

Getting Youth to the Workplace



Youth Employment Transportation Briefs 1-4

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The Joblinks Employment Transportation Initiative is a partnership of the Community Transportation Association, the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration and the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration. Joblinks assists communities in addressing challenges associated with accessing affordable and reliable transportation to work and related destinations. For more information, visit www.ctaa.org/ntrc.

This publication was prepared pursuant to a cooperative agreement with the Employment and Training Administration. The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are solely those of the authors and should not be construed as representing the opinions or policy of any agency of the federal government.

Brief #1: Overcoming Transportation Challenges for Youth

April 2005

Written by April Kaplan on behalf of the Community Transportation Association of America

Effective youth employment programs—whether based in a school or training center—integrate vocational and job training skills with life skills and employment-related values. These programs offer youth the opportunity for career exploration, community service, mentoring, and internships through collaborations with government, local businesses, community-based organizations, social service agencies, and schools.

The one area in which these programs' resources can be helpful is in ensuring youth have reliable transportation to and from the programs and, following completion of the program, to their jobs. Youth with transportation barriers are at a disadvantage in their ability to successfully operate and participate in their programs. The ultimate challenge for training and mentoring programs is ensuring that young people who graduate from these programs can translate the skills they have learned into a job or further education; often this can be a difficult task to accomplish because the youth lack transportation.

Youth transit needs are quite similar to those of their adult counterparts. Research indicates that the spatial mismatch between where low-income youth reside and where jobs are is a barrier to youth as well as their parents in obtaining and maintaining a job. The majority of low-income workers and youth are urban or rural residents, whereas most new jobs are available in the outlying suburbs. Many entry-level jobs require working evening or weekend hours when public transportation is often unavailable. Youth also lack personal vehicles, often cannot afford the upkeep of cars, and have difficulties obtaining a driver's license.

Many programs have ensured participants have access to transportation through various mechanisms such as

- Partnering with employers to purchase bus passes or collaborating with transit authorities to provide bus passes
- Providing vouchers and taxi reimbursements
- Contracting for shuttles and buses
- Facilitating participation in carpools
- Purchasing vans, shuttles, and minibuses
- Facilitating the donation and repairs of older vehicles
- Providing loans to eligible individuals to lease or purchase vehicles
- Making one-time or short-term payments for car repairs or insurance
- Accessing other existing transportation systems for older adults, people with disabilities, Head Start participants, and school children

Some programs help young people obtain a driver's licenses and clean up driving records. Others give gas cards to young people or create incentives for them to earn them. Still others help youth develop savings accounts, where they set aside a percentage of their stipend and the program matches what the participant has saved, with the idea that the savings would be available for transportation expenses.

Program Examples

The Home Builder's Institute offers a comprehensive curriculum to teach skills related to the home building industry; the target populations for the curriculum range from youth to veterans to older workers. The apprenticeship-based curriculum includes a 25–75 percent split between class time and hands-on training and practice. The Institute uses funding from the Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, and Education to provide transportation—a critical issue for those in the program. Most of the work in the home building industry is in the suburbs, where transit is not easily accessible. Therefore, some sites have leased vehicles that are paid for by the companies that contract with the Home Builder's Institute. For example, in Mississippi and Florida, the Department of Juvenile Justice helps lease vehicles. In other sites, members receive stipends for participating in the programs and are encouraged to use the stipend for transportation. Other programs place more than one person at the same job site so that these new workers can share travel expenses. The Home Builder's Institute has also reached out to employers to pay for transportation by emphasizing the benefit to these companies of providing reliable transportation for work-ready employees. Contact: Dennis Torbett, vice president, (800) 795-7955, <http://www.hbi.org>.

Positive Achievement for Learning Success (PALS) in Louisiana is one of the U.S. Department of Education's (DOE's) 21st Century Learning Center Program awardees. The DOE has awarded grants to support the creation of community schools in more than 3,600 schools in over 900 communities. The grants were established to help working families with school-age children by providing safe and enjoyable activities after school and during summer breaks, while improving their academic performance.

