

Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan

**South Central Tennessee
Development District**

Updated December 2015

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Introduction and Purpose of Plan

This Coordination Plan is submitted by the South Central Tennessee Development District (SCTDD) acting as a lead facilitator in coordination for the South Central Tennessee Region. SCTDD's initiative is to include the public and other agencies in coordination of transportation services.

This Coordination Plan encompasses the provisions set forth by the Executive order for Human Service Transportation Coordination reinforced by the Federal Transit Administration and joint participating cooperating agencies. The plan has been locally developed and includes input from public and non-profit transportation providers. The South Central Rural Planning Organization, local officials, workforce development centers, human service providers, rehabilitation centers, adult protective service providers and senior centers all contributed in the preparation of this plan. This plan is designed to diminish gaps and lack of transportation as a barrier to self-sustainability for disabled, elderly and low-income persons needing transportation to work, medical appointments and day-to-day activities. Initial strategies for meeting these local needs are proposed.

Coordination Plan Goals

- To increase public awareness of rural public transportation.
- To promote and continue the coordination of transit services.
- To eliminate duplication of transit services.
- To increase affordable transportation availability to the disabled community.
- To educate the elderly and disabled community on how to use public transportation.

Service Area

The South Central Region is made up of 13 counties, which have an area of 6,462 square miles. Counties included in the South Central area are Bedford, Coffee, Franklin, Giles, Hickman, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Marshall, Maury, Moore, Perry and Wayne. According to the data obtained from the census website, the south central area has a population of 385,723; 57,562 are seniors 65 and older, 80,128 are persons with a disability age 5 and older.

Existing Service and Service Providers

Data collected through company contacts identified that there are 59 transportation providers specific to the South Central area. Chart 1 lists the entities whose information was collected through yellow pages, transportation directories and personal contacts.

Chart 1

SCTDD, Bedford County Public Transportation
Statum Cab, Bedford County
Good Samaritan
Veterans Transportation
Bedford County Emergency Medical Services, Bedford County
SCTDD, Coffee County Public Transportation
ADC Cab Company, Coffee County
Coffee County Ambulance, Coffee County
SCTDD, Franklin County Public Transportation

ADC Cab Company, Franklin County
Statum Cab of Winchester, Franklin County
Franklin County Adult Activity Center, Franklin County
SCTDD, Giles County Public Transportation
Veterans Transportation, Giles County
City Cab Company, Giles County
Giles County Ambulance Company, Giles County
SCTDD, Hickman County Public Transportation
Hickman County Ambulance Company, Hickman County
Impact Center, In 13 County South Central District
SCTDD, Lawrence County Public Transportation
Laffy Cab Company, Lawrence County
Moore Care, Lawrence County
South Central Human Resource Agency, Lawrence County
Lawrence County Ambulance Service, Lawrence County
SCTDD, Lewis County Public Transportation
Buffalo River Services, Lewis County
Buffalo Valley, Lewis County
Ministerial Association, Lewis County
Lewis County Ambulance Service, Lewis County
South Central Human Resource Agency, Lewis County
Buffalo Valley Rehabilitation, Lewis County
SCTDD, Lincoln County Public Transportation
Multi-County Comprehensive Mental Health, Lincoln County
South Central Human Resource Transportation, Lincoln County
SCTDD, Marshall County Public Transportation
Knights of Columbus, Marshall County
Lewisburg Cab Company, Marshall County
Marshall County Emergency Response, Marshall County
SCTDD, Maury County Public Transportation
Lynnville Cab, Maury County
Carolyn's Transportation, Maury County
King's Daughters School, Maury County
Mum's Transportation, Maury County
Middle Tennessee Medical Transportation, Maury County
Maury County Ambulance Service, Maury County
SCTDD, Moore County Public Transportation
Moore County Ambulance Service, Moore County
South Central Human Resource Agency, Moore County
SCTDD, Perry County Public Transportation

