

Whether a site is focusing on helping participants attend Healthy Families events and programming, or is seeking to offer solutions and referrals for more general transportation needs, many HFA and other program sites are or will be addressing the lack of transportation options many of their participants face.

The passage of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) has heightened the need for transportation support. If welfare reform and other workforce development programs are to succeed, communities must find a way to make jobs, training and support services accessible to all who need them. Many participants face an increased demand on available services in low-income areas; a fragmented system of public and private transportation with incompatible policies and rules; a search for transportation during non-standard work hours; and communication barriers which include language and cultural differences and insufficient information about available services.

Transportation problems can pose significant barriers to the program participation and the overall health and well being of Healthy Families participants. The following is a listing of some examples of strategies and partnerships that Healthy Families and other programs are using to address the transportation needs of families, and a listing of potential resources for funding, partnerships, and innovative ideas.

Programs

Healthy Families Lake, Florida, has an interagency agreement with the First Baptist Church of Leesbury which allows them to access over 70 mission programs. These missions include an automotive repair program. Contact Art Aris, administrative minister for the First Baptist Church of Leesburg, at 352-787-1005 for details on this program. The Healthy Families contact is Glenna Osborne, Glenna.Osborne@chsfl.org

Northern Virginia Family Services purchases taxi vouchers and distributes them to families as needed for doctor's appointments, playgroups, etc. Contact Julie Shuell, Deputy Director of Healthy Families, jshuell@nvfs.org for more information.

Ridefinders operates in the Greater Richmond Virginia area and offers a computerized demand mapping and analysis technique that can map client's home addresses, day care facilities, and employment locations to identify both existing transportation services and gaps in services. Contact Felicia Woodruff, Executive Director: 804/643-7433.

Oregon's Gateway provides a data bank and dispatch system that matches participants in need of temporary or emergency rides with volunteer drivers; volunteers are reimbursed on a per mile basis. It also provides a driver assistance and education program designed to help clients pay for fuel, license fees and training on a limited basis. Contact Charlotte Hartwig, Community Reinvestment Manager, Oregon Dept. of Human Services: 503/945-6737

All Congregations Together Transportation Initiative, San Diego, provides transportation, using church vans for TANF clients needing rides to work or to Work Experience program sites. Each participating church will get a specified amount of money, to be spent on van repairs and salaries for drivers and a

system dispatcher. A TANF client interested in being trained as a shuttle driver serves as a driver's assistant for the first few months, riding along with the church's designated driver. The van service operates seven days a week.

http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/religion_online/welfare/prog_transportation.html

Volunteers in Service (VIS), Grand Rapids, MI, works to prepare clients for car ownership, finds a car within their budget and plans how they will meet the financial requirements. The client pays for one third of the car, the sponsoring church pays one third and VIS pays the other third. Volunteers in Service (VIS) (616) 459-7500

The Good News Garage is the first transportation equity center of its kind in the United States. It helps low-income people with affordable transportation in several ways:

- provides reconditioned donated vehicles for the cost of repairs.
- provides affordable car/van pooling connecting bus routes and job sites.
- provides training programs leading to employment in the automotive industry.

The Good News Garage has created a new program, CommuteShare, with funding from the Federal Transit Administration's Access to Jobs Grant. The objective of the program is to provide Vermont families with affordable, reliable and flexible transportation in order to access employment and job training, and additionally, childcare, grocery shopping, and other services.

<http://www.goodnewsgarage.org>

Resources

TANF: Depending on definitions of eligibility and assistance in your state, TANF funds can be utilized to provide necessary transportation services such as:

- reimbursement for work-related transportation expenses;
- a contract for shuttles, buses, car pools, or other transportation services for TANF- eligible individuals;
- the purchase of vans/shuttles/minibuses by State, tribe, or locale;
- the purchase of rider "slots," "passes," or vouchers on a public or private transit system;
- financial assistance in the form of loans or grants to eligible individuals for the lease or purchase of a vehicle to travel to/from work or work-related activities;
- facilitating the donation and repair of previously owned or reconditioned vehicles to eligible families;
- one-time, short-term "diversion" payments for automobile repair/insurance to secure or maintain employment;
- payment of start up or operating costs for new or expanded transportation services; and
- payment of costs incurred by State, local, or tribal TANF agency staff in the planning of transportation services for TANF-eligible individuals. These costs would be considered TANF administrative costs.

For more information on the use of TANF funds for transportation, go to

<http://www.fta.dot.gov/wtw/uoft.html>

Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA): www.ctaa.org

Community transportation is a practical alternative that picks up where the private auto and mass transit leave off. It has evolved as an effective network of community-based agencies and a coordinated service that offers the elderly access to needed services, ensures mobility for people with disabilities and connects the poor and unemployed with jobs and training facilities. For many Americans, community transportation means an opportunity to remain independent and self-sufficient and to participate fully in the life of the community. Highlights of the CTAA website include:

Across The Nation, a searchable database of employment transportation practices. There, you can find out how states and communities throughout the country are working to link people with jobs, job training, childcare and other destinations essential for quality of life. Go to:

<http://www.ctaa.org/NTRC/ATJ/Practices>

Information on The National Joblinks Employment Transportation Initiative, created to address this vital employment transportation issue. CTAA accomplishes this through demonstration projects, technical assistance and conferences. To learn more about Joblinks and review demonstration projects, go to: <http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/atj/joblinks/>

Federal funding source information. Go to: http://www.ctaa.org/ct/resource/funding_resources.shtml.

Car Talk: <http://cartalk.cars.com/>

The Car Talk Donate a Clunker site, aside from being amusing, has a rather thorough listing of resources for someone who is interested in donating a car, or setting up a donation program and a list of programs that accept car donations to be repaired or auctioned. Go to: <http://cartalk.cars.com/About/Donate/q-a.html>

If you would like to share your solutions to the transportation needs of your families with the HFA network, please email Sara Zuiderveen at szuiderveen@preventchildabuse.org