PALS has partnered with a variety of community-based organizations to accomplish its mission. For example, PALS provides tutoring services for the Sabine Parish School Board prior to its state testing. PALS' ability to pay salaries for bus drivers and operations costs for the transportation from the program enables more children to be involved. The local school board, which allows PALS to use the school system's buses after school, thus spends little additional money on the buses, insurance, and maintenance. PALS has also furthered its mission by partnering with the state parks. The state parks provide PALS participants with free use of facilities, such as swimming pools, while PALS pays for the transportation. Had PALS not paid for transportation, many students would not otherwise be able to participate. Contact: Eric Lord, lorde@sabine.k12.la.us.

Intercity Transit Village Vans Program in Olympia, WA, provides on-demand, free, door-to-door transportation to community members who have limited income and are searching for work. Riders include youth ages 16–18 years who are enrolled in the Thurston County Community Youth Services Career and Training Program.

The Village Vans Program grew out of research by a large group of local human services agencies to identify gaps in transportation for county residents. The research highlighted the lack of transportation options for low-income families making the transition from government aid to economic independence. Intercity Transit took the leadership in developing the program, which began service in 2002. Initial funding came from the Federal Transit Administration's Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program and the Washington State Office of Trade and Economic Development's WorkFirst Transportation Initiative Program. Services are sustained by continued funding from FTA and local matching funds. Contact: Ann Bridges, (360) 705-583, abridges@intercitytransit.com.

The Living Classrooms Foundation is a nonprofit organization that provides hands-on education and job skills training for students from diverse backgrounds. The foundation's Workforce Development Center acts as the facilitator of the United Parcel Service (UPS) School-to-Career Partnership. This partnership allows youth to obtain employment at the UPS site in Laurel, Maryland (26 miles south of Baltimore) and provides transportation for the youths to and from work. The program is funded through an \$80,000 Job Access and Reverse Commute grant matched 100 percent by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The Workforce Transportation and Referral Center is the broker that coordinates transportation. The foundation also sponsors incentive programs that can lead to auto purchases, including assistance in obtaining drivers' licenses and all the other items associated with purchasing a car for the first time. Contact: Rochelle McGee, (410) 685-0295, Rochelle@livingclassrooms.org.

The Serve Alaska Youth Corps (SAGA) in Juneau, Alaska, provides a year-round work experience, training, and education program for young adults. SAGA has an arrangement with the city through which once a week a SAGA crew cleans up the city bus stops; in return, the city gives bus passes to SAGA members who need them. To organize this arrangement, SAGA approached the City Transit Authority Director and also sought support from Assembly/Council members, the mayor, and the city manager. Eventually the idea was approved by the Assembly. Contact: Joe Parrish, (907) 790-6403, sagajp@servealaska.org, www.servealaska.org.

Next Steps

Although many sites have succeeded in getting program participants to and from programs and employment, many still struggle with transportation. The Community Transportation Association of America, a national nonprofit organization with federal dollars to provide technical assistance, is available to work with communities and youth programs to help solve transportation barriers for youth and others. For information, contact Amy Conrick at conrick@ctaa.org, (800) 891-0590 ext. 734, or visit the Employment Transportation site at: www.ctaa.org/ntrc/

Brief #2: Transportation For Youth in Minnesota: Recent Initiatives

October 2005

Written by April Kaplan on behalf of the Community Transportation Association of America

Employment initiatives for one often-neglected segment of the working population—youth—received a boost when Congress passed the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in 1998. Title I of WIA, which authorizes employment-related services for youth as well as for adults, mandated the creation of Youth Councils in every local delivery area. The councils were charged with developing a coordinated youth policy and strengthening linkages between existing youth services and resources. This marked a drastic change from the way services had been traditionally delivered to youth, moving from disjointed, short-term interventions to a more comprehensive, coordinated approach. In recognition of the social disadvantages some youth face—such as the lack of strong family support systems, stable community ties, and connections to social services—WIA mandated increased spending on out-of-school youth activities, with the goal of improving youth educational achievements, preparing youth to succeed in employment, providing supportive services for youth, and developing the potential of youth to become active citizens and leaders.

