

**Jonesboro MPO Urbanized Area  
Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation  
Plan**

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## **1. Executive Summary:**

The Jonesboro MPO Urbanized Area Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) is a vision of how transit providers, social service agencies and key stakeholders will transport low-income individuals, elderly, and disabled persons. The plan focuses on all their travel needs: work, shopping, medical, social and other in Jonesboro metropolitan area. Access to jobs and reverse commute can be challenging for TANF recipients, low-income individuals, and persons with disabilities. Studies in some metropolitan areas with extensive transit systems have shown that less than half of the jobs are accessible by transit. Even fewer jobs are accessible by transit in areas with limited transit systems. Many entry-level workers have difficulty reaching jobs during evening or weekend shifts when transit services are frequently diminished or non-existent. Work trips can also be complex, involving multiple destinations, including childcare providers. Low income individuals, elderly, and disabled persons face similar difficulties for non-work trips on weekends, holidays, and during the times when the transit system is not operating. The problems can be more challenging in rural areas, where approximately 40 percent of rural counties lack public transit systems and commuting distances generally are longer than in urban areas. Auto ownership among TANF recipients and other low-income persons is low. Most TANF recipients do not own cars and nearly 40 percent of workers with annual incomes below \$10,000 do not commute by car.

The Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) is developed through a collaborative effort with area's human services transportation providers and community based agencies. The following social service agencies participated in the development of this plan.

1. Focus
2. Abilities Unlimited of Jonesboro, Inc.
3. Mid South Health System
4. St. Bernards Regional Hospital
5. St. Bernards Senior Life Center
6. The Learning Center

Few other agencies and cab services were invited to participate in the development of the plan. Despite several reminders, some of the agencies did not show any interest in participation in the development of this plan.

The CPT-HSTP program is designed to create an area-wide plan and fund projects that provide transportation facility to low-income individuals, elderly, and disabled for all their travel needs including jobs and employment-related activities, such as job training and childcare.

The geographic distribution of low-income populations and employment centers pose a challenge to local transit and transportation providers and human service agencies in providing access to jobs and reverse commute. The CPT-HSTP Plan provides guidance in planning and implementing Job Access and Reverse Commute projects for the transportation-disadvantaged population segments of this urban region.

## **2. Introduction:**

The federal transportation legislation, Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), passed by Congress in 2005 requires that projects funded from the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC, Section 5316), and New Freedom (Section 5317)

Programs be derived from a locally developed Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP). A coordinated plan should maximize the programs' collective coverage by minimizing duplication of services. Further, a coordinated plan should be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and non-profit transportation and human services providers, and the public. A coordinated plan may incorporate activities offered under other programs sponsored by Federal, State, and local agencies to greatly strengthen its impact. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) also encourages participation in coordinated service delivery as long as the coordinated services will continue to meet the purposes of all programs. The purpose of various funding is listed below:

**2A. Section 5310: Formula Grants for Special Needs of Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities:**

The Section 5310 program was established in 1975 as a discretionary capital assistance program. In cases where public transit was inadequate or inappropriate, the program awarded grants to private non-profit organizations to serve the transportation needs of elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

The goal of the Section 5310 program is to improve mobility for elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities throughout the country. Toward this goal, FTA provides financial assistance for transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special transportation needs of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities in all areas - urbanized, small urban, and rural. The program requires coordination with other federally assisted programs and services in order to make the most efficient use of Federal resources.

**2B. Section 5316: Job Access and Reverse Commute Program:**

The Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Transportation Program was established in 1999 as part of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and was continued under Section 5316 of the federal transportation legislation, Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), passed by Congress in 2005.

The JARC program actually authorizes two kinds of grants: Job Access grants (aimed at developing new transportation services for low-income workers and/or filling in gaps in existing services) and Reverse Commute projects (intended to provide transportation to suburban jobs from urban, rural and other suburban locations - but not necessarily just for low-income people). Grantees are required to provide a 50% match for operating and a 20% match for capital projects.

The purpose of the JARC program is to provide a framework for the coordination and development of projects that will enhance transportation needs of two specific groups:

1. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients.
2. Low-income individuals (150 percent of poverty level).

