

DUATS HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Background

An increasing number of people are unable to get to work, run errands, or reach medical services simply because they do not have access to reliable transportation. This group of transportation disadvantaged includes disabled individuals who cannot operate vehicles or travel outside of the home on their own because of medical conditions or limitations; people who cannot afford their own automobile; and people who live in areas without access to public transportation.

To enable these individuals to travel for employment, medical, education, and other needs, state and federal grants are used to provide transportation services that assist elderly persons, persons with disabilities and/or low-income persons get to their destinations. In urbanized areas, regular public transportation service and supplemental paratransit service is often available to meet many of these needs. In rural and smaller urban areas, however, public transportation service is less available and human service providers such as senior centers must often find other ways to provide their clients with transportation.

Numerous local programs supported by state and federal agencies provide separate transportation services, including services for the elderly, hospital access for low-income individuals, services for the physically and mentally disabled and transportation for job training or job access. In Illinois, there are numerous state and federal programs administered by a variety of different state agencies that provide funding to be used for public and human services transportation. The lack of coordination among these programs and providers has led to duplication of transportation and dispatching services and an inefficient use of needed transportation and human services funds.

Federal transit law, as amended by SAFETEA-LU, now requires that projects funded from the Section 5310 (Elderly and Disabled), Section 5316 (Job Access and Reverse Commute or JARC), and Section 5317 (New Freedom) programs be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan (HSTP). The HSTP is intended to maximize the collective coverage of the targeted programs and needs to be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and the users of these services.

No known entities receive Section 5310, 5316 or 5317 funding at this time. However, DUATS has explored issues and conducted surveys which relate to the program objectives of these funding streams. In 2006, the Macon County Health Foundation, in cooperation with DUATS surveyed service providers and clients concerning transportation needs and issues. Service providers were in need of additional resources for transporting clients to medical appointments (88%), to social service agencies (53%), to shopping venues (48%) and to work (38%). Youth were generally less likely to need transit services. As the client's age increased the need for service increased and closely correlated to those expressed by service providers.

Also in 2006, DUATS supported the efforts of Illinois State University and the East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging which conducted research on the areas of the County having the highest poverty rates, lowest median income and the highest concentrations of elderly and physically challenged individuals. The information has proved useful in our study of rural to urban transit needs and obstacles. DUATS staff has talked extensively with adjacent and nearby counties and communities on their transportation operations. The meetings have proved invaluable. Information and suggestions have been the main goal and outcome to date. At this time, DUATS feels that affiliating with an existing transit system/operator would be a better option than creating a new entity. Further study and discussion is warranted on this topic.

References

The State and the MPO must follow all the requirements contained in the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circulars providing *Program Guidance and Application Instructions* for the Section 5310, 5316 and 5317 programs. Consolidated excerpts and web site addresses for the circulars are listed below.

Recipient Designation: For *Section 5310* funds, the state designates an agency with the requisite legal, financial, and staffing capabilities to receive and administer Federal funds under this program. The designated State agency is the recipient of all Section 5310 funds apportioned to the State, and applies to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for these funds on behalf of private non-profit agencies and eligible local governmental authorities within the State.

For *Section 5316 and 5317* funds, the state must designate a public entity to be the recipient for JARC and New Freedom funds.

- In urbanized areas with populations less than 200,000 and in non-urbanized areas, the State is the designated recipient. For these areas, the designated State agency is responsible for administering the JARC and New Freedom program.
- In urbanized areas over 200,000 in population, the recipient charged with administering the JARC Program must be officially designated through a process consistent with 49 U.S.C. Section 5307(a)(2):

an entity designated in accordance with the planning process under sections 5303, 5304, and 5306, by the chief executive officer of a State, responsible local officials, and publicly owned operators of public transportation, to receive and apportion amounts under section 5336 that are attributable to transportation management areas identified under Section 5303.

The Urbanized Area Formula (Section 5307) designated recipient provides and coordinates transportation services for the region and is familiar with FTA's program oversight requirements; therefore, it is appropriate for the designated recipient for the JARC and New Freedom programs to be the same as the designated recipient for Section 5307 funds. Alternatively, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), State, or another public agency may be a preferred choice based on local circumstances. The designation of recipient should be made by the State in consultation with responsible local officials and publicly owned operators of public transportation. The recipient for JARC funds will apply to FTA for these funds on behalf of sub-recipients within the recipient's area.

Apportionment: *Section 5310 (Elderly and Disabled)* funds are apportioned among the States by a formula based on the number of elderly persons and persons with disabilities in each State.