Many other federal programs have funding that can be used for transportation for youth, such as the:

- Corporation for National and Community Service
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Education
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Department of Justice
- Department of the Treasury
- National Endowment for the Arts
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Defense

Although most of the youth services funded by these agencies do not set aside funds specifically for transportation, many of them do fund support services, one of which is transportation services.

Minnesota is one state that has been particularly active in pursuing solutions to support youth employment. In so doing, it has undertaken several initiatives to assist youth in overcoming transportation barriers. Details of two of these programs are provided below.

Youth Connections

Youth Connections is the main youth initiative offered through Workforce Development, Inc. (WDI), the nonprofit agency that delivers workforce-related services on behalf of the state of Minnesota and local counties. WDI operates as the Workforce Investment Board for southeastern Minnesota and staffs ten area offices located throughout the region. Six of these locations are designated as Minnesota Workforce Centers, in which multiple agencies deliver a family of services for job seekers and employers. WDI annually serves thousands of people

through career planning and pre-vocational skills training in four major areas:

- Workforce Investment Act programs (adult and youth)
- Dislocated workers
- Welfare reform
- Youth programming

Youth Connections offers youth and young adults a variety of activities focused on life and work skills as well as career preparation. Participants in the program range in age from 14 to 20 years and have a variety of needs. As part of the Connections program, youth participate in projects in partnership with local, city, county, and other community-based organizations. These projects give participants the opportunity to see themselves as valued members of the community.

Support services offered through Youth Connections revolve around two basic concerns for youth and young adults: 1) helping them complete high school (or the equivalent) coursework and 2) aligning their skills and interests with meaningful employment. To accomplish these two goals, Youth Connections participants are aided in

- Completing job applications
- Learning computer skills
- Developing resumes
- Securing transportation
- Learning independent living skills
- Achieving job training
- Obtaining or renewing driver's license
- Securing financial assistance with education

Each young person entering the Youth Connections program meets with a caseworker who, as part of the intake process, interviews the participant to become familiar with his or her relationships, needs, barriers (including mobility deficits), and involvement in the community. Staff then develop an individual development plan for the new enrollee, choosing the specific components that would best meet his or her needs (e.g., subsidized employment, personal and/or career mentoring, college-based training, life skills preparation).

Meeting Participants' Transportation Needs

According to the program director, WDI staff who work with youth have found that 70–80% of youth entering the program identify transportation as a significant barrier to their fully accessing community and WDI services. WDI serves about 400 youths a year, with 25% facing transportation challenges throughout the year; 50–70% of new referrals alone struggle with transportation issues. Recognizing this fact, the agency attempts to maximize the resources of its public and private partners to help participants overcome any transportation barriers. Approximately 20% of every \$1,000 spent per youth goes to subsidizing transportation.

WDI staff use several different strategies to address participants' transportation needs:

- Mobility strategies. Strategies to improve participants' transportation options include purchasing vehicles, supporting the addition of new bus routes, subsidizing existing bus services, recruiting volunteers or using other organizations' volunteers to assist in transporting youth, identifying peers who can help drive youth, and carpooling.

- Public transit partnership. In this initiative, students from a rural high school traveling to a technical school to attend a summer program needed transportation. WDI worked with the public transit provider to arrange for a new bus route to be added; WDI agreed to pay for the expenses associated with the additional stop and the fare for the youth they transported.
- Using volunteers serving other populations. Local senior centers had recruited volunteers to assist older adults in traveling to and from the senior center and other destinations. WDI was able to tap into that volunteer pool to help youth as well. WDI asked the volunteers to pick up youth in neighborhoods where they were already picking up older adults and then paid for the additional mileage related to the youth trips. Young people and older adults thus began commuting together, which in some cases led to mentoring relationships being established.
- Recruiting new volunteers. Efforts with 14- to 16-year-old participants in the Connections program are usually focused on reconnecting these youth with education more so than with employment. One challenge for these youth, who often have been expelled from school in their home district, is arranging transportation to a neighboring school district. To fulfill this need, WDI recruited volunteer drivers to drive students back and forth to school. For other youth, WDI organized for a school bus from the neighboring district to pick up youth traveling to a school in that district from a designated location, such as a shopping mall. Transportation to the designated collection point was provided by either the students' parents or volunteers.
- Using identified volunteers. Often during the creation of the individual's development plan, the participant identifies people who could serve as volunteers. Then when a youth's mobility needs are identified, case workers contact these identified volunteers, who are often willing to assist the youth with his or her transit needs.
- Partnerships. WDI is part of the Family Preservation Collaborative, an entity funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that allowed several Minnesota counties to come together and discuss issues facing their constituency and maximize existing services already provided for clients. The collaborative has extended into several counties that are now funded through means other than the initial federal grant and has grown to include several community-based organizations. Through such partnering, these groups can share resources, such as vehicles and volunteers.