**2C. Section 5317: New Freedom Program:**

The New Freedom formula grant program aims to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the work force and full participation in society. Lack of adequate transportation is a primary barrier to

work for individuals with disabilities. The 2000 Census showed that only 60% of people between the ages of 16 and 64 with disabilities are employed. The New Freedom formula grant program seeks to expand the transportation mobility options available to persons with disabilities beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

### **3. Guiding Principles:**

Planning and development of the CPT-HSTP Plan for the Jonesboro MPO area is guided by the following principles:

#### **3A. Improve Access to Jobs:**

Improve access for eligible low-income individuals to industries and geographic areas that provide entry-level job opportunities.

#### **3B. Improve Access to Job-Related Support Services:**

Improve access to job-related support services such as education, vocational and skills training, and child-care.

#### **3C. Area wide Coordination:**

Take a coordinated area wide approach, bringing together the public transportation agency, community-based, and alternative transportation providers, human services agencies, employment and training programs, employers, transportation associations, and other stakeholders in a collaborative process. Make best use of existing resources and services, leverage Section 5316 and Section 5317 funds to address priority needs.

#### **3D. Provide Appropriate Transportation Options:**

Address travel needs at times of day and on days of the week that correspond with entry-level employment opportunities. Services such as travel training enable people to find transportation solutions even as their needs may change in the future. A network of services may offer alternatives and options to address identified needs.

#### **3E. Use Resources Effectively:**

Be cost-effective in service design and delivery in order to provide the maximum levels of transportation and related support with the program resources available. Reduce operating costs for transportation providers through shared services and risk management services such as: fuel purchasing, liability insurance, vehicle maintenance, workers compensation, driver hiring and screening.

#### **3F. Accessibility for People with Disabilities:**

Assure that the program, as a whole, includes and takes account of service choices that are accessible for people with disabilities.

### **4. Project Approach:**

The CPT-HSTP Plan aims to follow these principles by targeting efforts on two levels of emphasis:

**4A. Area wide Coordination:**

The area wide approach focuses on improving levels of coordination, training and information. The Jonesboro Economical Transportation System (JETS) will coordinate this effort with support from the social service and transportation providers. Marketing materials and training will focus on the special needs of the TANF recipients and low-income populations.

**4B. Improve Access to Employment Areas:**

Efforts will focus on improving access to employment areas by either creating new transportation options or increasing service that may already exist.

**5. Background:**

**5A. Transit Services:**

**Jonesboro Economical Transportation System (JETS):**

JETS provides public transportation for much of the City of Jonesboro area. JETS operates four fixed routes, and provides demand response service for seniors and people with disabilities. JETS has five buses and one van. Fixed route trips in March 2007 were 3,143 and demand response trips were 438.

Traditionally, JETS service has been oriented to serve the citizens of Jonesboro for their job, shopping, educational, recreational, and other trips. Decentralized industrial areas and suburban employment centers create an increasing need for cross-town travel. JETS is aware of these needs and continues to explore new services and planning efforts to address this issue.

**5B. Other Human Services Transportation:**

<b>Agency:</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Service Area:	Five DDTCS (Arkansas Medicaid, Developmental Clinic Services).
Type of Clientele: (Elderly, Disabled, Low Income):	Disabled.
Type of Service: (Fixed Route, Demand Response):	Demand Response.
No. of Vehicles:	11. One serves Craighead County.
ADA Accessible: (Yes or No):	Yes.
Average Seating Capacity per Vehicle:	14 with 2 wheelchairs.
No. of Riders per Day:	10 twice daily.
No. of Riders per Vehicle:	10 twice daily.
No. of Days Operated per Week:	Monday through Friday.
Hours of Operation:	7 a.m. through 4:15 p.m.
<b>Agency:</b>	<b>Abilities Unlimited of Jonesboro, Inc.</b>
Service Area:	Three Counties (Craighead, Mississippi, and Greene).

