

Coordinating Transportation Services:

Local Collaboration and Decision-Making



A "How-To" Manual for Planning and Implementation

Creative Action, Inc. Akron, Ohio

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A “How-to” Manual for Planning and Implementation

Completed as Part of the Project:
Model Procedures for Coordination among Transportation Providers:
The Key Role of Local Collaboration and Decision-Making

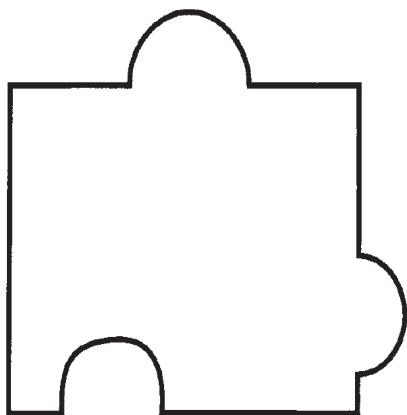
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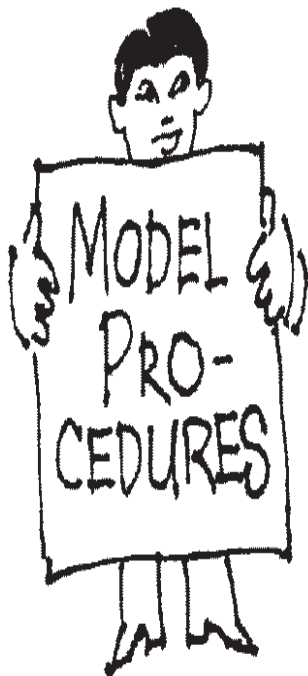
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Introduction

This handbook has been developed through a demonstration project entitled “Model Procedures for Coordination among Transportation Providers: The Key Role of Local Collaboration and Decision-Making.” The project was designed to develop, evaluate and document model procedures for coordination of transportation services among various transportation providers within a community. In addition to this handbook, two other reports have resulted from the project:

**Project Technical Report: Model Procedures for
Coordination among Transportation Providers:
The Key Role of Local Collaboration and Decision-Making
and
Transportation Services and the Functional Capabilities of
People with Disabilities**



BACKGROUND

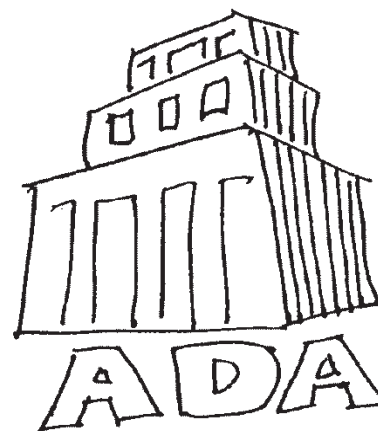
Through this demonstration project, model procedures for transportation coordination have been developed. The model is grounded in collaboration. Satisfying customer needs for accessibility and mobility provides the framework for transportation service development. In this perspective, people with disabilities are always customers. They are customers of the local public transportation system, of other agencies engaged in the collaboration process, and agencies potentially involved in the coordinated delivery of transportation services. Other clients of agencies involved in the collaborative process are also customers, as is the general public.

This demonstration project was completed by developing and testing the model coordination procedures in Mahoning County, Ohio in collaboration with the Western Reserve Transit Authority (WRTA), Mahoning County Commissioners, and agencies in the county. When the project began, WRTA and the other Mahoning County agencies were in the pre-planning stages of organizing to coordinate transportation services in the region. Through the development and testing process, the Mahoning County transportation providers

working together were able to make true progress toward the coordination of transportation services.

BENEFITS

These tested model procedures enable and empower local officials and representatives of public transportation interests, disability and other customer interests, and others to collaboratively find ways to more effectively use limited resources. They also promote the use of previously untapped resources to increase the service capability of public transportation systems. Application of the model procedures permits communities to meet the travel needs of people with disabilities and achieve compliance with the accessibility and complementary paratransit requirements of ADA. Through effective coordination of transportation services, mobility is improved for people with disabilities, older adults, and others who have difficulty using current modes of public transportation to get where they need or want to go.

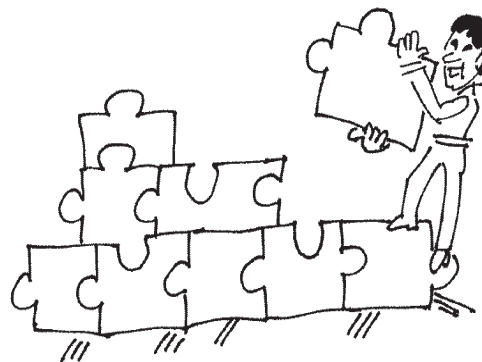


The project has demonstrated that representatives of public transportation systems and the disability community, along with other concerned agencies and individuals can work together effectively. Further, it has shown that groups with diverse interests in improving local transportation services can be effectively included in the process, as should be the case.

This handbook presents tools and techniques that will enable local officials and decision-makers to more efficiently and effectively deliver local transportation services. Application of the procedures can result in significant coordination of community transportation services. The amount and timeliness of service improvement depend on the extent to which key individuals are ready for change.

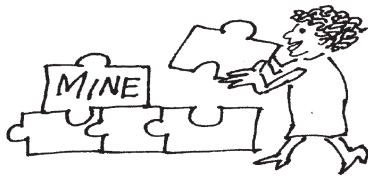
COLLABORATORS

Key individuals in the coordination process include both stakeholders and leaders. Stakeholders are those individuals in human services agencies, charitable organizations, transit



systems, and private industry who have an interest or role in the transportation services of their area. These individuals have—or perceive that they have—something to gain or lose in transportation service coordination. Key leaders are individuals who are in a position to contribute resources and funding, and make policy recommendations and decisions about transportation service coordination. They may include elected officials, agency directors, local government department staff, economic development personnel, planners, and executives in public transit, taxi companies, private transportation companies, or ambulance services. These groups and individuals are not mutually exclusive. In fact, it is very likely that some leaders will also be stakeholders.

TURFISM



“Turfism” is an issue that often surfaces in discussions about transportation coordination. Simply defined, “turfism” means “This is my program, my funding, my clients, etc., and nobody, especially you, can do a better job of providing transportation

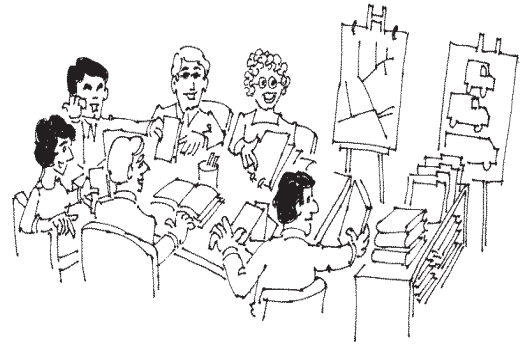
services than I.” This attitude presents a challenge to those seeking to coordinate, but it can be overcome. The key to changing this thinking, and the way in which community transportation services are delivered, rests with the people who are responsible for meeting transportation needs of the general public and groups of people who have specific needs and wants. The procedures presented in this handbook focus on enabling and empowering people to think differently, openly, and creatively. These techniques assist users in finding solutions that many may have recognized, but have been unable to implement.

PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

The methods presented in this handbook are grounded on the premise that local officials, people and organizations that serve and/or advocate for specific groups of people, and the customers of transportation services themselves must

understand transportation issues and concerns within their community. Further, they must work together to identify common interests and diverging views. They must work to reach consensus about where agreement is and what can be changed. Finally, they must reach consensus on what is difficult to change or what cannot be changed at the present time.

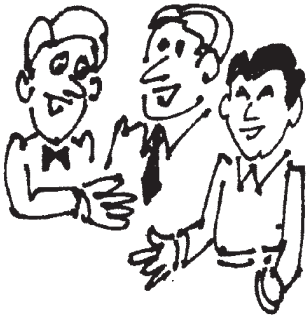
A key to successful collaboration and decision-making is to define a coordinated transportation system that can be achieved in the near term, recognizing that transportation will, and should be, viewed as a dynamic “work in progress” that will evolve, change, grow, and strengthen over time. One of the greatest threats to effective coordination is to decide or conclude that not enough agencies are ready to begin coordinating transportation services. The reality is that some agencies may not be ready at a given point in time, and that is okay. A group of agencies must reach consensus, decide on a plan of action, and begin to coordinate transportation services. Other agencies can join later. It is not worth waiting for those one or two agencies if waiting may jeopardize initiating others to coordinate.



The central philosophy presented is that people can work together under difficult circumstances. Conflict is not necessarily the natural consequence of efforts to find solutions to difficult problems. In fact, people can overcome difficult times and unsuccessful experiences. The procedures take a marketing approach to transportation coordination. Here, marketing is defined as creating and offering services to satisfy peoples' travel needs.

To that end, marketing involves the following:

- **Identifying, or “targeting,” individuals and groups in the community,**
- **Identifying their transportation needs, and**
- **Working toward meeting their needs through the coordination of transportation services.**



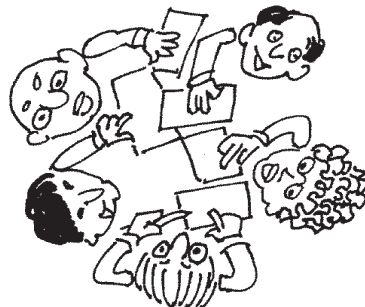
This handbook stresses ongoing communication through various methods in order to expand the market. It is essential to educate and inform the key public in the community about the features of the new coordinated transportation system and how these will benefit the users of transportation services.

TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION: CONCEPT AND KEY ELEMENTS

Transportation coordination means different things to different people. In the context of this handbook, transportation coordination means that two or more providers of transportation services work together under specific circumstances to pool physical and/or financial resources, combine transportation capabilities, and improve the capacity of services to meet travel needs.

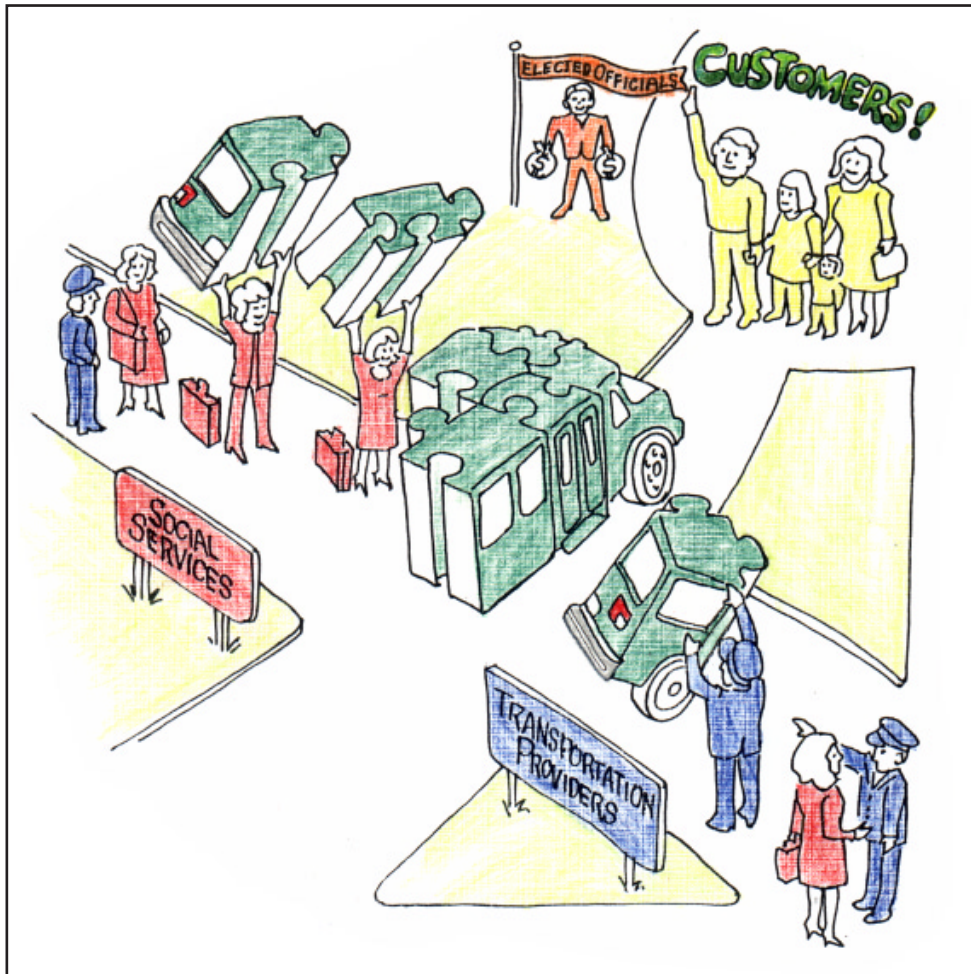
Communication is central to the successful, on-going coordination of transportation services. Communication is talking about issues and presenting points of view. It is about listening carefully to other views, concerns, and arguments. It is about developing an understanding of why people believe and feel the way they do and how those feelings and beliefs may impact efforts to coordinate transportation services.

The following illustration captures the approach to coordination of transportation services developed in this project. Central to successful coordination is the recognition that, in the end, what matters most is delivery of service to a customer with a travel need.



The Key...

...to Transportation Coordination



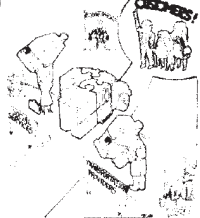
Key players in making coordination work include:

- **Social service agencies that provide service to and advocate for particular segments of the population.**
- **Transportation providers that are in a position to help people and the agencies meet travel needs.**
- **Elected local, state, and federal officials who are in a position to offer program and financial assistance.**

Local collaboration, communication, and decision-making is essential for coordination to succeed. These three groups must put the pieces of the coordination puzzle together.

The Key...
...To Transportation Coordination


- Maintain a focus on your customers
- Pay attention to your funding sources
- Transportation providers need to understand social service needs
- Social service agencies need to understand transportation providers



Key players and stakeholders need to understand and respect each other's interests and views. Further, it is essential that key players and stakeholders never forget that it is the customers of the coordinated transportation services who matter most.

Tying Services together through
...Transportation Coordination


- The customer is #1!!!
- Agencies and providers of transportation are serving many of the same people.



In our illustration, the customers are clearly the focal point. Transportation services are for them. If transportation services are not meeting their needs, then services should be evaluated and redesigned to do a better job. Like it or not, in today's local marketplace transportation services are not going to be self-sustaining. Therefore, elected officials at all levels of government are key to success. It is through programs and funding that they make available that local transportation services are to be put in place.

Tying Services together through
...Transportation Coordination

- Agencies must respect and trust the abilities of the providers of transportation service.



The real work, on a continuing basis, rests on the shoulders of those who provide transportation services and those who advocate for or provide social services for people who are unable to adequately meet their travel needs. In any local area, providers whose sole business is to run transportation service may provide transportation services. Usually, agencies whose real purpose is to provide social service programming to people also provide transportation services. They do this because their clients also happen to have difficulty meeting their travel needs. As a consequence, many of these agencies have gotten into the business of transportation by necessity. They have felt that providing transportation services is essential to ensuring that people can gain access to their program services.

Tying Services together through
...Transportation Coordination

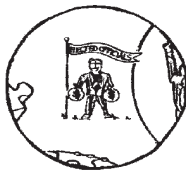
- Transportation service providers must respect and understand the commitment of agencies whose clients need transportation services.