In one initiative, the collaborative found that its constituents, especially youth and older adults, lacked transportation, so it obtained a grant to purchase a bus. The bus now goes to schools and retail locations throughout the city as well as to the Minnesota Department of Human Services, courts, and hospitals. Anyone can use the bus for \$1.00 a day, regardless of their destination.

- Peer to peer support. Case workers can sometimes link young program participants with other driving youths who live in or near the participant. To serve as a peer driver, the youths have to have a clean driving record and be fully insured. WDI then reimburses the youth driver for gas through a voucher system. Youth drivers who do not drive responsibly lose their vouchers. WDI found that although a few youths were not responsible drivers, most responded positively to the responsibility given to them.

- Direct support. Another way WDI helps youth is by helping them obtain or renew their driver's license or insurance or pay for car repairs. Youth who have lost their licenses often do not have the money needed to pay insurance premiums or license reinstatement fees and may not fully understand the legal issues involved. WDI walks them through possible solutions for having their license being reinstated, such as helping them find work so they can pay their fines, taking them to court for driving-related hearings, or showing them how to pay off fines by doing community service activities. For youth who have cars that need repairs, WDI provides vouchers to one of many car repair programs that are supported through federal or state funds.
- Contracting services. For 14 years, WDI operated a residential summer school for at-risk youth; the main impetus for developing the residential program was the transportation barriers these youth faced in attending summer school. Enrolled students stayed at the center Monday through Friday and went home on weekends. Parents who could transport their children to the program; however, to serve those families that lacked transportation, WDI contracted with four bus companies in rural communities to help provide services. The buses would then pick up participants at designated points to transport them to school on Monday mornings and bring them home on Friday evenings.
- Relocation. WDI is part of the Youth Build initiative, a state-funded program that provides specialized training in the construction and building trades, leadership and basic academic skills, and construction-based work experience for youth at risk of not completing their high school education. The program participants are generally students who have dropped out of school in the eight participating school districts. When it was determined that some youth could not reach the Youth Build school site because of a huge transit gap spanning two counties, WDI worked with the school district to move the Youth Build site to a new alternative school for youth. School buses now pick up those youth and bring them to the alternative school.

Recruitment

To spread the word about its services, WDI reaches youth by sending staff into schools and places in communities to speak and hand out information on the services the center provides. Potential WDI participants are also educated about the range of transportation options provided through the center. For youth who are interested in WDI's services but do not have transportation to the center for their initial intake interview, a case manager organizes a ride for them, either by walking them through public transit options or by arranging a ride through volunteer drivers or taxi cabs. As part of the individual's development plan, more cost-effective mechanisms for transportation other than taxi cabs are developed.

Chafee Foster Care Independence Program

Two federal programs—the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (passed in 1999) and the Chafee Educational and Training Voucher Program (passed in 2001)—support youth transportation in Minnesota. Both of these programs were designed to ease the transition of children raised in foster care into an independent living situation by providing them with life skills training, assistance obtaining a high school diploma and preparing for higher level education, vocational training, job placement and retention, training in budgeting and financial management skills, substance abuse prevention, and preventive health activities (including smoking avoidance, nutrition education, and pregnancy prevention).

