



Event: New Hampshire Transportation Coordination Meeting
Date: April 7, 2000
Location: Department of Health and Human Services, Concord, NH

I. Summary

The Welfare Peer Technical Assistance (TA) Network, funded by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance (OFA), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) provided technical assistance in support of this meeting. The meeting was coordinated by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (NH DHHS) and the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT).

The purpose of the meeting was to begin to develop a strategy and formulate a framework for coordination that improves and/or increases mobility options for various populations of transportation users throughout the State. Ms. Janis Reams, Business and Industry Coordinator, NH DHHS, along with Christopher (Kit) Morgan, Administrator of Bureau of Rail and Transit, NH DOT, led the planning efforts that resulted in this meeting. The meeting was attended by selected representatives of various constituencies throughout the State who have an interest in the planning and coordination of transportation services. The focus of the meeting was to explore such topics as:

- how coordination of services can be achieved;
- who should be involved in coordination efforts;
- what services are needed; and
- what resources are available.

The Welfare Peer TA Network provided facilitation support and a resource person from the State of Wisconsin experienced in transportation coordination issues.

The meeting followed a brief flexible agenda that afforded participants an opportunity to gain information and explore discussion topics that included questions such as:

- *What plans have been completed regarding funding so far by both State agencies?*
(Specific expenditures currently budgeted for this fiscal year by both NH DHHS and NH DOT.)
- *What are other States doing in the area of coordination?*
(Brief discussion of other State models as well as a featured discussion on Wisconsin's experiences with inter-agency transportation coordination and other current initiatives.)

- *What initiatives are in effect so far in the State in support of transportation coordination?*
(Exploratory discussion on potential Federal Transit Administration Job Access and Reverse Commute grant applications as well as other initiatives in NH.)
- *What are some funding sources/opportunities for future coordination initiatives?*
(Reflection on Federal funding sources available as well as possible State-wide options to obtaining funding.)
- *What are some next steps that can be taken as a result of the day's discussions?*
(Strategic planning session on short term and long term goals along with proposed action steps.)

For more detailed information on the agenda, refer to Appendix A-*Agenda*.

II. Participants

Meeting participants from New Hampshire included selected representatives from the NH DHHS, NH DOT, Federal representatives from the Region I DHHS and DOT offices, a representative from the NH Governor's Office, NH Welfare to Work, NH Department of Elderly and Adult Services, NH Disability Council, The Community Action Agencies, The NH Rural Development Council, two Regional Planning Commissions, a transit provider, and the NH Transit Association.

Participants from outside the State included Blake Austensen from the Welfare Peer TA Network who assisted Janis Reams (NH DHHS) with the facilitation of the meeting and coordinated the involvement of Brian Solomon from Wisconsin. Brian Solomon is the Employment Transportation Coordinator, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. Mr. Solomon offered a unique perspective on Wisconsin's experiences in the area of inter-agency coordination planning of transportation services. He also provided valuable input and suggestions during the meeting's discussion focusing on next steps.

For more details on meeting participants, refer to Appendix B-*Attendee List*.

III. Meeting Summary

A. Welcome, introductions, and goals for the day

The meeting began with a brief welcome from Dick Chevrefils, Assistant Commissioner, NH Department of Health and Human Services. In his remarks, Mr. Chevrefils stressed the "three c's": coordination, communication, and collaboration as being critical to future planning. Welcoming comments were also made to the group by Janis Reams, Business and Industry Coordinator, NH DHHS and Christopher Morgan, Administrator Bureau of Rail and Transit.