For coordination of transportation services to work, the transportation providers must understand the interests, concerns, and objectives of those who are providing social services. In like manner, the social service agencies must understand the interests, concerns and objectives of those who are providing transportation services. In other words, it is essential, that transportation providers put themselves in the shoes of the social service providers and vice versa. The result is a better common understanding of issues, concerns, and

Tying Services together through
...Transportation Coordination

- Federal, state, and local governments are important sources of funding for transportation services



objectives. Through this kind of collaborative thinking, issues and conflicts can be resolved pro-actively rather than reactively. Turf need not be protected. Walls need not be built in the first place

“HOW TO” MODULES

Five “how to” modules are presented in this handbook. Although each module is self-contained, it is recommended that the procedures and techniques in all five be followed. The modules are:

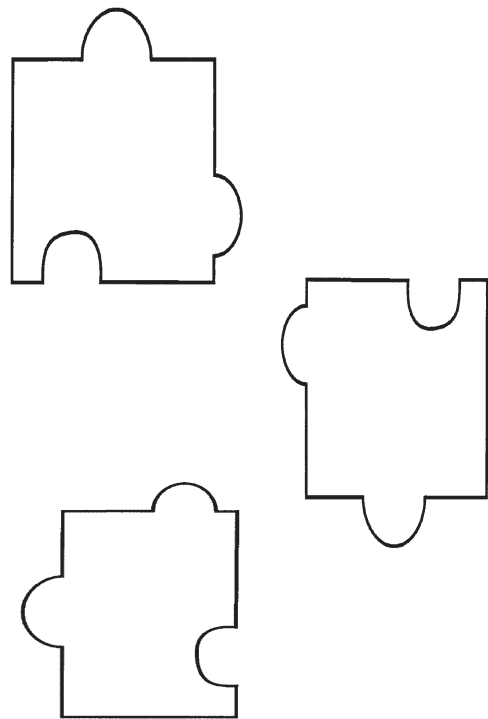
GETTING STARTED—Current Circumstances, Common Concerns and Issues (pg. 15)

MOVING FORWARD—Collaborative Thinking and Consensus Building Setting Direction and Taking Action (pg. 45)

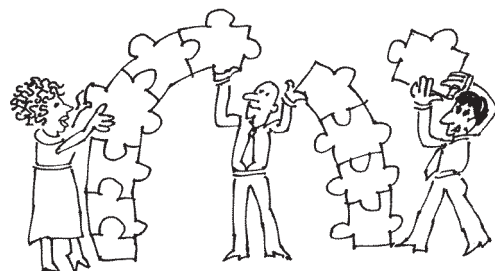
UP AND RUNNING—Developing and Implementing a Plan for Action (pg. 59)

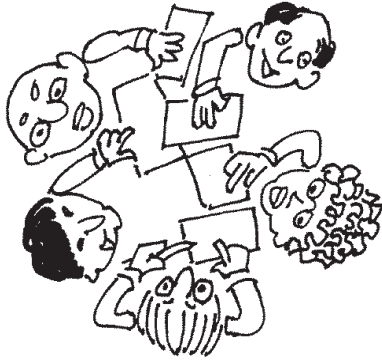
DEALING WITH THE ROUGH SPOTS—Persevering (pg. 83)

LOOKING BACK—Reviewing Progress (pg. 87)



The names of the “how-to” modules describe the focus of each of five major areas of concern in coordination. The module names also illustrate positive thinking and viewpoints, which are important themes throughout this handbook and the coordination process. A principal objective is to encourage the user to think in new and non-traditional ways about the way in which transportation services can be provided. Expect the unexpected, because the path to coordination can be unpredictable.





This handbook is targeted to individuals who are prepared to work with others to form the necessary organization to bring about coordination. This handbook is unique in that it presents coordination as a group endeavor. Activities described in this handbook are to be applied in group settings or as part of a collaborative effort. They are designed to create group consensus for development and implementation of coordinated transportation services. Coordination can only happen within the context of collaboration and consensus among group members. Outcomes will vary from one community to another. However, the approach presented in this handbook is designed to be transferable and replicable in local urban, suburban and rural areas across the United States.

“We tried coordination before and it didn’t work”

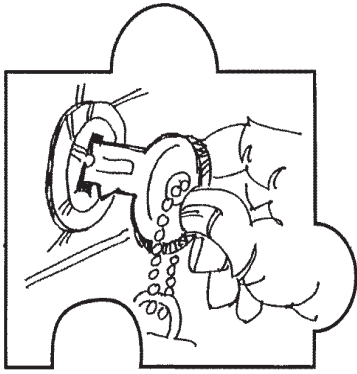
“We’ve tried everything and nothing has changed”

“Coordination won’t work in this community”

Some may say: “We tried coordination before and it didn’t work.” Or, as we have often heard: “Coordination won’t work in this community. We’ve tried everything and nothing has changed.”

CHANGE CAN OCCUR

The change can be revolutionary or more likely, evolutionary. Change can grow out of any set of local circumstances. But first, key leaders and stakeholders need to take risks, be open to failure, look past problems, and think about solutions. The old adage that says, “If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem” holds true here. A central theme of this handbook is that, while it is okay to disagree, people need to work together to build consensus. It doesn’t just happen.



Getting Started

Getting started means just that. Many times, this can be a most difficult step, especially if previous attempts at coordination have resulted in failure. Failure and the conflict that may have accompanied it can make it difficult to pick up the pieces and try again. In any event, there needs to be a decision to begin or revisit the coordination process. Usually, something will trigger such a decision. For example, federal and state mandates and inducements may force action, or a local transportation need may surface. The first step is to find out what information is needed and who in the community is most essential to starting a group process. Identifying information needs, key players and “hot” issues will lay the groundwork for coordination.

After reading this module, you will be able to:

- Identify and share important information about community transportation needs
- Identify leaders and stakeholders in the community who are or should be involved in the coordination of transportation services
- Carry out one-on-one interviews with key leaders and stakeholders whose opinions and actions will shape transportation service coordination
- Carry out a survey of local transportation needs and resources to further identify and verify important issues and information about coordination in your community

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

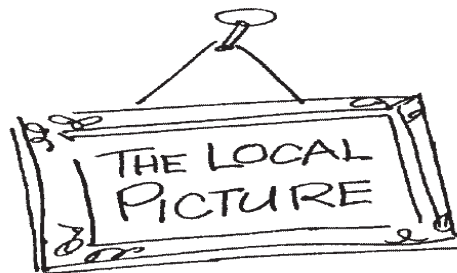
The goal of this module is to provide tools to establish key contacts, bring individuals and groups together to begin the dialogue and gather information on concerns, resources, and needs as they relate to transportation services within a local setting.

FRAMEWORK FOR COORDINATION ACTIVITIES

Understanding the Local Setting

Local settings will differ. However, the process presented in this handbook is designed to be universally applicable.

Groundwork is needed before key contacts can be made, and the concept of transportation coordination must be introduced into the local or regional agenda.



This groundwork means understanding the following:

Local political structure—What are the arrangements that define the roles, responsibilities, and powers of elected and appointed officials as they appear in constitutions and statutes at the state level, and charters at the local level?

Recent local history—Has some form of coordination been tried in the past? What were the results?

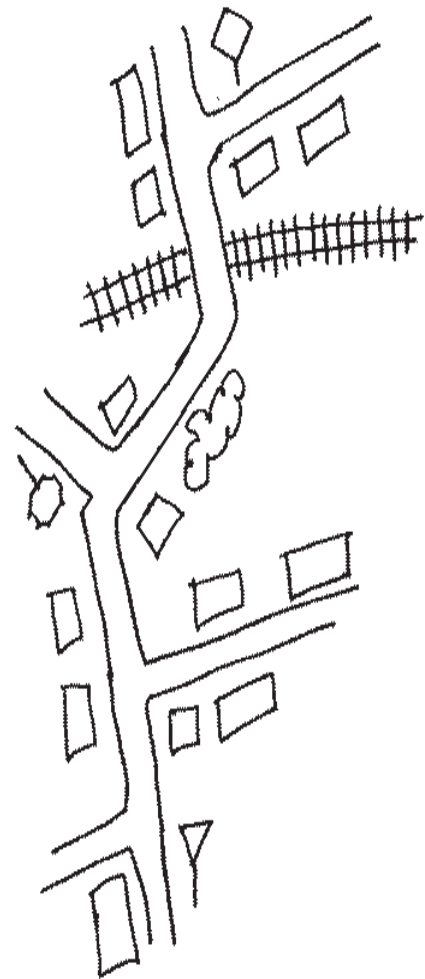
Transportation resources—Who are the transit providers, including human services agencies, taxi companies, and private bus companies?

Community educational resources—What colleges and universities, consultants, interest groups and other resources are available in the community to provide information and guidance?

Local political economy—What is the role of business in the local policy process?

Establishing Contacts and Bringing People Together

As you begin your coordination effort, there will be a core group of interested individuals—people who have a concern about transportation services, and a desire to do things differently. The number of people who fit into this category will vary from one local setting to another. Some of these individuals may have already started to discuss with each other their concerns and ideas about improving the situation as they see it. At first, they will probably represent many different viewpoints and will be far from reaching consensus. The task at hand is to connect with these folks and begin the networking process.



Your Core Group



of People

The established transportation providers are obvious contacts. But that should only be the beginning. Think about agencies with an interest in improving transportation services. Key leaders and stakeholders in transportation coordination will differ from community to community, and so will the desire to work toward change.

Your core group will be a unique mix of people from a variety of sectors, including the following:

- **Individuals and groups that advocate for older adults, people with disabilities, and people living in poverty**
- **Charitable organizations and religious institutions**
- **Local government**
- **Colleges and universities**
- **Business community (employers, mall owners, etc.)**

Rather than setting out right away to form a committee, the best approach is to let the group come together informally. You, as facilitator, should be impartial and objective in bringing people together. Arrange informal meetings to start the dialogue process. Invite people who represent a diversity of perspectives, opinions, and ideas. The point is to identify people who are interested in working toward change, not to sell them on your vision of coordination. You will also be creating awareness about problems and opportunities for change. As you network, additional names of key individuals and potential contacts will emerge. Once a few contacts are made, others will follow as transportation coordination takes its place on the local or regional agenda. The process should be allowed to evolve. As interest in coordination builds, participation should be encouraged and welcomed in the group. Some people may choose to stay outside the process or join later. Some may decide that they are not ready for coordination. Nevertheless,

it is important to keep moving forward despite a disappointing level of interest at first. Many times, a key individual or agency that is initially skeptical or negatively predisposed about coordination will join in when they see the effort building momentum and becoming successful.

Organization

As you begin bringing together individuals interested in coordinating transportation services, you will have the nucleus of a decision-making body. However, there is no single way of organizing that works best for coordination in all communities. Instead of following a rigid structure, the organization should be allowed to take shape and evolve naturally. Your organization will become more complex, and achieve greater formalization as it evolves. Without knowing what the local circumstances are, it is difficult to say what an organizational structure needs to be.

Three hypothetical counties are referred to throughout this handbook to illustrate how structure conforms to local circumstances. Although the counties (Muskmelon, Peach, and Mango) are hypothetical, the examples are true and are based on events that occurred in communities in which coordination has taken place to some extent. Each example represents a unique scenario, demonstrating how a coordination effort may play out differently in a variety of environments and under different circumstances.

Hypothetical Counties



**Muskmelon
Peach
Mango**



**Face-to-face interviews
are best.**



GATHERING INFORMATION

Personal Interviews with Key Leaders and Stakeholders

Interviewing key community leaders is a valuable, momentum-building step in the coordination process.

It serves two purposes:

- 1. To formulate the concepts, concerns, opportunities, and threats to coordination that will determine later discussion.**
- 2. To follow up on the interest generated by bringing community leaders into the idea-formulation process.**

Interviewing key leaders and stakeholders is a form of participatory research, a dynamic data collection process. Participatory research involves introducing individuals to the concept of transportation coordination and gaining their insight through an exchange of questions and answers. The process gives people the opportunity to express their ideas in a confidential setting, which is conducive to identifying conflicts and problems that might not emerge in a group setting. Discussing in a group setting the issues identified through the interview process is an excellent way for participants to share, and build upon, their insights.

Because you will be working with a diverse group, interest and willingness to participate will vary. Many of the key leaders and stakeholders who participate in interviews will continue to be active in the process. Others will participate sporadically, or drop out of the effort altogether. Therefore, it is important that the process remain open to those who wish to contribute now as well as later, and that you continue to look for participants.

How Many Key Leaders and Stakeholders should be Interviewed?

Fifteen to thirty interviews should be sufficient, depending on the number of key leaders and stakeholders in the community. More important than the number of people you interview, however, is the process of recruitment. A good way to begin is to generate a master list of individuals who qualify as key leaders and stakeholders. Many of these individuals will come to mind immediately. Collaborators can help to suggest names. By inviting everyone on your master list, you will end up with an acceptable number of completed interviews.

Contacting Potential Participants

The master list may not contain all necessary information. To prepare for key leader/stakeholder interviews, you will need to have as much complete information as possible about each one. Telephone numbers for key stakeholders in government, private industry and human services agencies can be found in the telephone directory. Many agencies publish their own directories, which often include the name of a contact person. Some areas have an information line or other central source of social services agency names, addresses and telephone numbers. Some directories, such as the standard phone book, do not include names and titles of potential interviewees. This information can be found by calling the agency, office or company and speaking to an administrative assistant or receptionist.

Working Out the Logistics

Place

Interviews may be held at a central location or the interviewee's office. What would be convenient for you, the interviewers, and more importantly, the interviewees? The interview setting should be a pleasant environment located nearby and easy-to-reach. A downtown office, boardroom, conference room, or other quiet area will work just fine as an interviewing facility. Many stakeholders and key leaders, however, prefer to be interviewed in their own offices. This may be the most feasible



Listening is the key to successful interviewing.



Probe interviewers for details, clarification, and understanding.

Mango County, U.S.A.

In Mango County, more than 50 key leaders and stakeholders were asked to participate in an interview. They included elected and appointed officials in municipal, township and county government, agency directors, and individuals from private industry. Interviews with twenty-nine were completed. Through the interview process, key leaders and stakeholders revealed a range of views on coordination, from very favorable, to cautious, to downright pessimistic. However, results provided a starting point for an ongoing coordination discussion and effort that now includes a working coordination plan, a standing steering committee devoted to achieving the goals of the plan, and contractual arrangements among transportation providers.



option for interviewing individuals whose availability is very limited. The goal is to make the interviewee feel comfortable as this helps the dialogue flow more easily.

Time

It is a good idea to have at least one week blocked out for conducting interviews. In this way, you will be able to schedule the key leaders and stakeholders at their convenience. Of course, the more options that you can offer, the more likely it will be that these leaders agree to an interview. In addition, having two to four trained interviewers available helps contribute to flexible scheduling.

Develop a Telephone Guide

Key leaders and stakeholders are often away from their desk or office when you call. Getting through may take some persistence. Leaving detailed voicemail messages or scheduling an appointment through an assistant is often necessary. A telephone guide helps in making phone calls and leaving messages. This helps ensure you leave sufficient information consistently. The guide should include an introduction, explain the purpose of the call, and request for an interview or a return call. (See Figure 1).

The best approach to securing an appointment for an interview is to quickly and persuasively present the necessary information. It is best to sound conversational when calling, not as though reading from a script. You should be prepared to repeat and expand upon the details you present over the telephone, depending on whom you are addressing. It is important to design the telephone guide not as a script but as a source of access to all pertinent information.

You will find that some individuals want a lot of detail about the project, while others do not. Have on hand a one-page background sheet that provides these details for elaboration if necessary. You can use this as a talking piece, or mail or fax it upon request. Also helpful for ensuring that appointments

are kept is a reminder sent by fax or mail containing all of the details, maps and directions. Figure 2 shows a sample a follow-up reminder that provides information about the time and place of an interview.