Using Chafee Act funds, Minnesota supports life skills activities such as transporting youth to groups and retreats; assisting them in touring colleges and vocational technical campuses; and aiding them in visiting potential work sites, apartment buildings, grocery stores, garage sales, thrift stores, workforce centers, libraries, and used car lots. The programs Minnesota supports with Chafee Act funds would fail without a way to provide reliable transportation to youth. Transportation strategies supported with Chafee funds include

- Paying for driver's education and licensing fees for youth
- Reimbursing volunteer peer youth drivers for gas or mileage
- Purchasing a bicycle, car insurance, car maintenance, or car repairs to enable a youth to travel to a job or postsecondary school
- Reimbursing foster parents or volunteer drivers for expenses incurred in transporting youth to life skills group activities
- Funding agency-based staff vehicles or vans to transport youth. (Counties generally use county funds to reimburse county social workers for driving youth around.)
- In metropolitan areas with a public bus system, purchasing bus cards for youth

Chafee Educational and Training Voucher Program

The Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV) program for Youths Aging out of Foster Care was added to the Chafee program in 2002. ETV provides resources specifically to meet the education and training needs of these youth. In addition, the law authorizes \$60 million for payments to states for post-secondary educational and training vouchers for youth who are likely to experience difficulty as they transition to adulthood after age 18 years. This program makes vouchers of up to \$5,000 per year per youth available for post-secondary education and training for eligible youth. Payments are made to eligible institutions to be used on behalf of the transitioning youths.

Transportation can be a major barrier for youth who are pursuing job skills education, because most of this type of education occurs in a technical college, community college, or other type of accredited trade school, very few of which have on-campus housing. There is no statutory definition of allowable transportation expenses. The institution may determine the amount of transportation expenses, if any, to allow in determining the cost of attendance. The state should consult with the institution to determine which expenses are allowable and appropriate.

Minnesota Legislation

The importance of transportation in transitioning youth from adolescents to adulthood was emphasized by Minnesota legislature when it passed a statute that requires all youth age 16 and older who are in out-of-home (foster) care to have an independent living plan. The law requires that the plan include but not be limited to the following objectives:

- Educational, vocational, or employment planning
- Health care planning and medical coverage
- Transportation, including, where appropriate, assisting the child in obtaining a driver's license
- Money management
- Planning for housing
- Social and recreational skills
- Establishing and maintaining connections with the child's family and community

The state-developed guide provides social workers with the information and resources to

develop the components that comprise an independent living plan. Among the recommendations included in the transportation component of the guide are the following:

- Arrange opportunities for youth to learn to use public transportation
- Provide youth with bus cards
- Arrange for youth to take driver's education and obtain their driver's license
- Provide opportunities for youth to practice driving
- Help youth learn how to purchase auto insurance and a reliable vehicle
- Help youth learn basic auto maintenance
- Provide youth with a bicycle if they need it for transportation to work

It also provides sample transportation goals and objectives for independent living plans and defines certain transportation-related skills that youth should possess by a defined date, such as the ability to

- Read a map and follow directional signs
- Identify and use public transportation
- Read public transportation schedules and maps
- Understand the responsibilities involved with a driver's license and obtain a license
- Estimate the cost of owning and operating a car for a month/year
- Understand safety guidelines for auto drivers and passengers

Conclusion

For youth development initiatives to be most effective in helping youth achieve good education and employment opportunities, a broad array of partnerships must be established at the state and community levels. Just as important are linkages among different types of services at the local level, with transportation being one of the most important linkages: for youth to actively participate in programs, they must have access to reliable transportation. Young adults and other youth have benefited from Minnesota's innovative programs, which help provide them access to adequate transportation as they progress to an independent lifestyle.

Brief #3: Federal Funding for Youth Employment-Related Transportation

December 2006

Compiled by April Kaplan on behalf of the Community Transportation Association of America

Several federal programs that promote youth employment readiness allow funds to be used for transportation, although under some programs the type of transportation expense is restricted. We have compiled a list of those programs and their relevant contact information below.

U.S. Department of Labor

Workforce Investment Act

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 replaced the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982. Under WIA, the federal government, states, and local communities join efforts to develop a system that provides workers with job search assistance, training, and advice. The Act emphasizes local involvement in the development of workforce training and employment programs, and thus gives states and communities flexibility in developing programs that meet the needs of their individual citizens. WIA also established the One Stop Center system, mandating that regional sites be set up in neighborhoods where customers can access employment, education, training, and information services they need in one location.

Specific to youth, the Act authorized the establishment of youth councils to guide the development and operation of youth programs as well as the provision of youth opportunity grants for high-poverty areas.

