

Myths and Realities: Finding Information Resources About Human Service Transportation Coordination

By Eileen Boswell, Information Specialist

NRC Myths and Realities
No. 3, July 2010

Myths about Coordination Information

MYTH: All information is available online.

MYTH: You can find anything you need by using Google's search engine.

MYTH: The top ten results you get from a Google search contain the most useful information on your topic.

MYTH: All good information is free and freely available.

MYTH: Coordination information online contains the phrase "human service transportation coordination" or some variant.

REALITY: All of these are false.

About this Series: This is an occasional publication of the [National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination](#) (NRC). Each issue explores the myths and realities surrounding a specific barrier to human service transportation coordination.

About the NRC: The NRC provides technical assistance to communities, states and transit and human services agencies to improve and integrate public transportation and human services. We support public transportation projects and coordination of transit and medical care, employment, education and services for senior citizens and people with disabilities. The NRC is operated by the Community Transportation Association under a cooperative agreement with the Federal Transit Administration.

Introduction

This paper will introduce you to the basic sources of coordination information, explain how to find coordination information on the World Wide Web, and introduce some of the foundational documents on this topic. While the National Resource Center invests a large portion of its time and energy on facilitating the person-to-person connections that are key to the coordination process, this paper specifically addresses information resources (mostly electronic ones available on the World Wide Web) that can complement the personal assistance available by contacting the NRC staff, Ambassador corps, and our network of technical assistance providers. Search strategies for finding Internet resources, as well as a list of helpful links, are also included in this paper. To establish the context for these resources and why they are important, the following few sections explain what coordination is and which federal entities exist to promote it.

What is Coordination?

Coordination is the efficient and effective use of transportation resources for getting people to important destinations, such as jobs and medical appointments. Coordination means working with transit providers, human service agencies, private institutions, businesses, volunteers and political leaders to broaden transportation options for all users, particularly those in vulnerable populations or with special needs. In 2004 President George W. Bush signed [Executive Order 13330](#), which renewed the focus on coordination among human services transportation providers. The executive order recognizes the critical role of transportation in people's lives, as well as the obstacles created by many federal and state rules and restrictions on service; the fragmented, underutilized, or unavailability of many community transportation systems; and the need for a responsible, seamless, comprehensive, and accessible community transportation system for mobility-dependent populations. The Order further mandates the creation of the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) which includes nine cabinet members and the Commissioner of Social Security.

What is United We Ride?

[United We Ride](#) is a federal interagency initiative that supports states and their localities in developing coordinated human service delivery systems. In addition to state coordination grants, United We Ride provides state and local agencies with a transportation coordination and planning self-assessment tool (the [Framework for Action](#)), technical assistance, and other resources to help communities succeed. The United We Ride effort is administered at the federal level by the Federal interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM). The Coordinating Council is led by an Executive Committee made up of designees from each of the eleven federal departments that make up the council. These are:

- Department of Transportation
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Education
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Department of Labor
- Department of Justice
- Department of the Interior
- Veterans Administration
- National Council on Disability
- Department of Agriculture
- Social Security Administration

CCAM activities are also carried out by four working groups that focus on transportation coordination issues related to (a) Policy; (b) Education and Technical Assistance; (c) Research and Development; and (d) Emergency Preparedness. CCAM represents the initial federal investment of time and expertise in the United We Ride effort, which is matched by a number of non-profit and academic partnerships.

What is the National Resource Center?

The National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination (NRC) is a group of people, services and resources whose goal is to help transportation and human service providers



coordinate services with the user in mind. The NRC is operated through a cooperative federal agreement between the Federal Transit Administration and the [Community Transportation Association of America](#). Association staff operate the NRC out of their Washington, DC offices, with additional networks throughout the United States and its territories and properties in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Marianas islands. The NRC is led by a national steering committee made up of private, public and federal sector experts on transportation and human services.

The National Resource Center leads a national network of sixteen technical assistance providers and coordination ambassadors, in addition to ten federal technical assistance partners. Technical Assistance (TA) providers range from the [National Joblinks Employment Transportation Initiative](#), to the [National Rural Transit Assistance Program](#), to [Easter Seals Project ACTION \(Accessible Community Transportation In Our Nation\)](#). These TA centers meet quarterly to update one another on current projects and to coordinate their coordinated mobility initiatives.