Perry County Rescue Squad, Perry County
Buffalo River Services, Perry County
SCTDD, Wayne County Public Transportation
Wayne County Ambulance Service, Wayne County
Wayne County Nursing Home, Wayne County
Buffalo River Services, Wayne County
Joe Dixon, Wayne County
Richard Rams VA Transportation, Wayne County
South Central Human Resource Agency, Wayne County

South Central Development District Rural Public Transportation Program

The South Central Development District (SCTDD) currently operates a federal and state funded rural public transportation system in each of the 13 counties within the south central region. The fleet consists of 210 vehicles, with more than 95% being wheelchair accessible. Vehicle purchasing plans are expected to increase due to the aging fleet. The struggling economy and the unemployment rates in our western counties reaching the highest in the nation have concurrently developed gaps throughout the region. Higher demands for transportation due to larger low-income status and dislocated workers needing transportation into metropolitan areas have increased a need for action and coordination. A step forward in a plan to rectify these gaps has been implemented and requires a continuation of funding to complete. South Central Tennessee Development District joined together with Labor and Workforce Development creating a union to provide transportation and staffing in conjunction with the Governors massive Economic Recovery Plan, funded through the Stimulus Plan, for Perry County and surrounding areas.

Another gap has been created by our aging baby boomers. According to a needs assessment survey assembled by the South Central Area Agency on Aging, it was determined that seniors were not just wanting access to public transportation, but have an increased need for more individualized, assisted transportation beyond curb to curb or door to door (pg.18 AAAD 2015-2018 Plan). Economic downfalls have increased the need for public transportation for persons of all ages but this is especially true for the baby boomers transitioning to the aging population. Aging baby boomers have become seniors with increasing health issues when healthcare costs are at the highest, leaving little to no funds to endure life sustaining costs such as food and shelter, let alone funds to cover the cost of auto insurance or auto maintenance. The AAAD in the South Central Tennessee District has partnered with public transportation and other transit providers in the area to assist those who cannot access public transportation due to lack of funds or because of the need for more assisted transportation beyond curb to curb or door to door.

A vehicle transfer plan and area wide structured schedule changes have been implemented in an attempt to lessen the burden of lost Job Access and New Freedoms funding. Although all the gaps and needs cannot be addressed immediately, coordination will insure a thriving growth and successful plan development to fill the transportation gaps. Coordination efforts and newly developed routes make it possible to transport low-income individuals that might not otherwise have the opportunity to obtain sustainable jobs to provide for themselves and their families. A transition plan has been developed and ongoing coordination meetings are being held to insure successful implementation for the disabled. Special emphasis of the transportation needs of the visually impaired and mentally challenged has been addressed through individualized agency meetings. Each rehabilitated client will have the opportunity to be educated through the proposed travel-training program. Coordination meetings will include more social service agencies and will be expanded to include more employers. All 13-transit offices work closely with Senior Centers, (10 of 13 are located in a Senior Center) making coordination services for the elderly more easily addressed on a daily basis.

Stakeholders

- Dialysis Centers
- Colleges
- Contiguous Transit Agencies
- Area Agency on Aging
- Senior Centers
- Medical Offices
- Nutrition & Social Centers
- Careers Centers
- Vocational Rehabilitation Centers
- Mental Health Centers
- Aspire Training
- Adult Social Training Centers
- Human Resources Agencies
- DHS
- Human Service Providers
- YMCA & Recreational Centers
- Adult Training & Activities Centers
- Skill Centers
- TennCare MCO's