Figure 1—Sample Telephone Guide for Scheduling Interviews with Key Community Leaders

**Telephone Guide
For Scheduling Interviews with
Key Community Leaders**

Hello. May I speak with _____. This is _____, with _____. We're working on a coordination project funded by _____ to broaden the scope of transportation service coordination in _____ by including leaders in local government and area agencies in this process. So, we're calling to schedule a one-on-one, half-hour interview with _____ to get [your/his/her] perspective on transportation service coordination issues.

[IF USING A CENTRAL LOCATION(S)]:

The interviews are being scheduled for [DATES] from ____AM to ____PM at:

[LOCATION NAME 1]
[ADDRESS 1]

[LOCATION NAME 2]
[ADDRESS 2]

What location and time would ____ prefer?

[REFER TO SCHEDULE SHEET]

We will be sending you a fax (or letter if no fax machine) confirming the time and location.

[IF INTERVIEWING AT HIS/HER OFFICE]:

What time would be convenient?

[REFER TO SCHEDULE SHEET]

[IF NECESSARY]: Where are you located?

We will be sending you a fax (or letter if no fax machine) confirming the interview time.

Thank you for your participation.

Figure 2—Sample Interview Appointment Reminder Post Card

<p style="text-align: center;">Interview Appointment Reminder</p> <p>Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Transportation Coordination Project in (your community). We have scheduled you for a one-on-one interview on Wednesday, January 21 at 2:15 PM in room _____ of:</p> <p>[LOCATION NAME] [ADDRESS] [DIRECTIONS]</p> <p>We are grateful for your time and look forward to gaining your perspective on public transportation service coordination issues in (your community). If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call _____ at _____.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Thank you for your participation in this important coordination project!</p>

Developing Your Interview Guide

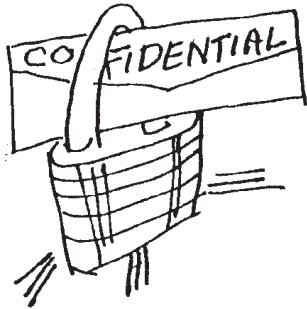
The personal interview with key leaders and stakeholders is your opportunity to begin to uncover the issues that will frame the transportation coordination discussion as it proceeds. Therefore, it is essential that the questions be worded as openly as possible, and that they evoke a detailed response. Often, a general question is best for getting the stakeholder to give you a thoughtful answer. Questions that can be answered “yes” or “no” should be avoided.

By the time you reach this stage of the coordination effort, you will have uncovered several facts and issues that should help in formulating the questions for the interview guide. For example, you may wish to add questions about the services of a local transit authority or other public transportation provider. A good practice, however, is to move from the general to the specific. This allows the leader or stakeholder to define the transportation issues as they see them. A useful closing item for your discussion guide is a question that gives the individual a chance to revisit or elaborate on an earlier point, and add final thoughts, concerns, and insights.

Figure 3 provides an example of an effective interview guide. It is helpful to space out the questions to give the interviewer plenty of room for writing. You will find that some interviewees will give more detailed and complete responses than others. Include probing questions in your interview guide that can be used to draw out a more complete response, if necessary.

Figure 3—Sample Interview Guide

<p style="text-align: center;">Interview Guide Mango County Coordination Project</p> <p>Introduction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please tell me a little about your agency (community). What is your mission? What types of services do you provide? Who do you provide your services to? <p>General Transportation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. In what ways are transportation services important to your agency (community) mission? The services you offer? The people you serve? 3. What are your perceptions of [TRANSIT PROVIDER] in helping _____ residents meet their travel needs? Strengths? Weaknesses? 4. What are your perceptions of other agency and private transportation services available in Mango County? Strengths? Weaknesses? <p>Coordination of Transportation Services</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. How do you believe coordination can help in maintaining and improving transportation services in Mango County? What opportunities does it present? What threats does it present? How can the threats be overcome? 6. Which agencies or individuals do you believe should be involved in transportation coordination? How should they be involved? 7. In what ways do you believe your agency (community) can be involved in efforts to coordinate transportation services? 8. How should leadership responsibility for transportation coordination be organized? Is there a logical organization or agency that should have this leadership responsibility? <p>Final Observations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Are there any final observations or insights that you would offer for improving transportation services in Mango County?
--



**No one will know
“you” said that.**

To ensure that the leaders and stakeholders are open and honest in their responses, they must understand that their responses will be held in confidence. In other words, in reporting the results of the interviews, especially hot issues and major concerns, references to who says what are omitted.

Interviewers need to be as accurate as possible when writing down the responses of leaders and stakeholders. Similar themes and responses to questions will surface as more and more individuals are interviewed. However, at the risk of biasing the results, it is critical that the interviewers listen carefully to the responses of each individual, and consistently record responses as accurately as possible.

Compiling Results

Create a Text File

A useful way to begin to compile all the data from the interviewers is by entering your notes into a text file in a spreadsheet application program. Create a matrix where the first column is an identification number (ID.) that is assigned to each stakeholder, and each successive column contains his or her responses. The first row will contain column headings, such as ID, Question 1, Question 2, and so on. (See Figure 4).

Figure 4—Sample Data File Configuration

	A	B	C
1	What is your Agency, Community or Company Name?	Please describe the transportation needs of your customers	What can be done to improve transportation service in Mango?
2	Dialysis Center	The main reason dialysis patients do not receive necessary treatment is that they have no transportation. Some have had to pay private drivers at a cost of hundreds of dollars each month.	We can contract with an available service and utilizing means testing to subsidize our patients' transportation.
3	Mango County Department of Human Services	Transportation to and from work (all shifts), school, and daycare.	The county is moving in the right direction by requesting input from community leaders.
4	Senior Center of Greater Mango	Currently, scheduling for our elderly and disabled clients is difficult due to high demand for door-to-door services. Until a person receives a permanent slot, they must call early in the morning, one week in advance and hope a space on the bus is available.	A tremendous help to the 70 to 90-year-old population would be greater availability of door-to-door service and a "one number" to call with a live human being at the other end.

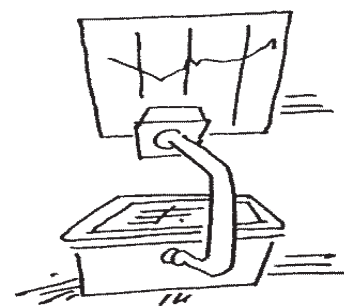
If the spreadsheet is set up in this way, responses may be typed in each cell. There is no need to be concerned about grammar, style and form. Some cells will contain very long, detailed responses, while others may contain a short phrase. These verbatim responses are the “raw data.” Having the data in this form will enable you to analyze and present it in a variety of ways.

Analysis

In analyzing the information you have gathered, look for prevailing themes, ideas, myths, biases, opportunities, threats, concerns, and insights from leaders and stakeholders that will begin to shape the ongoing discussion about transportation coordination. For example, if several stakeholders mention that the reluctance to give up some control of clients and resources is a threat to coordination, it suggests that “turfism” is a relatively important issue, and should be discussed with existing and potential coordination participants. Another approach is to look at positive versus negative statements by type of organization and geographical location. This will help to determine where the challenges lie, and where the base of greatest support is likely to exist. The interviews will also provide a focus for survey research and subsequent discussion.

Presentation

Deciding how to present the results of key leader and stakeholder interviews will depend on individual circumstances. In some cases, a written report will be preferable. In others, a simple visual presentation may suffice. The idea is to capture interest and attention while generating discussion and feedback.



Use Visual Aids

Keep reports focused on key results.

Preparing a Written Report

There are different views on how to organize a report. You may already have a preference or idea about how to organize a written report based on results of the interviews. However, if you do not have a formalized plan in mind, then you will want to review some reports written by colleagues or mentors to develop ideas about what would work best in your situation. Clear, straightforward language and strong visual impact are essential when writing for decision-makers. The former can only be achieved through a careful editing process. The latter involves using quotes, tables, pictures, and graphs.

Presentations should have visual impact.

Preparing a Visual Presentation

Sometimes a simple visual presentation with key points in bold print arranged in order of prominence, emphasized by underlining or bulleting, makes an effective visual presentation. Figure 5 illustrates a similar approach that works well. In practice, overheads were printed in a larger font with two to three items on each.

It is helpful to get out on the table for discussion all of the issues offered by key stakeholders, both positive and negative. Discussing these in a non-threatening group environment, such as an informal workshop, allows potential coordination participants the opportunity to think about their own ideas and opinions regarding transportation coordination. Moreover, the group will be able to expand upon positive and constructive ideas of leaders and stakeholders, while also considering their common concerns and fears.

Figure 5-Sample Summary Presentation

Who was Interviewed?

- County government
- Municipalities & townships
- Social service agencies
- Transportation service providers

Focus of Interviews?

- Importance of transportation services
- Perceptions of transit authority
- Perceptions of other public transportation providers
- Coordination of transportation services

What are the Risks?

- Perceived lack of cooperation
- Willingness of agencies to join
- Protection of "turf"
- Who would gain or lose?
- Benefits need to outweigh the costs
- Key role for communication and public education

What are the Benefits?

- Can help maintain and improve transportation services
- Can provide increased efficiency
- Offers relief for overburdened agencies
- Days and hours of services can be expanded
- Better ability to respond quickly to needs

Mango County, U.S.A.

For a survey conducted in Mango County, about 350 surveys were mailed to agencies and organizations. With follow-up by phone, 90 surveys were completed and returned within about six weeks. Another 19 completed surveys trickled in over another month's time. In all, one-third of the surveys that were mailed out were completed and returned. This amounted to a reasonably high return rate for a mailed survey, and one that was more than sufficient for contributing valuable information to the County's coordination effort.



Survey Research

In this stage of gathering information, you will be developing an understanding of the transportation needs, existing resources, level of interest and willingness to participate in moving the coordination concept forward. Results of key leader interviews will have produced a general understanding of the priority issues. However, you do not know how strong the issues are within the community or among specific groups. Because you want to build consensus for coordination, it is important to find out, among a broad range of people and/or groups, where consensus on issues exists and where it is lacking. Results of survey research will provide this information.

Survey research is conducted to achieve two key objectives:

To determine the transportation services and resources that are available

To determine key issues, concerns, and interests related to coordinating transportation services

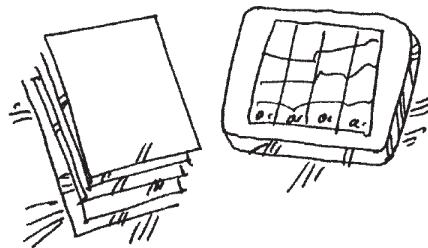
Who Should Be Surveyed?

By this time it should be well established that coordination requires collaboration and consensus-building. The best way to achieve this is to include as many types of agencies as possible. To this end, having a sample of convenience is recommended, rather than by randomly selecting a sample. In the former, participation from the entire population is invited. In the latter, you randomly select a sample from and then make statistical inferences about the population. For a convenience sample, participation is sought from a broad array of agencies, companies, and organizations representing urban, suburban and rural communities. Interest in shaping the local community's transportation coordination effort will affect an individual's willingness to complete a survey.

The survey should not be limited to agencies known to provide transportation services. Some agencies may purchase transportation services from others. Agencies that do not provide or receive transportation service may need service and may become key players in developing coordination.

Suggestions for Survey Topics

In formulating a survey, questions should be based these issues. The goal is to gain detailed information that will be critical in the planning and decision-making process. There will probably be unique issues specific to your community that you will want to address in a survey questionnaire.



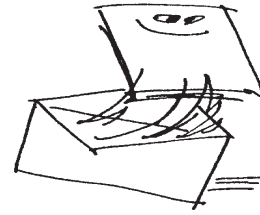
**The following are some general topics for you to consider in designing
the survey questionnaire:**

- What is the name of the agency, community, or company?
- What is the address?
- What is the phone and fax number?
- Who is the director or chief executive of the agency, community, or company?
- What is the nature and type of transportation services offered, if any?
- Do they operate their own vehicles, provide bus passes to their clients, etc?
- Does the service operate door-to-door? Is it fixed route?
- What days of the week they provide transportation services?
- What are the eligibility requirements for using transportation services?
- What is the geographical area of service?
- What are the special needs of passengers?
- Do they own or lease their vehicles?
- Do they have paid or volunteer drivers?
- Do they perform their own vehicle maintenance or contract it out?
- How many vehicles do they have in their fleet?
- How many passengers do these vehicles hold?

- How many vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts?
- What is the condition of their vehicles?
- When are the vehicles scheduled to be replaced?
- What are the yearly expenditures on transportation?
- How many miles per year do their vehicles operate?
- How many unduplicated passengers do they transport per year?
- What are the transportation needs specific to the agency or community?
- What are the transportation needs of the County or broader region targeted for transportation service coordination?
- What areas of transportation service coordination are of interest to them?
 - *Joining a network of transportation service providers
 - *Pooling financial resources
 - *Sharing of vehicles among agencies
 - *Cooperatively purchasing vehicles
 - *Centralized fueling, scheduling, operation
 - *Contracting to purchase or provide transportation service
 - *Consolidating services to a single provider

Mail Versus Telephone

For this type of survey, mailing will get the best results. The survey asks for detailed information that few people have at their fingertips and would be willing or able to give over the telephone. Mail enables individuals to respond more thoughtfully, and at their convenience. Of course, this may take longer, but the data will be much more complete. The mailing will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.



Questionnaire Design

The survey is intended to gather information needed to frame a serious discussion of transportation coordination. By working together with core participants gaps in information can be identified. Ideas for survey questions will emerge. The key to a good questionnaire is organization, flow, and a logical pattern for the questions (See Figure 6).



The first items on the questionnaire should focus on general information about the agency or organization. Some of these agencies and organizations will provide transportation services and some will not. From the transportation providers, you want to learn among other things the nature of services they provide, when they provide services, whom is eligible to use these services, the geographic area covered, the cost of services. Again, it depends on what information you need in order for good coordination planning and decision-making to take place.

A basic questionnaire structure begins with the following:

An introduction that states the purpose of the survey

Information about where to send it when it is complete

A date by which the survey should be returned.

Figure 6—Sample Survey Format

Transportation Coordination Survey

The purpose of this Survey of Transportation Services and Interest in Transportation Coordination is to develop baseline information about transportation services available in _____. This survey is being conducted as part of the _____ Transportation Coordination Project. It is a key element in our planning for broader coordination efforts next year. Your cooperation and assistance is appreciated. If you have questions about the survey, please call _____, at _____.

Please complete and return your survey by _____, or as soon thereafter as possible, to:

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Agency, Community or Company Name _____
2. Street Address _____
3. City, State, Zip Code _____
4. Telephone Number _____
5. FAX Number _____
6. Name of Agency Director _____
7. Telephone Number (if different) _____

Construct the survey so that individuals can answer only the questions that apply to their agency or organization by including instructions to skip questions and move to other sections where appropriate. (See Figure 7A).

Figure 7A–Sample Question: Skips

7. Which of the following best describes your situation with regard to transportation services? (Please check one box below)

- ☐ We offer no transportation services.
- ☐ We offer transportation services.
- ☐ We would like to offer transportation services in the future in some way.

[If you offer no transportation services now, please skip to Question #19.]

Open–Ended Questions

Open–ended questions allow the individual completing the survey to write a response in his/her own words. (See Figure 7B). This type of question is useful when you expect a great deal of variation in responses. For example, if you are asking for expenditures on transportation services, figures can vary considerably. Open-ended question wording is also helpful if you want to gain a depth of understanding, or if you want to learn the words people use in describing situations or concerns. Wording questions in an open-ended manner is particularly useful for topics in which you are just beginning to form an understanding.