At the front line of providing technical assistance for transportation coordination are the ten [United We Ride Coordination Ambassadors](#), each representing one Federal Transit Administration region of the country. The Coordination Ambassadors work with local, state and federal decision-making bodies to foster communication, collaboration and inclusive action-planning among all human service and transportation stakeholders.

In addition to the Technical Assistance Providers Network, the NRC leads the [National Consortium on the Coordination of Human Services Transportation](#). The National Consortium is a group of twenty-seven non-profit organizations who are dedicated to promoting mobility and the delivery of coordinated human services transportation to all individuals regardless of age, ability, income or education. [Consortium members](#) include the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#), [Children's Health Fund](#), [United Way of America](#), and many others. An Executive Committee composed of representatives from key Consortium member organizations leads the Consortium's activities.

This paper represents an activity of the National Resource Center's information clearinghouse. The clearinghouse maintains the [NRC website](#), as well as its print and electronic libraries of [coordinated transportation plans](#) and many other information resources on coordinated human services transportation. A monthly publication entitled [Tappy Grams](#) updates transportation and human services agencies about research publications pertaining to coordination. The [Myths and Realities](#) series offers occasional short papers such as this one, each of which focuses on one coordination obstacle. NRC Director Chris Zeilinger maintains the [Capitol Clips](#) weblog with updates about legislation affecting coordination. Additionally, the NRC maintains on its website a continually evolving list of transportation and human service acronyms, and a [coordination map](#) of people and resources specific to a state's coordination goals, obstacles, and particularities. Clearinghouse materials also include United We Ride publications and other coordination resources listed at the end of this paper.

How to Find Coordination Information on the World Wide Web

Information on human service transportation coordination can come in the form of people, organizations, federal publications, legislation, and web resources. Most of this information can be found on the World Wide Web with a little assistance and orientation to help you find the information you are looking for. However, the Internet may only get you part of the way toward finding the coordination information you need.

Searching the Internet for information can be like drinking from a fire hose. There is a lot of information, often too much, and it can be hard to find exactly what you are looking for. What we call the World Wide Web is a huge number of linked web sites that are not organized or regulated by any one person or group. Parts of the Web are “indexed” by commercial search engines such as Google, while others are considered part of the “Deep Web” or “invisible Web.” Indexed sites are those whose contents are obtained and stored by a search engine such as Google. For example, you may create a website for your organization, but if Google does not index your site, the information you provide will not be available in Google’s search results. Someone would have to know your website’s address to find out about you. Also, the contents of the World Wide Web are constantly changing. The Web is organic and dynamic, which can make it difficult to find and keep track of important information. Myths about finding information online are as abundant as the information itself, and one aim of this paper is to identify and dispel a number of those myths.

Myths about Finding Coordination Information on the World Wide Web

Myth #1: *All information is available online.*

Reality: Some of the most valuable information on coordination, or any topic, may not be online yet and may never be online. Some organizations have internal documents that contain helpful information but are not made available through their websites for a variety of reasons. Other organizations have enormous stores of knowledge that are not written down or published regularly. Still others will have information that is proprietary and cannot be shared online. Remember, too, that there are many valuable print resources on the topic of coordination that have never been digitized or put on the Web. Using the Internet may get you closer to finding that information, but actually getting your hands on it usually requires knowing the right person to call or gaining access to a print resource that has limited availability.

Myth #2: *You can find anything you need by using Google’s search engine.*

Reality: Google indexes a lot of web sites, but it does not index everything. There are still many great resources on the Web that even Google has not yet discovered and so they cannot index them for inclusion in their search results. When you do a Google search, you can find only what Google has already found; a Google search is a search of their databases, not of the entire World Wide Web. What Google and other commercial search engines do is “dragging a net across an ocean of information.”¹ Not only may there be holes in the net, but what you get out depends on what is there to begin with and not

¹ Devine and Egger-Sider 2009

all good information is online. Google results also return a lot of “false positives,” or results that match your search term but are not really on the topic of what you are seeking to learn about. This also complicates your search if you are relying on Google.

