

# **JOBLINKS EMPLOYMENT TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVE**

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## *UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM*

The crucial role of public transportation in welfare reform is often obscured by more obvious issues like job placement and child care. Yet without effective transportation, the welfare-to-work transition is almost impossible. Improved transportation services are also important to the working poor as they seek better employment opportunities.

Community and public transportation have a pivotal role to play in the journey from welfare to work. Today, fewer than one in 10 recipients of public assistance own an automobile and nearly 40 percent of the 10 million daily public transit riders in the US are considered low-income. However, public transit services often do not meet the needs of those people moving from welfare to work. Limited service hours, declining funding and outdated routes all contribute to the problem. In urban areas, the shift of jobs from the center city to the suburbs leaves many welfare recipients stranded. In rural areas, the economic structure has also undergone changes in recent years and many areas are not served by, or have inadequate, public transportation.

With reliable transportation services, welfare recipients will experience success in the workplace; without it, they will struggle to reach the jobs that could bring them economic security. Ultimately, the key to employment success will lie at the local level and very often the burden will fall on local caseworkers. In this light, the ability to connect clients to jobs through reliable transportation could mean greater job opportunities and higher job retention rates.

## *ABOUT JOBLINKS*

Since 1995, the Joblinks Employment Transportation Initiative has provided our nation's communities with tools to improve transportation services that connect people with job training and employment. Funded through the Federal Transit Administration and the United States Department of Labor, and administered by the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), Joblinks offers technical assistance and funding for demonstration programs so that local areas can create new and innovative approaches to respond to employment mobility challenges. The programs focus on demonstrating successful, affordable and transferable methods and strategies for assuring needed employment and training transportation. Overall, the Joblinks initiative pays particular attention to the needs of people in inner cities and rural areas, people leaving public assistance and those enrolled in Department of Labor one-stop programs.

## *HOW JOBLINKS CAN HELP YOU*

1. Go to [www.ctaa.org](http://www.ctaa.org) for up-to-the-minute information and assistance. Full-text documents, federal programs, funding conferences, and more are available. We also have an online database of promising practices in the employment transportation arena.

2. Use the National Transit Resource Center. The Community Transportation association maintains an information clearinghouse, advice center and referral service, all available over the phone. Simply dial

**800.527.8279 and you will be in touch with an information specialist. In addition to information on employment transportation, we also have specialists available on senior transportation, medical transportation and rural transportation.**

**3. Inquire about Peer-to-Peer Technical Assistance. Part of the assistance available through the National Transit Resource Center includes a national peer-based technical assistance network. We can link you to local practitioners familiar with the human services environment and special client needs. Peers are also available to speak on transportation issues at human service conferences and training sessions.**

**4. Get funding. Through the CTAA National Loan Program, we offer financing for small businesses seeking to enter the field of employment transportation or expand their current services.**

**5. Order an Employment Transportation Toolkit. “Linking People to the Workplace,” is a toolkit created to help local workforce development agencies understand and respond to the transportation challenges and to encourage people in the social service field to establish partnerships with transportation providers.**

**6. Attend the Vital Link and other Employment Transportation Conferences. CTAA periodically sponsors conferences to foster communication and coordination between social service agencies and transportation providers. These conferences are your best chance to meet other employment transportation professionals from around the country and compare notes. Watch the CTAA website for announcements about upcoming conferences.**

**7. Apply for on-site technical assistance. We can provide on site assistance to localities through Joblinks and other programs. Give us a call and discuss your needs.**

**\*\*For more information, please contact Charlie Dickson at Community Transportation Association of America, (202) 661-0208, Email: [dickson@ctaa.org](mailto:dickson@ctaa.org)\*\***