For further information on WIA, visit the program's website at www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The TANF program provides assistance and work opportunities to needy families by granting states the federal funds and flexibility to develop and implement their own welfare programs. The program, which became effective July 1, 1997, replaced two programs that were commonly known as welfare: Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) programs.

TANF funds may be used for employment support services, such as transportation, provided the expenditure benefits TANF-eligible individuals and reasonably accomplishes the purposes of the TANF program.

TANF funds have also become a major source of matching funds for the Federal Transit Administration's Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program, which requires a 50% local match for operations and a 20% local match for capital projects; this match requirement can be met with federal dollars, as long as the source of those funds is other than the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The TANF program is administered by the Administration for Children and Families (www.acf.hhs.gov).

Community Services Block Grants

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program provides funding to states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, U.S. territories, federal- and state-recognized Native American tribes and tribal organizations, community action agencies, state-designated migrant and seasonal farm worker, or related organizations to alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty in communities. The funds can be used to provide a range of services and activities to assist the needs of low-income individuals and migrant workers, including services and activities that address the following: employment, education, income management, housing, nutrition, emergency services, and health.

The CSBG program is administered by the Administration for Children and Families; more information is available at the program's website (www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/csbg).

Social Services Block Grant

Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funds are designed to enable each state to provide social services best suited to meet the needs of the individuals residing within the state. The covered services are wide ranging, but include day care for children or adults, special services for people with disabilities, counseling, case management, transportation, foster care for children or adults, independent/transitional living, special services for youth, employment services, and other social services found necessary by the state for its population.

The SSBG program is administered by the Administration for Children and Families; more information is available at the program's website at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/ssbg.

Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program

The primary goals of Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) are to prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their families, improve the quality of care and services to children and their families, and ensure permanency for children by reuniting them with their parents or facilitating an adoption or other permanent living arrangement. The PSSF program provides states with grants to develop, establish, and expand coordinated programs of four types of community-based services: (1) family preservation services, (2) time-limited family reunification services, (3) community-based family support services, and (4) adoption promotion and support services. Funds go directly to child welfare agencies and eligible Indian tribes and have been used to support many innovative programs and services that local communities rely on for at-risk families.

The PSSF program is administered by the Administration for Children and Families; more information is available at the program's website at:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs_fund/state_tribal/ss_act2.htm.

The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program

The Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (legislation passed in 1999) was designed to ease the transition of children raised in foster care into an independent living situation by providing them with life skills training, assistance obtaining a high school diploma and preparing for higher level education, vocational training, job placement and retention, training in budgeting and financial management skills, substance abuse prevention, and preventive health activities.

Chafee Act funds can be used to support life skills activities such as transporting youth to groups and retreats; assisting them in touring colleges and vocational technical campuses; and aiding them in visiting potential work sites, apartment buildings, grocery stores, garage sales, thrift stores, workforce centers, libraries, and used car lots. Some of the ways in which states

have used Chafee funds for transportation-related uses include 1) paying for driver's education and licensing fees for youth; 2) reimbursing volunteer peer youth drivers for gas or mileage; 3) purchasing a bicycle, car insurance, car maintenance, or car repairs to enable youth to travel to a job or postsecondary school; 4) reimbursing foster parents or volunteer drivers for expenses incurred in transporting youth to life skills group activities; and 5) funding agency-based staff vehicles or vans to transport youth; and 6) purchasing bus cards for youth.

The Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV) program for Youths Aging out of Foster Care was added to the Chafee program in 2002. ETV provides resources specifically to meet the education and training needs of these youth. In addition, the law authorizes \$60 million for payments to states for post-secondary educational and training vouchers for youth who are likely to experience difficulty as they transition to adulthood after age 18 years. This program makes vouchers of up to \$5,000 per year per youth available for post-secondary education and training for eligible youth. Payments are made to eligible institutions to be used on behalf of the transitioning youths.

Transportation can be a major barrier for youth who are pursuing job skills education, because most of this type of education occurs in a technical college, community college, or other type of accredited trade school, very few of which have on-campus housing. There is no statutory definition of allowable transportation expenses. The institution may determine the amount of transportation expenses, if any, to allow in determining the cost of attendance. The state should consult with the institution to determine which expenses are allowable and appropriate.