Blake Austensen, Welfare Peer TA Network, then facilitated an introductory discussion and asked group members to clarify their own roles and expected outcomes for the meeting. The following is a list of the outcomes participants cited for the day's meeting.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Discussion of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) grant applications
- NH DOT and NH DHHS find a way to improve coordination (i.e., a method such as a brokerage system, coordinating council, etc.)
- Action now!
- Tangible action steps be discussed for coordination
- Commitment for coordination between NH DHHS and NH DOT with the involvement of the governor's office
- Plans for ongoing commitment to work together to be discussed
- Increased understanding by all parties involved of the potential funding opportunities and technical assistance that is available or should be available
- Development of a small working group (with higher level support)
- Discussion on supporting the Nashua Regional Planning Commission and others in their FTA JARC grant applications
- Discussion on the Governor's support for coordination
- A commitment to change the way of thinking and have an open mind toward coordination
- A commitment to make coordination work!
- Learn more in general about the various organizations represented at the meeting as well as get an idea of what current coordination initiatives are underway both in NH and in other States
- Discuss concrete plans regarding the FTA JARC applications
- Discuss integration of services for special populations
- Discuss how to better coordinate transportation services in New Hampshire
- Obtain commitment for coordinating services as part of the planning for the Nashua Regional Planning Commission's FTA JARC grant application
- Discuss specific support for the Rockingham Regional Planning Commission's possible FTA JARC grant application (i.e., what services should be coordinated, how, information on possible State matching funds, etc.)

B. Funding for Transportation by NH DHHS and NH DOT

1. The following is a summary of a presentation on FY 2000 NH DHHS funding allocations by Janis Reams, Business and Industry Coordinator, Division of Family Assistance, NH DHHS:

<u>Budget</u>	
<u>FYE 6/30/00</u>	
<u>Category</u>	<u>Comments</u>
<p>I. Family Assistance New Hampshire Employment Program:</p>	

- a) Auto repairs, registration, insurance
- b) Drivers license fees
- c) Mileage reimbursement
- d) Bus passes

Food Stamp Recipients:

a) Mileage reimbursement
 subtotal **\$ 600,000** State and Federal Funds

II. Public Health Management

Medicaid:

a) Vendors and Volunteers \$ 420,000
 b) Ambulance \$ 403,000
 c) Wheel chair vans \$ 571,000
 subtotal **\$ 1,394,000** State & Federal Funds - 50/50

III. Division of Children, Youth, Families:

a) Secure transportation
 b) Public Transportation
 c) Private vehicle (mileage reimbursement)
 d) Accompanied transportation
 subtotal **\$ 1,234,446** State & Federal Funds

IV. Dept. of Elderly and Adult Services:

a) Funding to non-profit social service, and/or community health agencies for transportation services to elderly (>60 years old) and disabled adults.

b) Contracts with 10 agencies for reimbursement of travel expenses to volunteers in Senior Companion, RSVP Volunteers, or Foster Grandparents Program.

subtotal **\$ 1,300,000** est. Older American Act (Federal Funds) and State Funds \$265M.

V. Division of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services:

There are 11 area agencies that provide a multitude of services to support individuals living in a community setting.

There is not a direct appropriation for transportation. However, transportation expenses are an allowable indirect cost that area agencies may include in their establishment of rates.

subtotal **\$ 1,900,000** est. State and Federal Funds

Subtotal **\$ 6,428,446**

VI. Other

<i>Statewide planning, S. 5313 (80-20)</i>	\$52,000
<u>Discretionary capital: bus (S.5309)</u>	\$2,977,550
<i>Capital assistance for public systems (80-20)</i>	
<u>Discretionary capital: rail (S.5309)</u>	\$992,500
<i>Nashua commuter rail (Congressional earmarks)</i>	

During this discussion the topic of the flexibility of using FTA funds to serve different population's (para transit, fixed route, handicapped, Head Start, etc.) transit needs ensued. Mr. Morgan stressed that some of the FTA's regulations are very specific in how the funding is meant to be spent. This was one area where it was admitted that creative planning is needed in order to serve clients effectively.

C. Initiatives/Models Outside of New Hampshire

1. The following are highlights of a presentation by Christopher (Kit) Morgan, Administrator, Bureau of Rail and Transit, NH DOT:

Mr. Morgan began by reflecting that some States have mandated transportation coordination by establishing an inter-agency coordinating council (MN, TX, etc.). Some of the duties of these councils are to evaluate transit needs, identify funding options, evaluate how funds are allocated, and plan for service delivery coordination. Agencies on these councils have included DHHS, DOT, DED, DOL, and others. Actions taken by some of these councils have been to examine available funding from DOT, and other funding sources such as Community Transit Association of America, and other federal agencies. Some of the Councils have been instrumental in the development of guidelines, and the creation of a "system" (procedure) for local communities to receive information exchanges (technical assistance).

