



6.0 Obstacles and Opportunities

Anything that can obstruct and impede efforts to coordination, with adequate information and perseverance, can be successfully removed. The mere use of Federal funds and the lack of uniformity in program delivery, report, and eligibility requirements may present obstacles to coordination. Based on the Advisory Group experience and knowledge, obstacles and opportunities to coordination efforts were identified for the Tulsa TMA.

OBSTACLES TO COORDINATION:

The obstacles and challenges to coordination were identified as:

- “Turf” wars or the reluctance to give up ownership and control and allow another entity to provide services to its clients. Atmosphere of competition instead of cooperation
- Sharing funding and the need of additional funding for coordination
- Lack of information and communication at all levels; agency to client, agency to agency
- Some organizations lack infrastructure and technology for scheduling and equipment
- Strong leadership needed to promote collaboration among existing organizations.

- Duplication of some services, but still unmet needs
- No involvement of politicians
- Political and geographic divisions due to city/county boundaries and the prohibitive cost nature to serve all these areas
- Challenges of maximizing existing capacity
- Establishing a comprehensive infrastructure for coordination, dissemination of information, and scheduling of services
- Reliance on volunteers to deliver services creates challenges because of the high turnover rate
- Liability issues, insurance and beyond
- Lack of resources (staff, time, etc.) to coordinate at individual organizations
- Reporting requirements by funding sources, especially for volunteer-run programs
- Staffing drivers for shared vehicles
- Cost of individual services

The providers' surveys also identified issues that impact coordination efforts. When respondents were asked to

evaluate what were the biggest barriers to coordination, funding was the highest ranked answer followed by not enough equipment. A regulatory review of Federal funding programs indicates that the little uniformity in program delivery, report and eligibility requirements can present obstacles to coordination.

Additionally, the National Consortium on the Coordination of Human Services Transportation, a group of non-profit organizations representing public and private transportation providers, human service agencies, units of governments, and advocacy organizations, supported primarily by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), designed a research project to explore barriers to coordination in detail. The Consortium issued a white paper earlier this year on the project. They identified obstacles to coordination in seven categories. Virtually all obstacles identified by the Advisory Group and the Providers' surveys are included in the national list. See Figure 9 for a summary of their findings.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR COORDINATION

When brainstorming opportunities to coordinate, the Advisory Group identified the following:

- Transportation providers meet regularly to discuss needs and services
- Centralized source for information on transportation resources
- Advertise existing programs
- Sharing costs with governmental entities; example, county governments paying for insurance under existing fleet policy in exchange for use of vehicles
- Share resources, providing back-up vehicles, and inventory
- Hold public forums to find out what the public needs and wants
- Central location, or shared location, of vehicles to facilitate shared usage
- Bulk purchase of vehicles through county purchasing, i.e., county health department
- For some services, think regionally, not just city or county
- Use what we have through coordination to enhance existing services covering hours that are either underserved or not served at all
- Think creatively about usage of private services such as taxis and limos
- Explore the use of technology implementing the Smart Card – one card for multiple transportation services – and computerized billing and scheduling
- Implement employer-based services, multiple uses of vehicles
- Allow charter use of vehicles to help cover expenses
- Provide paid staff to coordinate information and schedules
- Explore opportunities for alternative forms of transportation, including bicycles and scooters that could be leased or rented
- Pursue opportunities for funding and sharing services with Sooner Start and 5310 funding through the Department of Human Services



Obstacles and opportunities to coordination are addressed in the “Recommended State, Regional, and Local Policy Actions” and “Key Findings: Strategies/ Solutions” chapters of this plan.