

A Report on One Stop Centers and Employment Transportation

Community Transportation
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Acknowledgments

The researchers would like to thank the more than 200 One Stop Center staff and Workforce Investment Board directors who participated in the survey. We appreciate their willingness to contribute significantly to this effort. We would also like to give special recognition to the individuals who agreed to be interviewed and who spoke with candor about their successes and failures in addressing transportation needs. We greatly appreciate the time they took to share their thoughts and insights about employment transportation.

We would also like to thank Virginia Hamilton, Executive Director of the California Workforce Association, who assisted in the design and administration of the One Stop Center survey. Ms. Hamilton also reviewed drafts of this report; we appreciate the wealth of experience that she brought to the project and her editorial suggestions.

Last, we thank the Community Transportation Association of America staff — Carolyn Jeskey, Gabrielle Sivage and Rich Sampson — for their support, understanding, flexibility and guidance through this process.

A Report on One Stop Centers and Employment Transportation*

Executive Summary

Since their establishment in the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), One Stop Centers have been providing consolidated employment, social, and transportation-related services to low-income and welfare-assisted families and individuals and to other customers. In WIA, Congress gave grantees the flexibility to use funds to address unique local problems, including transportation-related challenges. Transportation is a key component to ensuring an individual's access to employment training and jobs; without a reliable means for traveling to and from work and other work-related destinations (e.g., childcare, benefits offices, training), individuals can find the move toward self-sufficiency an almost impossible task.

In view of the continuing need for transportation assistance and strained staff and budget resources, it is vital that One Stop Centers be able to leverage all currently available funding as well as all possible partnerships to serve their customers' needs. The One Stop system is positioned to make significant strides in helping to forge transportation solutions, and there is much to be gained by a better-informed discourse among all stakeholders. This report is intended to be a foundation for that ongoing discourse and a forum through which One Stop Centers can share lessons learned and best practices.

Overview of Findings

The survey was undertaken to explore how One Stop Centers and Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) view transportation issues within the context of the host of other issues with which they must contend, what types of partnerships they have been able to forge to address the transportation needs of their customers, how they have implemented technological developments in their outreach efforts and what have been the successes and pitfalls of their current practices.

Survey responses were obtained from 212 geographically diverse One Stops representing 24 states. In-depth follow-up interviews were conducted with 36 selected respondents based on their responses to open-ended questions in the survey.

* A publication of the Community Transportation Association of America, Dale J. Marsico, CCTM, Executive Director. This report was prepared pursuant to a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are solely those of the authors and should not be construed as representing the opinions or policy of any agency of the federal government. March 2006.

The results of the survey reinforced the idea that transportation is an important issue to One Stops and the populations they serve. Fifty-one percent of One Stops said that 20-40 percent of their customers need help with transportation, and 16 percent indicated that more than 40 percent of their customers require this type of assistance. However, only 4 percent said that they were able to meet the transportation needs of at least 40 percent of these individuals, with 54 percent stating that they could meet the needs of only 0-10 percent of customers. In addition, 62 percent of the respondents spend less than \$10,000 annually on transportation solutions.

The survey responses indicate that One Stop Centers offer several types of transportation assistance:

- 79 percent provide basic transportation information (e.g., transportation brochures or schedules)
- 64 percent provide bus or transit tokens, vouchers or passes
- 59 percent give customers help in locating employment or childcare accessible by public transit
- 60 percent provide car-related assistance to customers (e.g., vouchers for car repairs, gas allowances)

The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program was cited as the most frequent source of funds used for transportation purposes. Although only 9 percent of the respondents indicated participation in the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program, participants in the program found it to be highly effective. One frequently mentioned challenge for JARC grantees is how to continue service after a grant expires.

Transit-Based Solutions

Funding direct bus/van service. Twelve percent of One Stops indicated that they were able to facilitate the establishment of a new bus/van service. One successful new start took place in Mesa County, a large, rural county in Colorado that originally had no public transportation system. By using TANF funds to offset a match for JARC dollars, the county was able to launch the Grand Valley Transit System. Originally three small fixed routes on which dilapidated buses that cost a dollar each to purchase operated, the system provided TANF recipients free work-related travel. Now the system runs articulated, modern buses that can accommodate disabled individuals as well as smaller, 25-passenger buses. Although the routes are not yet self-sustaining, they are moving in that direction.

A similar story played out in the Capital Area Michigan Works! One Stop Center, at which state money for assisting welfare recipients in obtaining employment was used to assist one area county in establishing a new transit agency.

Addressing the mismatch of available transit services to employment-related needs. Many One Stops (17 percent) were able to work with local transit companies to improve services in a variety of ways, such as adding new routes, extending hours of operation, educating new riders and using other techniques to boost ridership. Some of the techniques they have used include the following:

*The participation of public transportation agencies in crafting solutions is crucial.—
Summit County Department of Job and Family Services*

- **Knowing local transit systems.** Case managers at Capital Area Michigan Works! have become savvy in how local systems work and in advising customers on how best to use one or several transit systems.
- **Forming a cross-region transit system.** The Intercity Transit system in the Grays Harbor, Washington region, connects ridership within the area’s counties. It also has a full-time disability navigator dedicated to finding transportation solutions for people with disabilities.
- **Working with transit providers to adapt services to the community’s needs.** WorkForce One in Broward County, Florida, used a JARC grant to create a community transportation collaborative that succeeded in having workforce transportation solutions become incorporated into the regular county transit system (e.g., new routes, extended service hours, route accommodations to ensure safer nighttime bus stops). Livingston County Michigan Works! also provided TANF funds to the local transit provider that enabled that agency to expand services to accommodate work schedules. Beginning with a TANF grant in the late 1990s, Working Solutions in Rome, New York, was effective in getting Oneida County’s public transportation to adjust routes based on the location of new jobs.

Van-Based Solutions

A few One Stops have spent their own money to buy or lease vans to carry people to training or jobs. In other cases, where special grant money was available, the One Stop contracted this service to transportation providers.

- **Establishing employment-site vanpools.** Using a JARC grant, a Southeast Missouri One Stop subcontracted with numerous county transportation departments to set up van service to transport people to a specific employer site with which the One Stop had established a relationship. The One Stop also provided staff time to coordinate and pull together carpools for individuals commuting to the same employer.
- **Developing service pick-up-points for workers.** The Santa Ana One Stop funded a start-up van service in which the driver took a proactive

- role and developed routes for individual customers that involved pick-up and drop-off at childcare facilities, employment centers and the One Stop.
- **Provide transportation for special projects.** A number of One Stops reported using vans for special projects, such as transporting youth to schools or work sites. The Madera County (California) WIB runs a daily van to a pre-apprenticeship training program 40 miles away from the One Stop Center.

Car-Based Solutions

One stops have been active in implementing car-based solutions to customers' transportation dilemmas by

- Encouraging carpools
- Educating first-time car owners on insurance and vehicle-maintenance issues and other expenses of owning a private vehicle
- Working with customers on personal finances and household budgeting and show them how they can save for a car
- Developing or expanding a car donation program

Bundled Solutions

The range of solutions developed by the Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board, Inc., exemplifies the approach of many One Stops in addressing transportation barriers: if TANF participants have access to a vehicle, they can receive transportation assistance in the form of gas cards; if public transportation is reasonably available near home, they can receive bus passes. If neither is an option, customers may be referred to the local contracted taxi company for transportation to the One Stop Center, a training center, a childcare provider or a place of employment.

Extending One Stops' Reach Through Partnerships

Many of the transportation solutions described above were accomplished through establishing coalitions across many different kinds of private and public organizations. A number of respondents referred to joint membership on the boards of transit authorities, transit committees, economic development boards and other cross-board partnerships. Many described forming coalitions to deal with transportation issues on a large scale rather than customer by customer.

The director of Livingston County Michigan Works! noted that a predictable income stream really makes a difference in bringing people together. That One Stop has also found that having a structure already set up for exploring grants and applying them to meeting community needs increases the chances of a One Stop being allocated funds. For example, the center received a transportation-to-work grant that is given to only a handful of WIBs in Michigan because it had such a structure already in place.

We're organized around our community's needs, so when funding opportunities come through, we can take advantage of them.

—Livingston County Michigan Works!

- **Forming interagency task forces.** Employment-related transportation solutions are more likely to succeed if they are crafted with the involvement of One Stop, transit, transportation planning, workforce and other relevant social services agencies. Each stakeholder brings a specific perspective to the table, and by establishing common ground and purpose up front, the expertise of the various agencies can be directed toward viable solutions. It also develops a shared awareness of each stakeholder's issues.
- **Leveraging partnerships and sharing resources.** The Madera County One Stop partnered with First 5 Madera County, a state initiative to enhance childhood development and healthcare, to expand a countywide, fixed-route bus system to serve One Stop customers. Other groups like the housing authority got involved and provided input about public housing for residents. When routes were initially mapped and later expanded, major employment areas as well as shopping centers were factored into the design.

At the Lower Shore Workforce Alliance in eastern Maryland, the regional transportation authority and the WIB are part of a regional economic planning and development group that focuses on fundamental infrastructure issues, including workforce and transportation concerns. The region's system developed a regionally coordinated transportation system in only a few years. It also currently reduces costs and improves information flow among agencies by sharing staff.
- **Exploring funding through other agencies.** Budget constraints and limited staffing led rural Culpepper County, Virginia's One Stop to tap into the various funding streams of the local welfare office, which has the personnel and resources to explore and leverage grants.
- **Sharing information among partners.** The Broward Information Network is a web-based computer application that connects major funding sources of human services so they can exchange information about common customers and keep abreast of community activities. The network is now in its sixth year and steadily moving toward its full potential of connecting jobseekers with services within the network.
- **Build a web of relationships.** The best solutions to community transportation needs emerge when relationships with employees at many levels within the public and private sectors are developed. The Peoria, Illinois One Stop has addressed problems in implementing transportation solutions within the region by collaborating directly with local managers in business and government. Another One Stop was able to obtain bus passes through a community-based organization when the demand for fare assistance exceeded the supply and the bus company could not supply the bus passes directly due to budget constraints.

Strategies to Address Transportation Challenges

Sometimes transportation barriers can be eliminated by something as simple as buying bus passes or providing gas money. Other solutions involve a complex set of variables, both human and logistical. The following are some general strategies that One Stops and WIBs might use to tackle employment transportation challenges and expand the available options in their communities:

- Get involved in infrastructure planning
- Think regionally: the wave of the future
- Reconcile actions and attitude with reality
- Revise policies that impede partnerships
- Develop transportation expertise within the One Stop
- Consider satellite locations for the One Stop
- Leverage technology to assist customers

To successfully ... implement transportation solutions, more than one agency has to see the need and have the enthusiasm and credibility to work through those problems.—a Virginia One stop manager

Role of WIBs in Addressing Employment-Related Transportation Needs

The basic charter of WIBs mandates that these boards be involved in the integration and alignment of all public resources that impact workforce development and provide leadership within the community around workforce issues. Practical ways in which WIBs can fulfill these roles include the following:

- **Effectively overseeing resource allocation.** Given the potential impact transportation has on job readiness and employability, it is important for WIBs to know how resources are being allocated when they are creating investment levels and policies consistent with their overall direction and goals. In addition, WIB members might find it useful to familiarize themselves with the kind of transportation information that is available in their One Stop, the knowledgeability of One Stop staff about such resources and what if any services are being provided to employers.
- **Aligning demand for services with available resources.** In assessing employment-related community transportation needs, WIBs can mine information from One Stops as to what is currently working well, what could be improved, what seems to be broken and where services are lacking altogether. WIBs can also interview local employers and businesses to understand the overall workforce landscape and tease out any transportation-related issues.
- **Providing community leadership on employment transportation issues.** There are several practical ways in which a WIB can joint with local transportation leaders to play a leadership role with regard to transportation issues that affect employment. A few of those strategies might include 1) hosting a retreat for local leaders to discuss transportation issues, 2) sponsoring community forums around transportation and 3) convening an employment transportation summit to identify key issues and catalyze political interest in solving the problems.

- **Conduct strategic planning around employment transportation.**
After WIBS complete an environmental scan of their community, the following questions could help guide them in deciding the transportation issues they want to address:
 - What employment transportation solutions would the WIB like to see in place that are currently lacking?
 - What assets can the WIB draw on as a board to allow it to move forward?
 - What obstacles can the WIB anticipate?
 - What key actions could the WIB undertake to move it toward an effective transportation plan for its region?
 - Who should the partners be?
 - What actions will bring about immediate results?
 - What will require longer-term efforts?
 - Who else needs to be included on the WIB?

Conclusion

Today's transportation challenges call for creative solutions; this report has provided an overview of the options that One Stops and transit providers have for working together in tackling those challenges. By developing clear goals, ensuring ongoing communication among all stakeholders, requiring accountability of all parties and sharing what information works and what does not, One Stops and their partners will be better positioned to build more effective alliances for providing job-related transportation to all customers.

The full text of this report is available at www.ctaa.org/ntrc/atj/resources.asp.

A REPORT ON ONE STOP CENTERS AND EMPLOYMENT TRANSPORTATION

Introduction

This report explores how One Stop Centers, created under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), have responded to the transportation needs of job seekers. The investigation is based on a national survey of 212 One Stop Centers and follow-up interviews with 36 One Stop Center survey respondents.

Funding for the study came from the Community Transportation Association of America's Joblinks Employment Transportation Initiative, through a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). The study reflects the Association's long-standing commitment to providing effective employment transportation solutions, as demonstrated through its work with Joblinks subgrantees and ongoing technical assistance to local communities. The researchers are pleased to be a part the Association's tradition of exploring creative methods for expanding transportation alternatives for working people and employers.

