

COORDINATED HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION OCTOBER 7, 2008 MEETING

The meeting opened with introductions and each person gave a quick summary of their agency and the transportation assistance/service they can provide and needs that they have previously identified. Each provider was asked to complete a brief questionnaire describing their operation.

Assumption Parish

Shandra Streams of the Police Jury's Dept. of Special Programs said there is a need to provide transportation in particular to areas with low income populations and those that are remote from services such as Pierre Part.

Rosa Molaison spoke about the services offered through the COA. They provide the transportation service to elderly clients. They do not go to New Orleans anymore. At one time they had a cooperative agreement with Lafourche but this was cut back due to funding issues. They will transport people to doctor appointments in other parishes. The COA provides Medicaid transportation and has interagency agreement with the Assumption ARC to provide service for a number of their clients. There is a demand for medical appointments in the Houma area and they alternate week to week the days they will travel to Houma, one week is Monday/Wednesday/Friday and the next is Tuesday/Thursday. They provide the 5311 transportation services and there is a fare schedule for the service. The rural service is demand response and they do not allow subscription trips. They also note that Pierre Part is an underserved area. Lack of adequate funding has prevented them from offering greater service.

Warren Gonzales of the Assumption ARC said they have contracts for service.

Lafourche Parish

Denise Hughes of the Parish CAA said they have had a study on transportation needs in Lafourche and she will provide a copy to the group. There is no 5311 Rural Public Transportation Program in Lafourche. The CAA is very interested in and has been working on starting such a program. It was also noted that the City of Thibodaux is contemplating a system under the Section 5307 urban area grant program. Denise said that there is a need to provide a way to get to the grocery store and assistance programs.

Linda Pertuit said the Lafourche COA does not charge a fare but does ask for a donation or meal contribution. They only provide services for their clientele and does take people to medical trips in Houma.

Lester Adams of the Lafourche Special Service District No. 1 said they do not transport outside of the district. They only transport their clients. They will take clients to job sites, banking, etc.

George Stack said the Lafourche ARC is an area agency and can provide service in seven parishes. Eligible persons can choose an agency to be its provider. They use 5310 funded vehicles only within Lafourche Parish. Peggy Krieg of the Lafourche ARC said there is a lack of transportation services for those not served by one of the existing agencies, including families of low income.

Terrebonne Parish

Diana Edmundson and Darla Cantrelle spoke about the Terrebonne Council on Aging. They offer transportation for the elderly, non-emergency medical trips, private pay trips (disability or therapy insurance), and Section 5311 Rural Transportation. They operate Monday through Friday from 6:30 am to 7:00 pm. On Saturdays they provide transportation for dialyses only.

Rodger Shelton of TARC said that they use 5310 vehicles and their private fleet to transport their clients. They bring clients to job sites off of the campus and for some offsite trips.

Wendell Voisin of Good Earth said they provide general public transportation throughout the urban area of Terrebonne and also provide service to the Nicholls campus. There are five fixed routes. They offer a complimentary paratransit service to eligible person when the trip begins and ends within ¾ of a mile of the fixed route. The paratransit service is demand response and is based on “first come first serve.” They cannot provide service outside of the urbanized area.

St. James Parish

Representatives of St. James were unable to make the meeting due to unforeseen events. However it was noted that through the Parish’s department of Human Services transportation is provided to all human services agencies including Head Start, 5311 Rural transportation, COA, ARC and that they have also had Job Access Reverse Commute and other specific work related transportation programs.

Goals and Strategies

The group reviewed the Goals and Strategies identified in the 2007 Coordinated Human Services Plan and the following comments, suggestions, tasks for follow up were discussed.

Goal 1. To Increase Capacity to Serve Unmet Needs

Objective 1.1: Improve our ability to determine need for transit services

Strategies: Needs Assessment and Solicit Public Input

It was suggested that a transportation needs assessment be conducted. There was discussion about passing out a questionnaire to clients and transit riders. Denise Hughes said she will contact Nicholls State University about assisting with such a matter and attending the next meeting.

For further discussion at the next meeting.

Objective 1.2: Improve ability to obtain funding for coordination projects

Strategies: Determine what data is being collected now and develop a plan for collecting data ended for all funding streams in standard format.

When SCPDC mentioned that this would probably be resolved by CRAFFT program under development, agencies at the table indicated a number of problems. First the system has been promised for a long time and still is not available. ARC costs for transportation are much different from public transportation as drivers have multiple duties and their hours are only calculated into costs for actual driving time. In Demand Response services, driver down time is a transportation cost whether he/she is driving or not. Others indicated the presentations on CRAFFT showed a system that did not speak to their needs for scheduling, routing or other information. It also does not address a partial urban/rural community.

These strategies will require further discussion.

Goal 2: To ensure the coordination process is comprehensive and sustainable

Objective 2.1: Develop communication between providers.

Strategies: Meet quarterly, develop shared definitions, build dialogue skills

SCPDC will facilitate quarterly meetings.

The group was not sure what was involved in shared definitions and building dialogue skills but this will be revisited at the next meeting.

This needs further discussion.

Goal 3: To create a more cost effective service delivery system

Objective 3.1 Develop a method for prioritizing coordination activities.

Strategies: Develop a set of prioritization criteria and solicit input from the public

There needs to a better understanding of the needs prior to addressing these strategies.

To be discussed in the future.

Goal 4: To make services more easily understood and accessible by riders

Objective 4.1: Increase service available.

Strategies: Determine where duplication of services exist and develop coordination options to reduce duplication of services.

For further discussion.

Objective 4.2 Improve public awareness of transit options.

Strategies: Determine what marketing strategies are currently being used by providers, identify areas of duplication and options for coordination, and develop coordinated marketing strategy.

There was some discussion about possibly developing a flyer/ad that identifies all of the transportation services in the region, who offers what kind of service, hours, etc. However the committee was generally cautious about moving forward to quickly with such an idea. Members indicated problems with marketing services because it gives the perception something is offered that is not. LaDOTD requires all of its grantees to market the service. Too much marketing creates a demand that area transit providers cannot handle as they lack of funds to offer more service. Most area agencies offer spot announcements and those who serve special clients are targeting that audience in direct ways. For example, TARC advertises itself to area schools as they want parents to know all of the services they can offer client and family.

This item should remain open for further discussion.

Opportunities/Hindrances

Three items were discussed that continue to be a hindrance to furthering transportation

- Lack of funding and limitations on available sources
- Hiring and keeping qualified drivers due to ability to pay salaries
- Insurance requirements limit many of the area agencies to vehicles under 12 passengers making economies of scale difficult to meet.

There may be opportunities to partner with other agencies that can provide funding for transportation for their clients and it was suggested future meetings include representatives from such programs, e.g. mental health, etc.