Of the total *Section 5316 (JARC)* funds available, FTA apportions 60 percent among designated recipients in large urbanized areas; 20 percent to the States for small urbanized areas; and 20 percent to the States for rural and small urban areas under 50,000 in population. JARC funds are apportioned among the recipients by formula. The formula is based on the ratio that the number of eligible low-income and welfare recipients in each such area bears to the number of eligible low-income and welfare recipients in all such areas.

Of the total *Section 5317 (New Freedom)* funds available, FTA apportions 60 percent among designated recipients in large urbanized areas; 20 percent to the States for small urbanized areas; and 20 percent to the States for rural and small urban areas under 50,000 in population. New Freedom funds are apportioned among the recipients by formula. The formula is based on the

ratio that the number of individuals with disabilities in each such area bears to the number of individuals with disabilities in all such areas. .

Coordination Requirements: Projects selected for funding under *Sections 5310, 5316 and 5317* must be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human service providers, participation by the public, and representatives addressing the needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities and low-income individuals. .

Planning Requirements: *Section 5310, 5316 and 5317* projects in urbanized areas must be included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Projects outside urbanized areas must be included in, or be consistent with the Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan and must be included in the STIP.

Program of Projects: The program of projects (POP) for *Section 5310, 5316 and 5317* identifies the sub-recipients and projects for which the State or designated recipient is applying for financial assistance. The annual POP the State submits to FTA for approval must indicate the total number of sub-recipients; identify each sub-recipient and indicate whether they are governmental authorities, or private non-profit agencies. In addition, the POP must include a brief description of each project, which includes the counties served by the project. The POP must show, for each project, the total project cost and the Federal share. The total Federal funding level for the POP cannot exceed the total amount of Section 5310 funds available. The program of projects must be identical to, or consistent with, listings contained in the applicable TIP and STIP.

The Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan: Federal transit law, as amended by SAFETEA–LU, requires that projects selected for funding under the *Sections 5310, 5316 and 5317* be “derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan” and that the plan be “developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers and participation by members of the public.” The experiences gained from the efforts of the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM), and specifically the United We Ride (UWR) Initiative provide a useful starting point for the development and implementation of the local public transit-human services transportation plan.

Development of the Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan:

- A. *Overview:* A locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan (“coordinated plan”) identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provides strategies for meeting those local needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. Local plans may be developed on a local, regional, or statewide level. The decision as to the boundaries of the local planning areas should be made in consultation with the State and the metropolitan planning agency, where applicable. The agency leading the planning process is decided locally and does not have to be the State. A coordinated plan should maximize the programs’ collective coverage by minimizing duplication of services. Further, a coordinated plan shall be developed through a process that includes representatives of public and private and non-profit transportation and human services transportation providers, and participation by members of the public. Members of the public should include representatives of the targeted population(s) including individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. While the plan is only required in communities seeking funding under one or more of the three specified FTA programs, a coordinated plan should also incorporate activities offered under other programs sponsored by Federal, State, and local agencies to greatly strengthen its impact.

B. *Required Elements:* Projects shall be derived from a coordinated plan that minimally includes the following elements at a level consistent with available resources and the complexity of the local institutional environment:

- An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and non-profit);
- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service;
- Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery; and
- Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.

Web Page Links:

Section 5310 Circular - http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6622.html

Section 5316 Circular - http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6623.html

Section 5317 Circular - http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6624.html

United We Ride - <http://www.unitedweride.gov/>

Implementation

At the federal level, the United We Ride (UWR) initiative was established to break down the barriers between programs and set the stage for local partnerships that generate common sense solutions. The overall goal of this effort is to make it easier for the customer to access public and specialized transportation services by reducing transportation service duplication, increase efficient transportation service delivery, and expand transportation access for older Americans, persons with disabilities, and individuals with low incomes. The HSTP is the tool identified in SAFETEA-LU to accomplish this goal.

Locally, DUATS would be responsible for ensuring that the new federal coordination requirements are met for the urbanized area. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is responsible for those parts of the state that are outside the urbanized jurisdictions. IDOT has begun to implement the HSTP to be in compliance with the new requirements, which went into effect in FFY 2007.

Because Illinois has no formal rural public transportation planning infrastructure, IDOT has created a framework for developing the plan and project submission process for public and human services transportation funding. Through a combination of research and public involvement sub-state regions were established to facilitate the HSTP process (see map below). Each region will develop an HSTP to coordinate the delivery of services within its boundaries.