The report describes the types of activities One Stops engage in with direct funding under WIA, the nature of the partnerships One Stops have developed with other organizations (including transportation providers) and strategies One Stops have used for creating and participating in community initiatives that broaden local options. It also provides a framework that Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) can use to address employment transportation issues in their communities and expand their contribution in this area.

This report has five parts:

Part I discusses the extent to which One Stop Centers see transportation as an issue for their customer base.

Part II details how One Stop Centers have invested their own staff resources and funding to meet the needs of their customers.

Part III describes the partnerships and initiatives that One Stop Centers have developed with transportation providers and other key partners that have enabled them to expand their own capacities and services.

Part IV distills the insights provided by the One Stop Centers and lays out strategies that One Stop Centers and transportation providers can use to respond to community transportation needs. It also explores in depth how One Stops are using the Internet and technology to increase access to jobs, education and information and reduce the need to travel to avail of these services.

Part V provides a framework for WIBs to use in becoming more proactive in assuming a leadership role in relation to employment transportation.

It is hoped that the responses and insights that One Stop Center staff have shared in this report will provide a springboard for more effective initiatives, alliances and partnerships within both One Stop Centers and the community at large. The ultimate goal of these efforts is to enhance the competitiveness of workers and employers by making job-related transportation more responsive, efficient and reliable.

Methodology

We designed a survey to elicit responses from a broad cross-section of One Stops throughout the country. The final survey incorporated suggestions by selected One Stop managers, WIB directors and Association staff and was further revised after being pretested with several cohorts of One Stops.

We selected a geographically diverse sample of 600 One Stops to receive the survey and obtained responses from 212 centers, representing 24 states. Of these, 44 percent came from rural areas; 33 percent, from urban areas; 11 percent, from suburban areas; and 12 percent, from mixed areas. We subsequently conducted follow-up interviews with 36 One Stops selected on the basis of their responses to open-ended questions in the survey. Parts I through IV present an analysis of the responses of the One Stops to the survey and our in-depth discussions with those we interviewed directly.

The WIB framework for action, developed in Part V, evolved from numerous strategic planning sessions conducted with WIBs from many different states.

Background and Context

The role of Workforce Investment Boards. WIBs are voluntary boards appointed by the chief local elected official(s) to address community workforce issues, coordinate resources to meet the needs of skilled workers, and oversee the expenditure of funds under their direct purview, such as the WIA Title I funds that go to the One Stop Centers. They are also responsible for selecting the entity or entities that manage and operate the One Stop Centers.

Based on our observations, the WIBs see transportation as an issue that impacts their workforce, both collectively and on an individual level; however, few view it as a part of their work as a board. As states and local communities increasingly promote WIBs as coordinators and catalysts in creating community partnerships to address workforce-related issues, this becomes an opportune time to assist

WIBs in thinking through their potential role with employment transportation issues.

In our survey, we asked One Stops about their perception of WIBs and transportation issues. We found that 43 percent of the respondents said that their WIB is addressing broad transportation infrastructure issues, 40 percent indicated that their WIB pays some attention to these issues, and 32 percent said that their WIB is not addressing transportation issues at all; only 3 percent reported that their WIB saw these issues as a major priority. To the extent that these perceptions reflect reality, it appears that WIBs could become more involved in addressing employment transportation issues.

One Stop Centers. One Stop Centers were established under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to provide employment, training, literacy and vocational rehabilitation programs and services to individuals in local labor markets in the United States. They are generically referred to as One Stops, One Stop Centers, One Stop Career Centers or Job Centers, and they also market themselves under a variety of names, such as WorkSource, Michigan Works! Employment Resources, and so on.

The One Stops consolidate workforce development services in at least one physical location in every federally designated workforce investment area. These services include, but are not limited to, the traditional labor exchange services provided by the employment service as well as other employment-related activities provided by the local workforce provider, the vocational rehabilitation agency and, in some cases, the welfare department.

By housing many employment services under one roof, One Stops are tasked with creating a seamless service delivery system for jobseekers and employers, thereby reducing the need for trips to multiple service locations. The intent of the One Stop concept is to make it simpler for individuals to find the information and assistance that they need related to jobs, training, careers and other services to support their successful participation in the labor market.

Of the One Stops responding to the survey, 94 percent were full-service centers with all mandated partner agencies present. To judge the size of their customer base, we asked One Stops to estimate the average volume of monthly visitors. The results are given in Table 1.

Table 1

Average number of customers visiting One Stops each month	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Less than 250 	13	6%
251-500 	23	11%

501-1,000		46	22%
1,001-2,000		45	22%
2,001-5,000		46	22%
More than 5,000		33	16%
		Total	206
			99%*

***Response ratio equals 99 percent as response ratio was rounded to nearest tenth of a percent.**

These numbers represent a combined estimate of individuals who receive basic or “core” services and those who receive more intensive services and/or training. The amount of services an individual receives during any one visit varies. Some individuals may visit a center only once, whereas others may visit multiple times. Moreover, some visits may involve minimal staff interaction, with individuals simply obtaining job leads or otherwise availing themselves of the One Stop’s self-service features, whereas others may entail detailed intervention.

The **core services** provided at One Stops include job search and placement assistance, career counseling, access to job listings, information about training and occupations, and the provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services, including child care and transportation. **Intensive services** include specialized and comprehensive assessments, development of individual training plans, group and individual counseling and career planning, case management and short-term vocational services. Core services are available to all who visit a One Stop Center, whereas intensive services are delivered to those who are actually enrolled.

Actual **training** includes on-the-job training and skills training programs that lead to a credential or degree. Funding for supportive services, such as transportation assistance, is available only for those who are actually enrolled (i.e., those individuals who receive intensive services and/or training); however, as mentioned above, information on local transportation alternatives is available to all as a core service.

Information on the personal characteristics of all customers is not available for all who have used One Stop services, as this type of information is obtained only from those who are formally enrolled a One Stop program. Thus the responses of the One Stops in this survey reflect services offered not to everyone passing through an agency’s doors but only to those who are actually enrolled. This distinction may help outside agencies understand both what motivates and what constrains One Stops in responding to transportation needs: the average volume of One Stop customers is significant and generally far exceeds the number of those who are actually enrolled.

Funding pressures within One Stops. WIA mandated the collocation of resources to address the employment needs of jobseekers and employers. For WIBs to respond to this mission requires that a significant amount of funding be redirected to support the One Stop Centers. With their resources severely strained by the need to staff One Stops at the appropriate level, local WIBs must make difficult choices on to how to spend those limited resources to meet the demands of the thousands of people needing basic job placement and information services.

Overall WIA funding has declined substantially in the past five years, as the administration's budget asks for less money for social services programs and Congress grapples with tough appropriation decisions. Ongoing efforts to provide basic funding for the One Stop infrastructure were further hampered after congressional efforts to provide a dedicated funding stream for One Stop infrastructure failed.

Many partners who initially helped to staff and support One Stop activities are themselves experiencing cutbacks. The federal Employment Service is a case in point. It has a large presence in most One Stops around the country, but it is facing stagnant or decreasing funding levels in many states.

Other dynamics also are straining resources available to One Stops. Although they have traditionally focused on the jobseeker or supply side of the labor equation, One Stops are increasingly responding to employer demands as well, as skilled labor shortages in select industries (e.g., healthcare) intensify. In addition, DOL itself is calling on the One Stop system to take a "demand driven" approach and focus on business as the primary customer. Thus the One Stops' customer base continues to both increase in size and shift in character; these changes create significant organizational challenges to One Stops in the absence of any additional resources.

As this survey shows, the above-described funding environment and organizational pressures impact the ability of and resources available to One Stops for responding to the transportation needs of their customers.

Access to work-related transportation services. As part of the preliminary work in designing the survey, we convened a focus group of WIB and One Stop directors to provide input into the content of our One Stop survey. One unanticipated topic that the directors suggested for the survey was what One Stops are doing to answer the unmet need for transportation services, focusing specifically travel necessary to avail of education, training and employment opportunities. Throughout this report, we cite ways in which One Stops have used technology in responding to customers' transportation-related needs; one example of this is lessening the need for customers to travel to One Stops by

establishing virtual One Stops on the Internet. Other examples are provided throughout the report.

Principles in Providing Better Linkages

We were able to synthesize several lessons from the stories One Stops recounted to us that could guide other One Stops and transit providers in partnering and building community teams more effectively. These lessons include the following:

- Understanding the end game
- Developing clear goals
- Identifying key players
- Deciding what the rules are
- Being willing to share information
- Maintaining positive communication and open lines of communication
- Telling the truth
- Requiring accountability of each other
- Making the benefits of the partnership clear to each other
- Leveraging technology whenever possible

Each of the success stories we encountered with One Stops embodied at least some of these principles as the One Stops sought to link more effectively with transit providers and other organizations to respond to transportation needs.

Part I

How One Stops View Transportation

Our initial thought in approaching the study was to get the “lay of the land” and find out what steps One Stops are taking in dealing with the transportation needs of individuals: Where do linkages occur and what types of services are One Stops funding? To what degree are One Stops involved in responding to the transportation barriers of people walking through their doors? These questions led to our first inquiry: How do One Stops view transportation as they go about the business of increasing the skills and employability of the workforce in response to labor market demand? In Part I, we look at what the survey revealed about the One Stop customer base and the extent to which One Stops see transportation as an issue for their individual customers and a broader issue that impacts employability.

The One Stop Client Base

The customer base of federal job training programs has traditionally consisted of targeted populations such as welfare recipients, economically disadvantaged individuals, and people with disabilities. However, this customer base has broadened under WIA to include a more universal population that might at first glance be expected to have fewer employment-related transportation issues. To characterize this wider customer base, we asked One Stops to estimate the percentage of people receiving more intensive training and services (“Core B customers”) at their facilities who fall into the traditional targeted categories.

Table 2

Characteristics of One Stop Core B customers, by percentage of responding One Stops	
Characteristic	Percentage of One Stops
Receive welfare or some type of public assistance	
0-10 percent of customers	13%
11-20 percent of customers	25%
21-30 percent of customers	27%
31-40 percent of customers	20%
Over 40 percent of customers	15%
Are economically disadvantaged	
0-10 percent of customers	3%
11-20 percent of customers	13%
21-30 percent of customers	20%
31-40 percent of customers	28%

Over 40 percent of customers	36%
Have a disability that impacts their employability	
0-10 percent of customers	44%
11-20 percent of customers	42%
21-30 percent of customers	11%
31-40 percent of customers	2%
Over 40 percent of customers	<1%

As Table 2 shows, although the percentage of welfare recipients served varies among One Stops, 52 percent of centers indicated that 11-30 percent of their customer base receives welfare or other public assistance and 35% said that more than 30% of customers receive this type assistance. These percentages can be compared with the 33 percent of centers that indicated 11-30% of their customers are considered to be economically disadvantaged and the 64 percent of centers reporting that more than 30% of their customers fall into this category. Most centers (86 percent) indicated that the percentage of customers with a disability that affects their employability is 20 percent or less.

When the volume of customers served is considered (22% of One Stops serving 500-1,000 customers monthly, 44% serving 1,000-5,000 monthly, and 16% serving more than 5,000 monthly; see Table 1), a significant number of customers fall into a category traditionally requiring greater assistance with transportation. Indeed, reliable transportation is out of reach for many who are economically disadvantaged, are on some form of public assistance or have a disability. Table 3 demonstrates that One Stops are aware that they are not able to meet the transportation needs of a significant percentage of people passing through their doors.

Table 3

Total and unmet transportation-service needs of One Stop Core B customers, by percentage of responding One Stops	
Level of need	Percentage of One Stops
Need help with transportation	
0-10 percent of customers	12%
11-20 percent of customers	21%
21-30 percent of customers	29%
31-40 percent of customers	22%
Over 40 percent of customers	16%
Have their transportation needs met through the One Stop	
0-10 percent of customers	54%
11-20 percent of customers	26%
21-30 percent of customers	9%
31-40 percent of customers	7%

Over 40 percent of customers	4%
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Table 3 indicates that most One Stop Centers are overwhelmed by customers' needs for transportation assistance: in 16 percent of the One Stop centers, more than 40 percent of customers need help with transportation and in another 70 percent of the centers, 11-40 percent of customers require this type of support. Again considering the volume of customers indicated in Table 1, the number of customers needing transportation assistance reaches into the thousands annually. Yet only 4 percent of One Stops stated that they feel they are able to meet the transportation needs of a significant number of their customers (more than 40 percent), and 54 percent of the centers indicated that they could meet the transportation needs of less than 10 percent of their customers. The bottom line here is that although the traditional customer base of One Stops has broadened somewhat, a significant percentage of people accessing One Stops still require supportive services, including transportation assistance.

When asked whether they viewed transportation as being a barrier for their customer base, 40 percent of One Stop directors and managers responded it was a major barrier, 56 percent said it was somewhat of a barrier, and only 4 percent indicated it was not a barrier at all (data not provided). Thus, although the scale of the problem and solutions vary widely, it is clear that One Stop managers see solving transportation problems as a key component in their successfully promoting job placement and retention.

Amidst Great Diversity, Transportation Needs Are a Constant

Among the diverse locations surveyed, from Livingston, Michigan, to Peoria, Illinois, to Yuma, Arizona, it is apparent that there is no quick, global fix that can be applied to transportation problems. In Akron, Ohio, the One Stop director underscored the impact transportation issues have on customers' employability: "Transportation is a completely vital link. A large percentage of the people we serve have transportation problems; it's a basic need and a basic issue that keeps people from retaining jobs. [It's important to] get elected officials involved with bringing transportation issues to the forefront, making noise about the fact that transportation is a major barrier to employment. . . . [Akron is] an area where you almost have to have a car and where the jobs are not necessarily where the transportation is."