Transportation Gaps and Needs Identified

Gaps of unmet needs have been identified by previous data collected through group contacts and from surveys conducted by the regional Rural Planning Organization and by the Area Agency on Aging. Additional gaps were identified through partnerships with Workforce Development, DHS, Social Service Agencies, Housing Developments, Local Officials and with private non-profits such as (but not limited to) Impact Centers, Kings Daughter, Veterans associations, Senior Centers and through public meetings and news releases related to the struggling economy and above and beyond service. Coordination and stakeholder meetings were held on June 11, 2015 and August 10, 2015 to communicate the new deviated fixed routes and other available SCTDD programs. Stakeholders present included representatives from the following; Local Officials, Columbia State Community College, Franklin Transit, Workforce Development, Housing Authorities, Impact Centers, Skills Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation Centers, Private Nonprofits, Department of Human Services and various other divisions of our communities. Weekly routes have been established in each county to provide Veterans transit services to surrounding Veteran Hospitals. We also coordinate with private transit providers to meet any unmet transit needs for the South Central Tennessee area. SCTDD coordinates trips with both private and public transit providers in and outside the South Central Tennessee Development District's service area. All intercity deviated fixed routes connect with Greyhound in Nashville on our daily schedule and MTA Nashville upon request. SCTDD refers same day service requests and trips outside SCTDD hours of service to the local taxi service and/or surrounding transportation providers on file with SCTDD. SCTDD connects with Franklin Transit and MTA Nashville upon request.

SCTDD has taken an initiative in coordinating schedules with social service agencies, housing developments and healthcare facilities to provide transportation services in each county. This initiative resulted in an

increased coordination and ridership overall. Coordination with TennCare MCO's (Americhoice and Amerigroup) has generated contracts to provide transportation to and from medical appointments in each county. Currently 10 of our 13 transit offices are located in a Senior Center making coordination for elderly and disabled services very opportune. Trips for the elderly include nutrition, recreational visits to the Senior Center and medical appointments. We coordinate with the Department of Human Services on a regular basis. Communications with the Department of Human Services is scheduled depending on the program or need in the area. We have agreements with Vocational Rehabilitation to provide client transportation services to training activities and employment. Coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation includes the client's transition between rehabilitation and mainstreaming into the workplace. Part of the transition was New Freedoms and Job Access through TDOT. However, those funding sources have been deferred and funding is not available at this time creating a gap in service for those transitioning clients. Although services have been cut due to the lost funding, SCTDD still works diligently to provide services during regular business hours and by a referral process for after hours. This leaves a need for before and after hours services and above and beyond services previously provided under New Freedoms and Job Access funding.

- Limited funding, Limited Grants, Limited Understanding
- Funding sources for dedicated match.
- Scheduled transportation work routes that cross county lines
- Dedicated work routes for individuals that do not qualify for Job Access
- Night transportation service
- Travel Trainer
- Weekend transportation
- Deviated fixed routes in larger rural communities
- Holiday transportation for disabled
- Columbia State route service from surrounding counties
- Lack of coordination between agencies
- Funding for specialized transportation
- Expansion of routes and vehicle availability

Actions to Lessen Unmet Needs and Gaps

The gap analysis also indicated that additional data and a collaborative effort between agencies to obtain additional data is needed to confirm unmet service needs. Ongoing communications and meetings will also be needed to establish a network of agencies working together in an effort to fully implement coordination. South Central Tennessee Development will continue to develop partnerships with entities to enhance efforts of coordination in the south central area.

- Work toward expanding hours and days of service
- Work toward deviated fixed routes
- Continue to strive to consolidate funding of programs: Reducing administrative overhead, single trip cost and enhancing the vehicle availability to better serve the elderly, disabled and general public not eligible for assistance through a government program. For example, Job Access, Rural Transportation, New Freedoms, in conjunction with Coordinated Human Service trips (TennCare). Coordinated Human Service trips provide the match to provide the federally funded trip. One does not work well without the other.

- Work toward educating local officials on the sources of match to all federal and state transit programs at SCTDD.
- Work toward Educating Local Governments and Local Officials that the \$1.00 rides are not possible without Coordinated Human Service.
- Coordinated Human Service funds are also used for match to capital programs for vehicle replacement and the local vehicle replacement program.
- With proper planning, acquiring information on unmet needs as generated in the course of coordinated operations will be a valuable cost effective way of determining other gaps.
- Prepare for a competitive grant application process to acquire funding for mobility and travel training.

The coordinated plan is to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation availability and mobility options available to the elderly and disabled. The coalition of demand-response transportation that the South Central Tennessee Rural Public Transportation brings to the table will greatly enhance the success of this coordination plan.