Brokerage models was the next area Mr. Morgan discussed. He specifically mentioned WA, VT, and RI. Rhode Island conducts paratransit coordination for mixed populations. The State pays for a broker depending on transit needs and contracts with transit service providers. Vermont uses a similar method to provide service to Medicaid riders. Vermont's program was discussed briefly by the group. One participant pointed out that Vermont's brokerage program only serves the Medicaid population. Many of the meeting participants expressed an interest that New Hampshire look at how to create a model that would serve the demands of many different "types" of transit users.

2. The following are highlights of a presentation by Brian Solomon, Employment Transportation Coordinator, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development:

Mr. Solomon discussed transportation coordination experiences from his viewpoint with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. Given the demographics and current state of the economy in Wisconsin, the State faced a serious challenge in coordinating the delivery of its transportation services. With the extreme decline in caseload and the majority (85%) of clients

living in Milwaukee, many rural communities in Wisconsin have caseloads of only five or less persons. This makes developing transportation initiatives for the geographically dispersed rural clients an interesting challenge for the State of Wisconsin. In response, the WI Department of Workforce Development and the Department of Transportation have jointly developed a TANF transportation grant program, setting aside \$4 million for the next two years (\$3 mil for past 2 years) for transportation initiatives. The grant program consists of a combination of TANF, DOT, Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) funds and local dollars for funding. The objective is to encourage local planning and coordination to develop plans to meet the overall employment transportation needs of the region and help people obtain, retain and advance in employment. This program was the result of planning by an integrated workgroup Wisconsin formed with the support of the governor's office. The group was made up of representatives from DHHS, DOT, WtW, DWD, and WIA. As a resource, Mr. Solomon pointed out that DHHS, DOL, and DOT have issued coordination guidance to encourage States and communities to take full advantage of existing resources to develop seamless, integrated services addressing the transportation challenges of moving people from welfare to work. This joint guidance can be reviewed on the FTA web site at www.fta.gov/wtw/uoft.html.

Mr. Solomon went on to report that in his State the key to success was to get the right people at the table - private sector, employers, DHS, Aging, Head Start/Education, child care, non-profits, faith community, DOT and anyone else who has access to buses, vans or other transport vehicles. Each plan needs a mix of transportation components and strategies since just buying cars is not enough. Furthermore, the group learned to continually reassess plans (at least quarterly) since needs and resources may change.

In one example in Wisconsin, Door and Dane counties, grant dollars have been used to establish an employer sponsored transit route using vans and buses to get employees to industrial parks and also provide childcare transportation. A small fee (\$.50-\$1 per trip) is charged for usage. And in Dunn/Polk counties, grant dollars have been used to implement the *Project Jump Start* car loan program. Project Jump Start has been very successful in collaborating with car dealers and financial institutions to obtain car loans on new Geo Prisms for welfare clients who meet necessary criteria (i.e., good driving record, make payments on time, etc.).

Mr. Solomon then went into specifics on the planning process his State used to get where it is today which included continued support from the Governor's office, creative use of existing funds, seeking out additional Federal and State funding streams, conducting transit needs assessments, and some current initiatives taking place. He commented that although there are some notable differences between Wisconsin and New Hampshire, major facets of their overall planning process that they implemented could be replicated in almost any State.