The director of Livingston County Michigan Works! voiced his frustration this way: "Transportation is a big issue here. We have a dial-a-ride rather than a fixed route, which makes it very difficult to be used in transportation to work." Likewise, the director in Peoria, Illinois, talked about the importance of transportation issues, especially during the transition back into the labor force: "Transportation is a substantial barrier, especially for people just starting in a job. And some of the attempts we've made to confront it in the past have

succeeded and some haven't. A more global approach to that would be helpful. For example, [it would be good to] have some legislative flexibility that would enable us to partner better with bus companies, and some higher-level willingness to partner with local workforce organizations to address their customers' transportation needs."

Other One Stops have developed transportation solutions for specific subgroupings of people, as in Yuma, Arizona, where the One Stop director reported, "Transportation issues are by far the biggest, along with childcare. Based on demographics and wage data information, [people who live in outlying areas] are the types of individuals we're trying to get to our facility and to serve: they're economically disadvantaged and need lots of assistance in relation to employment, training and education."

To the Workforce Development Resource Center in rural Ohio, transportation is key: "We have lost all major employment here. Even our LPNs and RNs have to commute out of the area. Once they get into employment, they need a year to establish credit to purchase a vehicle. Transportation is our major issue," says One Stop Director Jewell Hackworth.

Our survey also sought to identify the types of transportation issues that were considered the most significant barriers to employment. We asked One Stops to rate the importance of a number of issues related to car ownership and public transportation.

Table 4
Impact of different transportation barriers on job readiness and employability, by percentage of responding One Stops

	1 Most important	2 Important	3 Neutral	4 Not very important	5 Not important at all
Not owning a car	31%	56%	11%	1%	<1%
Not having a driver's license	33%	49%	13%	6%	0%
Having an unreliable or uninsured car	29%	57%	11%	3%	0%
Little or no availability of public transit	34%	35%	17%	12%	1%
No availability of public transit during work hours (late work hours)	41%	37%	13%	8%	1%
Not being comfortable or not knowledgeable about public transit options	10%	29%	43%	14%	4%
Mismatch between public transportation destinations and job location	27%	41%	26%	2%	3%
Problematic access to childcare	33%	56%	8%	3%	0%

Disability-related transportation issues 11% 40% 36% 12% 1%

Difficulties with owning or operating a private vehicle ranked the highest on the list, being reported as the most challenging or a challenging problem by an average of 85 percent of centers.

With regard to public transportation, the most significant hurdle reported by One Stop Centers was the unavailability of public transportation during customers' work hours, with 78 percent of centers ranking this as the most important or an important barrier to employability. The next two toughest challenges were limited or no access to public transportation, reported by 69 percent of centers as either the most important or an important barrier, and the lack of public transportation serving customers' job locations, reported by 68 percent of centers. The survey respondents did not view a lack of knowledge about or comfort with taking public transportation as being a significant problem for most people.

In many cases, even if public transportation is available for work trips, it can be very difficult for families to use for transporting children to and from childcare before and after work. In the survey, accessibility to childcare also rated as a major barrier that impacted job readiness, with 89% of respondents ranking this as the most important or an important problem.

We heard from many respondents that One Stops' efforts in finding transportation solutions can be impeded by customers' preference for owning a car. One Stop operators reported that even when a transit system is put in place, people may choose a low-cost option (e.g., relying on a friend or relative for a ride). Even when a van service or carpool to a local employer proves cost-effective, individuals tend to opt out of these solutions as soon as they are able to buy a car. However, in the future, when greater transportation connectivity for getting to childcare, community shopping and other activities in addition to employment sites is available, this trend may change.

Irrespective of people's preferences, the data in Table 4 suggest that the difficulties low-income job seekers and those with disabilities face in owning and operating a car mean that these customers will remain largely dependent on public transportation for the foreseeable future. Furthermore, the growing expense of purchasing, maintaining and, in view of escalating gasoline prices, operating a car may catalyze more demand for transit options and further investment in public transportation systems. Effective dissemination of information about existing transit services and options as well as greater acceptance of the use of those services by the public are key to creating community transit solutions.

Transportation Issues in the Larger Context of Workforce Issues

One Stops view transportation issues not merely as an individual's problem to be solved but also as part of a larger policy picture. They describe transportation barriers as a community problem requiring a community solution. A common refrain is that transportation must be part of the larger conversation dealing with economic development and workforce policy.

Indeed, One Stops see daily transportation problems as reflecting a dynamic created by larger economic forces. For example, as changes in the global economy prompt employment shifts in certain sectors, it becomes even more essential for the workforce to engage in lifelong learning and upgrading skills. People must work and learn in tandem, for doing one without the other reduces employability. Likewise, the scarcity and location of affordable housing near major employment centers tend to require longer and longer commutes to work, thus increasing the need for and cost of transportation to most destinations.

Consider booming Bakersfield, California, where new houses are being built in the absence of any transportation infrastructure. "Transportation is an everyday topic with us," says Candy Gettman, deputy director of the city's Employers Training Resource. "We talk about it at both the community level and at staff meetings. Because we're growing so fast, we've had to figure out transportation to new developments."

Bakersfield, which reserves a seat for the director of the local bus company on its Workforce Investment Boards, recognizes the asset a good transportation service can be for government, employees and employers. City stakeholders know that leaving transportation out of the picture could mean losing business to other competing communities. They understand that transit solutions should be seen as integral component of workforce policy and not as a system implemented on a local level that does not address underlying structural or policy issues. Integrated approaches that involve employers, transportation providers, schools and other municipal bodies are the most effective in creating long-term transportation solutions.

Expanding Access Before Expanding Transportation Infrastructure

As shown in Tables 3 and 4, One Stops recognize that limited, scarce or mismatched public transportation services are a significant barrier to employability and that their resources at hand are inadequate for addressing this problem. In this context, how do One Stops begin to develop public transportation options where they are currently nonexistent, the density of housing is low, the distances between employment and residential centers are far and car ownership appears to be out of the question for many individuals?

Numerous survey respondents indicated frustration with the fact that they “have nothing to link to.” This frustration reflects the situation faced largely by rural communities with unemployed work populations. Many rural areas often lack any transportation system with which to connect, and others may have only dial-a-ride cab or van services. A community’s capacity to improve transportation options often comes down to one factor — cost: the more widely dispersed rural communities are or the farther the distances between rural communities and work centers, the greater the challenges in offering adequate resources to the population.

One option is for One Stops to facilitate the establishment of fixed routes to specific employers. Parts II through IV discuss this and other ways to expand transportation services through community partnerships, funding and planning.

Lessening Travel Demands by Leveraging Electronic Resources

One Stops are working to reduce the need for customers to physically travel to their centers by receiving and disseminating more information electronically. It often requires repeated visits by customers to local offices to demonstrate eligibility for and secure services, as well as to access basic education and training. For a customer base that is already facing transportation challenges, reducing the need for actual visits to tertiary physical locations can be beneficial. Many One Stops are turning to the Internet and more effectively linking “back office” systems that allow the sharing of information among different agencies and organizations, thereby reducing the need for multiple visits by customers.

The Internet also provides a channel through which workforce issues such as enabling people to work part-time from home during flexible hours, reducing workers’ commuting time, enabling web-friendly home businesses, and making telecommuting feasible can be addressed. Most One Stop managers see Internet capability and access as a real way of reducing commuting time and the need for physical travel — especially once high speed Internet connections are more widely in place and their costs drop further.

On-line resources may be more useful for some populations than others; for example, subgroupings of incumbent workers, dislocated workers seeking a change, college graduates joining the workforce and individuals without degrees or certificates hoping to explore fields in which they have limited experience may all find some online career resources useful. On-line training reduces the need to travel to training providers who may not be on public transportation routes (although students must usually travel to take final exams or certification tests). Job seekers without home Internet access can visit to One Stop Centers (or in

some cases libraries or community centers) for online classes or computer training.

Although online training offers an array of possible benefits, it is not a universal remedy. Once people have a training certificate or higher education degree, they must get to work. "The online training doesn't necessarily reduce the need to travel," comments rural Ohio One Stop Director Hackworth. "With welfare reform, you take people off welfare and into employment, but nothing helps them purchase a vehicle. And if they purchase a cheap vehicle, the repair costs are huge."

Nor is the Internet a substitute for face-to-face assistance and physical community. On the other hand, the combination of online and bricks-and-mortar services can be extremely effective in serving a broad population. Goodwill Southern California encourages distance learning and provides job leads through a listserv, which reduces the number of customer visits to its center. The organization also hosts on-site groups. Director Marguerite Ave explains, "The one advantage of getting to a One Stop Center is peer-to-peer support. Looking for a job while in your pajamas works fine for some people, but many require more structure. And they like the friends. The virtual world is not a substitute for that. But the two support each other."

Any efforts to leverage technology should be carefully evaluated to ensure that such efforts are indeed expanding the reach of the One Stops and that all demographic segments have equal access to the technology. Do usage rates of kiosks placed in malls justify the expense? Are there time limits on terminals in libraries and other public access locations that limit their practicality? These attempts to do more with less should be applauded, but care should be taken to identify the point of diminishing returns. These approaches will be examined more fully in Part IV.

Transportation Is Clearly a Significant Challenge

The One Stop system is positioned to make significant strides in helping to forge transportation solutions. The attitudes and opinions presented above clearly underscore that transportation is important to One Stop Center managers who seek to deliver both core and intensive services to their customers in a changing economic and technological landscape. Clearly there is much to be gained by a better-informed discourse among all stakeholders. The intent of the next parts of this report is to provide a foundation for that ongoing discourse.

PART II

One Stop Investment in Transportation Solutions

In the last section, we saw that One Stops view transportation as a major impediment to the success of their customers in finding and keeping jobs and attending training. We now examine how One Stops have invested their own staff resources and funding to address these issues.

A Range of Transportation Services Within One Stops

As previously discussed, One Stops are experiencing budget constraints and organizational challenges. Given this operating climate, we wanted to know what types of activities the One Stops were funding. The answers to this question are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Transportation services offered by One Stops	Response Ratio
Transportation brochures or schedules	79%
Bus or transit tokens, vouchers or passes	64%
Gas/debit cards, gas allowance or reimbursement for work-related transportation	58%
Cash reimbursement for mileage to interviews or schools	42%
Emergency taxi fare	19%
Funding for direct bus or van service	12%
Resources to help form carpool/vanpool	14%
Help in changing work 15: schedule	17%
Help in locating employment or childcare accessible by available transit	59%
Car repair or car insurance	62%
Assistance receiving/reinstating driver's license	44%
Driving lessons	14%
Use of donated cars	3%
Car leasing/financing programs	2%

One Stops were asked to check all that applied.

The most interesting overall finding of the survey is the broad range of services offered by the One Stops. Many One Stops provide one or several of the above services. In addition, as can be seen in Table 5, there is an extensive array of options to assist individuals with transportation issues that reach well beyond bus passes and gas allowances. For example, in 12 percent of One Stops are using their resources to fund direct bus or van services. Because WIA requires One Stops to provide transportation information and referral, it is not surprising that about 80 percent of the respondents provided written material on transportation options available. (Those lacking transportation options of any kind for which to provide information may account for some or all of the other 20 percent.)

Transportation referral services are generally divided into two distinct strategies: getting job seekers into a car (their own or someone else's) or connecting them to public transportation. The most typical approach to addressing transportation barriers involves car-based solutions, especially in areas with little or no public transit. One Stops offset costs related to car ownership through mileage reimbursement or gas allowances (58%), cash outlays related to repairs or insurance (62%) and other means. Respondents listed a number of specific car repair and car purchase services for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) customers provided through partner agencies rather than through the One Stop itself. (The role of interagency partnerships in providing transportation services is discussed in more detail in Part III.) One Stops also assist customers in obtaining valid driver's licenses (44%). A small percentage (2%) of One Stops become involved in helping customers obtain a car.

With regard to public transportation, 64 percent of the respondents provide assistance with direct bus or transit subsidies, 14 percent assist in helping form carpools and vanpools, and 12% engage in funding direct bus or van service. Most One Stops provide both transit and private vehicle-based assistance and not exclusively one or the other. The mix of transit and vehicle subsidies within any given One Stop varies, depending on the availability of public transportation options. (See discussion of bus- and van-based solutions in Part III.)

Both survey responses and the in-depth interviews reflect the perception that in rural areas, cars are often considered the only real option, given the dearth of public transit options. It is worth highlighting the obvious as a recommendation for policy consideration; that is, the affordability issue — transportation fares may take a toll, but the practicality of many car-based solutions is limited by the high cost of maintaining an automobile. Some One Stops have also found that public transit is a more cost-effective expenditure than car ownership.

Transportation Assistance and Pre-Employment Services

We also asked One Stops to indicate the extent to which they provide transportation assistance to pre-employment activities. Their answers appear in Table 6.

Table 6

Pre-employment transportation assistance offered by One Stops		Response Ratio
Transportation services to and from the One Stop		38%
Transportation assistance to job interviews		64%
Transportation assistance to education and/or training		76%
We don't provide any transportation services at all		14%

One Stops were asked to check all that applied.

As Table 6 shows, three-quarters of respondents provide transportation assistance that allows customers to participate in training, and almost two-thirds help with transportation to attend job interviews. Only 38 percent of the respondents provide transportation services to the One Stop itself. Although 14 percent may not be able to provide transportation services at all, clearly One Stops place importance on ensuring physical access does not prevent customers from accomplishing pre-employment goals

Direct Investment in Transportation by WIA Providers

To quantify the level of investment of One Stops in transportation solutions, we asked about annual budget allocations.