The Chafee Foster Care Independence Program is administered by the Administration for Children and Families; more information is available at the program's website at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs_fund/state_tribal/jh_chafee.htm.

Family Violence Programs

The Family Violence Prevention and Services Program provides grants to state agencies, territories, and Native American tribes for the provision of shelter to victims of family violence and their dependents, and for related services, such as emergency transportation and child care. These funds supplement many already-established community-based family violence prevention and services activities. They also allow recipients to expand current service programs and establish additional services in rural and underserved areas, on Native American reservations, and in Alaskan Native Villages.

The Family Violence program is administered by the Administration for Children and Families; more information is available at the program's website at: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/familyviolence/programs.htm.

National Youth Sports Program (NYSP)

NYSP grants, which are funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association, are given to selected institutions of higher education. The primary goal of the program is to provide youth living in areas of urban and rural poverty with an opportunity to benefit from academic and sports skills instruction and sports competition, improve their physical fitness and health habits, and become acquainted with career and educational opportunities within a college or university environment. More information on the program is available at www.nyscorp.org/nysp/home.html.

Medicaid

Under the Medicaid Program, states are required to arrange for transportation of beneficiaries to

and from medical care. Having access to proper medical care (e.g., eye examinations, counseling, pre-employment health screenings) can be essential for youth either seeking or attempting to maintain employment. Community school leaders receiving Medicaid funding may be able to use a portion of these funds to support transportation services for Medicaid-eligible children and youth to and from medical care.

U.S. Department of Education

21st Century Community Learning Centers

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program provides formula grants to states to support the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. These centers provide safe, drug free, supervised activities outside the regular school day or during periods when school is not in session. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children. Under this program, transportation expenses may be covered as indirect expenses incurred by a school district, community-based organization, or other entity in administering or providing program services as long as these expenses are specifically included in the grant application.

The program is administered through the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. The program contact is Peter Eldridge, 21stCCLC@ed.gov or peter.eldridge@ed.gov, tel. (202) 260-2514. The program's website is www.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The CDBG formula-based grants provide states and local jurisdictions with resources to address a wide range of community development needs, such as access to decent, affordable housing; services to the most vulnerable members of the community; and the creation of jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses. CDBG funds must be used for activities that benefit low- and moderate-income persons.

Support for transportation costs can be found under at least two of the program's national objectives: promote activities that benefit low- and moderate-income individuals and support activities that address community development needs. In the regulations, transportation costs are specifically provided to owners of microenterprises and are more generally included under the category of employment-related public services.

Directly related to youth employment, CDBG grants support two work study programs. Under the Community Development Work Study Program, grants are made directly to institutions of higher education for the purpose of providing assistance to economically disadvantaged and minority students who participate in a work study program while enrolled in full-time graduate programs in community and economic development, community planning, and community management. Within the Hispanic-Serving Institutions Work Study Program, grants are provided to public and private nonprofit Hispanic-serving institutions of higher education for the purpose of providing assistance to economically disadvantaged and minority students who participate in a work study program while enrolled in full-time community college programs in community

building, and to provide entry to pre-professional careers in these fields.

The program is administered by the Community Planning/Development Office; more information on this program is available at www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs.

Supportive Housing Program

The Supportive Housing Program is authorized by [Title IV, Subtitle C](#), of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, as amended. It is designed to promote, as part of a local continuum of care strategy, the development of supportive housing and supportive services to assist homeless persons to move into transitional housing and from transitional to permanent housing and to enable them to live as independently as possible. Among those support services is transportation.

The program is administered by the Community Planning/Development Office; the program's website is www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/programs/shp/.

U.S. Department of Justice

The Juvenile Accountability Block

The Juvenile Accountability Block Grants (JABG) program is administered by the State Relations and Assistance Division of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice. JABG funds may be to transport youth to support services that will help them become employable. The program's website is <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/jabg/>.