3. The following are discussion points or "ideas needing possible further attention" that were raised during the agenda segment on outside State initiatives:
 - Vermont's brokerage model (serving Medicaid recipients)
 - Suggested next steps for State transportation coordination in reference to a general question on where the State should be headed in the area of coordination (i.e., the final outcome that will be the result of State coordinated planning efforts)
 - NH DHHS and DOT coordinate funds via State planners

- Local planners coordinate services with State support
- Both agencies should lobby for support of transportation coordination at the governor's level
- A State integrated work group responsible for coordinating transportation should be explored
- The State could require local agencies to coordinate services similar to the way the Federal government has with the States in other areas of service delivery. (It was assumed this would involve the agencies conducting a needs assessment, gap analysis of existing services, and then planning appropriate services such as van pools, car loans, bus tickets, etc.)
- The FTA JARC applicants need to get a sense of available funding they will be able to obtain (i.e., State Matching Funds, etc.) as they are completing their applications
- Possibly a coordinated effort by both agencies in support of JARC grant applicants as they complete the application process could be a stepping stone toward larger State level coordination. The idea of forming a workgroup in the immediate future for technical assistance for grant applicants was raised.

D. Initiatives Currently in the State of New Hampshire

This session was introduced by Janis Reams, Business and Industry Coordinator, NH DHHS. Ms. Reams mentioned the potential FTA JARC applications, the Nashua Regional Planning Commission, and Coast Alliance Seacoast Transit (COAST). Both applications contain additional paratransit and demand response services for TANF clients, extended routes, extended hours of operation, and mobility managers to facilitate the creation of a broker model involving other local transit providers and non-profits that currently provide transportation. There are also other local initiatives such as the newly created Greater Derry/Greater Salem Transportation Council who are making plans for a grant to serve disabled riders and involves the support of the University of New Hampshire.

The group then entered an extended discussion on what support the grant applicants need from the State as they are completing their applications. NH DHHS was unable to commit a definite dollar amount in response to this question. However, several members of NH DHHS staff commented that there are many competing "needs" they are being asked to address using the federal TANF dollars (i.e. expansion of child care resources, low income housing, training and education, etc.). NH DHHS staff indicated that when reviewing the JARC applications they will be looking at the feasibility of the request, involvement of other local non profit agencies, and the amount of other (local) match dollars the applicants have. NH DHHS emphasized that it was committed to the coordination process and would do whatever was in its means to support that process. Janis Reams (DHHS) and Kit Mortan (NH DOT) committed to making themselves available to assist any applicants needing further assistance in completing their applications. Applicants could then discuss funding issues for FTA JARC grants or address any other concerns they may have. As per the letter sent out by NHDHHS, FTA JARC grant applications are due to DHHS 4/21/00 for their review and then FTA 5/9/00.

In future planning of grants, one participant suggested certain areas of the State should be targeted and receive priority based on the concentration or lack of concentration of the population. The overall consensus seemed to be that local areas have the best ideas as to what

their needs are and the availability of existing resources. The focus should be that the State would provide technical assistance to facilitate the implementation phase of those local plans.

There was brief mention of two future coordination meetings. A Regional coordination group will be meeting in the coming months for Region I States to discuss coordination initiatives and obtain planning ideas. Massachusetts will be highlighted at the group's first meeting. Representatives from that State will discuss their experiences in inter-agency transportation planning and coordination. They successfully established an inter-departmental agreement between DHHS and DOT. Representatives from New Hampshire will be invited to attend the meeting of this Regional group.

The NH Transit Association will also be having their annual meeting on June 14, 2000. Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Regional Planning Commissions, and local transit providers will be attending. Information on this important meeting will be forthcoming to potential participants in the near future.

E. Funding Sources and Opportunities (Federal and State)

The FTA JARC grants were the highlight of this discussion topic. Specifics of this program are available on FTA web site previously referred to in this report. One convenient source offering details on other Federal transportation funds is the Community Transportation Association of America's (CTAA) *Resource Guide*. This can be found in the Winter 2000 issue of CTAA's bi-monthly magazine *Community Transportation*. The *Guide* lists Federal funding resources from more than a dozen Federal agencies and nearly one hundred funding sources for community transportation. For more information on available Federal funding sources, contact CTAA's Transit Hotline at 800-527-8279. CTAA also has convenient listings of Federal, Regional, State, and other contacts for transportation.

In the area of State funding, there were limitations noted by everyone at the meeting. The State currently has no dedicated funds to support transit expansion. This led to a brief discussion of the need for coordinated creative funding efforts. The importance of high level State support was again mentioned (i.e., Governor's involvement and the need for legislative change).

