

Creating Individual Transportation Plans

Managing Mobility Series

Technical Assistance Brief Two

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About the Managing Mobility technical assistance series: As one-stop staff, you may well be the best asset to help dislocated workers and other unemployed people overcome their employment transportation barriers. You know individuals' family situations, neighborhoods and financial abilities. In addition, you understand the barriers that keep one-stop participants from reaching employment opportunities. Since accessing transportation to jobs, training, child care centers and other destinations often requires one-on-one counseling and assistance, job developers, case managers and other one-stop staff are a powerful support mechanism.

Successfully linking potential employees with transportation services is a local objective. For this reason, giving you the resources to become mobility managers is essential in connecting job seekers with employment and employment-related sites.

Designed for employment and training staff who have direct contact with program participants, this brief will:

- Help one-stop staff to locate the transportation resources (vehicles and funding) available to take one-stop participants to work,
- Explain how job developers and case managers can assess the transportation needs of participants, and
- Describe how staff can match one-stop participants with the available transportation resources and create personalized transportation plans for these customers.

Action One — Locate Available Transportation Resources

Because each job seeker has unique travel needs and varied financial situations, one-stop centers will need to develop a variety of travel options. For instance, a fixed-route bus may be able to

carry a second-shift employee to work; however, late at night, when the bus is no longer operating, the employee may take need to take dial-a-ride van or taxi home.

By familiarizing yourself with the range of transportation options available to one-stop customers, you can match job seekers with appropriate services that reliably connect them to the workplace and to other employment-related sites.

Step 1: Use **Form A** entitled "Transportation Services Inventory" to list the range of public and private transportation services in your community, including new arrangements that Workforce Investment Boards have created with transportation providers.

When filling out the form, be aware that the range of transportation services could include:

- Fixed-route buses,
- Dial-a-ride vans, including those operated by churches or disability organizations,
- Taxis,
- Commuter rail services,
- Shuttle services,
- Intercity buses (i.e., Greyhound),
- School buses,
- Volunteer driving programs, and
- Ridesharing programs that organize vanpools and carpools.

Note!!! Informal carpooling through family, friends and co-workers may be one of the most readily available and affordable means of transportation for a new employee.

Resource: To get your list started, contact Community Transportation Association of America's (CTAA) National Transit Resource Center at 800.527.8279. Local planning organizations, such as councils of government and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), will also provide you with a list of transportation providers in your community.

Step 2: Fill in the rest of **Form A** by gathering other relevant information about the transportation services in the community.

- Who operates the vehicles or programs?
- What are the days and hours when the vehicles operate?
- What is the schedule?
- Who are the people who ride the vehicles?
- Are these vehicles available for use by the general public? If so, what are the costs?

By familiarizing yourself with the variety of transportation services in your community you have

equipped yourself with the knowledge necessary to assist the participants in your program to reach jobs and job training.

Meeting the diverse travel needs of a large region

Because the Pima County (Ariz.) service delivery area ranges from metropolitan Tucson to rural areas in the county, the Arizona Department of Employment Security (DES) funded Job Express. Job Express offers transportation programs to meet the various transportation needs of TANF recipients. TANF recipients receive Job Express services to jobs, training and child care up until 90 after employment.

Job Express staff and DES JOBS Specialists select and manage the most appropriate and cost-effective mobility option which meets recipients' needs. The two primary programs are: 1) Rideshare's carpool matching services — Job Express pays for gas or mileage; and 2) Free monthly bus passes for the first 90 days after employment, and reduced-cost bus passes for 9 months — both adults and children are eligible.

If these two options do not meet the travel needs of recipients due to night or weekend shifts or gaps in rural transportation, Job Express offers: 1) cab or private van rides, 2) gas vouchers as an incentive for family and neighbors to provide work-related transportation in rural areas, and 3) grants up to \$650 for car or bike repairs, driver's licenses and education classes, as well as car registration and insurance.

Step 3: Learn what funding is available to help participants afford transportation.

There is money available to help dislocated workers, welfare recipients and other low-income people afford transportation. Some may be short-term assistance, while other funding may reduce one's transportation costs over a longer period of time. These funding resources may include: the **Commuter Tax Benefit** program, a **Get-A-Job, Get-A-Ride** program and discounted bus passes.

There may also be funding through TANF, DOL Welfare-to-Work or other programs to help job seekers afford their transportation. To learn whether TANF and Welfare-to-Work money can be used for transportation assistance, ask the persons in the one-stop or local social service agency who are responsible for distributing these funds.

Get a Job, Get a Ride

Transit providers and social service agencies believe that incurring short-term expenses to accustom new riders to public transit will serve long-term ends of increased use of public transit.

The **Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART)** in Detroit Mich., promotes its **Get a Job, Get a Ride!** program to new employees in SMART's service area. When eligible new employees get a job they also can enjoy one month of free rides on SMART buses.

The **Commuter Tax Benefit** program enables employees to afford transportation services. Employers can reimburse employees \$65 dollars a month for their transportation costs on transit or in vanpools and deduct the reimbursements as an employee benefit. (Beginning after December 31, 2001, the nontaxable transit and vanpool benefits will increase to \$100 a month.) In addition, employers can directly pay for an employee's transit and vanpool expenses and the costs can be deducted from the employee's paycheck before taxes.