Figure 7B—Sample Question: Open–Ended #1

14. Thinking of your agency or community, what transportation needs are not being met adequately? Please be as specific as you can. (Please include any special needs or requirements your clients or passengers may have.)

Closed–Ended Questions

Closed–ended questions, in which individuals choose one or more answers, are easy to analyze. (See Figure 7C). If you feel that there is nothing to gain by asking the question in open–ended form, then omit them. Include a last item for “other” responses to capture unique responses.

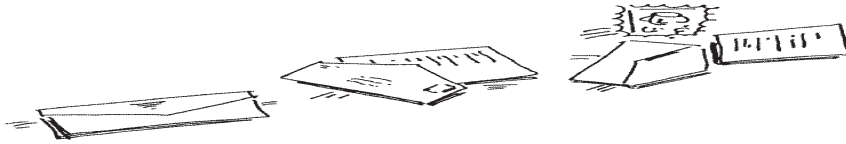
Figure 7C—Sample Question: Closed–ended

8. In which of the following ways do you provide transportation service? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ We operate our own vehicles
- ☐ We contract with someone else who provides transportation service for us
- ☐ We purchase and provide transit authority tickets and passes for our clients
- ☐ Some of our clients reach our services using transit authority fixed route service
- ☐ Some of our clients reach our services using transit authority paratransit service
- ☐ Some of our clients reach our services using other transportation services
- ☐ We provide no transportation services to our clients
- ☐ Other (please explain) _____

Some numeric information, such as vehicle fleet size, cost information, dates, and so on lends itself to a closed-ended question format in which ranges are provided from which to choose.

The Mailing



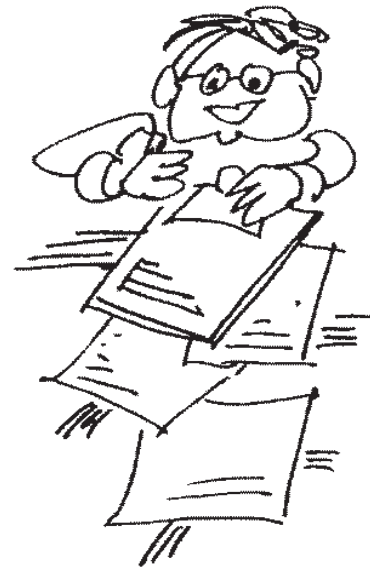
Making Your Mailing Look Official

Unfortunately, poorly done and frivolous surveys have created a great deal of cynicism and apathy toward the most legitimate survey research. It is important that this mailing stands apart from “junk mail” surveys. A very inexpensive way to help ensure a high rate of completed and returned surveys is to use official envelopes and letterhead. It is a good idea to enclose a cover letter along with the questionnaire. The letter should be authoritative, yet friendly, and neatly printed on official stationery. The letter should clearly and concisely explain in friendly, everyday language the purpose of the survey, why it is important, and how it will be used.

Typed or laser-printed envelopes look very official. However, pre-printed address labels, while somewhat less official-looking, are convenient for saving time and effort. Major word processing software packages include address label and mail merge features. Using large, metered envelopes further contributes to the official look, and is an obvious time saver.

Self-Addressed, Stamped Envelope

An expensive but very effective way to further ensure a high rate of return is to enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. This makes it easier for individuals to return their survey, and further impresses upon them the seriousness and importance of the effort. Business reply mail or other postal procedures may be worth looking into as well. Relative costs usually need to be considered in deciding which method to use.



Following Up

It is important to follow up and remind agencies and others to complete and return the survey. There are several ways that this can be done.



Send a Post Card

Sending a post card is the least expensive way to follow up and increase the number of completed surveys. The card can simply state a reminder about the survey and a number to call or fax in case additional information or another survey is needed.

Give Them a Call

Calling agencies that have not sent back surveys is more expensive and time-consuming, but it's the best way to find out the reason that a survey has not been returned. For example, some agencies that don't provide transportation services may think that the survey is not intended for them. They need to be assured that their information is important, relevant, and appreciated. When talking to these individuals on the telephone, you can make sure that they actually have a copy of the survey at hand. Surveys sometimes end up buried on someone's desk, or get misplaced or misrouted. It is a good idea to have extras ready to send out. A local university student or group of volunteers might be willing to assist in making these calls, thereby reducing costs and saving staff time.



Compiling and Analyzing Data

Setting Up a Database

The raw data that is returned in the form of completed surveys will be in the form of numbers and text. Choosing the right software for entering and analyzing your data will largely depend on what types of output you wish to obtain. Spreadsheet and statistical packages generate statistics and graphs. These software packages vary as to speed, complexity, and quality of output produced, i.e., tables and graphs.

Analyzing Text

Survey data will contain written responses to open-ended questions. This text should first be entered in a database or spreadsheet. Then a matrix table can be set up with names of agencies or individuals listed in the left column and then corresponding responses to the open-ended question across each row. Responses can then be sorted in alphabetical order, separating transportation providers from non-providers, by type of agency or organization, or by whatever categories provide a good first look. This will help in deciding where to take the analysis from there. For example, the degree to which responses to a given question are similar suggests a level of agreement. This information will prove useful in understanding the key opinions, issues and attitudes in the community pertaining to coordination.

If it appears that there are many similar responses, then response categories can be created. This provides a systematic way of counting the number of similar responses to a question, which can then be presented as a table or graph. Response categories should be unique and exhaustive. Each response must be assigned to a category, but only a single category. Many responses will be too unique or unusual to be categorized specifically. These responses are best assigned to the catch-all "other" category. Written responses sometimes contain multiple thoughts or ideas. Look for the statement that is dominant in the response. If there are many responses that contain different thoughts or ideas, then may assigning the

CATEGORY A

○ _____
○ _____
○ _____

CATEGORY B

○ _____
○ _____
○ _____

response to multiple categories is probably best.

Creating a master list of categories helps maintain consistency. For example, if there are two questions dealing with transportation needs, the same set of categories should be used for both. Recall the sample question (page 35, figure 7B)) that asked about the transportation needs specific to the customers of agencies or organizations. In Figure 7D below, Question #20 asks about transportation needs in the county as a whole.

Figure 7D–Sample Question: Open Ended #2

20. Please describe other transportation needs in the County that you feel need should be addressed?

Figure 8 shows a set of categories that were developed from the responses to the previous questions.

Figure 8—Sample Transportation Needs Code Sheet

Transportation Needs Code Sheet

- 1. Coordination**
- 2. Eliminate public transportation inefficiencies**
- 3. Expanded hours of public transportation service**
- 4. Expanded geographic service area**
- 5. Greater transportation resources for agencies**
- 6. Lower cost public transportation**
- 7. Reduce waiting time for a ride**
- 8. Special needs individuals with low incomes**
- 9. Special needs of children**
- 10. Special needs of older adults**
- 11. Special needs of people with disabilities**
- 12. Weekend service**
- 13. Other**

An effective presentation should include the following elements:

Draft for review

Visuals for impact

Feedback and discussion for “buy in”

Presenting Results

Participatory research means including the audience in the process. This helps to generate further interest in coordination because it ultimately helps leaders and stakeholders “buy in” to the process and its outcomes.

It is recommended that a draft report of survey research be distributed to the committee or core group for review and comments. This is most effective if done about a week before a scheduled meeting. Include a cover letter requesting comments and suggestions. An essential feature of participatory research is inviting feedback. When the survey results are presented to the core group participants, they will have read the draft and formulated comments, questions, and suggestions. These should be incorporated into the next draft. By providing their input, core participants are more apt to be guided by these objective research results—instead of old biases—when making coordination decisions.

When presenting survey results in a group setting, it is important to convey the information as quickly and as clearly as possible. The use of visuals, such as overheads or blown-up diagrams and graphs, is very helpful in achieving this goal. When using visuals, it is also a good practice to distribute individual copies. This will allow participants the opportunity to jot down notes and review the material later. Figure 9 presents hypothetical data in a simple bar chart that can be used as an overhead or slide presentation of results to Question #20.

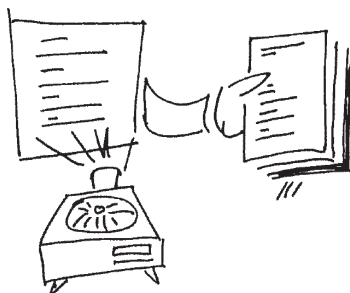
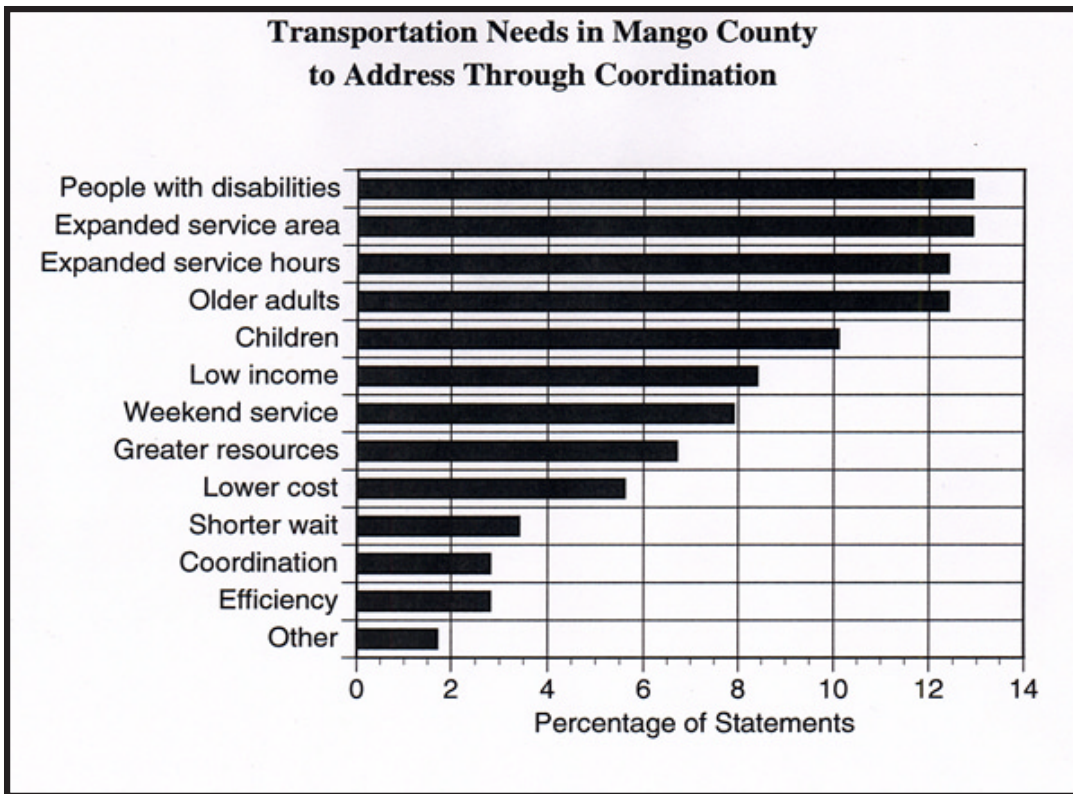


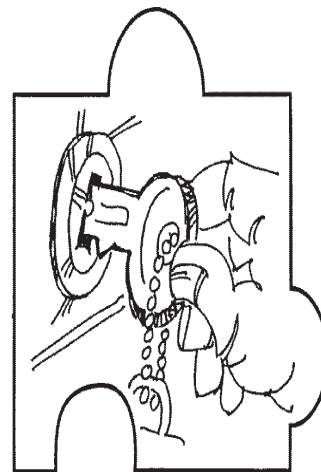
Figure 9—Sample Bar Chart Presentation

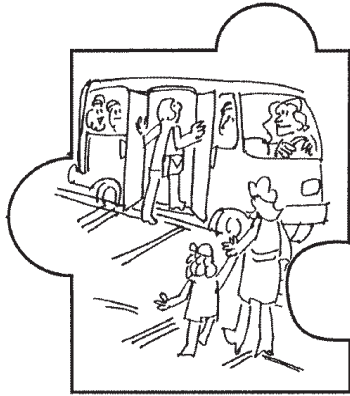


CONCLUSION

In this module, you learned how to:

- Identify and share important information about community transportation needs,
- Identify leaders and stakeholders in the community who are or should be involved in the coordination of transportation services,
- Carry out one-on-one interviews with key leaders and stakeholders whose opinions and actions will shape transportation service coordination, and
- Carry out a survey of local transportation needs and resources to further identify and verify important issues and information about coordination in your community.





Moving Forward

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this module is to provide strategic group discussion methods and techniques to enable you to understand areas of agreement and disagreement among collaborators. Such an understanding is key to broadening support and building sufficient consensus for moving the coordination effort forward.

After reading this module, you will be able to:

- Bring people together to think creatively about local coordination issues and share their ideas and opinions
- Discover multiple viewpoints in a non-judgmental setting
- Build understanding and trust among diverse individuals and organizations
- Collaborate with leaders and stakeholders toward overcoming conflict and building consensus

COLLABORATIVE THINKING AND CONSENSUS BUILDING

Effective collaboration and consensus-building involves thinking creatively, generating ideas, and gaining support among leaders and stakeholders for participating in the process. Unanimous agreement is not necessary in order to move forward. Along the way, the number of active participants may increase, then become smaller as you approach consensus. The key is to know when you have a consensus sufficient for moving forward. For example, someone that you perceive as important to have in the group may decide to sit out. This need not stall the coordination effort. He or she may decide to join later in the process, as is often the case. Many leaders and stakeholders are skeptical of efforts to bring about change. They may feel that coordination is a good idea, but difficult to achieve. They have to “see it to believe it.” Because these individuals do not want to be associated with failure, they prefer to see some signs of success before they participate actively. This is an attitude that must simply be accepted without letting it impede progress.

Group Discussion

Collaboration and consensus building starts with discussion. This module presents creative group discussion techniques. When individuals come together in a non-judgmental group setting where they are free to express their views, barriers start to break down as common ground is uncovered. As this occurs, interest in working together to coordinate transportation services will grow. It



is neither realistic nor necessary that everyone agrees at this stage. However, It is essential that group discussion begins and continues, recognizing that opinions will differ along the way.

A neutral facilitator from outside the group may be valuable in creating a non-threatening, non-judgmental environment conducive to openness and trust. It is well to keep in mind that individuals and organizations, who may or may not have a history of seeing eye-to-eye, are being asked to come together to express their feelings and ideas. Perceiving that the facilitator does not have a vested interest in coordination outcomes, leaders and stakeholders will feel more comfortable expressing themselves freely in a group setting.

Leaders and stakeholders have unique perspectives that will affect their opinions on coordination and their openness to collaboration. Getting them to see the ways in which everyone can benefit—the “win/win” outcomes —is an important step toward building consensus on transportation coordination. Such outcomes cannot be imposed. They are achieved when group members perceive benefits and positive outcomes for themselves.

The neutral facilitator will need one to three assistants to help with setting up the room, greeting participants, guiding discussion, and dealing with handouts, pens, markers, and other materials.

