



# 1.0 Introduction

The Coordinated Public Transit- Human Services Transportation Plan focuses on transportation services for the populations of older adults, persons with disabilities, and lower income. It was developed by the Indian Nations Council of Governments (INCOG) with ongoing participation by representatives from public, private and agency transportation providers, Departments of Human and Social Services, Departments of Health, Mental Health, Rehabilitation Services Employment, Education, Area Agency on Aging, faith-based organizations, and private, non-profit organizations such as the United Way.

Human service transportation includes a broad range of transportation service options designed to meet the needs of a variety of populations. Choices range from the public transit fixed-route system, specialized dial-a-ride van programs, taxi vouchers, to volunteer drivers. The array of services often results in multiple, underutilized vehicles, inefficiently operated. At the same time there are often large numbers of people unable to access transportation services when and where they need them.

Coordination of transportation program services, appropriately implemented, reduces individual inefficiencies and encourages sharing of existing community resources. In communities where coordination is a priority, all citizens benefit from having more transportation choices through expanded service, lower costs, and easier access.



In order to strengthen existing transportation services, and increase cost-effectiveness and responsiveness to consumers, the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM), established by President George W. Bush under the Executive Order on Human Service Transportation Coordination, submitted a report to the President outlining five key recommendations<sup>1</sup>:

- 1. Coordinated Transportation Planning:** the Administration should seek mechanisms to require participation in a community transportation planning process for human service transportation programs. Coordinated transportation planning promises increased cost-effectiveness and increased access for consumers by eliminating duplicative efforts and wasted resources.
- 2. Vehicle Sharing:** vehicles used in human service transportation should be made available to other federally funded programs, reducing duplicate transportation services as well as idle time for drivers and vehicles.
- 3. Cost Allocation:** standard cost allocation principles for transportation should be developed and endorsed by federal human service and transportation agencies, where statutorily permitted, ensuring that adequate resources are available for transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults and individuals with lower incomes, and encouraging the shared use of vehicles and existing public transportation services.
- 4. Reporting and Evaluation:** a method to permit cross-agency analysis of the effectiveness, efficiency, and progress of States, communities, and tribes toward improved coordination of transportation programs should be developed, as evidenced by improvements in the overall quality and cost-effectiveness of human service transportation.
- 5. Consolidated Access Transportation Demonstration Program:** statutory authority should be sought to permit the development of ten to twelve demonstration projects in metropolitan, rural and/or tribal areas to test the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of a new approach to meeting the full range of transportation needs of persons with disabilities, older adults and individuals with lower incomes. In these demonstration projects, a single transportation system (not necessarily a single provider) financed through a consolidated federally funded stream would meet the total needs of transportation-disadvantaged populations.

1. *Report to the President: Human Service Transportation Coordination Executive Order 13330*, prepared by the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM), 2005.

## **SAFETEA-LU AND COORDINATION**

In response to these recommendations, SAFETEA-LU, the federal transportation reauthorization act, requires the establishment of a locally developed Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for all FTA human services transportation programs. Under SAFETEA-LU, to receive program funding in FFY 2007, federal program grantees must certify that approved projects were derived from the coordinated plan developed through a process that includes representatives of the general public as well as public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers.

Included in these new programs created by SAFETEA-LU, the New Freedom program has the purpose of providing new transportation services beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to improve mobility for people with disabilities. The Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program already existed under TEA-21 as a discretionary program.

Under SAFETEA-LU it became a formula program with the intent of providing transportation services to and from jobs and employment activities for low-income people. The Elderly and Disabled Program (Section 5310) allocates funds by formula to states for capital costs of providing services to elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

“United We Ride,” a national initiative implemented by CCAM to help carry out these recommendations, is addressing this challenge by educating human service agencies, transportation providers, consumers and policymakers on the benefits of transportation coordination; providing tools to help states and communities coordinate their transportation resources; analyzing the regulatory barriers to coordination and identifying solutions to overcome the limitations; encouraging comprehensive transportation service planning with active participation of people with disabilities, seniors, and people with low incomes; identifying and sharing successful strategies and solutions with states and communities; and coordinating the provision of technical assistance from a variety of specialists including Easter Seals Project ACTION and others.

## **INCOG’s ROLE**

The Indian Nations Council of Governments (INCOG), in coordination with local officials, was designated by the Governor of Oklahoma as the organization responsible

for developing and implementing the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CTP) and a competitive process to select and prioritize projects for the Tulsa Transportation Management Area (TMA).

## **PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

The Tulsa CTP was developed in phases. The first involved an inventory of the transportation resources available in the Tulsa TMA. Consumers, advocates, transportation agencies, education and employment specialists, health care providers, and organizations providing disability-related services were identified. A survey was distributed to these organizations to compile a comprehensive inventory of services provided and the areas served.

An Advisory Group was formed with representatives from organizations serving low-income populations, elderly individuals, and persons with disabilities, including private and non-profit service providers, advocacy groups and health care providers. Six Advisory Group meetings and several public meetings were conducted. Attendees assisted in identifying service needs and gaps, analyzing origin-destination data, and identifying existing transit service.

Aspects of coordination programs used across the country were analyzed, and the experiences that best fit the needs of the Tulsa region were utilized as models to develop an action plan for implementation of coordinated transportation service in the Tulsa TMA. Finally, the CTP also establishes methods to monitor the delivery of the coordinated service and improve the quality of those services.

Coordination must take place in every state and community across the country. The shift from managing resources to managing mobility is the key to the success of a fully coordinated transportation system. The coordination of services between transit providers and local human service providers has potential social and economic benefits and is designed to reduce duplicate efforts, enhance service quality, provide better staff training, and improve the overall cost-effectiveness of the system. Coordinated systems increase the ability of transit agencies to provide services that meet the needs of residents who must have access to health and social services, jobs, education, and other locations that improve their quality of life and connection with the community. Coordination also increases the ability of the government to effectively and efficiently manage limited resources.