Table 7

Amount spent by One Stops on transportation solutions annually		Response Ratio
None		13%
Less than \$5,000		28%
\$5,000–10,000		21%
\$10,000–50,000		22%
\$50,000–100,000		10%
\$100,000–200,000		4%
More than \$200,000		4%
Total		102%

***All response ratios are rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent and therefore may not equal 100 percent.**

These data show that 62 percent of the respondents spend less than \$10,000 annually on transportation solutions. Given the size of the customer population and the large numbers of economically disadvantaged customers, this amount is smaller than what might be anticipated. Budget constraints definitely impact the amount of money allocated for transportation assistance.

Meeting the challenge. In our survey, we sought to gather not only quantitative data but also models and best practices. Our interviews revealed an eclectic mix of creative problem-solving, ranging from small, pragmatic program approaches to big-picture planning. Truly, as the following portraits reveal, one size does not fit all.

Despite challenging situations and operating environments, innovative thinking and adequate funding do sometimes combine to make real success stories. For example, consider Mesa County, a large, rural county in Colorado that had no public transportation eight years ago. Sue Tuffin, director of the Mesa County Workforce Center, explained that the state gave the county commissioners control of TANF funds so they could “use TANF dollars in very creative ways.” The county decided to use TANF dollars to offset a match for Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC)¹ and other Federal Transit Administration funds to start up the county-operated Grand Valley Transit.

The system started with three small fixed routes and clunky old buses that cost a dollar each to purchase. The One Stop secured a commitment that TANF recipients would ride the bus free to travel to and from work and childcare. “Since then we’ve expanded to serve all of [the city of] Grand Junction as well as the small communities around us,” says Tuffin. The number of buses and routes has been increased, a more expansive geographic area is served, and the most-utilized routes are equipped with bus shelters. Grand Valley Transit was granted an initial allotment of \$400,000 followed by \$200,000 each year thereafter. The old buses were traded in for modern, articulated, handicap-accessible ones along with some smaller, 25-passenger buses. “The routes aren’t self-sustaining — they need our \$200,000 — but they’re getting closer to self-sufficiency,” Tuffin reports.

Even success stories like Mesa County continue to worry about funding. “We watch federal transportation money like hawks. We’re very concerned that if TANF is not reauthorized, [the bus service] will become a target in the budget process,” Tuffin says. But prospects are bright. “I’m certainly not worried about this transportation company going down the drain because demand is so high,” she predicts “I can only believe we will expand.”

¹ JARC is a U.S. Department of Transportation/ Federal Transit Administration program currently funded through 2009 that communities can use for employment-related transportation services.

The following portraits, divided into bus-, van-, and car-based solutions, show the diverse ways that One Stops across the country have worked to solve transportation challenges.

Making Buses Work

Many One Stops work with local transit companies to improve services in a variety of ways, such as adding new routes, extending hours of operation, educating new riders and using other techniques to boost ridership. The story of Mesa County, cited above, is one example; the next two examples involve a rural and urban area each that started a transit system where one had not previously existed. In both cases, TANF dollars played a big funding role in beginning those systems.

Create your own bus system. Six years ago, Capital Area Michigan Works! created a board to disburse state money to assist welfare recipients in obtaining employment by eliminating barriers to transportation. One of the three capital-area counties had no transit agency of any sort, so Michigan Works! helped that county form a fully functional system. “We helped create something that wasn’t there. It’s not yet self-sustaining, but it’s close,” reports Michigan Works! CEO Doug Stites.

Stites continues, “Where new lines have been warranted, our transit agencies have provided them.” He reports that a car-buying program failed miserably because economics favored public transit. According to Stites, it was a choice between getting fewer people to less accessible jobs or more people to more accessible employment. “We used to buy hundreds of thousand of dollars worth of junky cars. I stopped that and decided to use public transportation,” he says. “But say a job involves crossing four different county lines and the transit solution costs more than the job produces? Our case managers have learned where the public transit works. They say, ‘Here are the jobs that fit you, and here are easy transit solutions. Or you can cross transit lines — but you have to make \$19/hr.’” Targeting job development where transit runs helps customers without cars reach available jobs.

Support local transit with local tax dollars. Thanks to partial support from the region’s sales tax, Grays Harbor, Washington, has an excellent transit system. “We have a partnership with Pacific County, which stretches all the way to the Columbia River, and the transit systems interconnect. People who live in Pacific County can work in Aberdeen [approximately 25-50 miles away],” says One Stop manager Ron Schmidt. The Intercity Transit system also has a full-time disability navigator dedicated to finding solutions for people with disabilities and ensuring that they can get to and from work.

"In our county, transportation issues are solved," Schmidt declares. "What we need is funding for people to educate our school districts to understand where individuals can come for help when they are first entering the world of work. It's not the same old unemployment office. We want the schools to give students the tools to think through their own transportation barriers. Teaching them how to get to the One Stop is the first step, whether that involves learning how the transit system works or how to get a driver's license."

Educate transit authorities about workforce issues. WorkForce One in Broward County, Florida, used a JARC grant to create a very successful community transportation collaborative. Although the group had to disband when the grant expired, CEO Mason Jackson reports, "The elements we started were incorporated into the regular Broward County transit system. There is a legacy, and we got them thinking more about workforce issues, about taking people to and from jobs, than they had been. The collaborative helped create new routes and extended service hours; buses once running hourly after 5:00 p.m. now run every 15 minutes until at least 6:00 p.m.

Safety concerns also prompted improvements in transportation service. The One Stop pointed out that welfare recipients attending night school were reluctant to ride the bus because of safety issues. Together citizens and the One Stop worked to increase lighting around bus stops; the One Stop was also successful in negotiating that after-hours buses be flexible about making interim stops between bus stops to bring riders closer to their destination. As Jackson points out, "Often, solutions aren't one big silver bullet, but a whole bunch of little things." That same philosophy is played out as One Stops work to solve transportation problems by bundling a variety of services to meet needs. One example might be assisting a community in building a car park to allow workers to catch a commuter bus.

Expand bus schedules to accommodate workers. For the past three years, Livingston County Michigan Works! has provided TANF funds to the local transit provider that have enabled the agency to expand services to accommodate work schedules. Originally the local transit operation provided mainly dial-a-ride service that operated from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. using mostly small buses. The early and late runs were largely contract runs, so that dial-a-ride for the general ridership was available only between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

After discussions with the One Stop and a number of community groups, the agency expanded its service hours to accommodate employment shifts. TANF funds were used to lease another vehicle and a driver was hired to test the runs on a trial basis. "We're now just giving them a little bit of money, and they're funding the bulk of [the expansion]. And I think they'll sustain it once our money is gone," reports WIB Director Bill Sleight of Michigan Works!. Marketing has

increased public awareness of the system's services, ridership on the system has grown, and the transit provider's image has changed, although the further expansion of the system is impeded by the current economic climate.

Sleight also found that as ridership demand drops, local transit agencies have less of an incentive to work with One Stops. This highlights the impermanence of some public transit solutions: One Stops must contend with reductions in services that transit agencies provide as the economy changes and ridership fluctuates.

Expanding ridership options. Located about 30 miles outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Job Training for Beaver County, Inc. has offered a suite of small-scale services to educate One Stop customers, boost ridership and support the main bus route into the city. The WIB provided information for route times "and even tried to entice more people to use the system, to take away some of the fear involved [in using an unfamiliar system]," says WIA partner Deborah Newton of Job Training for Beaver County, Inc. The transit authority provided free bus passes to help acclimate first-time bus riders. "We targeted areas of low ridership and higher unemployment and sent customers to potential job locations. Customers had to make contact with a certain number of employers and bring back a sheet of the results," Newton explains. "I'm not sure what the long-term payoff was, but I'd like to do another test of this approach and I think the transit authority is pretty interested."

Working with the Mental Health Service office, the One Stop also worked with the bus agency to reroute the bus past the local jail to serve several work-release customers who needed to enroll in the welfare program. This is one of many examples of partnerships and collaborations connecting diverse populations with diverse needs to community-based employment transportation.

Van-Based Solutions

A few One Stops have spent their own money to buy or lease vans to carry people to training or jobs. In other cases, where special grant money was available, the One Stop contracted this service to transportation providers. In Southeast Missouri, for example, the WIB, which operates in a multi-county region, received a grant through the JARC program and provided the required 50 percent match with WIA funds. It then subcontracted with numerous county transportation departments to set up van service to transport 12–15 people each to a specific employer site with which the One Stop had established a relationship. In addition, the One Stop itself provided staff time to coordinate and pull together carpools for individuals commuting to the same employer. (This model may be transferable to other sites with similar financial and logistical assets.) (For more information, see <http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/atj/pubs/missouri.brief.doc>)

Promote employer investment in transportation. Peter MocarSKI is manager of a One Stop in Northern Virginia, where he predicts that the shortage of blue-collar workers is “going to get worse because the housing costs have gone sky high.” MocarSKI’s office is the state employment service agency and when employers call looking for workers, he suggests that they find a dependable employee to drive a company van to pick up workers — “usually at a central location because otherwise you have to start at 3:00 a.m.” Some companies are beginning to make small investments in vans for this purpose.

Develop service pick-up-points for workers. When it was first given DOL funding to run the local Welfare to Work program, the Santa Ana One Stop realized that many customers were not attending workshops or orientations because they had no transportation to the venues. Researching the options, Santa Ana came across a start-up van service called Child Shuttle that was willing to customize its services to meet the One Stop’s needs. “They were the best thing that happened to us in the five years of our Welfare to Work programs,” recalls Bea Gonzales of the Santa Ana W/O/R/K Center. “The driver developed routes for individual customers that involved pick-up and drop-off at childcare facilities and the One Stop, and we would call to let the other drop-off sites know that the van was en route. He (the driver) really operated as a case manager,” she explains. In this case, the One Stop participants themselves provided an important resource for getting people to and from work.

Provide transportation for special projects. A number of One Stops reported using vans for special projects, such as transporting youth to schools or work sites. For example, the Madera County (California) WIB runs a daily van to a pre-apprenticeship training program 40 miles away the One Stop Center. “This type of transportation is project specific, typically a class-size activity. We don’t normally provide transportation for other types of vocational training,” explains Division Administrator Tracy Scott-Contreras. “Usually we have grant or special funding outside of our normal allocation and then build transportation in.” This program is funded through a partnership with the Madera County Department of Social Services.

Many One Stops mentioned how services stopped when the funding stopped. With the passage of the new federal transportation bill, known as SAFETEA-LU, additional funding for such efforts has become available. One Stops need to become more aware of potential resources that are available to support and sustain their efforts to provide transportation options to their customers. (For more information on SAFETEA-LU, the successor to the TEA-21 transportation bill, see <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/index.htm>.)

Car-Based Approaches

As the survey indicated, almost two-thirds of One Stops offset the costs of customers' owning and operating a car in some way through programs such as

- Car leasing or car financing programs (2 percent of One Stops)
- Encouraging carpooling
- Assisting drivers with the necessary licensing and insurance process
- Educating customers about the costs of purchasing and operating a private vehicle

Encouraging carpools. "We're involved with the customers who are geared up to get a job but may still face transportation barriers," says Terry Humphries, manager of Working Solutions in Rome, New York, which serves about 100 people a week. "We see job candidates and encourage employers to do their interviewing here, so the [One Stop] becomes a base for job seekers whom we can link together."

In some cases, the One Stop matches people who have cars with people who either do not own cars themselves or cannot afford the price of gas. "People may have transportation but don't want to spend the gas money to go out to the business park every day," she says, "even though there are numerous jobs available there." In other cases, the One Stop also tries to solve childcare transportation issues even parents begin a new job, which reduces employee turnover and maintains employer satisfaction.

Educating first-time car owners. Some One Stops help job seekers make wiser car purchases and better maintain their vehicles. "A lot of our customers don't know the basics of what's involved in car shopping or anything about car repairs," reports Deborah Newton, WIA Partner at Job Training for Beaver County, Inc. (Pennsylvania). "We had customers who didn't realize you had to have your oil changed after so many miles." The One Stop is considering bringing in an expert to give a workshop on the basics of car ownership or develop a pamphlet with tips on what watch out for when you're buying a car. The goal of these efforts is to facilitate long-term car ownership, especially because many One Stop customers cannot sustain expenses for long-term costly repairs.

The Working Solutions One Stop in Rome also uses the budget-planning piece of a software program called "Choices" to help job seekers in general and car drivers in particular estimate their expenses. The One Stop found that few individuals have a realistic idea about the cost of running a car; they tended to factor in the price of fuel but not the per-mile expense of insurance, repairs and maintenance. Humphries notes, "Individuals have to look at what it costs to keep

a car running as part of the budget they must conserve before they start work." By learning the full cost of traveling and maintaining a private vehicle, customers can often see the argument for carpooling, Humphries concludes.

Similarly, the Workforce Development Resource Center in Ironton, Ohio serves an area with no public transportation and can only fund transportation to work. Because people may live 50 or 100 miles from their jobs, and many have no credit or poor credit, the Resource Center works with them on personal finances and household budgeting to show them how they can save for a car. WIA Manager Jewell Hackworth explains, "Right now they're making temporary provisions to get through the training and work until they've established credit, so that once they're self-sufficient they can purchase a car that will last and be dependable."

Develop a car donation program. When car purchasing is out of reach for low-income customers, another avenue for car ownership is receiving a donated car, provided a program exists in the customer's vicinity. A fitting role for a One Stop is to act as an intermediary between car donors and recipients. Livingston County Michigan Works! is teaming up with Goodwill Industries in expanding its car donation program into the populous southeastern part of the state. A committee that includes representatives from local organizations and the One Stop selects the car donation recipients. "We're trying to help Goodwill hire a new staff person to coordinate [the program]. Once it gets up and running we'll probably use TANF money to help buy or maintain the car if a TANF recipient is chosen to receive a car," says WIB Director Bill Sleight.