Recruiting Participants

The master list of stakeholders and leaders contains the potential invitees. This list should have all of the information necessary to recruit creative discussion participants. If you decide to invite participants by telephone, prepare a guide that briefly identifies the purpose of the creative discussion, why it is important that they attend, and information about time and place. (See Figure 1, page 22). Also mention the type of refreshments that will be provided—for example, a continental breakfast, light lunch, or whatever is appropriate for the time of

Materials Needed for Creative Group Sessions

Facilitator(s)

Room large enough to accommodate 12-25 people

Name tags

Sign-in sheet

Chairs and tables arranged for groupings of 3-5 participants

Easels and newsprint pads for each table

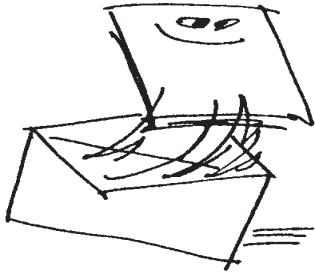
Variety of colored magic markers for each table

Large expanse of wall to display about 8-10 large sheets of newsprint

Masking tape

Adhesive dots in a variety of colors for prioritizing issues and ideas

Refreshments to last for the duration of the session

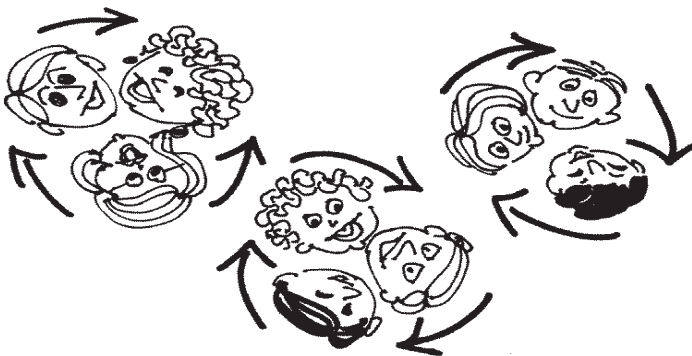


day. Prepare a follow-up letter to serve as a reminder to those individuals that you have contacted. If you decide to recruit participants by mail, write a letter of invitation to potential participants in creative discussion sessions and include the same information. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped post card so that invitees may let you know if they will or will not be attending. It will probably be necessary to make follow-up telephone calls for a reminder and/or to confirm attendance.

Sending a letter to those who attend thanking them for their participation helps to build goodwill and continuity. Both are needed if you are to make progress toward transportation coordination goals.

Brainstorming

Effective group discussion involves a structured process designed to generate creative thinking and expression of ideas.



Most commonly referred to as brainstorming, this type of creative group discussion is a valuable step in the coordination planning process. Brainstorming brings issues and attitudes out for discussion that might otherwise remain hidden. Identifying and discussing biases, mistrust, misperceptions, and other barriers in a creative, non-threatening environment, is an important first step toward changing some of these

views that stand in the way of progress toward successful coordination. In all local areas, there are barriers that must be understood before meaningful change can occur. One common barrier is "turfism," discussed earlier in this handbook. Another may be mistrust among agencies, local government, and business interests. There are unique problems and issues in all local areas that create barriers to progress. Brainstorming brings out such barriers for consideration by the group. Solutions can then be explored in a creative, judgment-free, and non-threatening way.

Brainstorming is an interactive technique that relies upon participants' teamwork to identify opportunities and solve problems. Brainstorming represents a small group dynamics approach to strategy development for transportation coordination. Participants, including transportation providers, social service agency personnel, community leaders and consumers are recruited to work together as a team. The process creates a highly supportive, task-oriented, interactive climate to identify issues and opportunities, then focuses on realistic, actionable solutions that will achieve coordination.



The value of brainstorming is that it provides the opportunity to tap into the widespread resource potential that typically exists in groups but is often hampered by societal constraints, structured thinking and an attendant lack of spontaneity. Through this process, creative solutions are generated by the individuals directly affected. In this way, participants are able to articulate and develop their own definition of and response to coordination, the framework of relationships necessary to achieve, along with the policies and procedures for establishment and implementation.

Twelve individuals from a wide variety of constituencies make the ideal sized group for creativity and idea generation. Participants begin as a whole group, divide into four groups of three for many **ideation** activities, and finish as a whole. More than one session may be required to include all relevant organizations or individuals.

IDEATION is ...

A group process technique that enables a group to take an issue in need of rethinking, rethink it in a creative, fresh way and then evaluate the practical implications of the ideas

Brainstorming provides an excellent opportunity to begin building consensus. Ideas, problems, and solutions are contributed by the group and written down by the group members or the moderator. These thoughts are written or posted on large sheets of flipchart paper, which are then placed on the wall with masking tape. The result is that the group can see all of the thoughts and ideas that were generated. This is when the consensus building begins. Individuals can vote for the thoughts and ideas they feel are most important. The group

decides which issues and ideas are key. An easy and fun way of “voting” is to use colored adhesive dots, available at any office supply store.

Analysis of ideas provided by brainstorming reveals the collective creativity of the group. Combined with other information, these results indicate areas of consensus and the best solutions to the issues at hand.

Preparing a Creative Discussion Guide

A guide is essential for conducting group ideation. Basically, an effective discussion guide will help the facilitator move the group through various exercises in the time allotted. A discussion guide should contain thought-provoking scenarios and ideas for opening up the creative thinking process.



Consider the following elements in developing a discussion guide:

Introductory statements

Facilitator instructions for forming small groups

Creative exercises with small groups that use hypothetical scenarios to stimulate creative thinking

Real world application of creative thinking that focuses on the issues of transportation service, needs and solutions

Full group exploration of issues and potential solutions

Setting priorities for issues and solutions

Review of results

Figure 10A

Creative Discussion Guide to Thinking Creatively

What Animal Are You Today?

[ASK EACH PERSON TO DRAW AN ANIMAL]. Give it a name. Tell the group why you drew it, and why you gave it this name. Now draw a group animal, combining the best parts of your individual animals. Give it a group name. **[ASK EACH SMALL GROUP TO EXPLAIN ITS ANIMAL TO THE LARGE GROUP]**

Now, we travel to the moon in a spaceship, each group lands on the moon in a different location. We are all looking for adventure. The future is now.

Each group needs to meet basic needs. Each spaceship has different supplies. One group has the food, one the medical supplies, one the money, one the sports and recreation equipment, one the services dry cleaning, lawyers, accountants, one the retail businesses stuff, one the manufacturing stuff.

Each group is isolated from the others. There is no way to get around. How do you feel?

Draw a picture of your group that shows what you are experiencing and how you are feeling. Now, write somewhere on this picture the words that describe how you feel?

Luckily, we have discovered that previous inhabitants left behind inflatable moon rovers. The moon rover allows you to get around. But there are not enough to one for each group.

Remember, no group has all the resources it needs to exist and survive. What are the problems you face? How does your group survive? What do you have to do?

Draw a picture of how you survive. Get food, medical supplies, and things like that.

[TELL HALF OF THE GROUPS THAT THEY HAVE A MOON ROVER AND THE OTHER HALF THAT THEY DO NOT. SWITCH ROLES IF TIME PERMITS] How do you feel about your circumstances?

[TELL SELECTED GROUPS THAT THEIR MOON ROVER HAS JUST FAILED AND IS NO LONGER OPERABLE.] How do you feel about your circumstances now? Write down the words about surviving and how and what you are doing.

Now, we are still on the moon, and we want you to develop a way to get around, to solve this problem. How do you solve the problems you face? Think about how you get the job done.

[ASK GROUPS TO DRAW A PICTURE OF THEIR SOLUTION]
[FACILITATORS MAKE SUGGESTIONS TO INDIVIDUAL GROUPS]

What are the needs?

What people do you put in the picture?

What resources do you put in the picture?

What structure do you put in the picture?

[ASK EACH GROUP TO SHARE ITS SOLUTION AND HOW THEY FEEL ABOUT IT]

Figure 10B

Creative Discussion Guide Back to Earth

[AFTER TRIP TO THE MOON]

One morning we wake up and we are all back in Mango County.

[ASK SMALL GROUPS TO DRAW A PICTURE OF TRANSPORTATION IN MANGO COUNTY]

Draw what is good about it. Draw what is not so good about it.

[FACILITATORS MAKE SUGGESTIONS TO INDIVIDUAL GROUPS] What are the needs? What people do you put in the picture? What resources do you put in the picture? What structure do you put in the picture?

[MODERATOR ASKS] What words describe your picture and how you feel about transportation for people in Mango County?

Now put together a list of the elements and features that you need for transportation to work better. Where will you get them? Who has them?

[ASK EACH GROUP TO SHARE ITS IDEAS]

[THE LARGE GROUP DESIGNS THE IDEAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND ADDRESSES THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS]

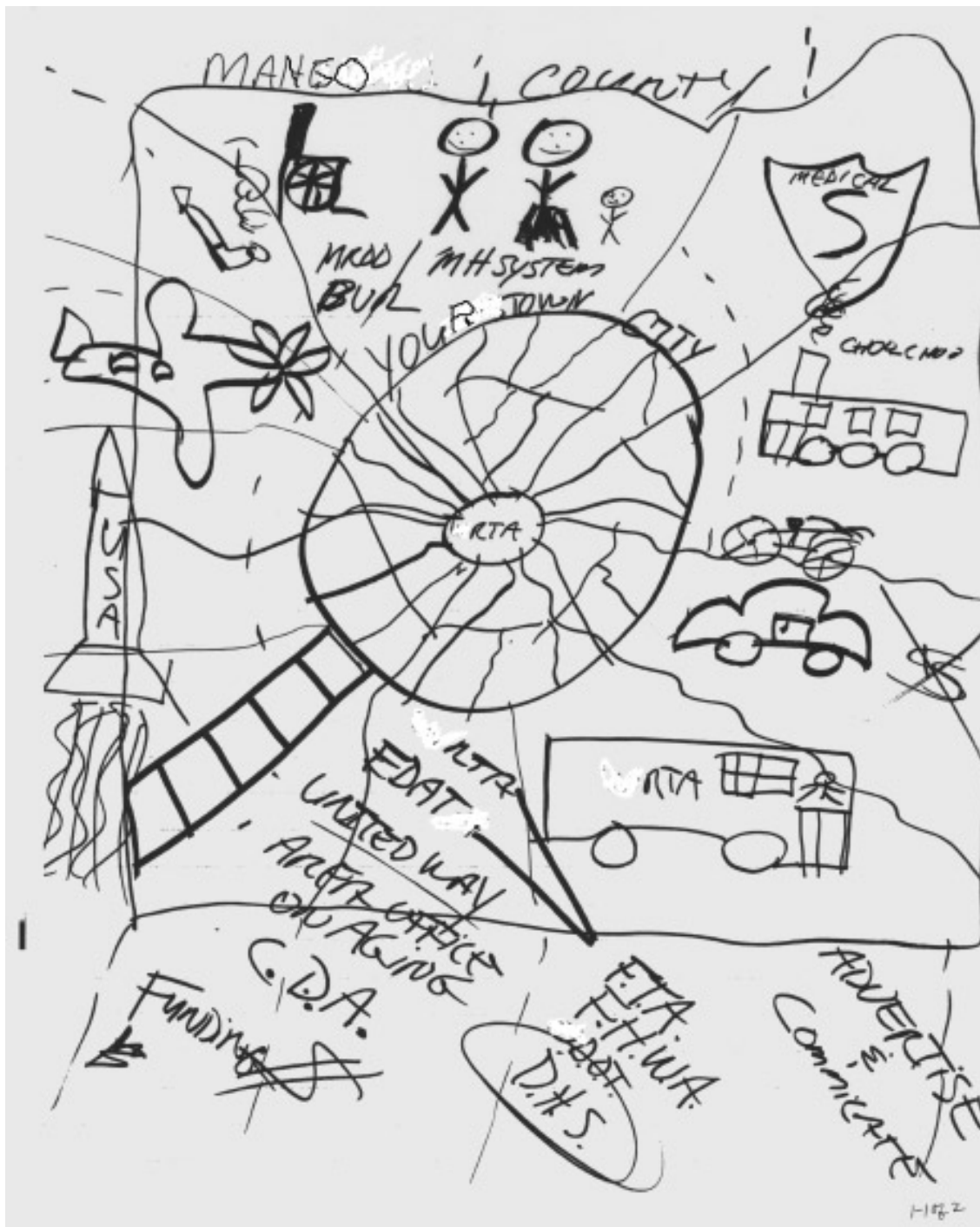
Who are the customers?
What are their travel needs?
What is the structure of this system?
What kind of organization does it have?
What resources do you need?
Where do you get them?
What do you need to know?
How is the system run?
Who should provide the leadership?
Who should set policy?
How do you make this happen?
What procedures should be used?

[WRITE RESPONSES, IDEAS, THOUGHTS ON LARGE NEWSPRINT SHEETS AND POST THEM ON WALLS]

[WHEN DISCUSSION IS FINISHED, ASK GROUPS TO PRIORITIZE THE ELEMENTS OF THE IDEAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM POSTED. DISTRIBUTE AN EQUAL NUMBER OF RED AND BLUE ADHESIVE DOTS TO EACH INDIVIDUAL AND ASK THEM TO VOTE BY PLACING RED DOTS NEXT TO THE TOP PRIORITIES AND BLUE DOTS NEXT TO THE SECONDARY PRIORITIES.]

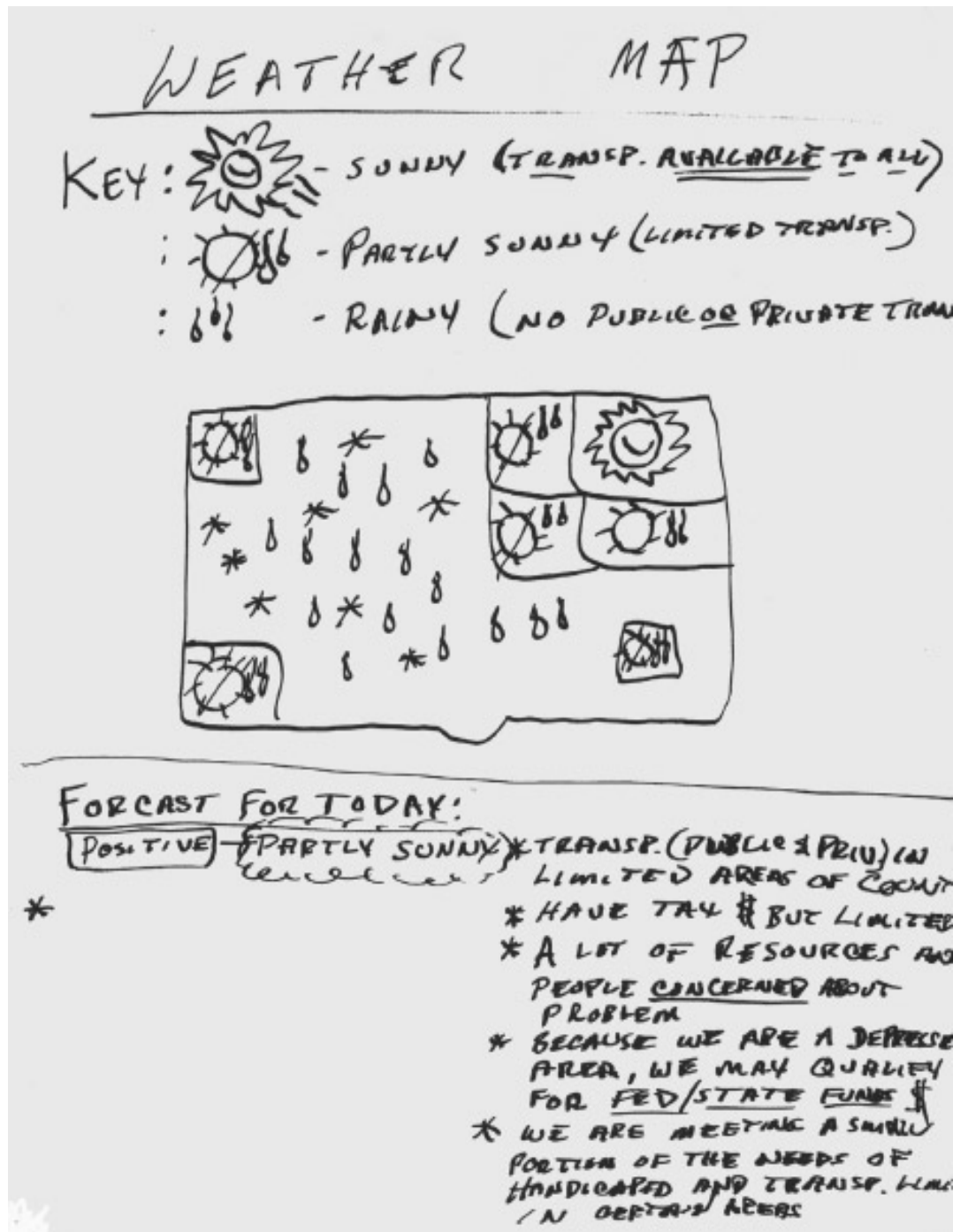
What would you call this system?