Type of Clientele:  
(Elderly, Disabled, Low Income): Disabled.  
Type of Service:  
(Fixed Route, Demand Response): Demand Response.  
No. of Vehicles: 11. Six serve Craighead County.  
ADA Accessable:  
(Yes or No): Yes.  
Average Seating Capacity per Vehicle: 13 with 2 wheelchairs.  
No. of Riders per Day: 10 twice daily.  
No. of Riders per Vehicle: 10 twice daily.  
No. of Days Operated per Week: Monday through Saturday.  
Hours of Operation: 6:30 a.m. through 4:15 p.m.

**Agency:** **Mid South Health System. Jonesboro.**  
Service Area: Six Counties (Craighead, Mississippi, Greene, Clay, Lawrence, and Randolph).

Type of Clientele:  
(Elderly, Disabled, Low Income): Disabled.  
Type of Service:  
(Fixed Route, Demand Response): Demand Response.  
No. of Vehicles: 26  
ADA Accessable:  
(Yes or No): Yes.  
Average Seating Capacity per Vehicle: 13 with 2 wheelchairs.  
No. of Riders per Day: 278 per day.  
No. of Riders per Vehicle: 10 per day.  
No. of Days Operated per Week: Monday through Friday.  
Hours of Operation: 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.

**Agency:** **St. Bernards Regional Hospital, Inc.**  
Service Area: Jonesboro City.

Type of Clientele:  
(Elderly, Disabled, Low Income): Elderly and Disabled.  
Type of Service:  
(Fixed Route, Demand Response): Demand Response.  
No. of Vehicles: 2.  
ADA Accessable:  
(Yes or No): Yes.  
Average Seating Capacity per Vehicle: 3 and 14 with 2 wheelchairs.  
No. of Riders per Day: Varies.  
No. of Riders per Vehicle: Varies.  
No. of Days Operated per Week: Monday through Friday.  
Hours of Operation: 8:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m.

**Agency:** **St. Bernards Senior Life Centers.**  
Service Area: Two Counties (Craighead, and Poinsett).  
Type of Clientele:  
(Elderly, Disabled, Low Income): Disabled.  
Type of Service:  
(Fixed Route, Demand Response): Demand Response.

No. of Vehicles:	22. Nine for transporting clients. Thirteen for delivering food. Two for transportation clients in Jonesboro.
ADA Accessable: (Yes or No):	Yes.
Average Seating Capacity per Vehicle:	10 with 2 wheelchairs.
No. of Riders per Day:	Varies.
No. of Riders per Vehicle:	Varies.
No. of Days Operated per Week:	Monday through Friday.
Hours of Operation:	8:00 a.m. through 4:30 p.m.
<b>Agency:</b>	<b>The Learning Center.</b>
Service Area:	Three Counties (Craighead, Greene, and Poinsett).
Type of Clientele: (Elderly, Disabled, Low Income):	Disabled.
Type of Service: (Fixed Route, Demand Response):	Demand Response.
No. of Vehicles:	8.
ADA Accessable: (Yes or No):	Yes.
Average Seating Capacity per Vehicle:	17 with 2 wheelchairs.
No. of Riders per Day:	265 per day.
No. of Riders per Vehicle:	33 per day.
No. of Days Operated per Week:	Monday through Friday.
Hours of Operation:	5:15 a.m. through 5:30 p.m.

### **5C. Taxi Cabs:**

The City Cab, the Taxi Thrifty Company, and the Arkansas Cab and Courier Company serve the area. The information request and participation in the development of coordinated plan from these companies was not very rewarding. The companies either do not want to participate at this time or do not have resources to participate in the plan.

### **5D. Carpools/Vanpools:**

Currently there are no carpools and vanpools in operation. Such services tend not to be a viable option for TANF clients or persons with low incomes, many of whom do not own a reliable automobile. Frequently, one must have the means to drive to a pickup site, and work schedules and locations must coincide in order for carpooling and vanpooling to work. When the need for childcare drop-offs and running errands is factored in, carpooling and vanpooling becomes even more challenging.

### **5E. Population:**

The urbanized area is the major economic centers of the North East Arkansas region. The Jonesboro urbanized area extends over parts of Craighead County and includes the cities of Jonesboro, Brookland, Bay, and Bono. The Jonesboro urbanized area boundary is defined by a population density criterion established by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Jonesboro urbanized area boasts extensive employment in the industrial, retail and service sectors. Major health care facilities and educational institutions within the Jonesboro urbanized area serve the needs of both local and regional citizens.