F. Next Steps

1. Options for future planning:

Blake Austensen asked the group to consider the existing status of transportation coordination in New Hampshire today versus where the group would like it to be in the future. As a brief summary of the meeting, he reviewed what the group had discussed over the course of the day as actions "steps" that could lead to plausible future coordination efforts.

Some ideas included:

- Increased State funding for transit services

- The creation of a State Transportation Coordination Council and inter-agency planning/work group
- Development of Brokerage systems in various areas of the State
- Research on specific transportation needs and inventory of existing resources throughout the State

As a follow up to these ideas, Mr. Austensen then listed various short and long term goals that had been mentioned throughout the day that could be viewed as potential next steps toward reaching the group's goals.

Some of the ideas reference included:

- Inter-agency coordination to support FTA JARC grant applicants
- Development of a Memorandum of Understanding between DOT and DHHS (also Regional Planning Commissions, etc.)
- Legislative change to obtain dedicated State funding for transit projects
- Formal support from the Governor's office in support of coordination initiatives
- Seek an "earmark of FTA Job Access funds"
- Position mobility managers in one stop centers
- Form a committee to deliver technical assistance to transportation providers and planners

The group was then asked to propose their own short and long term goals along with some potential next steps.

2. Short term goals:

- (In reference to support of coordination efforts for FTA JARC grant applicants) - DHHS will follow up on the letter they already sent out to potential grant applicants and determine the amount of federal TANF dollars they will commit to successful FTA/JARC applicants.
- DHHS, DOT, and other parties to be determined, formulate a workgroup that will begin preparations for next year's FTA grants.
- DHHS, DOT, and other parties to be determined, formulate a technical assistance workgroup that would:
 - Explore how other regional planning commissions, transit systems, rural councils, and other State governments have accomplished coordination of transportation services. Determine applicable lessons that can be applied to New Hampshire's current situation.
 - Assess transportation needs of the State both regionally and locally
 - Assess resources available for services and transit planning (for activities such as needs assessments, etc.)
 - Identify methods to develop "seed money" to implement particular models or other new initiatives
 - Determine the best way for the State to coordinate funding (State and Federal) and local transit representatives to coordinate delivery of services

- DHHS and DOT make a commitment to communicate more effectively in the future in areas such as funding, service delivery, sharing and collection of data, etc.

3. Long term goals:

- DHHS and DOT cooperate to create a joint formal written recommendation to the Governor's office to form an inter-agency work group. The mission of this work group will be to improve transportation planning and transit services throughout the State. The joint recommendation will contain suggestions of individuals to serve on this work group. Suggested participating organizations mentioned included representatives from DHHS, DOT, the Governor's office, Regional Planning Commissions, Rural Development Councils, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, transit providers, business representatives, and state agencies involved in the Workforce Investment Act activities. It should be noted that several meeting participants cautioned that a small number (under five) be suggested as the number of staff on the group in order to facilitate ACTION and that it really be a work group. In support of that suggestion, it was mentioned that sub committees might be formed with specific tasks and focus such as:
 - Survey transit providers regarding their services
 - Contact State Legislators who sit on the State House and Senate committees that oversee transportation.
 - Inventory local coordination activities currently in process and identify needs for technical assistance and/or funding.
 - Compile data on transit needs throughout the State and share the data among appropriate constituencies

4. Specific action steps

- Compile meeting notes and prepare meeting summary report
- Disseminate the summary report among meeting participants and other appropriate parties

IV. Final Remarks

As the meeting adjourned, the overall feeling among participants of the how well the meeting went was summed up by one person who pronounced, "I can't believe how much we accomplished in just one day." For further information on the specific initiatives or other topics discussed, refer to the appropriate contact person (*Appendix B-Attendee List*). For more information on transportation coordination models outside the State of New Hampshire, refer to the Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network's web site at www.calib.com/peerta. For general information about this meeting, or the Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network, contact Blake Austensen at (301) 270-0841.