To wrap up, if you could tell Mango County officials only one thing, what would that be?



Brainstorming Example:

Collaborative drawing of movement toward coordinated transportation with a transit authority as the new lead agency



Brainstorming Example:

Collaborative drawing of transportation now and in the future (in a very creative weather forecast format.)



Strategic Discussion

Strategic discussion helps to further build consensus toward coordination. Depending on time constraints, this can be part of a single group session or workshop that includes the creative thinking exercises detailed above. However, you may wish to schedule a separate workshop for discussion only. Strategic discussion centers on the following five general questions:

- **Where are we now?**
- **What are our strengths?**
- **What are our weaknesses?**
- **What is working?**
- **What is not working?**
- **What is missing?**
- **What are the opportunities?**
- **What are the threats?**

Questions should be worded in a way that is specific to the local situation. For example, you might ask:

- What are we now doing in Mango County to provide transportation services?
 - What works well in meeting the transportation needs of the county's residents?
 - What does not work well?
 - What is missing that, if present, would improve the way transportation services are provided in Mango County?
- The issue of coordination will most likely emerge out of a general discussion about transportation. However, you may want to steer the discussion in that direction by specifically mentioning transportation coordination.
- What opportunities exist for successfully coordinating transportation services in Mango County?
 - What are the threats to the successful coordination of transportation services in Mango County?



Figures 10A and 10B give examples of brainstorming discussion guides. Notice that they contain a script, facilitator prompts, and directions.

In facilitating strategic group discussion, it is important to allow participants' ideas and thinking about the future to develop spontaneously. Unlike the creative thinking exercises that require a detailed script, strategic discussion relies on the group to guide its own thinking. (See Figure 11.) Markers and index cards can be placed on each table for participants to write down their thoughts as they occur. A large newsprint pad on an easel is helpful for arranging and categorizing thoughts and ideas of participants as they are recorded on the index cards.

Sharing Thoughts and Ideas

The group facilitator should begin the discussion session with some introductory statements. If this strategic group discussion is the second in a series of workshops, then the facilitator should first update participants on results and outcomes of earlier sessions. It is important for the facilitator to brief participants on the judgment-free expression of ideas necessary for a successful discussion. A simple rule to emphasize is that **all ideas are good**. Next, the facilitator asks a question such as those listed above. Participants then write each individual idea on a separate index card. After everyone is finished writing, participants take turns sharing their ideas. A discussion emerges as the group explores and builds upon these ideas.



Prioritizing Ideas

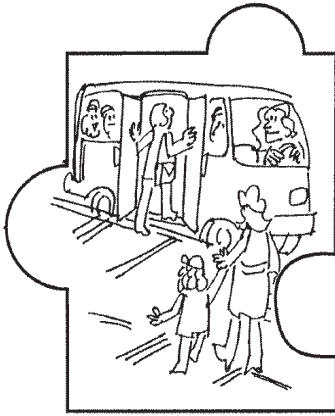
By voting for the most important thoughts and ideas, group participants express their opinion and priorities in a non-judgmental way. By examining the results of this voting, clustering or scattering of thought may be revealed. This provides a basis for determining the issues on which you have consensus and begin to get an idea about how strong the consensus is. In addition, you will have a greater understanding of where the challenges lie, and where work needs to be done.

Figure 11—Sample Strategic Discussion Guide: Agenda Format

Strategic Discussion Agenda
Second Workshop
on Transportation Coordination

Wednesday, May 16, 2001, 1:30 PM
Papaya Center
Kumquat State University

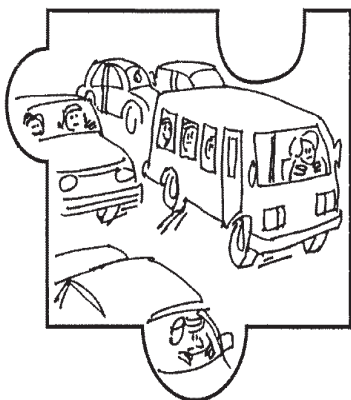
1. Summary of Results from the Creative Group Discussion
2. Strategic Discussion of Transportation Services in Mango County
 - Strengths
 - Weaknesses
 - Opportunities
 - Threats
3. Developing a Shared Vision of Success
4. What Comes Next?
5. Agenda for the Future



CONCLUSION

In this module you learned how to:

- Bring people together to think creatively about local coordination issues and share their ideas and opinions,
- Discover multiple viewpoints in a non-judgmental setting,
- Build understanding and trust among diverse individuals and organizations, and
- Collaborate with leaders and stakeholders toward overcoming conflict and building consensus.



Up and Running

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this module is to provide guidance for organizing, planning for coordination, and developing a marketing and public relations program to ensure the continued success of the coordinated transportation system in your community.

After reading this module, you will be able to:

- Organize a formal group to plan and implement a coordinated transportation system
- Create a business plan for every facet of coordination
- Develop a marketing and public relations program for your community's coordinated system

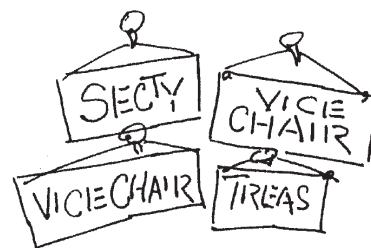
PLANNING FOR COORDINATION Structuring a Formal Organization

The eventual goal is to have transportation providers carrying out the day to day work of providing transportation through a coordinated system. However, to get the system up and running, authoritative decisions about planning and implementation must be made at this stage. A formal organizational structure will be needed to take responsibility for developing and carrying out this collaborative and mutual vision of successful transportation coordination.

Elements of a Formal Organization

Formalizing the coordination process means organizing in a way that allows one or more parties to enter into contracts, obligate funds, spend money, secure the necessary capital equipment, and see that transportation services are provided. However, this should evolve informally through a discussion process rather than being arbitrarily constructed.

A major focus of earlier sections of this handbook is on understanding the local environment. That includes learning what kinds of informal structures or relationships exist, and whether or not there are organizational commitments of any kind. Through brainstorming, you will develop a sense of where people feel the leadership should be vested. Who should be in a leadership role? Should there be a lead agency? How much centralization of functions should there be?



Leadership may come from a variety of sources with broad community jurisdiction such as county government, city government, a transit authority, a metropolitan planning organization (MPO), or social service agencies. These entities vary from state to state in terms of their authority to tax, enter into contracts, and perform other governmental functions. They may also vary from county to county within a state. All of this will affect how you look at organizational options. Again, the core group must work this through in the coordination process to determine what kind of a structure will fit into what is in place, and what they want to create. It is not enough to simply have an organizational structure in place. The goal is to have an organizational structure that can effectively take action.



In an effective organization, there is division of labor. Ordinarily this is achieved through the assignment of key functions to various subcommittees. Standard functional areas in coordination include planning, service development, ways and means, capital development, and public relations and marketing. Using these as a guide, the group can decide how to define its own functional areas and divide the various tasks involved in coordinating transportation services. Approaches may vary depending on the size and urban/rural character of the community to be served.

Planning

Planning for coordination should focus on how to implement various tasks necessary to run a coordinated



transportation system. Thus it is necessary to develop plans that focus on service and operations, capital resources, finance, marketing, public relations, and evaluation. A service and operations plan should focus on the implementation of coordinated service delivery through contracting with various providers. Developing a capital plan provides an understanding of the amount and condition of capital resources that are currently available, and those that need to be acquired, such as

EVALUATION

There is not likely to be a single reporting base that is going to meet the needs of all participating agencies. The report that evaluates the performance of the coordinated system overall is not going to have the kind of detail that any single agency will need for its reporting. It is important to recognize this reality in developing an evaluation plan. Every agency has its own reporting structure. For example, some may need to report miles and/or hours of service; some may need number of people served. It is important to maintain existing individual structures while accommodating the evaluation and monitoring needs of the new coordinated structure. Agencies will be more comfortable with the idea of participating in the coordination process if there is a structure that facilitates and accommodates their unique reporting needs. In fact, this is imperative for overcoming one of the primary turf issues. Agencies are protective of their funding sources and see their data and reporting structure as a vital part of their ability to sustain funding and to remain a functional service provider.

vehicles, computer hardware and software, radios, etc. The plan considers what is available, assesses the condition of capital resources and considers sources of funding to upgrade or acquire new vehicles and support equipment. A financial plan must consider both operating funds and capital funds. Different agencies have access to various sources of capital dollars through granting agencies at the state and federal levels. In terms of the financial plan for operation, the perspective is simply that there is no free lunch. If an agency wishes to participate as a user of services, that agency will have to pay for those services, which is part of the reason why contracts need to be in place. It's not necessarily a matter of going out and finding the money, but pulling together the resources that are available to the participating agencies, so that the services can be covered in a predictable and defensible way. A marketing and public relations plan should first determine who are the customers of a coordinated transportation system. The plan should recognize that there is not a single public, but rather several publics within every market. These publics include users, agencies, and political leaders, among others. An evaluation plan focuses on tracking progress and performance of all aspects of the coordinated system so that timely corrective action can be taken if necessary. The evaluation plan should also provide a structure for generating data for reporting to various granting entities.

Mango County, U.S.A.

An early attempt at transportation coordination in Mango County began with a formal committee, established under the Board of County Commissioners and the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The "top down" approach failed because the coordination effort did not seek to establish a broad base of ownership and support, which is best achieved from the "bottom up." The opportunity to revisit the coordination concept came with a state funded coordination grant that grew and evolved beyond the focus of that specific project. As coordination started to re-emerge on the public agenda, an informal group started to meet periodically. The approach of the group was to be open to participation and inclusive of anyone interested in the effort. The structure that had been created in the previous coordination effort was used as the basic framework for group activity. It became clear to the broadening group that a committee structure was needed to divide tasks and allow smaller groups to focus on specific coordination issues and tasks. As part of working through the issues, the committee structure was modified and amended, gaining formalization along the way.

One unsuccessful attempt did not discourage the county and those organizations that were still interested in coordinating transportation services. The second try resulted in a base of involvement from the bottom up allowing the process to evolve naturally – and successfully.

Peach County, U.S.A.

In Peach County, there was a long-standing organization, which included the Transit Authority, that wanted to provide improved transportation service, but was unsuccessful at doing so. Eventually, leaders emerged and began the coordination planning process. Soon after, the organization received a special project grant, and organized an advisory committee in a very open and inclusive way. The leadership used that committee to work on service-related issues. Along the way, the organization pursued and received a Demonstration Grant, which provided the opportunity to broaden its base of involvement and support. Peach County had the public transportation provider that wanted to do more, and through several projects, started to deal effectively with transportation issues. Thus a forum for addressing issues was created where no effective forum had existed in the past. Although it was an informal committee, it served to form the basis for a coordinating structure.

Coordination began to take shape with a contract between the local Board of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities (MR/DD) and the Transit Authority for transportation services. Recognizing a need for ongoing communication, an informal group was formed that included representatives of the MR/DD Board, the Transit Authority, and other agencies to monitor progress and address issues as they arose.

Muskmelon County, U.S.A.

Following a mandate by the state to conduct a study of coordination, a committee was created “top down” in Muskmelon County, which included representatives of the transit authority and other agencies. This type of group formation is common in counties that are expected to implement state policy. The development of a “bottom up” organization would have been preferable and naturally leads to consensus building. Understanding the need to create consensus, committee members employed a marketing strategy in Muskmelon County that helped to build support for coordination. This scenario demonstrates that a less-than-ideal organizational structure can work if its members are flexible and creative.



Preparing a Business Plan

Several functional areas need to be addressed in setting up coordinated services. These include planning, service development, ways and means, capital development, marketing, and public relations.

A business plan is key to organizing to provide coordinated transportation services. The business plan should contain the following functional areas:

- Create an organizational structure for management
- Prepare a service development and operations plan
- Prepare a capital facilities and equipment plan and program
- Prepare operating and capital budget including sources of revenues
- Formulate a marketing and promotional program
- Monitor, review, and report on performance of services

Organizational Structure and Management

For successful coordination of transportation services, it is necessary to set in place an organizational structure with the legal capacity to:

- Enter into contracts for services and funding
- Provide the necessary staffing
- Set policy and establish procedures for doing business
- Formalize inter-agency relationships
- This section presents the organizational structure and management through which coordinated transportation services will be provided.

Service Development, Delivery, and Pricing

Planning involves developing and putting in place the details of coordination, and how it will be implemented and monitored. Service development involves taking the actions necessary to implement service. These may include developing the process for receiving and evaluating proposals from service providers, and making recommendations about contracting.

The guiding principle for coordinated transportation services

should be customer service. Customer service means understanding the mobility needs of customers and developing and maintaining transportation services that are responsive to those needs. This recognizes that resources are limited and that coordinated transportation service providers will not be able to be all things to all people.

In developing and delivering transportation services, it is necessary to focus in the following areas:

- Providing a family of transportation services responsive to customer needs
- Creating an effective system for providing accurate and timely information on services
- Developing a system for monitoring and evaluating the delivery of transportation services
- Setting the cost of services to customers

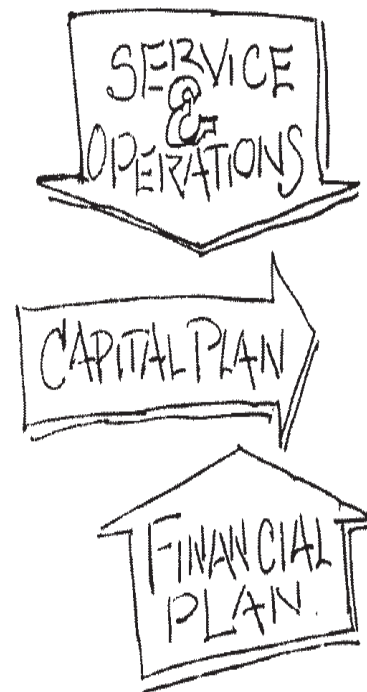
Capital Facilities and Equipment

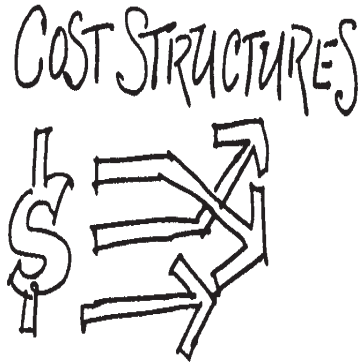
Ways and means deals with money issues including sources of revenues, cost levels, and the kind of cost structure that exists or needs to exist for agencies to contract with transportation service providers.

Development of capital resources over time will be essential to the continuing strength of coordinated transportation services. It is important to understand the condition of the existing fleet of vehicles that is available for coordinated transportation service delivery. A schedule for replacement and expansion of the vehicle fleet is required.