Sleight projects that his agency will give 12-25 cars away each year, a number that could be matched by rehabilitation offices and perhaps the local health authority. "A lot of other groups are working with people who need vehicles. It could turn out to be a good program, if you get the vehicles," Sleight comments.

The car donation program in Livingston County may be negatively impacted by recent changes in tax laws. Until January 1, 2005, donors could deduct the fair market value of the car. "Now you can deduct only whatever the vehicle is actually sold for, and a lot of these cars are sold at auction. Our TANF-mandated limited is \$1,200. So [this donation route] is not as attractive as a private sale or trade-in," Sleight notes. Agencies like Sleight's worry that the impact of the new ceiling in the tax deduction will be that fewer people will donate their cars to the program and instead will choose more appealing opportunities, such as selling to a private party at market value. The result is that the supply of donated vehicles in Livingston County and elsewhere will not meet the demand.

Bundle Solutions

The range of solutions developed by the Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board, Inc., exemplifies the approach of many One Stops in addressing various transportation barriers: if TANF participants have access to a vehicle, they can receive transportation assistance in the form of gas cards; if public transportation is reasonably available near home, they can receive bus passes. If neither is an option, customers may be referred to the local contracted transportation provider (a taxi company called Good Wheels) for transportation to the One Stop Center, training center, childcare provider or place of employment. However, Good Wheels is expensive and the One Stop uses it only in temporary or crisis situations. "We'll subsidize Good Wheels service until the customer has their car repaired or provide vouchers if they can document the miles to their job in a carpool," explains program manager Barbara Short. Short distances are less costly and some customers are taken to the county line where the public bus can transport the customer for the remainder of the trip. In the face of rising gas prices, gas cards are considered a temporary supplement as well, but only until a customer's car is repaired or the customer begins carpooling with someone else.

The One Stop also offers transportation-related support services in assisting with car registration, title transferring and obtaining auto insurance and repairs, all of which require intensive investment of staff time in the individual. The services are offered once in a lifetime to any particular customer, and there is a \$1,000 cap per person. Short explains that the latter supportive services are for the TANF-only population, "either mandatory participants or those who went off of cash assistance due to earned income in the last 24 months." She continues, "It's a retention program, or to help them obtain employment. We'll help you out with titles, insurance, the works — whichever one is your worst nightmare. It's been very successful."

Other customers rely on whomever they can for assistance, such as family and friends; for individuals who cannot find someone to transport them daily to training or work, the One Stop does pay for taxi services. The support services have not grown to the ideal level, but they can provide a stepping-stone for customers to independence from public assistance.

Many of the transportation solutions described above were accomplished through coalitions established across many different private and public organizations. The next part of this report explores how some such partnerships occurred and what made them effective.

Part III

Leveraging Partnerships to Extend the One Stops' Reach

In this section, we look at how One Stops and WIBs are forging various partnerships to address transportation issues in their communities. The survey indicated that some One Stops draw extensively on resources available from other agencies and organizations, combining and pooling funding, sharing staff to generate new revenue streams, completing joint community planning efforts and serving on each other's boards and committees. These efforts effectively extend the "reach" of the One Stop beyond what can be accomplished with WIA funding alone.

Table 8 shows some of the ways One Stops are partnering to meet the needs of the people walking through their doors.

Table 8

Types of partnerships Ones Stops form on transportation issues	Response Ratio
Memoranda of understanding with transportation providers	17%
Joint funding of transportation services from WIA & partner agencies	31%
Pooling of transportation resources with nonmandated partner agencies	15%
Public information links (e.g., via the Internet, in kiosks)	35%
Special employment transportation projects (e.g., Joblinks)	12%
Job Access and Reverse Commute program	9%
Specific disability programs (e.g., Disability Navigator, Ticket to Work program)	32%
Transportation staff housed in the One Stop	7%
Intermittent staff meetings with other agencies	19%
Joint marketing/outreach efforts	15%

One Stops were asked to check all that applied.

Partnerships most commonly occur between transportation providers and other community agencies; these agencies may distribute transit brochures and schedules or establish links to the transportation provider on their own website. Transit providers also provide information in kiosks in One Stops or in other

public locations. Our survey showed that 35 percent of One Stop respondents had agreements with transportation agencies that allowed for this type of information exchange.

Almost one-third (32 percent) of all the respondents reported a specific program to address the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities. Some One Stops house a disability navigator, and others participate in the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program. Ticket to Work (www.yourtickettowork.com) is an employment program run by the Social Security Administration for people with disabilities who are interested in going to work. The percentage of One Stops reporting such efforts demonstrates the willingness of One Stops to seek out new resources in addressing the needs of people with transportation barriers, including those with disabilities.

Another 31 percent of respondents reported joint funding of transportation services by One Stop partners. The TANF program was cited as the most frequent source of funds used for transportation purposes. The challenge to serving all transportation-disadvantaged One Stop customers is that TANF funding is restricted to those on welfare; the role of One Stop partners is to leverage other funding sources as well.

One-third of the One Stops surveyed reported being involved in no partnerships or collaborations to deal with transportation issues (data not shown in Table 8). Only a small percentage of One Stops have dedicated transit staff, though many have expressed interest in the concept of a having a transportation navigator, or a resident expert capable of providing “in house” capabilities to assist staff from all agencies in creating transportation solutions. For example, the transportation navigator could link businesses that need workers with workers who need jobs, coordinating with employers and community organizations to make the transportation connection.

Varied Success

The path to effective partnership is not always smooth. A number of One Stop managers expressed frustration with local transit providers. One respondent said, “We tried, but they don’t participate. Although they receive funding [for this purpose], they don’t reduce their charges or consider new routes.” Another respondent commented, “They are unwilling to adjust and [their services] are too expensive in light of the public funding they receive.” There are clearly frustrations involved in any new collaboration and room for greater communication and mutual education about the missions and resources of both One Stops and transit agencies.

On the other hand, some One Stops commended transit agencies for their flexibility and commented on the productive and pleasant working relationship

they have been able to foster with them. A number of respondents reported working in the same agency as the transit authority. Some One Stop operators, especially in rural areas, actually operate transit systems. As mentioned above, some One Stops described using grants from TANF or other partner agencies, helping to recruit transit workers through their center and forging partnerships with local community action agencies.

Though the restrictions imposed by different grant programs often present challenges for those motivated to put together a coordinated transit plan, a number of transit and workforce development providers have formed consortiums to hire a grant writer whose job it is to pursue additional monies that might bring diverse agencies together and expand services.

Although only 9 percent of the respondents indicated that they participated in a JARC-funded program, it is another specific example of effective partnerships among One Stops, WIBs and transit providers. Many are not very familiar with the program; however, those who do participate in the program have found it to be highly effective. One frequently mentioned challenge for JARC grantees is how to continue service after the grant expires.

One JARC grantee, the Workforce Investment Board of Southeast Missouri, is splitting the cost of its *Missouri Goes to Work* initiative among JARC funds and WIA dollars. The program provides vans and organizes carpools in a 13-county area to take individuals to jobs that pay a livable wage. The vans pick workers up at their homes or a common pick-up point and deliver them to the job site. The WIB established the participation criteria for the employers, the One Stop found the employers and various county transit providers supplied the vans. The initiative serves 20 routes in the area, which helps meet the needs of local employers who need workers and employees working in jobs that would not otherwise be accessible. (For more information, see <http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/atj/pubs/missouri.brief.doc>)

A number of respondents referred to joint membership on the boards of transit authorities, transit committees, economic development boards and other cross-board partnerships. A surprising number of One Stops described forming coalitions to deal with transportation issues on a large scale, rather than customer by customer. Community partnerships of this nature are key in achieving policy changes and in garnering the flexibility that effective transit solutions require.

Creating solutions to transportation through these partnerships necessitate input and collaboration from many sources, including transportation providers, community-based organizations, public agencies and, last but not least, employers. The resulting collaborations take many forms — from temporary task

forces to institutionalized arrangements and from memoranda of understanding to more formal contractual schemes. The resulting partnerships and their benefits are described below.

Lessons for Building Effective Partnerships

Turn relationships into results. Bill Sleight, the Director of Livingston County Michigan Works!, sits on a countywide committee that addresses transportation and other workforce issues. "Our workforce/WIB committee has asked the Transit Director as well as other service providers to sit on the committee so we can coordinate issues," he explains. Monthly meetings are designed to focus on the WIB's strategic objectives:

Every year we go through and list our priorities, and that's how we decide which community members to bring into meetings. We asked the transit officer to come because we need his expertise and experience, and he does. The key to getting people to come is to make sure that there's something happening that they have an interest in — and that we're actually working to accomplish some specific things. The way we're set up makes it easier to pursue opportunities. For example, we received a transportation-to-work grant [from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth] that only comes to five or six boards in Michigan right now, and we get it because we have a structure set up for exploring grants. We're organized around our community's needs, so when funding opportunities come through, we can take advantage of them.

Establishing common ground and purpose is essential. "It's all about relationships," says Mason Jackson, CEO of WorkForce One in Broward County, Florida, who sat on a community transportation collaborative. "If you're not sitting down with your transportation planners, you aren't going to get very far. They're just looking at ridership. You might show them that ridership would grow if they became more work friendly."

Deborah Newton's One Stop outside of Pittsburgh runs TANF programs to re-employ welfare customers for whom transportation is a significant barrier. She formed a task group with agencies such as the Beaver County Assistance Office, Beaver County Drug and Alcohol, Beaver County Transit Authority, the Department of Drug & Alcohol, Childcare Choices, and the Women, Infants & Children program, all of which deal with customers with similar needs, to meet monthly to discuss employment barriers. Because many people using the region's bus system are One Stop customers, Newton also decided to pull the local transit authority into the group. "That individual really stepped up and provided great information, and in turn we provided insight into our customers' needs," she reports. "We try getting everyone there every month. It's fairly well attended

because good information comes out of it and we can route material to our customers. Now even a housing representative attends.”

Newton describes the task force as being “a communications tool.” It has yielded specific results, such as a very successful job fair jointly sponsored by the One Stop and the transit authority. Through participation in the task force, the authority has come to link ridership with the needs of the welfare-to-work population. “It’s very fruitful . . . having him on board,” Newton says. “[For example], we may point out that the bus stop is far from a school that many customers attend and ask if there’s a way to tweak the schedule or the route/”

It always works better when you have money on the table. It was a JARC grant that brought together transit providers, Broward County Public Works and Transportation and others to form a community transportation collaborative in Broward County, Florida. “The JARC grant gave us a reason to get together and begin to talk about workforce issues,” says CEO Jackson. “That JARC grant model ought to be replicated, because it always works better when you have money on the table. You’re asking the county to take a loss until people get to know the new routes. ” He continues, “It helps if a WIB can use separate funding to offset that initial risk.” Partnerships work better when everyone assumes part of the risk and part of the investment.

One Stop manager Ron Schmidt, from WorkSource Grays Harbor in Washington State, attributes his county’s “wonderful transit system” to the fact that it’s supported by a percentage of the regional sales tax. He noted that a predictable income stream really makes a difference in bringing people together. “We chose to do [the sales tax] because our rural community needs the support of many agencies,” he explains. “Partnerships are very easy to form in our community, and we have one of the most integrated offices due to multiple partnerships under one roof, which serves all kinds of customers. Our work with people with disabilities has been really successful, and now we’re reaching out to serve ex-offenders.”

Working Solutions, in Rome, New York, has been effective in getting Oneida County’s public transportation to adjust routes based on the location of new jobs. A TANF grant in the late 1990s got things off the ground. “It brought a number of people to the table together for the first time: the people who ran mass transit for two major cities in our region, the private providers, people in public policy, and people from the private sector. Those people had never talked before. Employers had griped and called the bus company, but nobody could see how to make it profitable until we got advance buy-in. That’s the difference,” says Manager Terry Humphries.

Learn to do a lot with a little bit of nothing. Lean economic times can be a catalyst for creative group problem solving. In Culpepper County, Virginia, Peter MocarSKI runs a small office for the Virginia Employment Commission. To achieve his goal of extending transportation lines beyond local town limits, MocarSKI tapped into the local welfare office's various funding streams. "They're very active on grants and human services-related issues. They have more personnel and resources to work on things like this," he observes. "I'm in a small office and we're facing massive budget cuts. Out here you learn to do a lot with a little bit of nothing."

One Stop Manager Tracy Scott-Contreras, who works in Madera County, California, likewise takes advantage of local synergies. "Because we're such a small county, we can move more quickly. The people with the most influence are all on each other's boards, so a lot of natural collaboration occurs because these relationships are built. We have to do that because we're so restricted in funds compared with larger areas; we have no corporations or foundations," Scott-Contreras explains.

Site Administrator John Casella sits on a committee comprised of the Monroe County Transit Authority (New York), the Monroe County Career Link, the Monroe County Office for the Aging and Adult Services and the local county assistance office as well as the providers for local welfare-to-work programs. The group established a consortium to get grants to target single mothers on welfare and ensure there is a good procedure to get this population to job training, child care and work. "We're trying to eliminate duplication of resources," Casella explains. Coordination among committee members assists the various agencies in making the most progress toward meeting their goals with the limited resources at their agencies' disposal. The committee has been meeting once a month for years; all reports indicate that "it works well when there's money there." Each year the group hopes for funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

When sources of funding tighten, partnerships help organizations coordinate resources, reduce staff and work more efficiently. Sometimes success is a matter of getting committee members, such as employers or organizations serving people with disabilities, to pitch in for transportation costs.

Take advantage of institutional arrangements. The Madera County One Stop in California's Central Valley partners with Madera city in identifying needs and transportation routes. The new partnership idea originated with the First 5 Madera County, part of a state initiative to enhance early childhood development and address concerns about access to healthcare. The One Stop, which is a department within the County Office of Education, is overseen by the

Superintendent of Schools, who made the natural connection between workforce development and the First 5 program.