Myth #3: *The top ten results you get from a Google search contain the most useful information for your topic.*

Reality: Sometimes good information is buried in an enormous list of results that do not come close enough to what you are seeking. Other times, good information is obscured by results that match your search term but actually mean something else (such as when you search for information about “mobility management” and your search results include links to cellular technology vendors who also use this term). Also, be aware that Google results marked “Sponsored Link” are paid advertisements. Some companies pay search engines for higher ranking in a list of search results.

Myth #4: *All good information is free and freely available.*

Reality: Many search results will only include links to websites with information that is both free of charge and not restricted by copyright protections. However, this may be difficult to discern from looking at a list of search results. Some of the best information on coordination or any topic may be by paid subscription only, such as the *Transportation Research Record* published by the [Transportation Research Board](#). You may need to consult a subscription database of research articles or a transportation library if you are looking for research articles that are the intellectual property of an academic or professional journal.

Myth #5: *Online information about human service transportation coordination contains the phrase “human service transportation coordination” or some version of it.*

Reality: Some laws encourage coordination while not explicitly stating it, while others make reference to coordination obligations using different sets of terms. In the NRC publication [Coordination: It’s the Law](#), Director Chris Zeilinger explains how to interpret language in Sections 5305, 5307, 5310, 5311, 5316 and 5317 that relate to coordinated transportation activities. Specifically, federal transit laws (i.e., the [Federal Transit Act](#), codified as Chapter 53 of Title 49 of the United States Code) require coordination between public transportation and human services in statewide and metropolitan transportation planning, in the provision of urban and rural public transportation, and in the provision of specialized transportation services to elderly individuals, persons with disabilities, and persons from low-income households accessing jobs or job-related activities.

Conclusion

The universe of information about human service transportation coordination may be small, relative to the World Wide Web, but its landscape and guideposts are very important information to those trying to improve coordinated mobility for people throughout the country. The National Resource Center has started to organize this important information through its web presence, its team of Coordination Ambassadors, and its networks of people and organizations working toward coordination. Please contact the NRC using the information provided below to tell us what your particular information needs are as they relate to human service transportation coordination.

Recommended Resources

Foundational Documents

Annotated Bibliography of Human Service Transportation Coordination

Prepared by the Small Urban and Rural Transit Center (SURTC)

http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/articlefiles/HSTC_AnnotatedBibliography_January2008.pdf

Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations: Some Coordination Efforts among Programs Providing Transportation Services, but Obstacles Persist

By the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d03697.pdf>

State Human Service Transportation Coordinating Councils: An Overview and State Profiles

Prepared by the National Conference of State Legislatures

http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/articlefiles/NCSL_StateCoordinatingCouncilsBrief_February2010.pdf

The United We Ride National Dialogue Final Report

By the National Academy of Public Administration for the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility

<http://www.uwrdialogue.org/UWR.National%20Dialogue%20Final%20Report-1-.Feb.2010.pdf>

Toolkit for Rural Community Coordinated Transportation Services

By the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP Report 101)

http://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_101.pdf

Economic Benefits of Coordinating Human Service Transportation and Transit Services

By the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP Report 91)

http://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_91.pdf

Seniors Benefit from Transportation Coordination Partnerships: A Toolbox and Resource Guide

By the Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

<http://seniortransportation.easterseals.com/site/DocServer/6.ResourceGuide.pdf?docID=100023>

Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plans

www.ctaa.org/coordinationplans

Federal Transit Laws - 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53

http://www.fta.dot.gov/printer_friendly/leg_reg_1097.html

NRC Publications

Coordination: It's the Law by NRC Director Chris Zeilinger

www.NRCtransportation.org/coordinationlaw

Capitol Clips Blog: Federal News Affecting Community Transportation

www.nrccapitolclips.blogspot.com

Tappy Grams, A monthly electronic newsletter with coordination publication alerts and "Web Help" tutorials

www.ctaa.org/tappygrams

NRC *Myths and Realities* Series

<http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/anviewer.asp?a=2008&z=62>

NRC Technical Assistance News

<http://nrctanews.blogspot.com/>

The Express Stop (Consortium News)

<http://express-stop.blogspot.com/>

Web Searching Resources

Search Engine Showdown: The Users' Guide to Web Searching

<http://www.searchengineshowdown.com/>

Google 101: How Google Crawls, Indexes, and Serves the Web

www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=70897&topic=8843

Going Beyond Google by Jane Devine and Francine Egger-Sider, published by Neal-Schuman (2009).