Capital development should be organized as follows:

- Vehicles
- Vehicle-related equipment
- Operations support equipment
- Facilities improvements
- Other equipment





Sources of funds should be organized as follows:

- Purchasers of service
- Units of government - local, state, federal
- Businesses
- Other organizations

Annual and Projected Operating Budget

Capital development involves meeting the equipment-based needs for providing services, such as vehicles, computer hardware and software, support equipment, and other items requiring capital expenditures.

Coordination of transportation services will require a detailed operating budget that establishes expense levels by functional categories as well as by traditional line items. Further, for coordination to be successful, participating agencies will need to pay for transportation services and, therefore, will comprise a significant source of revenues to support coordinated transportation service. An operating budget that includes the agencies centralizing transportation services will need to be developed.

Functional expense categories should be organized to report the following:

- Management and administration
- Operations
- Service contracting
- Maintenance
- Marketing and public relations

Revenue categories should be organized to report the following:

- Units of government - local, state, federal
- Purchasers of service
- Businesses
- Other organizations

Marketing and Public Relations Program

Marketing and public relations focuses on ways to develop and package information about the coordinated system and communicate its features and benefits to customers, political leaders, agencies and other targeted public.

Marketing and public relations activities will be important to help agencies understand the benefits of coordination and the costs of not participating and to encourage agencies and others to join the coordination network.

Communicating the benefits and costs of coordination will be important for involving the following groups in coordinated transportation services:

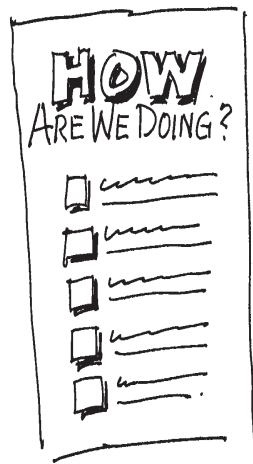
- Providers of transportation services
- Purchasers of transportation services
- Customers who are using transportation services
- Other key interest groups that have a stake in the success of the coordination of transportation services

Outreach and education are important to make certain that people and organizations are aware of and understand what is being done and accomplished to coordinate transportation services. The following groups need to be kept informed:

- Providers of transportation services
- Purchasers of transportation services
- Customers who are using transportation services
- Other key interest groups that have a stake in the success of the coordination of transportation services
- Residents of county
- The business community
- Local, state, and federal elected officials
- Local, state, and federal organizations and units of government that are providing funding to support coordination of transportation service

Important elements of a business plan include the following:

- Statement of mission, vision of success, and service objectives
- Market development strategies
- Service development, delivery, and pricing projections
- Capital facility and equipment requirements
- Inter-organizational relationships and requirements
- Organization, management, and staffing requirements
- Operating and capital program budgets
- Marketing and public information.



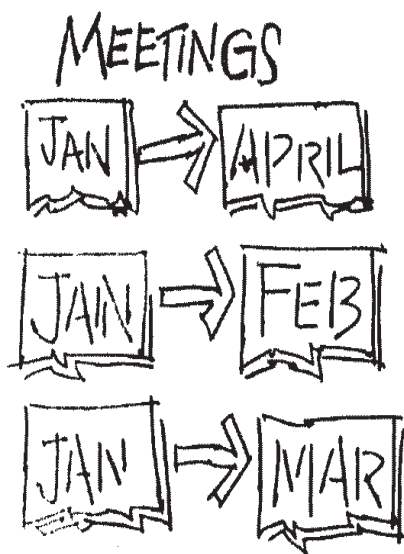
Program Performance, Review, and Reporting

For coordinated transportation services to operate cost-effectively and cost-efficiently, the periodic review, evaluation, and reporting of performance is essential. This review should be conducted on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis.

This review should encompass the following areas and dimensions within those areas:

- Operating standards and performance
- Financial standards and performance
- Performance review and evaluation
- Service, operations, and performance reporting

This review and reporting should enable participants in transportation coordination to maintain an understanding of service-effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and cost-efficiency. Further, it provides the basis by which providers of transportation can evaluate services. Finally, it provides the means by which agencies purchasing transportation services receive the service and performance reports that they require for reporting.



Meetings of the Organization

Through your collaboration and consensus-building efforts, you will gain an understanding of the issues to be discussed and the work that needs to be done. Setting up regular meetings is critical for moving forward toward achieving your coordination goals.

Setting an Agenda for Action

It is important to set an agenda that will include the important issues and points of business that the steering committee or other organization will address and about which they will make decisions. Specific agenda items will vary from place to place; but there are some general areas that the organization will need to consider.

In developing a coordination plan, the organization should focus on transportation service needs and the role of the various agencies and other local entities in meeting these needs through the planning, management, and operation of transportation services. The organization should consider perceptions about the effectiveness and efficiency of currently available transportation resources and explore ways to pool these services and resources. It is also necessary to weigh the strengths and weaknesses of alternative service implementation approaches and organizational structures to best carry out coordination objectives.



The organization will need to assess the appropriateness of using local public and agency funds to help support services financially. It will also need to evaluate existing attitudes toward the use of these funds. The organization should explore potential state and federal funding sources to establish, enhance, improve, or expand coordinated transportation services.



Issues involving the policy, regulatory and institutional environment in which coordination will occur are important and should be incorporated in the formal discussion and planning of coordination.

These issues include the following:

- **Agreements and relationships between organizations, agencies, and companies providing transportation services;**
- **State and federal laws, statutes, regulations, and rules pertaining to public and agency transportation services;**
- **State and federal sources of funding available for organization, management, and capital development for transportation services;**
- **Statutory provisions that address options for organizing the management and delivery of coordinated transportation services.**

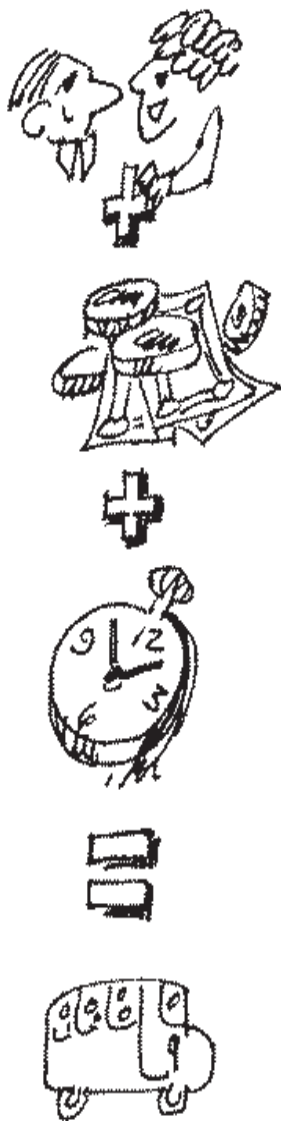


The organization should work to bring together the collaborative thinking and representative wisdom and commitment of stakeholders and leaders to prepare a business plan for coordinating transportation services.

Once coordinated transportation services begin, the agenda for meetings will include a review of services provided, and operating and financial characteristics. In addition, meetings provide a continuing forum for discussion of services and operating issues.

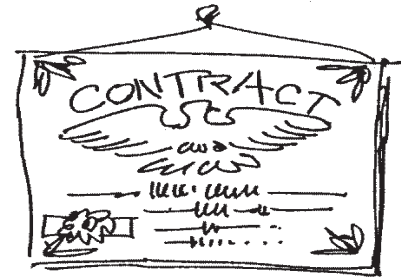
IMPLEMENTING A COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

To begin implementing a coordinated system, formal agreements must be in place. Many different opportunities for formalized agreements will present themselves as the coordination process unfolds. Decisions must be made and agreements reached about service operation, oversight, sources of funding, and other major issues necessary for providing service through the new coordinated system. Formalization is necessary whether it is for joint use, vehicle sharing, centralized dispatching, joint purchase, or any other type of coordination arrangement. Formalization involves contracts between agencies or between a lead agency and a unit of government. Formalized arrangements also occur through resolutions or other legislative action. It can simply be an agreement to let an agency store a vehicle in a garage. It can be an agreement to enable an agency to purchase low-cost fuel at a central agency. It can be a lead agency with a fleet of vehicles entering into a contract with other agencies to let them use those vehicles on an occasional basis. Or it could be an agreement between a central agency and a service contractor to use those vehicles in the provision of coordinated service.



Whatever your vision of coordination, agreements need to become formalized. If the movement is toward centralizing services under a transit authority, it will take the form of several agreements between the transit authority, the

county, and agencies. On the other hand, it may only be necessary to contract between the RTA and the county for just one particular element of service. Agreements between lead agencies and other agencies that want to purchase transportation services may be required. Other agreements may exist between a transit authority serving as lead agency and other agencies that want to provide transportation services. Formal agreements should include specific details such as the number and type of available vehicles, the days and times at which they are available, the length of time they're available, and cost reimbursement details. Contracts and agreements will, in the end, provide the solid framework necessary for sustaining the new coordinated system.



It is frequently necessary and usually helpful to engage outside expertise to assist in working through this formalization process. For example, a consulting firm can help in developing the coordination plan, and putting the other pieces together that need to be in place for implementing coordinated service. You may have a core group of people who can accomplish this within your coordination network. However, a consultant can assist by bringing focus and commitment to doing what needs to be done. An outside consulting group might take the lead responsibility for bringing the group along. Or, you could engage a consulting firm to provide advice and counsel to people or organizations that are taking on some major staff responsibilities. It is conceivable that the community's leaders and stakeholders are willing to roll up their sleeves and make it happen. However, if the process gets complicated with too much conflict, distrust, and turfism, help from some outside entity may be needed to offer advice, strategies, and experience. It may be helpful simply to have someone guiding the discussion. In short, doing the work of coordination involves various roles, functions and tasks. The decision of who performs which tasks will vary among communities. The model presented here is adaptable and can be tailored to the unique local setting.

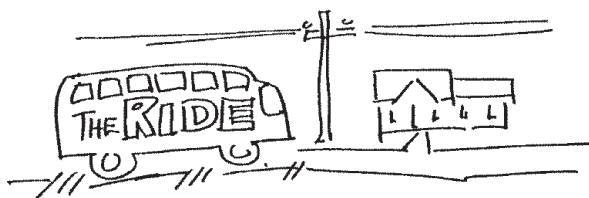




DEVELOPING A MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

Marketing goes hand in hand with all stages of the coordination process. Classic marketing principles and strategies permeate every section of this handbook. However, in this section, we will focus on developing a strategy for keeping the coordination effort on track, maintaining and increasing ridership, bringing agencies into the system, opening up funding opportunities, achieving self-sufficiency, and increasing awareness about the benefits to the community that transportation coordination provides. Public relations is the communications side of marketing. Marketing focuses on the goals of the organization and seeks to influence the behaviors of targeted markets in order to meet those goals. Public relations encompasses such functions as assessing the preferences and attitudes of targeted customers and other important “publics” within the community, and developing ways to gain their acceptance and understanding. Public relations uses communications and education as tools to accomplish its objectives of influencing attitudes. (Kotler & Andreason, 1996, 542,3).

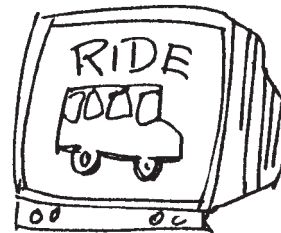
Influencing attitudes and understanding is critical for gaining public support and bringing organizations into the coordination effort. Positive attitudes are essential to the long-term success of a local coordinated transportation system. Marketing and public relations increase awareness about the benefits of coordination for those who use transportation services. This awareness is crucial for gaining voter support needed to pass levies that help fund transportation services and for increasing and maintaining revenues through ridership and fares.



A marketing strategy should be tied into coordination planning. The idea is to raise the visibility of the coordination effort to targeted groups, individuals, and organizations that are important to making the system work. These may include any or all of the following:

- **Transportation service users**
- **Agencies and companies that provide transportation services**
- **Agencies that do not provide transportation services**
- **Leaders and stakeholders in business, local government, and non-profit organizations**
- **News media**
- **Funding agencies at the local, state, and federal levels**
- **Voters**

Once targets are established, the next step is to formulate the messages that you want to communicate about the coordinated system.



- **Transportation service users:**

How are transportation services improved with the new system?

Does service cost more? If yes, what do service customers get for their money?

- **Agencies and companies that provide transportation services:**

What are the benefits of contracting to purchase services through the coordinated system?

What are the benefits of contracting to provide services through the coordinated system?

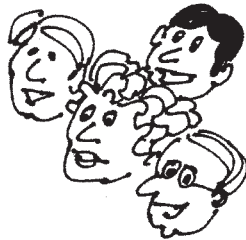
What does it cost to purchase transportation service for clients in the new coordinated system?

What kinds of savings can be realized by purchasing rather than providing service?

What revenues can be derived from providing transportation services in the new coordinated system?

• **Agencies that do not provide transportation services:**

What are the benefits of contracting to purchase services through the coordinated system?



What does it cost to purchase transportation service for clients in the new coordinated system?

• **Leaders and stakeholders in business, local government, and non-profit organizations**

What are the economic benefits of a coordinated system, both from an individual and a community perspective?

What are the political and public relations benefits of supporting a coordinated system?

• **News media**

What are the impacts of coordination on key groups in the community?

What does the coordination effort say about the community's leaders?

What should the public know about coordination and those who made it happen?

• **Funding agencies at the local, state, and federal levels**

How does coordination contribute to the efficient use of resources?

What lessons can other communities learn from the coordination effort?

- **Voters**

What are the economic benefits to service users and the community?

What are the quality-of-life benefits to service users and the community?

Are the benefits worth the costs?

Developing Marketing and Public Relations Materials

There are several marketing tools that will help achieve marketing and public relations objectives. It is best to approach the use of these materials strategically, carefully considering each target group and what will work best given available resources. The time invested in developing elaborate marketing materials should not detract from the overall goal of providing better transportation services in your community. In developing your public relations and marketing materials, focus on communicating the features and benefits of the coordinated transportation system, educating the targeted users about how to take advantage of services, and promoting the benefits of participation to agencies and companies.

Naming Your Coordinated System

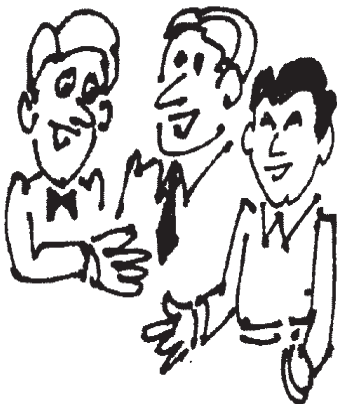
Collaboration is again the key when naming the new coordinated system. Responsibility for coming up with a name is logically delegated to the marketing and public relations subcommittee, or its equivalent in the organizational structure. Ideally, a name should be easy to pronounce and remember. A good name will create a favorable first impression with someone who knows nothing about the coordinated system or what it does.



Creating a Logo, Stationery, and Business Cards

An effective logo and stationery will contribute to the coordination effort by fostering favorable impressions in the community. The logo will become the visual symbol of service

coordination in the community. Ideas for an effective logo can also be generated collaboratively. However, it is worth investing in the expertise of a graphic designer to create a professional looking logo. Graphic designers have the skills to produce a logo that visually reinforces the name. Once the organization has a name and logo, the marketing and public relations subcommittee (or equivalent) can work with a professional printer to produce stationery and business cards that create a strong visual impact. This element of marketing is especially important for generating interest among agencies that are being asked to for their participation and/or cooperation. A name, logo and stationery provide concrete evidence that coordination is a reality, which is valuable in gaining the participation and support of initially skeptical agencies and individuals.



Networking and Presentations

Continuing the networking process is a necessary approach to marketing and public relations. As the coordination effort grows and develops, it is important that your coordination leadership continues to communicate with members of the community to keep the issue of improved transportation services on the local agenda. Maintaining communication with existing contacts while developing new ones, and delivering periodic presentations to significant community groups is an effective way to reach leaders and stakeholders in the community.