Table 1.1 shows the population in cities and the non-urbanized area within the MPO urbanized area. The area contains significant population living in rural areas. The lack of socioeconomic activities in rural areas is the main force pushing the rural population inward to the MPO urbanized area for employment, education and medical care.

Table 1.1: Urban and Rural Population in 2000

Area	Total Population	Urban Population	Rural Population
MPO Study Area	69,033	60,159	8,874
Jonesboro	55,515	55,515	
Brookland	1,332	1,332	
Bono	1,512	1,512	
Bay	1,800	1,800	
Non-Urban Area	8,874		8,874

Source: US Census Bureau

The primary focus of the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) is to improve access to employment for low-income populations. Therefore, it is important to know where these people reside in the region and, when possible, directly connect these areas with employment areas. The travel need for the low-income populations is not limited to work trips only. This populations needs to travel for shopping, medical, recreational, and other trips. The plan focuses on all their needs and designs transit routes connecting residential areas to shopping centers, medical, and educational institutions.

CPT-HSTP funded services will focus on improving the mobility of the people earning at 150% or below the federal poverty level. According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines, in 2006 this is estimated to represent an annual income of \$24,900 for a family of three persons.

The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) caseloads in the state of Arkansas have dropped considerably since 1993 (-55.2%, includes Basic and Unemployed Families), thanks in large part to passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.

Table 1.2: TANF cases in Arkansas

Area	Jan-93	Jan-94	Jan-95	Jan-96	Jan-97	Jan-98	Jan-99	Jan-00	Change 93-00
Arkansas	26,897	26,398	24,930	23,140	21,549	14,419	12,057	12,046	-55.2

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, September 14, 2004

#### 5F. Location of Low Income and TANF Recipients:

According to data provided by the Regional Supervisor of Craighead County Office of the Department of Workforce Services (DWS), Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA), there were approximately 70 TANF recipients in the Craighead County area.; 64 of those in the City of Jonesboro.

Map 1: Location of TANF Recipients is prepared using this information. This map is intended to provide a general visual representation, not pinpoint actual addresses of TANF recipients. Many of these areas with concentrations of TANF recipients coincide with

locations of the Jonesboro Urban Renewal and Housing Authority's public housing complexes.

Similarly, Map 2 shows areas identified by the Jonesboro Community Development Department as the Number of Family Households Below the Low Income Threshold by Census Tract. Low- to moderate-income is defined as equal to or less than 80% (\$33,350 for a three person family) of the Annual Median Income (\$46,250) for the Jonesboro area. The geographic distribution is similar to that of the TANF recipients.

**5G. Location of Employment Centers:**

**Overview of Employment in Jonesboro**

According to the "Discover Arkansas" website maintained by the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) in the Jonesboro MSA was 4.1 percent in November 2006. This is lower than the state of Arkansas unemployment rate of 5.2%.

The following table shows occupations that have an average wage lower than the threshold for CPT-HSTP funded services for improving the mobility of the people earning at 150% or below the federal poverty level.

Table 1.3: Low Wage Occupations

Occupation	Average Wage
Retail Salespersons	\$18,768
Laborer and Freight, Stock and Material Movers	\$16,810
Cashiers	\$13,969
Office Clerks	\$17,762
Helpers: Production Workers	\$20,843
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers	\$12,834
Nursing Aids, Orderlies, and Attendants	\$17,294

Source: "Discover Arkansas" Webpage: Department of Workforce Services, 2007

The projected growth of the above listed occupations is summarized in the following table.

Table 1.4: Projected Growth 2002 - 2012

Occupation	Percent Change
Retail Salespersons	15.8
Laborer and Freight, Stock and Material Movers	17.3
Cashiers	15.8
Office Clerks	11.1
Helpers: Production Workers	18.1
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers	19.5
Nursing Aids, Orderlies, and Attendants	30.5

Source: "Discover Arkansas" Webpage: Department of Workforce Services, 2007

**5H. Employment Locations in Jonesboro**

Industries and manufacturing establishments are also spread within the study area. However, major concentration of industries is in Craighead Technology Park, Jonesboro Industrial Park, and Henry P. Jones Business Park. All these parks are located along Highland Drive on the eastern side of the city of Jonesboro. Map 3 shows the location of manufacturers in Jonesboro.