The result of the new collaborative effort was the development of a countywide, fixed-route system. "First 5 had some dollars to invest initially in the expanded route system," recalls Manager Tracy Scott-Contreras. Other groups like the housing authority got involved and provided input about public housing for residents. When routes were initially mapped and later expanded, major employment areas as well as shopping centers were factored into the design.

At the Lower Shore Workforce Alliance in eastern Maryland, the regional transportation authority and the WIB are both subsumed under an umbrella organization of elected officials that carries out regional economic planning and development. The group focuses on fundamental infrastructure issues ranging from water and sewer to broadband access to workforce and transportation; the results of this collaboration have been substantive. Director B. J. Corbin gives an example of their success in transportation: "We went from a fragmented rural transit system to a regionally coordinated system in just a few short years," he recounts. Among the many benefits of the alliance cited by Corbin is the sharing of staff, which improves the flow of information among agencies and reduces overall administration costs. (For more information, see http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/atj/practices/shore_transit_profile_no_12.pdf)

Corbin serves on the Transportation Advisory Board, which meets monthly. He believes that despite differences among regions, "economic development, workforce and transportation mixed with leadership from elected officials is something everyone can do." Ralph Sinistro, of the Department of Child and Family Services in Summit County, Ohio, agrees: "We're involved with community economic development at any possible level because that's what workforce issues are all about. That's what we focus on in terms of board membership. We also work with the local chamber of commerce on anything having to do with workforce development and serving the needs of employers."

Take a regional approach. Capital Area Michigan Works! covers three counties, and their customer base frequently travels among those counties. CEO Doug Stites wanted the transit agencies serving the three counties to see that their arbitrary boundaries, as applied to transportation routes, were irrelevant. Stites' first step was to create a powerful board. Typically chaired by one of the local welfare directors, the board includes the county board chairs and mayors and senior representatives from transit organizations, the state department of transportation and the business community. The board secured some funding for buses and vans, and it achieved results. Stites explains: "We helped create special transit plans and tried them out. Some worked and some didn't. Our transit agencies are very creative."

Share information with your partners. The Broward Information Network was envisioned as a web-based computer application that would connect major funding sources of human services together to exchange information about common customers and keep abreast of community activities. Administered by the county, the application tool allows agencies to find people by their Social Security number and identify whether they are in other systems. Customer entries are covered by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), but some information can be shared. For example, agencies can track “where a person was referred to and see that he or she actually showed up at the Salvation Army,” explains CEO Mason Jackson.

The network took a long time to get off the ground because of confidentiality complications and disagreements among attorneys for the different organizations involved about what information could be shared. Eventually those disagreements and HIPAA-related issues were solved. The Broward Information Network is now in its sixth year and steadily moving toward its full potential of connecting job seekers with services within the network.

Invest in the initial innovation. In an effort to reduce travel to the One Stop, WorkForce One (Broward County, Florida) installed kiosks at 25 faith-based and community-based organizations spread throughout the community at which people can access job information, do résumé writing and access a community resource inventory for information about social services throughout the county on a geographic information system (GIS) map. “We used a faith-based federal initiative grant to install the data lines. Then we went back and said [to the community organizations], ‘If you want to keep these lines, it’s on your nickel,’” recounts CEO Mason Jackson. “By that time they were addicted. Only a few of the 25 couldn’t start paying for it themselves, so we had very little turnover.” Most of the organizations already had a T1 line or were on the brink of obtaining one, and the One Stop’s initiative simply moved them along.

Build a web of relationships. The best solutions to community transportation needs emerge when relationships with employees at many levels within the public (federal and state agencies, transit companies) and private (employers, nonprofit community organizations) sectors are developed. For example, at the One Stop in Peoria, Illinois, Operations Manager Bruce Marston has had to confront the reluctance of some of the state’s mandated partners to contribute an adequate amount of their own funding to the One Stops. In implementing transportation solutions within his region, Marston has addressed this problem by collaborating directly with local managers in business and government.

The Peoria One Stop program has been able to provide bus transportation to specific employer locations where a large number of customers were employed.

“It all comes down to the ability to work with local people. It worked because we had a good relationship with the transit authority and were able to get the particular line going right out to this employer,” reports Marston. “This was not an official partnership; it was an initiative that our career counselors and transit staff were able to assist with. We got our own bus line to pick up these youth — a training component was involved as well — and it was funded through our workforce programs.”

The operation of this need-specific transportation service was cut short when the funding ended and the bus line went out of business. Keeping operations going depends on demand from all stakeholders — employers, funders and users. “Unless you can provide a large number of people who are going to the same place for a long period of time, it’s tough to sustain. The bus companies need to make a profit as well,” Marston remarks.

Another One Stop provided bus passes to individuals starting new jobs until they could afford them on their own. When the demand for fare assistance exceeded supply and the bus company could not supply the bus passes directly due to budget constraints, the program had to be curtailed. Eventually the One Stop was able to obtain more passes through a local community-based organization.

Pitfalls and Cautions

Sometimes when you push the envelope, the envelope pushes back. Solid ideas and the best of intentions may not be enough to yield results. Sometimes setbacks happen because agencies have different priorities or different incentives driving their decisions, and sometimes it is the attitude of the people making those decisions that prevents progress, especially if all partners do not see that all parties “win” when they work together.

Virginia One Stop Manager Louise Tomlinson facilitated community meetings to develop transportation in her area where only taxi service is available. The objective was to design a transportation system that could be used jointly by social services and any other interested party; as Tomlinson explains, under current circumstances, “We can share customers but we can’t share transportation.” Two community meetings were well attended by service providers, employers and community leaders, and everyone thought the concept of shared transportation service was sound. “But we didn’t want to be the transportation provider, and as a Virginia Employment Commission manager, I thought there would be others more equipped to run [a shared transportation agency]. But no one came forward,” she explains. As a result, nothing was developed. The bottom line is that to successfully tackle the bureaucratic and logistical hurdles involved in implementing transportation solutions, more than one agency has to see the need and have the enthusiasm and credibility to work through those problems.

When funding dries up, sometimes the partnership does too. When the JARC grant that brought Broward County's community transportation collaborative into existence expired, the group disbanded. However, the group left an important legacy by injecting workforce issues into a system originally focused only on getting people to and from the beach and the malls; as a direct result of the collaborative's efforts, new routes were created and service hours were extended.

The local transit organization in Summit County, Ohio, provides public transportation to the One Stop and has participated in monthly One Stop Partner meetings. "Of course the relationship is helpful, but it's limited because it [the transit agency] is not a required One Stop partner," One Stop Manager Ralph Sinistro notes. He considers the participation of public transportation agencies in crafting solutions to be crucial and bemoans the budget cuts that make that type of participation so difficult. "[Transit agencies] are too busy scrambling to survive to be able to go out and explore creative community solutions."

One Stops have devoted considerable effort and ingenuity to constructing partnerships to address transportation issues. Part IV examines strategies used to address some of the challenges these partnerships face.

Part IV

Strategies to Address Transportation Challenges

Sometimes transportation barriers can be eliminated by something as simple as a One Stop providing bus passes or gas money. Other solutions may involve a complex set of human and logistical variables. Extending bus routes requires relationships, planning tools and compromises. Seeking grant money to benefit common customers requires coordination and communication. Even gas money and other basic supports demand the availability of resources and sometimes a combination of aid from multiple sources.

This section IV looks at general strategies that One Stops and WIBs might use to tackle employment transportation challenges and expand the available options in their communities.

Become Involved in Infrastructure Planning

Growing traffic congestion, rising gas prices, and flight to the exurbs are all reshaping the link between employment and transportation. In addition, although most urban and rural areas offer public transportation in some form to residents, public transportation remains inadequate or is nonexistent in others, particularly in rural settings. An overwhelming number of Americans who rely on private cars face ever-longer commutes on ever-more-crowded highways.

One Stop Manager Peter MocarSKI works in Northern Virginia, near bustling employment centers and Washington, D.C., a region where traffic is horrific because public transportation is underdeveloped. He reports that several of the local cities have circuit-type buses but that these generally do not travel outside the city limits. "People are starting to think more in terms of the hours it takes to get to work instead of the distance," he comments.

MocarSKI's One Stop, run by the Virginia Employment Commission, has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the state and a definite shortage of blue-collar workers; MocarSKI predicts the situation will worsen because of skyrocketing housing costs in the immediate vicinity. Broward County, Florida, is another community struggling with a lack of affordable housing, where the median house cost of \$319,000 puts home ownership out of reach for many segments of the population.

To address Broward's transportation and housing problems, planners are beginning to consider housing when planning or expanding transit routes. Jackson recalls a conversation with the county's newly hired housing czar: "He

told me, 'Affordable housing and density and transportation are inextricably interwoven. You should look at increasing housing density along east-west thoroughfares already well used by buses rather than out along the canals at the fringes of the city. Put the density of the people where they're most likely to use the public transportation.'"

This strategy of in-fill housing development along transportation routes has yet to be implemented in Broward, where Jackson describes transportation planning as "kind of an afterthought, after the development has already occurred." He continues, "But [in-fill development] struck me as very smart, and it could solve the affordable housing part of the puzzle."

The Mesa County One Stop in Colorado used TANF funds to match JARC and other federal transportation funds to create a successful and expanding public transit system. In making future decisions for expanding service, the county will examine data linked to affordable housing, asking questions such as "Where is the low-income population living that needs the services? How can we reach out to the elderly?" explains One Stop Director Sue Tuffin. This type of approach to transportation, workforce and community planning would go a long way toward developing transportation solutions that promote ridership connections and workforce policy.

The location of new business is another important factor to be considered in planning public transportation. Most new business development tends to occur in outlying areas, where parking is good and rents are low, conditions that encourage single-vehicle ridership but can be disadvantageous to those who do not own a private vehicle. In such situations, there is a clear role for public transportation, as Rome (New York) One Stop Manager Terry Humphries observed in her region, where a lot of growth is taking place in business or technology parks. In a timely development, the public transit systems in nearby Utica and Rome were recently consolidated and an entirely new transportation system was designed. Humphries notes that the community has been effective in getting public transportation "to adjust routes based on where new jobs are."

Northern Virginia's MocarSKI encourages companies in outerlying regions to develop vanpools. Although the vanpools address problems for small groups of people, they do not solve areawide transit problems and the need to travel to destinations beyond work. He comments, "When people move out here and realize there's no public transportation, they start griping without even realizing that you can't even drive a bus on a lot of these roads."

As these examples illustrate, many One Stops are looking well beyond bus passes and van services to focus on large-scale, infrastructure-related issues.

Problem solvers are trying to stop the problems before they begin, with better planning to provide a transportation infrastructure that addresses employment and other needs.

Think Regionally: The Wave of the Future

Many One Stops work to develop transit solutions that look at business and workforce needs from a regional rather than a purely local perspective. Job recruitment and skill sets do not stop at county lines, and it can be a problem when the bus does. One Stop CEO Mason Jackson convinced bus companies in Broward County, Florida, to cross those lines to reach the major employers. As a result of the One Stop's efforts combined with local businesses' recognition that county lines "are only important to politicians and mapmakers, not to job seekers and employers," a regional transportation authority was created to develop regional, not county-specific, transportation solutions. In the United States, regional planning is the wave of the future.

Reconcile Actions and Attitude With Reality

In Doug Stites' view, "The most important thing we've learned is that workforce agencies have to stop being their own worst enemies. You can't place a person in a \$7 per hour job without solving the transit piece first." His One Stop serves three large counties in the Lansing, Michigan, area and he makes sure that the One Stop's first step is to realistically assess a person's opportunities. "It doesn't make sense to put someone in a McDonald's job across the county, especially if there's one in the same town [where they live]. We've learned to stop being a part of the problem," he says. Spatial mismatches between customers and jobs have been minimized to the point that Stites' special ad-hoc transportation committee was disbanded and only a handful of customers still require customized transit solutions. "At the last meeting, not one vendor could name a single thing that they wanted a transit agency to do in addition to what they were already doing," Stites reports. "Our transit agencies really have 'gone the extra mile.'"

Revise Policies That Impede Partnerships

The criteria for judging the success of One Stops' and transportation agencies' services can be diverse, with One Stops measuring success on how many people find and keep jobs and transportation agencies looking at such things as ridership and revenue stream. Although these objectives are complementary, they may also encourage different activities on behalf of the same individuals; the success of a well-integrated workforce transportation plan requires communication between One Stops and transportation agencies about their respective motivations, rewards and goals and the development of common ground.

Rules and requirements can sometimes impede partnerships. Terry Humphries, manager of Working Solutions in Rome, New York, sees flaws in the One Stop system as a whole:

The One Stop is designed for self-help, but the people who can access self-help are the same people who can do this for themselves from home. There's no one at the One Stop who doesn't come from some targeting funding (e.g., disabled veterans, TANF recipients, the vocational rehabilitation population), and [specific laws governing these programs] say that all staff must serve that [program-specific] population. So what do you do when 60 percent of the people who come in for the first assessment don't know where they fit in? Who greets them? Who does the initial interview? That's the huge design flaw. You pull together your partners; you try and address the problem. But the Veterans' Administration (VA), for example, absolutely prohibits staff who are funded by the VA from assisting anyone who isn't a veteran. The same is true of TANF. You build a team, but there's resentment because people can't pitch in to help customers who aren't in their group. Team spirit breaks down, and it's hard as a manager because the staff all work with other agencies.

The One Stops at the local level can't fight this battle. You need buy-in at the state and federal levels. The VA needs to understand that their customers get far better service through synergy if their staff can use 10–15 percent of their time to serve the person I call the universal customer, until that person gets connected to all the things they're eligible for.

