrepreneurial Enterprises Inc. Public Transportation Program provides transportation services for residents of the Zuni Pueblo in Northwestern New Mexico. The program receives funding from the New Mexico Department of Transportation under the auspices of the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and Small Urban and Rural Transportation programs of the Federal Transit Administration. The agency was able to begin job and vocational rehabilitation related transportation services with financial assistance of a Joblinks grant from the Community Transportation Association of America. This grant came at a critical time in the development of the community transit service in the Pueblo of Zuni. It allowed the agency to grow and enhance the services for the community.

The agency operates both fixed route and a demand responsive service within the village. The agency also provides daily trips to Gallup for students attending classes at the University of New Mexico – Gallup Branch and individuals employed or seeking employment in the Gallup community. The transit program contracts with several state agencies to provide support for persons receiving vocational rehabilitation and related services.

Opportunity Cars

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Opportunity Cars is a national network of over 150 nonprofit organizations dedicated to promoting car ownership for low wage working families as a strategy for improving

employment and quality of life outcomes. Opportunity Cars works with car programs, advocates, researchers, policy makers and other critical stakeholders to strengthen practice and promote policies to further car purchase and financing options. Opportunity Cars programs seek to increase client mobility and economic sustainability through three primary strategies: (1) donating or selling used cars at a subsidized price to low-income families; (2) making low interest loans for vehicle purchases; (3) facilitating matched savings for car down payments and/or purchases.