Brief #4: BerkshireRides Now Provides Transportation Access to Local Youth Programs

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Written by Pamela Friedman on behalf of the Community Transportation Association of America

Having helped over 5,000 residents commute to work and volunteer opportunities over the past five years, BerkshireRides, a non-profit transportation service in northern Berkshire County (Massachusetts) has now expanded its mission to transporting younger residents to after-school and summer programs throughout the community. In collaboration with area schools and youth programs, and using an \$81,000 three-year grant from Northern Berkshire United Way, BerkshireRides recently added three vans to its fleet to specifically transport children to programs.

The youth transportation program, the first for this rural community, resulted from a 10-month cooperative effort between the North Adams Public School System, the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition, the Northern Berkshire YMCA and the Church Outreach to Youth program. The collaboration is an example of how local agencies can partner to provide local youth access to a variety of programs the youth may not otherwise been able to attend. The concept for the service was born after multiple meetings with local agencies that offer youth development programs. In the past, agencies were able to use public school vans during after-school hours to transport youth to programs. But, as that fleet aged, the vehicles became less available. In addition, the YMCA's vans were headed for retirement, so suddenly the community was faced with a transportation crisis. After looking at many different ways to mitigate the problem, the community presented Northern Berkshire United Way with its proposal for the youth transportation service.

With the \$81,000 grant from Northern Berkshire United Way, BerkshireRides purchased three new vans, fitted with school bus lights and pupil plates to use to pick up students from local schools and take them to after-school summer activities. One of the vans is a 12-passenger van that can be used for larger groups.

The program's first priority is assisting agencies with their youth development programs. All three vehicles are shared among member agencies as needed, under the sponsorship of BerkshireRides. Each van may be used for multiple trips on any given day; with each agency using the vehicle for the hours they need it to provide youth transportation. When not reserved by one of the collaborating partners, the vans may be used to support BerkshireRides greater mission of removing transportation barriers for local communities. In its first six weeks of operation, 871 children, were transported for a total of 2,913 miles.

Rides are free of charge to the youth passengers. The participating agencies each pay a monthly fee to cover insurance, safety inspection, registration, maintenance costs. Member agencies also recruit drivers and maintain and re-fuel the vehicles. BerkshireRides maintains a list of qualified drivers. Drivers are required to pass a criminal background check and have a safe driving record before they are accepted into the program. The drivers are employed by each individual agency. Some might volunteer, others are paid, and others are full-time agency employees who drive as part of their program responsibilities.

BerkshireRides also coordinates the schedules for use of the vans; member agencies are entitled to priority scheduling of one vehicle. When one of the “paying” partners has not requested use of a vehicle, it is available for use in meeting other community transportation needs. For example, prior to the service’s maiden voyage, the Mayor of North Adams contacted Jana Hunkler Brule, Project Manager for BerkshireRides, looking for a way to get two families to attend their children’s performance in a play. About 3 hours after being registered, a volunteer driver went to the housing development where the families live and shuttled them to a neighboring town’s summer theater festival so they could see their children perform. Brule said “it was a wonderful feeling” to be able to provide this service.

The member agencies attend scheduling meetings 3-4 times per year during which they plan their programs in such a way that the small fleet of vans can be shared between all. A separate daily rate for agencies with occasional transportation needs is also being considered.

Much of the program’s success is accredited to the fact that participating agencies were part of the service from the start and actually conceptualized the model. Attracting additional partners, which is seen as necessary to sustaining the service over the long haul, is a challenge because the service is still new. However, at least two more agencies are expected to enroll by the end of 2007, and member agencies will continue to work to identify potential new agency partners. Ultimately, BerkShireRides’ aim is to have 10 agencies share/support the three vehicles.

Additional support for the youth transportation service is currently provided by donations from the local school system and a hospital outreach/education program. The additional income has allowed BerkshireRides to bring parents to schools for meeting and school-related events. Without this service, these parents would not be able to participate in their children’s academic lives. Furthermore, adult students, with a referral, are now able to attend prevention programs such as smoking cessation or free mammograms for the uninsured offered by a local hospital.

A program of the Transportation Association of Northern Berkshire, Inc. BerkshireRides offers employment related ride service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, each day of the year, assisting any resident in need of a ride throughout the Northern Berkshire region of seven cities and towns.