Appendix A shows the list of major employers in Jonesboro. The list includes health care providers, educational institutes, retailers, and manufacturers. In Jonesboro, there are more than 150 restaurants ranging from fast-food enterprises to full service restaurants. These restaurants are located all around town but majority of these are north of US 63 along Caraway Road, Highland Drive, and Stadium Boulevard. Map 4 shows the locations of the restaurants in Jonesboro.

## 6. Transportation Needs of the Disabled:

Disabled persons needing access to jobs face a different set of challenges. According to the Federal Transit Administration, persons with disabilities are disproportionately represented among low-income groups. There is a need for special accommodations to serve this population: wheelchair accessible vehicles and making transit schedules information available in alternative formats. Many disabled persons needing transportation to work would qualify for JETS para-transit service, but only if their working hours happen to coincide with the operating hours of the service.

## 7. Transportation Gaps and Deficiencies:

These transportation gaps include the following:

1. Time Gap.
2. Geographical Gap.
3. Information Gap.
4. Child Care Gap

The **Time Gap** refers to the difference between the hours of available transit service in the area and the business hours of area employers. For example, JETS service to areas where clients live ends in the early evening at approximately 7:00 p.m. The Mall at Turtle Creek and surrounding businesses, encompassing an area containing hundreds of employers and thousands of entry and low-skill level jobs, remains open until 9:30 p.m. and often later. Additionally, JETS does not provide Sunday service. Thus workers are not able to have full access to these jobs, because convenient transportation is not available.

A **Geographic Gap** exists because JETS while covering a wide area leave a number of areas of clients without convenient transportation services. The City of Jonesboro is served by public transit with four fixed routes providing an alternative mode of transportation for employment, medical and basic needs in the areas of low and moderate income citizens. JETS provides demand response service within the entire municipal area of Jonesboro. However, smaller cities and rural region of the MPO do not have regular public transit service for work purposes.

The **Information Gap** exists in many forms. Information on available transportation services is not readily available. A major problem lies in communicating the availability of these services to the persons who need them. Information for TANF clients is needed in the form of transportation guides to provide simplified time and route schedules, which need to be distributed to employers, public agencies, and community centers, as well as posted on information boards located in those places. Training and education for both human service providers and clients on transportation would further assist in bridging this gap.

The **Child Care Gap** is a relevant issue for most recipients transitioning from TANF. Fixed route transit services are only an option for families whose homes, day care providers, and

jobs are all located on bus routes. Finding transportation, not only to their work sites, but also to their children's day care facilities remains a challenge. Factors to consider in this initiative are the number of centers and homes within walking distance of the public transit system, and the number of facilities which are part of employment centers. Map 5 shows the location of daycare centers in Jonesboro.

## **8. Evaluation and Analysis of Gaps in Existing Transportation Service:**

### **8A. Lack of transit service to areas in and around the City of Jonesboro:**

1. No public transportation outside the City limits.
2. Limited transit service to the industrial parks.
3. Lack of evening or Sunday public transportation service.

### **8B. Lack of coordination of public and private transportation providers in providing adequate and timely service of transportation to and from areas of employment need and employment opportunities:**

1. No coordination between existing service providers.
2. Specialized mission of some transportation service providers (i.e., medical, disabled), makes them unable to provide other types of transportation.
3. Restrictive laws and regulations that prevent shared use in some cases.
4. Need for Joint Powers Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding, and contracts in order to provide shared services.

### **8C. Lack of employer-sponsored transportation programs to assist those desiring to work:**

1. Employers could provide transit subsidies or institute transportation programs for employers.
2. Employers could arrange work shifts around transit schedules to accommodate transit-dependent employees.
3. Employers could locate businesses in areas served by transit.
4. Few local employers are large enough to have resources to provide effective employee transportation.