Staff Members, National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination

Chris Zeilinger, Director

800.891.0590 x717

zeilinger@ctaa.org

Charles Dickson, Principal Investigator

800.891.0590 x708

dickson@ctaa.org

Sheryl Gross-Glaser, Coordination Specialist

800.891.0590 x733

grossglaser@ctaa.org

Janice Ross Lorenz, Director of Special Projects

800.891.0590 x721

lorenz@ctaa.org

Eileen Boswell, Information Specialist

800.891.0590 x 707

boswell@ctaa.org



United We Ride Coordination Ambassadors

Beverly Ward, Ph.D.
Ambassador, Region 1: Connecticut,
Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode
Island, and Vermont
800.891.0590 x735
ward@ctaa.org
www.ctaa.org/nrc/region1

James McLary, P.E., L.S.
Ambassador, Region 2: New York New Jersey, and
Virgin Islands
800.891.0590 x709
mclary@ctaa.org
www.ctaa.org/nrc/region2

Rex Knowlton, CCTM
Ambassador, Region 3: Delaware, District of
Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and
West Virginia
800.891.0590 x728
knowlton@ctaa.org
www.ctaa.org/nrc/region3

Jo Ann Hutchinson
Ambassador, Region 4: Alabama, Florida Georgia,
Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico,
South Carolina, and Tennessee
800.891.0590 x730
hutchinson@ctaa.org
www.ctaa.org/nrc/region4

Roland Mross
Ambassador, Region 5: Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota,
Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin
800.891.0636 x723
mross@ctaa.org
www.ctaa.org/nrc/region5

Dan Dirks, CCTM
Ambassador, Region 6: Arkansas, Louisiana, New
Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas
800.891.0590 x739
dirks@ctaa.org
www.ctaa.org/nrc/region6

Margi Ness
Ambassador, Region 7: Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and
Nebraska
800.891.0590 x737
ness@ctaa.org
www.ctaa.org/nrc/region7

Jeanne Erickson
Ambassador, Region 8: Colorado, Montana, North
Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming
800.891.0590 x738
erickson@ctaa.org
www.ctaa.org/nrc/region8

David Cyra
Ambassador, Region 9: Arizona, California, Hawaii,
Nevada, Guam, American Samoa and Northern
Marianas
800.891.0590 x713
cyra@ctaa.org
www.ctaa.org/nrc/region9

Barbara Singleton
Ambassador, Region 10: Alaska, Idaho, Oregon,
and Washington
800.891.0590 x715
singleton@ctaa.org
www.ctaa.org/nrc/region10

Technical Assistance Centers

Easter Seals Project ACTION (Accessible Community Transportation In Our Nation)

www.projectaction.easterseals.com

800.659.6428

National Center on Senior Transportation, operated by Easter Seals/National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)

www.seniortransportation.net

866.528.6278

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Peer-to-Peer Program

www.its.dot.gov/peer

888.700.PEER (7337)

American Public Transportation Association Mobility Management Program

www.apta.com

202.496.4883

Mobility Services for All Americans

www.its.dot.gov/msaa

National Joblinks Employment Transportation Initiative: Community Transportation Association of America

www.ctaa.org/joblinks

800.527.8279

Community Transportation Assistance Program (CTAP): Community Transportation Association of America

www.ctaa.org/ctap

202.415.9688

Multi-State Technical Assistance Program, part of the American Association of Highway and Transportation Officials

www.mtap.org

202.624.3625

National Transit Institute

www.ntionline.com

732.932.1700

Rural Passenger and Tribal Passenger Transportation Technical Assistance Programs: Community Transportation Association of America

www.ctaa.org/rtptap

800.527.8279

National Rural Transit Assistance Program

www.nationalrtap.org

888.589.6821

Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association

www.tlpa.org

301.984.5700

Transportation Planning Capacity Building Peer Program

www.planning.dot.gov

202.366.1944

National Conference of State Legislatures

www.ncsl.org

303.364.7700

National Association of Development Organizations

www.RuralTransportation.org

202.624.7806

Visit us on the Web at

www.NRCtransportation.org

This document can be found online at

http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/articlefiles/Resources_MythsAndRealities_20100716.pdf