In making presentations it is essential to consider the audience, which will vary in terms of their knowledge of public transportation and coordination. Suppose, for example, that the speaker is going to address a group of voters about an upcoming local election to influence them to support a tax levy that will help fund the coordinated transportation system. While some voters will be familiar with public transportation service issues, the majority will not. The reality is that a large majority of individuals do not use public transportation. Therefore, it is important that the presentation is designed to create awareness and influence behavior. First, avoiding all jargon,

it must be communicated to the voters how, by improving transportation services, the whole community benefits. Your style of presentation in this scenario should be one that grabs attention and keeps the audience interested.

If the audience is an informed public, the approach will be more businesslike and include detailed information on such items as progress to date, people served, revenues, costs, and benefits. For example, you might have the assignment of presenting to the county human service board to inform them of the progress of the coordination effort and to gain their continued support. In this case, a brief presentation delivered in a professional style will be most effective. It is also important to be prepared to answer very specific questions in as much detail as possible.

There are clearly several audiences that fall between these two extremes. Whoever the audience, the following points need to be considered in developing a presentation:

- **What stake, if any, does the audience have in this topic?**
- **What do you hope to achieve by this presentation?**
- **How informed is the audience?**
- **How much time is allotted for the presentation?**
- **What messages will be most effective for this audience?**

Advance preparation should also include consideration of other details such as the place of the presentation, the materials you will need, including charts, graphs, handouts, overheads and/or audio-visual equipment. An important step in preparing for any presentation is practice, which helps a speaker be more relaxed and effective in your delivery.

Issuing a Press Release

The goal of issuing a press release is to gain free publicity from the local news media. Essentially, a press release contains information that you desire the news media to report to its readers, viewers, and listeners. (See Figure 13).

The following are a few rules of thumb for creating an effective press release:

Print your press release on your letterhead

Double space your text and use wide margins to facilitate editing

Use a plain serif font

Avoid graphics

Keep the length to a maximum of two pages

Proofread the release and eliminate all typos and errors of any kind

Figure 13—Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE	Contact: Gordon A. Shinn Ideal System 555-RIDE
CATCHY ATTENTION-GRABBING HEADLINE	
Subhead	
First Paragraph	
Subsequent Paragraphs	
Final Paragraph	
###	

Developing a Brochure

A brochure can be an effective marketing and public relations tool to educate potential riders about how to use the new services. It can also advertise services and inform targeted publics about features and benefits of the coordinated system. Brochures are very useful as a direct mail piece. Your marketing and public relations subcommittee (or equivalent) should collaboratively decide what the content should be to accomplish its objectives.

To create a professional-looking and effective brochure requires a certain level of skill in graphic design. There are software packages on the market that make it relatively easy to produce quality brochures. Perhaps there is someone on your committee with the skills and software to create a high quality brochure. If not, you may wish to use the services of a professional graphic designer.

A small booklet is an alternative to a brochure. Some coordinated transportation systems distribute these to provide more detailed information about their services than can be contained in a brochure. Other systems produce a map of their service area that doubles as a brochure, containing relevant information about the services and how to use them.

Using the Internet and E-mail

The Internet has opened up a new medium for marketing and public relations. Having a website is a powerful tool for doing business and providing information in the global economy, which may or may not be useful to your organization. Consider the costs and benefits of this technology in developing a marketing and public relations program. E-mail is an effective way to reach key leaders and stakeholders for the purpose of staying in touch. It is becoming more and more common as a way to communicate and exchange information. Although it lacks the personal quality of communication face-to-face, and even by telephone, e-mail can enhance your ability to convey information conveniently and immediately, at low cost.



The following elements have been used by coordinated transportation systems in developing their brochures:

Organizational Name and Logo

Mission statement

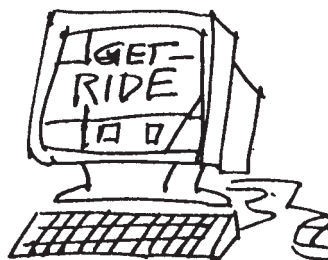
New (coordinated) service concept

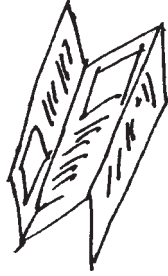
Types of services offered (e.g., fixed route, flex route, demand responsive service)

Map of the service area

Where to call for services

Date of brochure





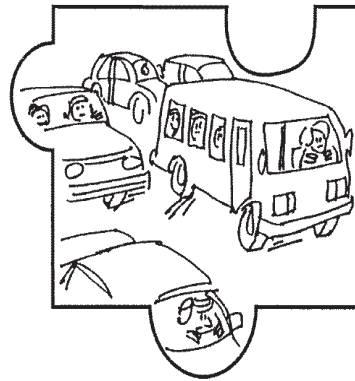
Issuing a Newsletter

Another way to distribute timely information about the new coordinated system is to produce a newsletter. The newsletter should be thought of as a way to maintain the coordinated system's relationship with its customers. It can provide information such as updates on service features, benefits, changes, and successes. In short, a newsletter can help build support.

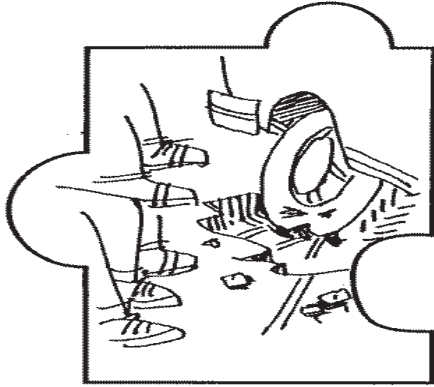
CONCLUSION

In this module, you learned how to:

- Organize a formal group to plan and implement a coordinated transportation system,
- Create a business plan for every facet of coordination, and
- Develop a marketing and public relations program for your community's coordinated system.



Dealing With the Rough Spots



GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

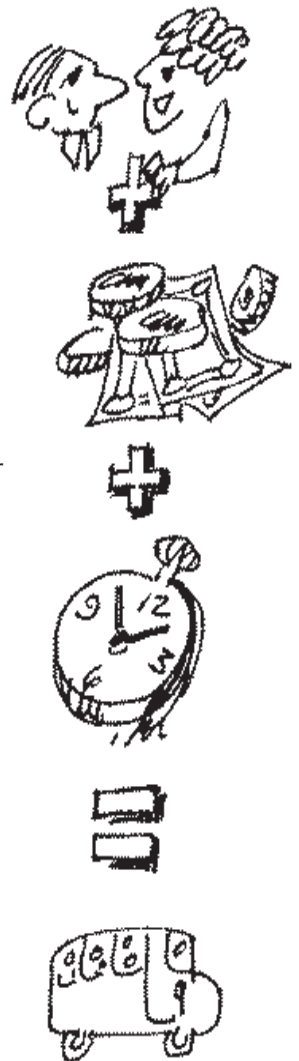
The goal of this module is to provide an understanding of problems that often occur in the ongoing operation of coordinated transportation, and techniques and guidance for avoiding and overcoming problem areas.

After reading this module, you will be able to:

- Recognize that problems will arise despite the most careful planning
- Apply techniques for overcoming problem areas in a group setting and one to one

PERSEVERING

A reality of working with diverse groups and individuals in a common venture is that conflict will occur. Conflict in the coordination process is not inherently bad. However, the way in which the organization deals with these conflicts can make a big difference in the outcome. Conflict can be effectively overcome and may even lead to a stronger coordinated system. On the other hand, it can be poorly managed or left unresolved, creating resentment and stalemating the process.



In addition to conflicts between groups and individuals, other "rough spots" that you can expect are policy changes that affect public transportation needs and resources. For example, the Americans with Disabilities Act placed new service requirements on public transportation systems receiving federal funding through Federal Transit Administration County departments of human services experienced changes in policy related to Welfare to Work legislation that required them to find ways to move individuals into the work force and deal with new issues such as transportation and day care. Such policy changes may present barriers, but also opens up new opportunities. Welfare reform brought mandates

that challenged local transportation service providers. It also opened up new funding opportunities for providing services to accommodate new demand for public transportation services.

Another potential rough spot is getting local matching funds. Often granting agencies require that a share of funds be provided locally in order to qualify. However, “local share” does not always have to be in the form of cash. It can often be in the form of vehicles or other capital equipment.



An important part of overcoming crises is being adaptable to change and responsive to agency and individual needs as they arise. Evaluation and reporting needs, for example, may be covered for all agencies that are coordinating their transportation services. What happens when a new agency joins the fold with additional needs?



Turnover in personnel is a potential rough spot. To counteract this, it is important to have an organizational structure in place that is permanent and ongoing, and not one that is merely based on informal relationships among key leaders and stakeholders.

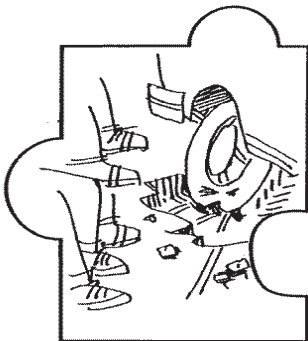


Mechanisms for Solving Problems

Mechanisms for problem solving should be part of organizational structure and procedures. These should enable the organization to bring the necessary people together to address problems effectively. In a coordinated setting it is often easier to point fingers, but the bottom line is that for a system to continue to function, it is important to work out issues of conflict as they occur and move on.

Another example of a problem solving mechanism is an ombudsman or advocate to serve as a representative or spokesperson for groups that have the greatest stake in the transportation service. In particular, older adults and people with disabilities require such a mechanism for addressing complaints and concerns. Individually, older adults and people with disabilities often hesitate to make their concerns known for fear of losing service or appearing ungrateful.

By having reporting procedures in place, problems can be effectively addressed and prevented from becoming major issues. For example, what is the follow-up procedure if somebody doesn't get picked up on time, gets dropped off too early, or falls while riding the bus?

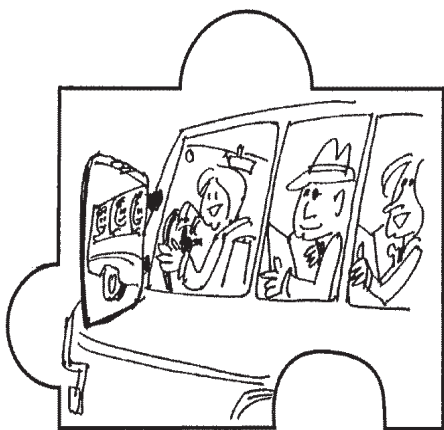


Some problems are best dealt with on a one-to-one basis. An impartial consultant or ombudsman can help resolve conflicts and solve problems.

CONCLUSION

In this module you learned how to:

- Recognize that problems will arise despite the most careful planning, and
- How to apply techniques for overcoming problem areas in a group setting and one to one.



Looking Back

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this module is to provide an understanding of the need for monitoring and evaluation, and to examine the procedures and processes that are in place to track and review progress.

After reading this section, you will be able to:

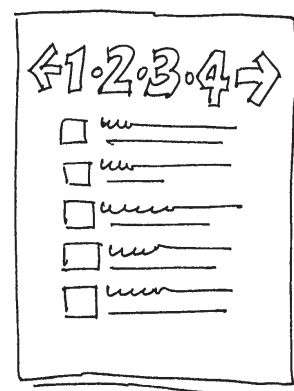
- Recognize the rationale for evaluation and monitoring in improving the coordinated system
- Understand how evaluation and monitoring assist in reporting
- Identify the key variables and data needs of all participants in the coordinated system
- Design evaluation and monitoring procedures that meet the needs of participating agencies and companies, and the coordinated system as a whole

REVIEWING PROGRESS

In the planning stage, it is important that procedures be in place to track what is occurring in the coordinated system. Specifically, this falls under the general function of “program evaluation.” Program evaluation is approached in a variety of ways, depending on the organizational setting in which it is performed. As discussed earlier, agencies have different reporting requirements that they must fulfill in order to satisfy state and/or federal requirements. Each of these agencies will have its own ideas about evaluation, and require recipients of funding to supply a variety of data. Beyond the need to comply with the requirements of granting agencies, evaluation is sometimes used as a basis for determining the effectiveness of a program and making decisions about whether or not to continue funding. In the case of transportation service coordination, evaluation should be thought of as a means by which processes and procedures for delivering services can be improved to perform more effectively and efficiently.

It is important to set up an information system for gathering, analyzing and disseminating data.

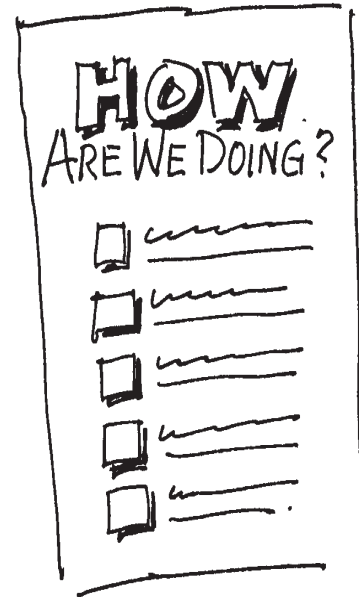
This is best accomplished collaboratively. Review of progress should take place on a monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, or annual basis because agencies have different reporting needs and time frames. Further, an evaluation system should provide sufficient data on performance and demographic variables to generate



needed statistics.

These variables might include the following:

- Use of service**
- Number of people served**
- Number of trips**
- Travel patterns**
- Time of day trips are taken**
- Financial data**
- Revenues**
- Expenditures**
- Types of trips**
- Work**
- Medical appointments**
- Personal business**
- Service efficiency**
- Number of vehicles in service by time of day**
- Hours of service per day**
- Miles of service per day**
- Operating costs**
- Customer satisfaction**
- Number of complaints**
- Types of complaints**



These evaluation measures should be taken into consideration during the planning process. An effective information system is mandatory for having statistics available for those agencies that need them when they need them. Also, in terms of evaluating the coordination effort itself, performance objectives will be set during the planning process. As the system becomes operational, data will be available for determining whether or not these objectives are being met.

The purpose of monitoring the coordinated system is to discover problems and make necessary changes. For example, it is important to keep an eye on costs. If agencies discover that it is cheaper to provide services outside the coordinated system, they may opt not to participate. Looking at the data, you may discover, for example, that there are too many vehicles going out in the morning. There may be too many vehicles hanging around in the evening. There may be more vehicles out in the middle of the day than are needed to meet customer demand at that time. Once a problem is discovered, it is then necessary

to have enough flexibility in the way services are scheduled to make the changes necessary to increase efficiency and lower costs. Again, it is better to address this need during the planning process, so that changes can be made smoothly without jeopardizing any of the arrangements and relationships that make up the coordinated structure.

Ongoing Market Research

Data on customer satisfaction should be gathered periodically to suggest service improvements that might not be discovered through other data collection methods. Market research techniques discussed earlier including surveys, group discussions, and personal interviews, are effective ways of gaining a depth of understanding about how well the coordinated system is functioning and serving the markets to which it is targeted.

Advisory Committee

Having an advisory committee is helpful for keeping the discussion alive and keeping performance issues on the table. Armed with essential information described above, an advisory committee would ideally meet on a regular basis, review progress, and make suggestions for improvement to the coordinated transportation system.



CONCLUSION

In this module you learned how to:

- Recognize the rationale for evaluation and monitoring in improving the coordinated system,
- Understand how evaluation and monitoring assist in reporting,
- Identify the key variables and data needs of all participants in the coordinated system, and
- Design evaluation and monitoring procedures that meet the needs of participating agencies and companies, and the coordinated system as a whole.