Humphries' perspective is shared by a sizable group of program managers and captures the conflict inherent in a system of federal programs that has multiple authorizing committees and no coordinating mechanism among the federal bureaucracies that implement the programs; this lack of synergy eventually filters down to the local level.

Develop Transportation Expertise Within the One Stop

During the course of the survey, we explored the idea of a transportation navigator with One Stop directors. The navigator would become the resident expert on transportation, assisting job seekers, case managers, job developers and other staff in the One Stop.

One Stop managers liked the idea, but to most it was impractical in the absence of dedicated funding. "What's the line from that movie? 'Show me the money.'," responded Ron Schmidt, manager of WorkSource Grays Harbor in Washington State. For example, one of his staff is dedicated to working part-time with people with disabilities, and Schmidt has high expectations that his One Stop's exceptional range of disability-related outreach and programs will continue — if he obtains funding. So it all comes down to how the position would be funded.

Assistance in this area may come from the newly passed federal transportation legislation, SAFETEA-LU, which includes dedicated funding for mobility management, including positions such as a transportation navigator. (For more information, see http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/atj/joblinks/linking_people_workplace.pdf)

In 65 percent of One Stops surveyed, there was a dedicated rehabilitation counselor or a disability navigator, but that person's transportation expertise varied considerably. Pointing out that very few Los Angeles residents use public transportation, Barbara Aranguren, Operator of WiN WorkSource Centers, commented: "Our Navigator is not knowledgeable about transportation resources beyond an awareness of the paratransit services available to people with disabilities, which are specially contracted by local governments and agencies."

Diane Oropeza, operations director for the Polk Works Workforce Development Board in Florida, spoke enthusiastically about the potential of a staff person dedicated to transportation issues. "I would want them to be on some of the councils here, provide input, work with the vendor that runs the bus system and go out into the community to find out where the problems are and what solutions could work for all our customers, including people with disabilities."

Consider Satellite Locations for the One Stop

There is no bus service in Yuma, Arizona, and many of the Yuma Private Industry Council's neediest customers live in outlying areas close to the Mexican border and do not have cars. The One Stop considered opening part-time offices in the outer areas in space shared with other agencies but found that that "wasn't even a band-aid on the problem," reports One Stop Administrator Mercedes Mendivil. "You have to establish a relationship and do some initial assessment, and that's impossible unless we're there all the time."

So the Yuma One Stop branched out, opening a satellite location in a town halfway to the border. This office was so well used that a second office 40 miles from the main office has since been opened. A good deal of customer paperwork is completed in these satellite offices, along with job search and résumé assistance; these also offices provide a location for interagency and community meetings. Once a job seeker is enrolled in training or an adult remediation program, that person is eligible for transportation assistance, and that opens up a lot more options for them, according to Mendivil. "Satellite offices are a very expensive venture and susceptible to budget cuts. But we're looking at an extension in South County and ways to partner with other agencies to share costs," she says optimistically. She sees the satellite offices as a complement to a preexisting comprehensive Internet presence.

The One Stop also made finding satellite offices in Yuma County a user-friendly process. People can find a satellite office close to their home by giving their zip code to the nearest One Stop. The One Stop has put computers in Yuma County's U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development housing to assist residents with transportation barriers. "They can click on administration [while using our computers], ask questions, and I respond," says Mendivil. "When we need to get in a vehicle and go to the location to provide services or attend a meeting and figure out how to connect with services, we do it all the time."

Remote One Stops have opened elsewhere in the country. Goodwill Southern California opened mini-One Stops in the back of Goodwill stores, many of which offer computer access for free. "Travel is lessened there," Director Marguerite Ave points out. In some cases, the Goodwill access point may be reachable for the customer when the main One Stop facility is not.

As noted above, Broward County, Florida, One Stop satellite locations take the form of touch-screen kiosks placed by the One Stop at 25 faith-based and community-based organizations. There is a required \$1,200 investment per kiosk, plus the continuing cost of high-speed data lines, but almost all of the partner organizations have assumed the latter expense. "We're taking our services out to the community," explains CEO Mason Jackson. "You can register online and get an idea of what's out there before you get on a bus or the interstate to come to an office." Face-to-face meetings are still necessary for case management, counseling and testing. However, kiosks allow customers to write résumés, access job information, peruse job listings and view an inventory of social services on a GIS map of the community.

Leveraging Technology to Assist Customers

Go online before going on the road. Many One Stops view the Internet as an asset whose potential is just beginning to be tapped. A few One Stops expressed concerns about the demographics of Internet access, pointing out that many customers who do not have cars might not have computers at home. Others point out that access to the Internet is free at libraries, community centers and the One Stops themselves. Of course, transportation is still needed to get to these public locations, and computer access can be limited in many other ways in public places. Therefore, physical access to computer terminals and the Internet does not always translate into real or usable access.

The Internet expands individuals' reach to information in ways that many One Stops are just beginning to exploit fully. The Foothill WIB in Los Angeles was an early convert to a number of new technologies. "Technology allows you to access more services and distribute them more easily," says Operations Manager Dianne Russell. "We're a very small WIB, so we pay attention to things like conference

calls, telecommuting and distance learning." Her organization has moved confidently into online learning as a way to increase traffic to the One Stop and improve outcomes. "I think being open for online classes will probably make our One Stop more attractive to individuals outside of our immediate cities," Russell predicts.

The Internet is often ideal for looking at job listings, salaries and qualifications, and many customers can accomplish much of their legwork online before making an office visit. Many One Stops have built up their Web presence to enable online assessments, registration for distance learning and access to listservs for job seekers and employers.

Looking for a job on the Internet may not be easy; Internet-based employment searches are also vulnerable to economic downturns. When unemployment rates are high, employers "don't need to look through 10,000 computer-generated résumés because they have people knocking on the door," notes Alan Knox, an analyst with the County of Santa Cruz Human Resources Agency. "When the unemployment rate was lower than 3 percent, the employers were really using the computer job-search engines to get candidates."

To their credit, One Stops are stepping up to the requirements of Internet job searching by giving customers tips on how to make the job hunting process as efficient and effective as possible, including offering basic computer classes for people venturing online for the first time. "A lot of the assessments we'd like to do in our centers are on the computer, and we still see a lot of people who can't type and don't know how to use a mouse, especially a lot of low-income, Spanish-speaking people. It's a problem. We're actually designing a course in Spanish to teach introductory computer skills," says Knox. It is clear that One Stop staff can and often do design tools to meet the emerging needs of their customers.

Hosting profiles and data online also enables One Stops to connect offices, share data and serve customers more effectively. "We really share a lot of information between all the One Stops out here," says Marguerite Ave, director of Goodwill Southern California, whose office runs a free listserv on the server Yahoo. Someone in that office serves as the moderator of the listserv; people need permission to join, and any time a job listing comes through, an e-blast goes out to everyone in the group including all One Stops in the region, the Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino county departments of social services, the local offices of the California Department of Rehabilitation, Volunteers of America and Easter Seals — "anyone interested in placing people in jobs," Ave says. The One Stop modifies the job and contact information as appropriate and forwards the names of only those people it feels are a good match to the respective employer needs. The result of the Internet-based job-match system is more leads from

businesses and more placements, reports Ave. "If they get the position filled from another One Stop, I don't care because my customers are businesses as well as job seekers. So my business customers are happy."

Giving customers access to technological infrastructure. Customers who lack access to the Internet or other technological infrastructure (e.g., broadband services) can be at an economic disadvantage in the job market. The demand for computer-based Internet services ranges from people who want to telecommute to work to those who wish to start an at-home business that requires broadband, to those who desire access to training and educational opportunities that are available only through the Internet.

Some One Stops have been active in trying to broaden people's access to Internet technology. Livingston County Michigan Works! is part of a community partnership working on making community broadband services more available and less expensive. The initiative started a couple of years ago when the state made some grants available to local communities. "In the process we saw that this was really a workforce issue as well as an economic development one," says Director Bill Sleight.

Another impetus for facilitating Internet access is the desire to reduce the need to travel. According to Sleight, about 60 percent of county residents commute to jobs outside the county, many to the Detroit metropolitan area and about 40 percent of workers actually commute into the county from other areas. Subsequently there is a lot of commuting going on both in and out of the county. Access to online choices would reduce additional travel.

Expand online tools to increase capacity. To reduce job seekers' travel, five One Stop partners at the Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board promote online systems that match employers and job seekers, make employment and training-related assessments accessible online, accept documentation via mail or fax and offer online coursework toward a certification, license or degree. (The partners are the regional WIA providers for welfare transition, food stamps, training providers, vocational rehabilitation and the Florida Department of Children and Families.) In addition, the One Stop has its own service center website, which has a tracking system. People can register, get job matches and receive email on job matches. The One Stop also hosts the site of U.S. Works where employers can post jobs and seekers can post résumés. "We track our contact with employers to have them be proactive in workforce development in our region," says Program Manager Barbara Short at the Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board.

The online developments have been well received and have translated into fewer mandatory One Stop visits and resulting time management improvements. "The

staff didn't have to see as many people face-to-face to drop off stuff, because [the information] could be mailed or faxed," explains Short. Online assessments also save time and reduce congestion in the building. "People can do an interest assessment online from home or a library, and when they come into the office they're ready to look at training in a specific area. They don't need to be assessed by a manual test, although they can still do it onsite," she points out.

At the One Stop, basic computer trainings are available every month, and according to Short, "They're booked up pretty regularly, because people really want to learn these skills. It's a universal customer (no eligibility requirements); anyone can come in for free. We want to get people up-to-date on technology so they won't be nervous about job-seeking online, because that's only going to grow." Most of the people taking computer classes are seniors or middle-aged people getting updates, and the program is expanding quickly into a new computer training room.

Make information sharing easier. WorkForce One (Broward County, Florida) has been developing the Broward Information Network, a county-administered system started with state seed grant money. The Internet-based application enables major funders of human services to exchange information about common customers and community programs. "This type of effort gets information in the hands of people who need it, including our own staff. [It] also result in fewer trips [for customers] between and among agencies," says CEO Mason Jackson, who calls the system a "virtual reality mega-human services agency."

"The idea is to cut down on the churning that counselors encounter, as well as travel by customers, and ultimately create a 'no wrong doors' approach to human services so that anywhere you touch is the right place," remarks Jackson. Somewhat paradoxically, this system replaces a setup in which all the agencies were located in one building, "but customers actually got angry because state, federal and local processes were not integrated, so they'd have to do the same thing over and over at each agency," he explains.

Agencies can track customers in the Broward Information Network via their Social Security numbers. Counselors can make referrals and appointments via email and use an eligibility navigator to assess customers' eligibility for programs associated with food stamps or Section Eight housing. "The holy grail of social services is the common intake form," says Jackson. "In a sense, it exists in this system because we input this information, you can load as many forms as you want, and with data scraping, you can populate the form with as much information as you want. You can push the food stamp button and it will fill out most of that form."

Go virtual with the One Stop. A database case management system called the Virtual One Stop, developed by a Florida company called Geographic Solutions, is in use at the County of Santa Cruz Human Resources Agency (as well as in Washington, D.C., and Baltimore). Like many of the systems already described, it allows people to answer basic questions, build a résumé, conduct a skills analysis or look for a job without traveling to the One Stop. "It's easy to send job seekers a link to our website and say, 'Here, do some tests and then go to the Career Center.'" It makes their onsite visits more focused," says Program Manager Sara Paz. Usage is tracked, providing a good portrait of the people who are using our system."

Alan Knox, the system administrator, estimates that "probably less than 5 percent are registering from home or other locations," a situation that he attributes to limited marketing of the virtual One Stop and the fact that most people want to deal with a human being. The region also has a high rate of field laborers who may not be computer literate or literate at all; in response, the One Stop is designing a Spanish-language course to teach customers introductory computer skills. "The case management aspect of the system is the most important part," adds Paz. "I don't think our managers would ever go back to filling out forms manually, so in that sense, it's money well spent." She hopes that eventually more and more people will take advantage of the remote access to the One Stop.

Expand distance learning courses. Offering distance learning opportunities to customers can be more efficient for both customers and One Stop staff. Many One Stop customers either have computers at home or have access to One Stop computer labs, but few have access to training providers. Even in cases where it turns out to be more expensive for customers to use distance learning than actually go to a classroom, the One Stop saves in support services like transportation and mileage reimbursements for those who enroll.

"We do want to expand distance learning because it eliminates transportation as an issue," explains Dianne Russell, Operations Manager of the Foothill WIB in the Los Angeles County Basin. "We're mandated to provide training in demand occupations and industries. That's why we sponsored 10 individuals in real estate appraisals. Right now it's the health field. Online courses allow us to respond to these hot areas." The only hurdle Russell foresees is the possibility of the quality of the courses declining as online learning grows more popular.

The Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission also targets the in-demand market through the One Stop, which allocates WIA funds, need-based Pell grants for college students and Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation monies for online training. "We use our labor market statistics to see if there's a demand for teachers or licensed practical nurses," says WIA Manager Jewell Hackworth.

Limiting factors include the fact that few occupations have appropriate online training opportunities, completion rates in online courses are lower than in regular classrooms and tuition is expensive. In addition, the One Stop can only fund customers who are taking courses given by Ohio-approved training providers; customers who pay for the courses out of pocket have access to a wider choice of online courses.

Form e-learning consortiums for skills upgrading and retraining.

Interested in reducing the need to travel for training and in improving customers' skill sets, the Schenectady County (New York) One Stop formed a tri-county consortium that provides e-learning licenses to all applicants. "Our philosophy is that if you can get to our One Stop, you can get to any classroom, because the classroom can be on the Internet," says Director Francis Ricci. "We found that we had a lot of people coming into the One Stop for whom a big barrier, if not the biggest, is the lack of transportation. We thought, 'If this could be a way to educate or retrain folks, provide some modicum of learning that could enhance their skill sets, we'd do it in a heartbeat.'"