### **8D. Problems related to the actual trip to work:**

1. Complexity of work trips may include child care drop-offs and other errands.
2. Costs of commuting: taxis are expensive while the cost of private auto may be prohibitive (purchase, insurance, gas, maintenance).
3. Length of work trips: cross-town trips may necessitate several transfers.
4. Need for emergency ride home if child care or other type of emergency occurs.

## **9. Recommended Projects:**

The JETS have a policy to divert a bus within  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile on either side of a fixed route to pickup and drop a passenger. JETS provides para-transit service within a corridor three-fourths ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) of a mile on each side of any fixed routes. All the maps in this report show the coverage area of JETS fixed route and para-transit services. These services envelop the areas of TANF residents, public housing areas and areas of employment. There is hardly a geographic gap for

eligible persons to go to work, shopping, medical facilities, educational institutes, or any other trip purpose.

JETS and social service transportation providers have already established a committee. This committee has met twice and has agreed to transfer out of town passengers to JETS to let JETS take care of their local needs. The committee has also agreed to reduce maintenance and fuel purchase cost by pooling.

This section covers the projects that are recommended to address the transportation gaps identified above. The primary goal of all recommended projects is to let TANF, low and middle income, and elderly clients on the path to self-sufficiency by ensuring that they have access to reliable transportation to job sites, training, schools, shopping and childcares.

#### **9A. Initiate Job Access Service:**

**Goal:** Increase the number of JETS clients by adding Job Access service.

**Objective:** Increase service through expanding service hours and service area options.

JETS is presently operating a demand-responsive transportation service funded by FTA Section 5307 Urbanized Areas Capital and Operating Assistance for transit. JETS may expand the current service with a FTA Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute grant from the Federal Transit Administration.

JETS may serve additional clients who work second and third shifts on Monday through Saturday or on Sundays.

JETS does not have the resources at this time to provide service outside their normal operating hours or outside their service area. Rather than hire additional staff and purchase additional vehicles to expand service, it is proposed that a contractor be hired to provide this service. This could be in the form of hiring subsidized taxis to and from employment sites during times outside service hours or hiring a contractor to provide the entire service.

#### **Costs of Project:**

JETS is presently operating the demand responsive transportation service at a cost of \$17.28 per trip (March 2007). With increased coordination and efficient service practices, a contractor may be able to provide this service at a more economical rate with improved service to users and employers. Additionally, a contract provider may be capable of serving more clients and for extended hours of operation, further reducing costs.

#### **How will this project maximize use of existing transportation service providers?**

By expanding service hours and service area, this will provide an opportunity for existing transportation service providers to expand their service to include Job Access and Reverse Commute clients.

#### **How will this project be coordinated with the existing transportation network?**

These services can be coordinated with existing transit service by dropping clients off at bus stops, or by providing coordinated service with rural transportation providers.

#### **How will this serve the needs of the elderly and disabled population?**

The JETS buses are ADA-compliant and wheelchair accessible. Any contractor who provides supplemental service will also be required to have wheelchair-accessible vehicles available

for the elderly and disabled clients. During regular JETS service hours, elderly and disabled patrons can use demand-responsive para-transit services.

**9B. Maintain and Improve the Level of Service to Public Transportation Dependent Persons:**

**Goal:** Encourage social service transportation providers to maintain and improve transportation service for the elderly and disabled.

**Objective:** Facilitate FTA Section 5310 Grant procurement by social service transportation providers.

AHTD and MPO will encourage social service agencies to maintain and improve the transportation service for the elderly and disabled persons. Social service agencies may serve additional clients by procuring more vehicles through FTA 5310 fund.

**Costs of Project:**

Adding more clients may increase the service cost for the social service providers. Maintaining the existing service by replacing older vehicles with newer vehicles will not have significant change in average cost per trip.

**How will this project maximize use of existing transportation service providers?**

This project will increase the use of existing transit service and provide additional service to new clients.

**How will this project be coordinated with the existing transportation network?**

These services can be coordinated with existing transit service by dropping clients off at bus stops, or by providing coordinated service with rural transportation providers.

**How will this serve the needs of the elderly and disabled population?**

The primary purpose of the FTA 5310 fund is to provide transportation service to the elderly and disabled population.