For more information, contact the National Transit Resource Center at 800.527.8279.

Action Two — Assess the Mobility Needs of Job Seekers

One-stop staff recognize that their job seeking customers have transportation barriers that impede their chances of accepting and keeping a job. In many cases, these job seekers cannot afford a car and many do not have a driver's license. As a result, the resources listed in **Form A** are the best alternatives to travel to work.

As you work one-on-one with job seekers, make a transportation needs assessment part of your overall assessment of skills and education, needs and barriers.

Step 1: Assess the transportation needs of job seekers.

- Where does each job seeker reside?
- Where does she (or he) need to travel each day to satisfy training requirements and meet her work schedule?
- Where does she need to go to meet family obligations, such as taking children to school and child care, shopping, and running errands?
- What are the times she needs to travel? (Take special note of nighttime traveling needs.)

Step 2: Identify the customer's financial resources and her ability to afford certain travel alternatives.

A Hypothetical Situation — Part A

Transportation assessment of Vickie

Profile:	A mother of two young children. No access to a reliable automobile.
Work schedule:	Tuesday through Saturday, 3 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Destination: Downtown
Child care:	Tuesday through Saturday. Needed from 2:30 p.m. until 7 p.m. (when children can be picked up by their father or aunt). Location: Near her home
Training schedule:	Mondays from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Location: East side of the city
Shopping:	Flexible hours before work and on weekends
Financial ability:	Could afford monthly bus pass or vanpool after her third or fourth paycheck.

With the information you have gathered from **Actions One and Two**, you can make an assessment regarding the most appropriate form of transportation necessary to carry individuals to their destinations.

Note: These assessments can serve as evidence of the need for additional employment transportation options. Share these with Workforce Investment Area staff, transportation planners and other community representatives.

Action Three — Create Personalized Transportation Plans

Gaining an awareness of available transportation resources and of customers' travel needs were the necessary first steps in linking them with transportation. With this information, you are now able to create transportation strategies that one-stop participants can use to get to work.

Step 1: Create Personalized Transportation Plans.

- Summarize the customer's transportation needs, including the times she needs to travel and her ability to afford various options.
- Based on the list of resources in **Form A**, match the participant with the appropriate transportation options.
- Make eligible financial assistance available to the job seeker or new employee. This may entail arranging for the employer to take advantage of the Commuter Tax Benefit program (described above), buying a monthly bus pass from the local transit agency, or reimbursing eligible individuals for public transit fares or carpool expenses, such as gas or mileage.

A Hypothetical Situation — Part B

Personal travel plan for Vickie

Travel to work:	Vickie can take the Blue line bus two blocks from her home to her job downtown. After work at 11 p.m., the van service (a contracted service between the area's one-stop center and the local transit provider) will pick her up at work and will take her home along with other passengers.
Child care:	With an unlimited ride monthly bus pass, Vickie can ride the bus from her home two stops, drop off her children at child care, and get back on the bus to get to work. Each evening, her husband or sister will pick up the children.
Training:	The contracted van service will take Vickie to and from training on Mondays.
Shopping:	The monthly bus pass allows Vickie to go shopping at her convenience.
Funding for travel:	The one-stop will pay for van service home from work for the first 6 months of employment, and to and from training until completion. The one-stop will reimburse her for buying a monthly bus pass until her fourth paycheck (2 months).

Note: Keep your Workforce Investment Area director and staff informed about your ability to link one-stop participants with transportation alternatives. If reliable, safe and affordable travel options are **not** available to participants, this barrier will prevent job-ready individuals from obtaining and retaining employment. With knowledge of persistent transportation barriers, WIA staff can negotiate with transportation providers and planning organizations to develop additional employment transportation options.

Step 2: Accustom the participant to the transportation plan.

Once a plan is created, work one-on-one with participants to ensure that they have a working knowledge to successfully use the designated transportation services and are comfortable with carrying out their personal plan.

A Hypothetical Situation — Part C

Vickie's travel plan: follow up

- Vickie has been given weekday and weekend bus schedules for using the Blue line bus, as well as guidelines for using fixed-route bus service.
- Vickie attended an orientation on how to use the dial-a-ride van service to get to and from training and for her return trip home from work. She understands that she must call the service provider if she needs to cancel her scheduled trip, and that, according to the van service policy, she will be unable to use the service if she fails to cancel three unneeded trips.
- Lastly, Vickie was taught how to apply for travel reimbursements for buying her monthly pass for the first two months of employment, and worked with her case worker on maintaining a budget that accounts for the monthly transportation expenses she will assume after she no longer receives financial assistance.

Such individualized attention from staff can help participants carry out their personal transportation plans for accessing job training, jobs and child care.

Mobility Managers

Here are descriptions of different ways that job seekers can receive one-on-one transportation assistance.

1. Job Description: One-stop center mobility manager

One way to make the transportation link is to have a specific staff member work one-on-one with participants to create a transportation plan and assist them in plan implementation. The person filling this position should have knowledge of all transportation resources in the community.