On-line courses can be expensive, but Ricci's organization purchased licenses from a distance-learning company called New York Wired for \$48 per course during an introductory period. Licensees can take as many courses as they can complete during an introductory 12-month period, choosing from approximately 6,000 course offerings. "More and more of the people who are using the One Stops are workers whose organizations have shut down or relocated, or a welfare recipient or other individual who comes to us with a multitude of barriers, one of which is a lack of education," says Ricci. "Getting them into a classroom as a precursor to employment would be very difficult. But we have workshops training them in how to use computers."

Further Thoughts

As the dedicated professionals discussed throughout this report have demonstrated, One Stops are working in both novel and time-tested ways to help people get where they need to go or access what they need online. Their efforts to partner with transit providers and other organizations are making a difference in their communities. The results can be writ large when supported by WIBs, as the next and final section of this report describes.

Part V

Workforce Investment Boards: A Framework for Action on Transportation Issues

This final part lays out a framework for WIBs to become more proactive in relation to employment transportation. The framework is based on extensive experience in assisting WIBs with strategic planning around the country.

The Framework

The basic charter of WIBs is briefly described in the introduction to this report. Within their charter, WIBs' responsibilities can be divided into three major categories: 1) oversight of the funds provided through WIA, 2) integration and alignment of all public resources that impact workforce development and 3) community leadership around workforce issues.

Oversight of WIA funds. In partnership with the local chief elected official, WIBs have certain oversight and fiduciary responsibilities in ensuring the proper expenditure of WIA funds. Although WIA is not just a training program, it does fund certain activities under Title IB of the WIA and enables the WIBs to select the entity or entities that will manage the activities of the One Stop. In short, WIBs are responsible for planning and directing how these funds get spent, including setting priorities for the One Stops in their workforce investment area.

System building and resource alignment. The second major WIB responsibility is to integrate and align the wide variety of public resources that increase the skills and competitiveness of the local workforce and to address labor shortages. In fact, WIA was passed in response to a General Accounting Office's report that identified over 155 different funding streams directed toward some aspect of workforce development. Although Congress did not consolidate most of the programs, it did pass on its interest in the "streamlining of resources" to local WIBs by creating the One Stops. To determine where integration and alignment might help, WIBs conduct gap analyses that compare a community's resources (including those that the One Stops represent) against a "map" of community needs.

Community engagement. The third and most complex domain over which WIBs preside is spearheading workforce policy and promoting community dialogue around workforce issues. It is here that WIBs play their most strategic role in workforce development by assessing what is most needed to provide their communities a competitive workforce advantage. It is within this domain that

WIBs have the potential to take up transportation as a key infrastructure issue related to a region's ongoing economic vitality.

We believe that WIBs can use the aforementioned three roles as a framework — and draw upon the multitude of strategies and approaches set forth in this report — to study and shape policies within their communities to address transportation issues. By promoting dialogue, acting as a catalyst for community initiatives and fostering partnerships, WIBs are helping to build an infrastructure that will help individuals gain easier access to the resources of the One Stop, attend training or education classes, look for employment and, last but not least, commute to the workplace.

Why Should WIBs Help People Get to Work?

Employment transportation affects many aspects of workforce development. It can increase worker supply by tapping into areas of the labor market previously cut off from jobs because of transportation barriers, opening up new job possibilities for job seekers and employers.

Many employers say they just want workers who will show up on time and are ready to work. Viable transit options can help workers meet work schedules, shorten their commuting times, expand the range of available childcare, allow them to deal with family emergencies without leaving work for the whole day, and generally increase their reliability and efficiency. With many employers touting a balance between work and family, these efforts may assist in making that balance a reality. The benefits of viable transit options are widely dispersed: more people land and retain jobs, workers are better positioned to move up the career ladder and families are less stressed and better able to manage childcare and school matters without disrupting work schedules. In addition, employers have a larger potential labor pool from which to draw. Equally important, effective transportation options are an asset in further assisting people with disabilities and welfare recipients in their quest to become self-sufficient.

So what are some practical ways WIBs can move to action?

Moving to Action

WIB oversight of transportation services. First, not all WIBs know that transportation is a supportive service that they can provide. Others are unclear about the level of resources that can be set aside for transportation assistance. In these cases, it would be helpful for the WIBs to understand the many options they have at their disposal to help provide needed employment transportation services.

As oversight bodies, WIBs should be familiar with how resources are allocated and spent. Some WIBs know little about how direct WIA dollars are being dedicated to transportation assistance within the One Stops. Given the potential impact transportation has on job readiness and employability, it is important for WIBs to know how resources are being allocated when they are creating investment levels and policies consistent with their overall direction and goals.

WIBs should be familiar with how much is being spent on transportation-related services and who gets served and in what way. Through One Stop surveys such as this one, WIBs can also find out what percentage of people walking in the door of One Stops need transportation assistance. Finally, WIBs can draw on the staff experiences at the One Stop to explore the level of unmet transportation need.

In addition, WIB members might find it useful to familiarize themselves with the kind of transportation information that is available in the One Stop, the knowledgeability of staff about such resources and what if any services are being provided to employers.

Integration and alignment of resources. WIBs' role in actually building a workforce "system" is accomplished through their efforts to better integrate and align resources. This process typically involves an assessment of needs and resources, determination of resource gaps, assistance in establishing community priorities and participating with other community initiatives.

Before a WIB undertakes any efforts to align and integrate resources, it often performs some type of community assessment to determine employment-related community transportation needs. (This research may already be available from transit providers or relevant community-based organizations.) Current and future needs and resources are typically included in the assessment, encompassing any and all funding streams. Such funds might include commitments from TANF (welfare), the Ticket to Work program, a JARC grant or resources specifically designed to increase the mobility and self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities. The resource inventory often also lists partnerships between transit providers and other agencies in the community.

When completed, the WIB can use a needs assessment to discuss resource gaps in relation to existing needs and determine how collective resources might be better deployed and coordinated. The general discussion with One Stops could focus on what is currently working well, what could be improved, what seems to be broken and where services are lacking altogether.

Many communities, particularly cities and counties, have established goals that set a direction for the types of development that the community would like to

see occur. It is important that the WIB familiarize itself with these types of planning approaches to enable it to be in sync with the larger community.

WIBs can also interview local employers and businesses to understand the overall workforce landscape and tease out any transportation-related issues. For example, in Broward County, the WIB discovered that businesses in a local mall were having problems retaining workers. The WIB discovered that the last bus left the mall before employees could close the stores in which they worked and thus public transit was not an option for employees traveling home at the end of the night. After determining that this was a cause of poor job retention, the WIB convinced the transit authority to add one later bus. This solved a big problem for both employers and workers and gave the WIB new credibility in the business community.

WIBs could also participate in ongoing community planning with other relevant organizations by sending representatives to meetings. If warranted, WIBs could suggest placing a transportation representative on the WIB, ensuring good communication between transit providers, community planners and the workforce development system.

Community leadership on employment transportation issues. How can a WIB play a leadership role with regard to transportation issues that affect employment? As one example, the WIB could choose to hold a retreat for local leaders to discuss transportation issues, including an action planning session that would focus on transit. It could convene community forums around transportation, or it could simply place transportation as an item on the WIB meeting agenda and progress from there.

On a larger scale, a WIB could jointly convene an "Employment Transportation Summit" with another public agency to identify key issues and catalyze political interest in solving problems. If political and civic leaders are already engaged in transportation, WIB members can become involved, serve on relevant boards or commissions and become the voice of the employer community in ensuring that there is transportation to good jobs in the region.

Strategic planning around employment transportation. After WIBS complete an environmental scan of their community, the following questions could help guide them in deciding the transportation issues they want to address and gauge their strength as a board to effectively "move the needle" toward solving particular problems:

- What employment transportation solutions would the WIB like to see in place that are currently lacking?
- What assets can the WIB draw on as a board to move forward?
- What obstacles can the WIB anticipate?
- What key actions could the WIB undertake to move it toward an effective transportation plan for its region?
- Who should the partners be?
- What actions will bring about immediate results?
- What will require longer-term efforts?
- Who else needs to be included on the WIB?

There are many ways for WIBs to assume a leadership role in making employment transportation a front-burner issue in their communities. We hope that these suggestions serve as a catalyst for such efforts.

Conclusion

Today's transportation challenges call for creative solutions; this report has provided an overview of the options that One Stops and transit providers have for working together in tackling those challenges. By developing clear goals, ensuring ongoing communication among all stakeholders, requiring accountability of all parties and sharing what information works and what does not, One Stops and their partners will be better positioned to build more effective alliances for providing job-related transportation to all customers.

APPENDIX A

List of One Stops Interviewed

Adams County CareerLink (PA) — Harold Wantz
Capital Area Michigan Works! (Lansing, MI area) - Doug Stites
Cattaraugus One Stop Career Center (NY) — Michele Hoffman
City of Peoria Workforce Development Department (IL) — Bruce Marston
CNY WORKS (Syracuse, NY area) — Manny Martinez
Colorado Workforce Center— Betty Velazquez
County of Santa Cruz, Human Resources Agency (CA) — Sara Paz

Employers Training Resource (Bakersfield, CA) — Candy Gettman
Foothill WIB (Los Angeles Basin, CA) — Dianne Russell
Goodwill Southern California — Marguerite Ave
Job Training for Beaver County, Inc. (PA) — Deborah Newton
Livingston County Michigan Works! (MI) - Bill Sleight
Lower Shore Workforce Alliance (Salisbury, MD area) — B. J. Corbin

Madera County Workforce Investment Board (CA) — Tracy Scott-Contreras
Mesa County Workforce Center (CO) — Sue Tuffin
Monroe County Job Training — (NY) John Casella
Pasco Hernando Workforce Board (FL) — Blake Harding
Pikes Peak Workforce Center (Colorado Springs, CO area) — Terence Jackson
Polk Works Workforce Development Board / ACS (FL) — Diane Oropeza

San Mateo County Workforce Investment Division (CA) — Marissa King
Santa Ana W/O/R/K Center (CA) — Bea Gonzales
Schenectady County One Stop//SJTA (NY) — Francis Ricci
South Central Tennessee Workforce Board — Rick Molder
Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board, Inc. — Barbara Short
Summit County Dept. of Job and Family Services (CO) — Ralph Sinistro
Virginia Employment Commission — Linda Broughman
Virginia Employment Commission — Louise Tomlinson
Virginia Employment Commission — Peter Mocariski

WiN WorkSource Centers (Carson/Lomita/Torrance, CA) — Barbara Aranguren
Workforce Development Resource Center (OH) — Jewell Hackworth
Workforce Investment Board of Southeast Missouri, Cape Girardeau (MO) —June O'Dell
WorkForce One (Broward County, FL) — Mason Jackson

Working Solutions, Rome (NY) — Terry Humphries
WorkSource Grays Harbor (WA) — Ron Schmidt
Yuma Private Industry Council (AZ) — Mercedes Mendivil

About the Community Transportation Association of America



The Community Transportation Association of America is a nonprofit, membership association committed to removing barriers to isolation and improving mobility for all people. The Association is involved in several projects to provide information and technical assistance to communities, transportation providers, and other groups to increase mobility and improve the quality of community transportation.

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About the Joblinks Employment Transportation Initiative



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http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/is_employment.asp

Getting to work. It's one of the basics of community life. Public and community transportation play a critical role in moving Americans to employment sites, training facilities, educational programs, interviews, child care and back home. For some, it's a standard commute on a train or bus; for others, it might be a third-shift van pool to a nearby factory; and for still others, it can be a connection to new skills through the local technical college.

Through a partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration and the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Community Transportation Association provides technical assistance designed to help communities overcome one of the most significant barriers preventing low-income people from getting and keeping jobs - transportation. This program, known as the Joblinks Employment Transportation Initiative or simply Joblinks, includes demonstration projects, technical assistance, conferences and publications, such as the *Linking People to the Workplace Toolkit*.

National Leadership Council on Employment Transportation

The National Leadership Council on Employment Transportation is comprised of representatives of national, state and local transportation, workforce development and human services organizations. The Council meets biennially and serves the following role:

- To give input to Joblinks staff on the types of activities and services offered by the project,
- To identify transportation challenges specific to local workforce development and human services agencies so that Joblinks can develop targeted assistance, and
- To increase the access of workforce development agencies, human services organizations and transportation providers to Joblinks resources in order to help low-income individuals, persons with disabilities and others to overcome employment transportation barriers.

Members of the National Leadership Council:

Don Chatfield
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Madison, Wisconsin

Dan Dalton, CCTM
Easter Seals Project ACTION
Washington, DC

Dan Dirks, CCTM
SMART
Detroit, Michigan

Laura Farah
Law, Health Policy and Disability Center
University of Iowa College of Law
Quincy, Massachusetts

Sheila Fesko
Institute for Community Inclusion
National Center on Workforce and
Disability/Adult
Boston, Massachusetts

Kathy McGehee
North Carolina Department of Health and
Human Services
Raleigh, North Carolina

John M. McBeth
Brazos Transit District
Bryan, Texas

Jim McLaughlin
Urbitran Group
(representing the American Public
Transportation Association)
Glendale, California

Thirland McKissic
Arkansas Rehabilitation Services
Pine Bluff, Arkansas

C. Paul Mendez
National Association of Workforce
Development Professionals
Washington, DC

Roland Mross
Member, Board of Directors
Great Lakes Regional Director
Community Transportation Association of
America
Carmel, Indiana

Carolyn Ross
Oregon Department of Human Services
Salem, Oregon

Moses Stites
Fresno County Economic Opportunity
Commission
Fresno, California

Latrina Trotman
Maryland Transit Administration
Baltimore, MARYLAND