**9C. Coordinate with other Transportation Service Providers:**

**Goal:** Avoid duplication of services or gaps in services.

**Objective:** Increase coordination between transportation service providers to avoid duplication and overlap.

There is an opportunity for coordination between the MPO region's transportation service providers. The lack of coordination tends to exacerbate the gaps in the existing transportation network since potential clients may not be aware of all available options. Additionally, without coordination, the potential exists for duplication of service. Increased communication between service providers can identify areas in which coordination can improve the existing transportation network. Transportation service providers such as transit, medical service providers, rural transit providers, taxi and disabled transit service providers can meet periodically to share information and explore coordination opportunities. Cross referrals can be provided between service providers so the best possible transportation option can be provided for Job Access clients.

**Cost of Project**

No additional costs, existing transportation service provider staff can perform this function.

**How will this project be coordinated with the existing transportation network?**

Coordination and maximization of existing transportation services is the primary focus of this project.

**How will this serve the needs of the elderly and disabled?**

By coordinating with a wide range of transportation service providers, elderly and disabled clients can be referred to agencies that best meet their needs.

**9D. Maximize Use of Fixed Route Service**

**Goal:** Get as many people to employment or employment-related sites using fixed-route service as possible.

**Objective:** Increase awareness and use of fixed route service through education and assistance.

Whenever an employee can use JETS fixed route service, this should be the first option considered. Maps 3 and Map 4 show many employment locations within the city limits are accessible via fixed route service. Whenever possible, those seeking transportation to work should be encouraged to use JETS fixed route service. Strategies to maximize the use of fixed route service include:

1. Make bus passes easier to obtain. Recently passes are available for purchase at JETS office and Craighead County Public Library. JETS can partner with businesses to provide additional locations where passes can be purchased.
2. Provide bus schedules and maps at numerous locations, especially at large employment sites, social service agencies, and major shopping areas.
3. Provide online information regarding the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) on JETS website
4. Designate a JETS staff to serve as a “trip coordinators”. This staff member can instruct clients as to what bus routes they need to take in order to get from their homes to employment sites. The trip coordinators can provide information regarding bus routes, transfer information, scheduling and fares. The staff will also be able to refer clients to other transportation providers if necessary. The trip coordinator will be available to answer inquiries by telephone and in person.
5. Encourage potential employers to locate in areas served by fixed route service. Employers can benefit from the convenience of being located on a bus route.
6. Consider providing fixed route transit service to new business developments that may open up new job opportunities for TANF recipients.

**Cost of Project**

This program should not incur additional cost. Existing JETS staff is already providing services of this type. Additional training may be needed for those employees designated as “trip coordinators.”

**How will this project be coordinated with the existing transportation network?**

This project will increase the use of existing transit service and provide referrals to other transportation providers as needed.

### **How will this serve the needs of the elderly and disabled?**

Trip coordinators will be able to refer elderly and disabled employees who are unable to use fixed-route service to JETS demand responsive para-transit service.

### **9E. Encourage Employers to Provide Transportation Services for their employees.**

**Goal:** Educate and encourage employers to assist their employees with transportation needs

**Objective:** Make employers aware of the benefits of providing transportation assistance.

Better information about transportation options is needed. Employers can be encouraged to help their employees with transportation solutions. Employers may not realize that many transportation assistance programs they can provide are low in cost and can result in lower absenteeism, fewer tardy employees, and reduced employee turnover. Some options are:

#### For those employers located in fixed-route service areas

1. Provide free or reduced-cost bus passes to employees as part of the benefits package.
2. Coordinate work shifts to coincide with fixed-route service hours.
3. Provide bus schedules and information at work.
4. Emergency ride home program: Employer provides for a cab to take someone who has used transit to the worksite.
5. Locate in areas where fixed-route service is available.
6. Reduce the amount of employee parking available to provide for drop-off lanes or pullout lanes on roadways for buses.

#### For those employers unable to locate in fixed-route service areas

1. Provide free or reduced-cost van shuttle service to and from work. For those employers not large enough to need an entire van, nearby employers can coordinate with one another to share a van.
2. Provide carpool coordination service for employees. Incentives could be provided to those employees who carpool.
3. Evaluate the feasibility of providing carpool parking lots or transfer points throughout the metropolitan area.