Actions of the mobility manager might include the following activities:

- Working with job developers to coordinate transportation services to employment sites,
- Dispersing travel vouchers or bus passes,
- Training participants to use transportation services,
- Matching participants in carpool and vanpool services,
- Arranging volunteer driver services,
- Calling transportation providers to schedule rides on vehicles, or
- Directly scheduling rides on vehicles through remote scheduling.

Example: In Tennessee, the Department of Human Services (DHS) refers each Families First (TANF) participant to a mobility manager who creates a transportation plan for the recipient. The transportation managers with whom DHS contracts are the 14 Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) for the state, covering all of the state's 95 counties. The SDAs have the responsibility of assessing the needs of each participant and contracting with transportation providers to arrange services for those who do not have access to a vehicle to get to job training, educational sites and employment.

Transportation managers encourage using a variety of transportation options. Participants can use a monthly bus pass on public transit, use taxi service or participate in vanpools. Stops at child care centers are prearranged as part of the vanpool service and the cost for children riding is funded by DHS.

2. Variation on one-stop center mobility manager

Using the transportation broker to manage participant transportation barriers

Some Workforce Investment Areas and social services agencies have directly contracted mobility management services out to a transportation provider. Transit staff provide the customized trip planning services on behalf of the agency and link eligible participants with the appropriate transportation solution (e.g., private taxi, demand-response or fixed-route bus, carpool and vanpool program, among others). If the mobility manager is a transportation provider, it can ensure cost-effective transportation because the transportation providers' centralized intake and scheduling allows maximum coordination of riders. This coordination can succeed in lowering per trip transportation costs by maximizing vehicle efficiency.

A mobility manager proves effective when the social service agency, one-stop center or training agency requires a variety of transportation modes to meet the needs of participants.

Example: In Northeast Oklahoma, the Department of Human Services has a contract with Tulsa Transit (a public transit provider) to manage transportation services for TANF participants in an 11-county area.

As the manager, Tulsa Transit will accomplish the following:

- Conduct an in-person transportation needs assessment,
- Determine the best transportation service options,
- Identify and negotiate contracts with various service providers as needed,
- Schedule or train the TANF participants for the selected transportation,
- Collect client usage data for DHS review,
- Verify that the services were actually provided, and
- Invoice DHS for the services provided.

The transportation services that Tulsa Transit arranges include: Tulsa's fixed route *Connection*, curb-to-curb demand response, vanpools, carpools, taxis, bikes, private autos, among other alternatives.

In addition to training TANF participants and DHS staff on transportation services, Tulsa Transit also provides training to employers.

The key to successfully linking potential employees with transportation services lies at the local level and one-stop staff are the best asset to help dislocated workers and other unemployed people overcome their transportation barriers.

Don't miss two other technical assistance briefs in the **Managing Mobility** series:

Brief One: An Introduction to Community Transportation familiarizes the reader with the range of community transportation services that could be used to provide trips to work, and describes the ways in which many communities are funding and planning transportation services.

Brief Three: Working in Partnership — Transportation as the Vital Link suggests ways that one-stop staff can work in partnership with transportation providers to promote greater mobility options for one-stop participants.

To request these technical assistance briefs, or to order additional copies of this brief, call the National Transit Resource Center at 800.527.8279.

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Form A — Worksheet: Transportation Services Inventory

Transit Agency or Community Program	Type of Service (bus, van, taxi, rail, car)	Days of Service	Hours of Service	Lift or Ramp Equipped?	Type of Payment?	How to Access Service?
1. Name: Address: Phone: Contact: Fax:				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Free <input type="checkbox"/> Voucher <input type="checkbox"/> Fare	<input type="checkbox"/> Fixed schedule <input type="checkbox"/> Call for each ride <input type="checkbox"/> Subscription
2. Name: Address: Phone: Contact: Fax:				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Free <input type="checkbox"/> Voucher <input type="checkbox"/> Fare	<input type="checkbox"/> Fixed schedule <input type="checkbox"/> Call for each ride <input type="checkbox"/> Subscription
3. Name: Address: Phone: Contact: Fax:				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Free <input type="checkbox"/> Voucher <input type="checkbox"/> Fare	<input type="checkbox"/> Fixed schedule <input type="checkbox"/> Call for each ride <input type="checkbox"/> Subscription
4. Name: Address: Phone: Contact: Fax:				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Free <input type="checkbox"/> Voucher <input type="checkbox"/> Fare	<input type="checkbox"/> Fixed schedule <input type="checkbox"/> Call for each ride <input type="checkbox"/> Subscription
5. Name: Address: Phone: Contact: Fax:				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Free <input type="checkbox"/> Voucher <input type="checkbox"/> Fare	<input type="checkbox"/> Fixed schedule <input type="checkbox"/> Call for each ride <input type="checkbox"/> Subscription
6. Name: Address: Phone: Contact: Fax:				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Free <input type="checkbox"/> Voucher <input type="checkbox"/> Fare	<input type="checkbox"/> Fixed schedule <input type="checkbox"/> Call for each ride <input type="checkbox"/> Subscription