The primary role of DUATS will be to facilitate the review committee meetings, solicit feedback on the plan and projects for the urbanized portion of the region and to develop an urbanized area HSTP document. Another key responsibility will be to work with rural and small urban regional coordinator to integrate the HSTP activities of DUATS and the Regional Transportation Committee. IDOT will provide oversight for the program to ensure that the HSTP procedural guidelines are being met.

Process

The HSTP development process must, at a minimum, include stakeholders representing public, private and non-profit transportation service providers, human service providers, the public, representatives addressing the needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities and low-income individuals, planning organizations and/or county government representatives. In our urbanized area, DUATS staff would compile and analyze input and organize it into a readable report that will be reviewed and adopted by the Policy Committee. At a minimum, the plan must analyze and address the following issues.

- Identify the public and specialized transportation goals of the community
- Inventory of existing transportation services
- Assess human services transportation needs
- Analyze gaps in human services transportation service
- Recommend short and long-term transportation strategies to address service gaps and improve coordination

Once information on local needs and resources is compiled and organized the plan needs to explore the following questions for the region.

- Where are we doing well?
- Where do we need to do better?
- What will it take to get to the next level of service provision?

Where there is agreement on needed improvements, strategies to implement the improvements and an action plan to accomplish the strategies needs to be developed. The action plan needs to include the following elements.

- A clear set of steps
- Identification of who is responsible for carrying out each step
- Timeline for tasks
- A strategy for communication within the group

Projects

In order to be eligible for federal funding, projects identified through the HSTP process must be included in the state STIP, a Regional Program of Projects (RPOP) in rural and small urban areas and in the TIP in urbanized areas.

- Projects for the Section 5316 (JARC), and Section 5317 (New Freedom) programs will be competitively selected using local criteria.
- All projects funded from the Section 5310 (Elderly and Disabled), Section 5316 (JARC), and Section 5317 (New Freedom) programs will be competitively selected regardless of who the designated recipient is.

- All projects funded from the Section 5310 (Elderly and Disabled), Section 5316 (JARC), and Section 5317 (New Freedom) programs will be reviewed and approved by IDOT and/or the State Oversight Committee (SOC).

The SOC is composed of agencies involved in the planning and provision of transportation, human service and economic development services. Representatives of the agencies listed below serve on the SOC.

- IDOT
- Rural Technical Assistance Center (RTAC), part of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs
- Illinois Department of Aging
- Illinois Department of Human Services
- Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
- Lieutenant Governor's Office
- MPO representative (from the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission)
- Illinois Association of Regional Councils
- Illinois Public Transportation Association

In order to meet federal requirements, projects in urban areas under 200,000 population and rural areas that are requesting funds through Section 5316 (JARC) and 5317 (New Freedom) programs will be competitively selected and prioritized at the local level and then submitted to the State Oversight Committee for final review and state wide prioritization.

DUATS' Human Services Transportation Plan Approach

1. Currently no 5310, 5316 or 5317 funds are received by any entity in the Decatur Urbanized Area. At such time that the Decatur Urbanized Area is required to develop a HSTP, DUATS will be the entity responsible for developing the Plan. As such DUATS would have the following duties if in the future such funds were to be received.
2. Establish an HSTP Advisory Committee to coordinate the public involvement process and evaluate the input received. Representatives of the public transportation provider(s), human service agencies, DUATS, users of the transportation services being considered and IDOT-DPIT will be included in the Advisory Committee. The specific names of the human service agencies and transit users which will be included on this proposed committee is pending further local discussion in cooperative and collaboration with HSTP Region 6.
3. Implement a broad based proactive public involvement process to identify and catalogue existing services, determine unmet needs and identify potential strategies to meet those needs. The PPP as adopted by DUATS reflects the wishes and intent regarding a proactive approach to involving the public in all facets and in all stages of plan and project discussion and any subsequent projects.
4. Create a regional consensus on feasible strategies to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of human service transportation provided in the region.
5. Coordinate with the HSTP Regional Coordinator for region # 8 to ensure the urbanized area boundary does not create a barrier to the delivery of seamless transportation services to the targeted populations.
6. Develop an Action Plan that clearly identifies the actions to be taken, the projects to be implemented and the persons/ agencies responsible for making the specified activities happen.

7. Amend the projects proposed for federal funding into DUATS' TIP.
8. Forward those projects to IDOT for review and approval.
9. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented strategies and projects.
10. Adjust strategies to address new and/or previously undetected needs.
11. Amend the TIP to reflect projects selected for funding.
12. The goal is to have the HSTP completed by July 17, 2007, with the fully completed and compliance HSTP in place by October 1, 2007.