### **Costs of Project**

Costs will vary depending on what transportation assistance employers decide to provide. Bus passes are \$50.00 a month. Existing staff members could be used for carpool coordination services and for vanpool drivers.

### **How will this project be coordinated with the existing transportation network?**

This will increase coordination between transit, vanpool and carpool services, and potentially reduce the number of cars on the road. For rural employers, coordination with rural transportation service providers can be explored.

**How will this serve the needs of the disabled?**

Employers who choose to provide vanpool service to their job sites should be encouraged to utilize ADA-compliant vans.

**10. ON-GOING COORDINATION AND PLAN OVERSIGHT:****10A. CPT-HSTP Advisory Committee:**

The CPT-HSTP Advisory Committee (CPT-HSTPC) will conduct the ongoing review of the Plan. The committee will supervise the implementation of the plan and its related strategies. The CPT-HSTPC will regularly review the status and progress of the plan and make recommendations on changes or concerns regarding program goals and principles, strategies, implementation or evaluation.

**10B. Program Evaluation Process:**

This process will be designed by JETS with assistance from the CPT-HSTPC as soon as possible to evaluate the success of the plan.

**10C. Plan Evaluation Implementation:**

The annual review will be prepared by JETS each year. This annual report will give an overview of the current services available, highlight any new strategies implemented over the year and provide a specific analysis of the results. The results will provide a direct comparison with past years data (trend information) and assess the plan's ability to meet established performance standards.

**11. Conclusion**

Those trying to leave the TANF rolls and move into permanent employment face numerous hurdles. Transportation is just one of these hurdles. However, transportation problems can mean the difference between keeping a job or losing it. Even getting to job interviews can become impossible if one does not have reliable transportation. Through the CPT-HSTP program it is hoped that these individuals will have reliable transportation to help ease their transition. Finding a service provider that is well equipped, both staff and operations wise, to provide this type of service is key. Fixed route transit services are not necessarily the best organizations to provide such a service, which tends to be widely dispersed, occurs at odd hours, and are subject to frequent changes. Therefore, it is recommended that JETS focus on providing fixed-route service, dispersing transit information, and communicating with employers, while finding a reliable transportation service provider to serve clients outside its existing fixed-route service area and hours.

## Appendix A: Major Employers

St. Bernards Medical Center	1,986
Arkansas State University	1,342
Wal-Mart Super Centers (2)	834
Hytrol Conveyor Company	726
Quebecor World	700
Jonesboro Public Schools	650
Frito-Lay	575
NEA Clinic	525
NEA Medical Center	475
City of Jonesboro	471
Thomas & Betts Corporation	450
Nestlé Prepared Foods Company	425
Nettleton Public Schools	400
Wolverine Slipper Group	400
Great Dane Trailers LLC	390
Crowley's Ridge Development Council	386
Airtex Products	383
Riceland Foods, Inc.	352
Delta Consolidated Industries	350
Mid-South Health Systems	350
Liberty Bank of Arkansas	323
Dillard's	300
Roach Manufacturing	300
Craighead County	285
Arkansas Glass Container Corporation	280
Jonesboro Human Development Center	250
Trumann Public Schools	250
Westside Consolidated School District	250
First Community Bank	215
HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital	210

Fowler Foods	208
Valley View Public Schools	197
Kraft Foods - Post Division	186
City Water & Light	185
Columbia Forest Products, Inc.	185
Lowe's of Jonesboro	180
ConAgra Foods	170
JC Penney Company	170
U.S. Postal Service	170
Brookland Public Schools	165
Harrisburg Public Schools	165
RGB Mechanical Contractors	149
Optus, Inc.	146
Skill Care Nursing Center	145
Crane Composites	142
Sam's Club	141
International Paper	140
Colson Caster Corporation	130
Craighead Nursing Center	130
Holiday Inn / Holiday Inn Express	126
The Jonesboro Sun	126
Boling Security Guard, Inc.	125
JK Products & Services, Inc.	125
Ramsons, Inc.	125
East Poinsett County Public Schools	122
Colson Plastics	119
Sears	110
G & K Services	100

Source: Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce