National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

ASSESSMENT OF THE JOB ACCESS AND REVERSE COMMUTE (JARC) AND NEW FREEDOM PROGRAMS IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

DRAFT FINAL REPORT

January 2012

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1 OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) obtained consultant assistance to conduct an independent evaluation of some 35 grants funded through the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom programs within the Washington, DC-VA-MD Urbanized Area. Both of these federal programs are administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and are intended to improve transportation for low-income persons seeking access to work or training opportunities and/or reverse commute strategies (JARC), and to improve transportation for persons with disabilities (New Freedom).

In 2006, the TPB became the designated recipient for JARC and New Freedom funds for region consisting of Northern Virginia, Suburban Maryland and the District of Columbia. In addition, the TPB is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region; in this capacity, the TPB coordinates transportation planning for the region and prepares plans and programs that the federal government must approve in order for federal-aid transportation funds to flow to the Washington region. Starting in Fiscal Year 2007, projects funded through three programs in SAFETEA-LU[1], including JARC (Section 5316), New Freedom (Section 5317) and the Formula Program for Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) are required to be derived from a locally developed, Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. SAFETEA-LU guidance issued by the FTA indicates that the plan should be a "unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited income, laying out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizing services."[2]

The TPB is responsible, under the guidance of its Human Services Transportation Coordination Task Force (referred to in this report as the Task Force), to prepare and update the Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan from which the projects are derived, and conducts a competitive process for selecting grant recipients. The TPB has served in this capacity since 2006, and has funded four "cycles" of projects (a total of 35 projects) ranging from providing travel training on how to use the bus and rail system to door-to-door services to the purchase of accessible taxi vehicles.

The purpose of this assessment is to systematically review the funded projects in terms of their effectiveness in meeting the needs of low-income and disability communities, as well as to evaluate the process used for soliciting and selecting projects. Since many of the grants funded are

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[1] The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (Public Law 109-59; SAFETEA-LU) is a funding and authorization bill that governs federal surface transportation spending. It was signed into law on August 10, 2005 and expired as of September 30, 2009. Congress is working on a replacement bill for the next six-year period.

[2] Federal Register: March 15, 2006 (Volume 71, Number 50, page 13458)

pilot projects intended to test new approaches to specialized transportation, there is interest in identifying those approaches that have worked well, those that haven't worked well, and why.

The planning area for this study covers the District of Columbia and surrounding jurisdictions. In Maryland these jurisdictions include Frederick County, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County and the St. Charles urbanized area of Charles County, plus the cities of Bowie, College Park, Frederick, Gaithersburg, Greenbelt, Rockville, and Takoma Park. In Virginia, the planning area includes Alexandria, Arlington County, the City of Fairfax, Fairfax County, Falls Church, Loudoun County, the Cities of Manassas and Manassas Park, and Prince William County.

The funding sources and their requirements are described in more detail below.

FTA SECTION 5316 JOB ACCESS AND REVERSE COMMUTE (JARC) PROGRAM

The purpose of the JARC program is to fund transportation-related job access services for low-income individuals. JARC funds are distributed to states and Urbanized Areas on a formula basis, depending on that state's rate of low-income population. This approach differs from previous funding cycles, when grants were awarded purely on an "earmark" basis. JARC funds will pay for up to 50% of operating costs and 80% for capital costs. The remaining funds are required to be provided through local or other match sources.

Examples of eligible JARC projects include:

- Late-night and weekend public transit service
- Guaranteed ride home programs
- Vanpools or shuttle services to improve access to employment or training sites
- Car-share, car loan, or other projects to improve access to autos
- Access to child care and training

Eligible applicants for JARC funds may include state or local governmental bodies, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations.

FTA SECTION 5317 NEW FREEDOM PROGRAM

The New Freedom formula grant program aims to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the workforce and full participation in society. The New Freedom Program seeks to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

New Freedom funds are available for capital and operating expenses that support new public transportation services and alternatives, beyond those required by the ADA, that are designed to assist individuals with disabilities with accessing transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services. The same match requirements for JARC apply for the New Freedom Program.

Examples of eligible New Freedom Program projects include:

- Expansion of paratransit service hours or service area beyond minimal ADA requirements

- Purchase of accessible taxi or other vehicles
- Promotion of accessible ride sharing or vanpool programs
- Administration of volunteer programs
- Building curb-cuts, providing accessible bus stops
- Travel training programs

Eligible applicants may include state or local governmental bodies, MPOs, social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations.

The Washington region receives about $1 million in JARC funds and $900,000 in New Freedom funds annually. Federal requirements stipulate that these funds be supplemented by what is considered a "local match," which can be comprised of a wide variety of funding sources, including federal (non Department of Transportation) funds. A 50% match is required for an operations project, and a 20% match is required for a capital project or a mobility management project.[3] Figure 1-1 illustrates the total amount of funding programmed for the region since 2007 with JARC funds, and Figure 1-2 illustrates funding programmed by year through the New Freedom Program. As shown, the region sponsored more than $10 million in program activities with a combination of JARC, New Freedom and local sources of funds. As mentioned, JARC and New Freedom funding can be used to support a variety of services or activities, which may include purchase of capital equipment, in providing loans to purchase autos, for training, or to operate direct services. For purposes of this assessment, each separate grant is referred to as a "project." Some years' funding was not obligated the year it was apportioned, and therefore carried over to subsequent years; however, TPB has not lost any funds it has been apportioned.

Figure 1-1   JARC Projects and Funding 2007-2010

Year	# Projects	JARC Funding	Matching Funds	Total Resources
2007	3	$124,369.50	$124,370	$248,739
2008	4	$997,766	$592,547	$1,590,313
2009	4	$659,574	$596,214	$1,256,418
2010	6	$1,198,538	$697,082	$1,895,620
Total	17	$2,980,247	$2,010,213	$4,990,460

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[3] According to FTA's United we Ride, mobility management can be described as a strategic approach to service coordination and customer service which enhances the ease of use and accessibility of transportation networks

Figure 1-2   New Freedom Projects and Funding 2007-2010

Year	# Projects	New Freedom Funding	Matching Funds	Total Resources
2007	2	$210,048	$160,513	$370,561
2008	6	$1,253,241	$627,425	$1,880,666
2009	5	$786,848	$294,212	$1,081,060
2010	4	$485,500	$247,300	$732,800
Total	17	$2,735,637	$1,329,450	$4,065,087

In addition to those listed above, one project, funded in 2009, used both JARC and New Freedom funds at a total project cost of $1,234,465. Figure 1-3 following chart shows the breakdown of that funding.

Figure 1-3   Joint JARC and New Freedom Funding 2009 - WMATA

Year	# Projects	Federal Funding	Matching Funds	Total Resources
2009 – JARC	1/2	$691,300	$172,826	$864,126
2009 - New Freedom	1/2	$296,271	$74,068	$370,339
Total	1	$987,571	$246,894	$1,234,465

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

This assessment involved evaluating two aspects of the JARC and New Freedom programs: program administration and the effectiveness of the funded projects. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods were used to conduct the assessment.   Some steps contributed to both research goals, while others advised on only one. The assessment methodology included:

- Interviewing key project stakeholders, including most of the project sponsors. These interviews were conducted in person or by telephone independent of TPB staff, and a written summary of each interview was completed, and key findings and common themes are included in this report.

- Consulted national reviews and reports about Human Service Transportation Coordination, JARC and New Freedom, such as that issued through the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP), as well as summaries of relevant documents previously prepared by the TPB staff.

- Analyzing available program data which includes original applications submitted by the project sponsor, quarterly reports submitted to TPB, and other relevant program information (as available). This information was synthesized and is described further in the report.

- Observing a pre-proposal conference that was conducted as part of the process for the upcoming fifth cycle of funding, and otherwise documented the planning and selection process.

- Conducting focus groups with individuals who participated in programs funded with JARC or New Freedom resources.   The purpose of the focus groups was to learn how customers learned about the projects, whether—and how—mobility has been improved as a result of their participation in program activities, and their level of satisfaction with the services. Additionally, some telephone interviews were conducted with program participants.

- Convening a meeting of Task Force members (absent TPB staff) to learn their perspective of program effectiveness, and of challenges faced by project sponsors and others in implementing JARC and/or New Freedom projects. The role of TBP in administering the program was also discussed.

- Conducting a brief on-line survey of agencies that attended the pre-proposal conferences but did not submit applications and following up with selected agencies also in this category by telephone to learn more about their reasons for not applying. The survey instrument is included as Appendix A to this report.

- Preparing a peer review so that TPB can learn more about how other entities administer their JARC and New Freedom programs, and to highlight their experiences and challenges in program oversight. The findings from the peer review are included in Chapter 4, and full interview summaries are included as Appendix B.

2 ADMINISTRATION OF JARC AND NEW FREEDOM PROGRAMS (TPB'S ROLE)

OVERVIEW OF TPB'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The TPB serves both as the designated recipient of federal JARC and New Freedom funds, and as the entity designated to prepare, adopt and update the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan. As described in more detail below, assuming these responsibilities requires a significant level of TBP staff oversight and ongoing assistance.[4] Federal guidelines allow for up to ten percent of these fund sources to be used for program administration, which is used by TPB for this purpose. Specific responsibilities and tasks associated with oversight of the JARC and New Freedom Programs are as follows:

- With the guidance of the Task Force, the TPB staff prepared the initial Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan in 2006 ("the Plan"), which was adopted in early 2007. In consultation with the Task Force, staff developed program selection criteria which are incorporated into the Coordinated Plan.

- The Task Force also provided guidance to update the Plan in 2009; the needs and identification of priority projects occurs annually in association with the Task Force.

- A TPB member chairs the Task Force, which is comprised of some 45 stakeholders representing a broad range of interests within the TPB service area.[5] The Task Force primarily meets between September and December to consider priority projects for the upcoming funding cycle.

- The TPB serves as the designated recipient of JARC and New Freedom funds for all entities other than WMATA[6], which is currently the only other sponsor eligible to receive these and other federal transportation funds directly from FTA. This means it applies for and receives funding, and passes them through to subrecipients through an agreement.

- The TPB staff issue a call for projects to solicit applications for use of JARC and New Freedom funds, which is distributed to a wide list of interested agencies.

- Staff provides technical assistance to potential applicants, including convening mandatory pre-application conferences.

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[4]It is estimated that 1.5 FTE are dedicated to program administration and oversight.

[5] The Task Force consists of one human services and one transportation representative from each county and the District of Columbia, as well as consumer and private provider representation.

[6] Although it is a direct recipient of FTA funds, WMATA still participates through the competitive project selection process as administered by the TPB.

- The Chair of the Task Force facilitates the meetings of a selection committee, comprised of Task Force members and others agency representatives not directly affiliated with the TPB or the Task Force, to conduct the annual project selection process. Staff forwards the selection committee's recommendations to the TPB for approval.

- The TPB staff confirms the final grant amounts and match sources of funds with each project sponsor, and submits the Program of Projects to FTA. Once FTA approves via the execution of the grant, a subgrant agreement is executed to authorize use of the funds. The agreement includes a copy of the application; the application functions as the scope of services for the project.

- Staff receives quarterly reports and monitors project outcomes, and provides ongoing technical assistance as needed.

In addition, the TPB is itself a recipient of funds to sponsor the Regional Transportation Information Clearinghouse and the D.C. Wheelchair Accessible Taxicab Pilot Project, which included setting operational guidelines, coordinating between the DC Taxicab Commission and the DC Office of Disability Rights, and the purchase of some 20 accessible taxi vehicles by issuing the RFP for the vehicles. These services are described in more detail in Chapter 4, and were subject to the regional project selection process described below

PROJECT SOLICITATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

This section of the report describes the process and steps undertaken to select and fund the projects, which are solicited on an annual basis. The timeframe is as follows:

Figure 2-1   Project Selection Process Timeline

Timeline	Activity
September – December	Task Force meets to update Coordinated Plan, consider priority projects for upcoming funding cycle
January-April	Project Solicitation
January-April	Pre-application conferences
April-May	Selection Committee makes funding recommendations
May-June	TPB asked to approve funding recommendations
November-January	Project Implementation Begins

Project Solicitation

To launch the project solicitation process, TPB prepares a brochure highlighting the priority projects as identified by the Task Force.[7] The brochure is emailed and sent out in hard copy to a list of some 1700-1800 organizations, including TPB board members, technical committees and members of the Task Force. It is also sent to organizations that have applied in the past, and to a list of transportation providers. Members of the Task Force are asked to help with program

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[7] Identification of priority projects is also subject to public review and comment prior to finalization.

outreach by letting their partner agencies know about the solicitation. The TPB also highlights the availability of funds on its website.

In the past, TPB has sponsored specialized meetings to highlight particular projects of interest, such as provision of accessible taxi cabs, travel training, and establishing vanpools. These meetings are intended to assist potential sponsors with project development and by presenting and discussing relevant best practices. For example, when considering how best to implement an accessible taxi program, TPB sponsored a special meeting on the topic and brought in a guest speaker from Chicago to explain how that city had implemented a similar program.

Pre-Proposal Conference

TPB holds mandatory pre-proposal conferences for all organizations interested in submitting an application for the JARC or New Freedom programs. TPB uses the pre-proposal conferences to give potential applicants an overview of the application process, explain program rules and answer questions. The process also provides TPB early information about which organizations might be applying for funding and the types of programs project sponsors are considering, and alerts TBP to any problems potential applicants may have with the application form or process.

In the initial years of program administration, attendance at the pre-proposal conference was optional, but as of 2008 attendance became mandatory, even for organizations that had been successful applicants in the past.   An overview of the number of organizations attending the pre-proposal conference is shown together with the number of applications received and the number of applications funded is shown in Figure 2-2. This data suggests that making the pre-proposal conference mandatory increased attendance, but that there is no clear relationship between pre-proposal attendance and the number of applications received or funded.

Qualitatively, program sponsors reported being appreciative of the pre-proposal conference and the information received. Some repeat program sponsors, however, felt the conference should be optional for organizations that had already had successful applications.

Figure 2-2   Organizations Attending Pre-Proposal Conference and Submitting Applications

Year	Number of Organizations Attending Pre-Proposal Conference	Number of Applications Submitted by Organizations Attending Pre-Proposal Conference (Number of Organizations Represented)	Number of Projects Funded from Organizations that Attended the Pre-Proposal Conference
2007	16	5 (4)	4
2008	27	27 (6)	3
2009	36	6	5
2010	23	7	7
2011	24	16	

Applications Received

As Figure 2-2 indicates, about one third of the agencies attending the pre-proposal conferences did not actually submit an application. As part of this assessment, TPB is interested to learn about the effectiveness of its solicitation process, and whether it has reached the broad spectrum of agencies or organizations who could potentially serve as project sponsors. As a result, the consultant team followed up by collecting the email addresses of agencies that attended the first four pre-proposal conferences and asked them to respond to a brief on-line survey that was designed to elicit the reasons they did not apply for either JARC or New Freedom funds. A copy of the survey instrument is included as Appendix A.

An invitation to participate in the survey was sent via email by TBP staff to 32 agencies for which email addresses were available. A total of 5 responses was received.

Three agencies reported seeking sources of funding, while two were looking to partner with another organization for a project, and one agency sought new sources of funding for an existing project. Of the responses received, 2 agencies each, or 40% each indicated one of the following:

- My organization did not have an applicable project
- My organization will apply in another selection cycle

One organization, 20% of responses received indicated:

- Finding enough funding for the required project match was too challenging for my organization
- My organization has other priorities to which it is dedicating its time and resources

One agency said it was very likely to apply, two are likely, and two are very unlikely in the future to apply. In terms of making organizations more likely to apply, one said that the matching fund options should be made more flexible.[8] A respondent also shared that it would be helpful if the funding were available for longer periods of time.

In addition, consultant staff followed up by contacting two agencies by telephone to discuss this issue. The two agencies (identified by TBP) were: The Goodwill of Greater Washington and SW Action Team (SWAT).

The Goodwill of Greater Washington

The Goodwill of Greater Washington attended two pre-application conferences, one in 2009 and one in 2010, but did not apply for either JARC or New Freedom funding. Two obstacles were identified that prevented them from applying. These included (1) difficulty in identifying the required match, and (2) finding the right project to be a good fit, as well as a feasible project, for the JARC and New Freedom funding sources.

The Goodwill did look into both JARC and New Freedom, and considered two projects, one for each funding program. Both would have offered reverse commuting for employment, one for a population with disabilities, and one for a training program to serve residents of the District of Columbia to more outlying construction sites. The organization expressed some concern at being able to fill the van and identify the appropriate pick-up and drop-off locations to make the program a success.

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[8] As reported in Chapter 1, match requirements are established through federal legislation and are beyond the control of TPB.

SW Action Team - SWAT

A member of the all-volunteer SW Action Team - SWAT, attended two pre-application conferences, one in 2009 and again in 2010. Unlike the Goodwill of Greater Washington, the SW Action Team had a project in place for which they were seeking additional funding. The project was a community bus that provided a connection to Metrorail, a grocery store, pharmacy, and bank, while major construction was underway in the neighborhood that severely limited access to these locations. Operating in the morning and evening, with midday trips two days a week, the 12-passenger van with spaces for 2 wheelchairs was in service for nearly nineteen months before it did not have the funding to keep it running. While it was in place, it had a ridership of 45,000 people, and often times there was standing-room only on the bus.

The bus was originally funded through the District government and developers building in the area, but as both faced financial challenges, they scaled back their support of the service significantly. SW Action Team – SWAT was interested in both JARC and New Freedom funding, since the service met transportation needs of both target populations, but found the 50% match expectation to be prohibitive. Additionally, the need to provide a 50% match for not one, but two years compounded the financial challenges in making a JARC/New Freedom application feasible. The organization is unlikely to apply in the future if the match levels remain at 50% for operations. A match requirement of 20% is considered more feasible.

Proposal Review Process

In response to the Call for Projects, JARC and New Freedom project applications are submitted to TPB. Staff looks them over for completeness, and to be sure the application is consistent with federal guidelines. Once the applications are deemed complete, TPB staff forwards them to the selection committee.

A selection committee is assembled, which is facilitated by the TPB member who chairs the Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force. Typically the committee includes five to seven members who are assigned responsibility for reviewing and scoring each project. Members of the selection committee include representatives from the Task Force together with representatives from national organizations headquartered in Washington DC, such as the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and the Taxicab, Limousine and Paratransit Association. The committee reviews each application and scores it against the eight selection criteria included in the Coordinated Plan and corresponding application. These criteria and possible points include:

Strategies (16 points): How the project responds to four identified strategies, which include:

- Tailor transportation services to the individual needs of low-income workers and people with disabilities
- Provide user-friendly information in appropriate format to customers, caregivers, social service agencies about programs that are available to low-income workers and people with disabilities
- Develop services and programs that improve the reliability of existing paratransit or fixed-route services, or that provide alternatives for people who rely heavily on public transportation.

- Develop and implement new programs and services to provide additional transportation options that address specific unmet needs for people with disabilities and workers with limited incomes.

Coordination (16 points): How the project demonstrates coordination among local jurisdictions

Innovation (11 points): The extent to which new ideas, technologies, or other characteristics make it an innovative solution that can be replicated elsewhere

Regional Need (11 points): How project meets a regional transportation need

Private Sector Partners (10 points): How private sector partners are involved or have contributed

Estimate number of People Served (11 points): Represents number of persons served or number of trips provided each month

Ongoing funding (11 points): Presents ongoing funding sources to support the project

Feasibility (14 points): Agency's ability to manage the project

The selection committee considers these criteria, each of which is assigned a point value; together, they total 100 possible points. As mentioned previously, the Task Force identifies priority projects that the region would like to see started. The priority projects are included in the Call for Projects; however, the review process focuses on whether the application meets the stated criteria and not on the type of project.

The selection committee meets again to jointly review and discuss the preliminary scores assigned to each application. After initial review and scoring of applications, there may be questions for applicants, and their responses are included as part of their application. The Selection Committee Chair submits funding recommendations from the selection committee to the TPB officers for concurrence on the selection process and results. Once all three officers concur, the funding recommendations are presented to the TPB for approval and inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

3 OVERVIEW OF FUNDED PROJECTS

INTRODUCTION AND KEY FINDINGS

As part of the assessment project, the study team analyzed the entirety of the funded projects. This analysis looks at the location of funded projects, the types of project sponsor (i.e. private non-profit, private for-profit, governmental entity, etc.), the amount of funding by project, and the types of projects funded.

As detailed earlier (see Figures 1-1, 1-2, 1-3), the region has so far dedicated nearly $10 million in federal and local funds to the JARC and New Freedom programs. To date, 35 projects have been funded through four cycles and a solicitation for a fifth funding cycle was just completed. This section reports on the types of projects funded, their sponsors, and other relevant information.

Key findings include:

- There have been 35 projects funded under the auspices of 20 unique sponsors; several sponsors have received multiple grants, or their original project was continued beyond the original grant cycle.
- The majority of project sponsors include private non-profit agencies (43%) and public agencies other than transit agencies (43%).
- Three of the public agencies are County or DC Department of Transportation agencies that oversee local transit services.
- There is a range in types of projects funded (7 identified types of projects), and the number of projects and amount of funding is fairly evenly distributed among these types.
- To date, 17% of the projects have been completed. Another 25% are at least 50% completed (as determined by funding spent).
- There is a wide range in the grant amount received: 20% of the projects received over $500,000 while most were smaller in scale.
- Virtually all the projects rely at least partially on in-kind resources as matching funds. The two most common sources of match funds include local agency funds, and in-kind match (or some combination of the two). No other (non DOT) federal agency funds are used as match.
- Projects funded with JARC funds were more focused on services as compared to New Freedom projects, which were more likely to utilize funds for capital purposes.
- Geographically, projects are widely disbursed throughout the region, as illustrated in Figure 3-1, showing the office locations of each of the recipients. It is important to note that the service area of each project generally extends far beyond the city or town in which its office is located.

The following figures provide more detailed information.

Figure 3-1   JARC and New Freedom Projects Funded in Metropolitan Washington Urbanized Area 2006-2010

Project Sponsor Type

The 35 projects reflect a diversity of sponsorship, with the private non-profit agency being the category with the most funded projects. Public agencies, like Area Agencies on Aging, affiliated with a local government, make up about one-quarter of the projects. Six projects have been sponsored by public transit providers, which are the District Department of Transportation, Montgomery County RideOn, and the Prince George's County TheBus service, which are affiliated with local governments. One public transit operator, WMATA, has received funding for a joint JARC and New Freedom project. Four private, for profit companies have also had projects funded, which were all related to the Accessible Taxicab 2008 New Freedom project.

Figure 3-2   Project Sponsor by Type

Project Level of Completion

Of the 35 funded projects, seventeen percent, or six projects, are complete, and the rest are in varying stages of completion. Ten of the 35 projects have been approved, but not yet begun, four at least fifty percent complete, and ten less than fifty percent completed. For the purposes of this analysis, projects for which 50% or more of the budgeted total has been expended are considered far enough along to be reviewed by comparing the goals stated in their application, their reported performance measures. Forty-two percent of the projects or fifteen projects fall into this group (six completed and nine at least 50% complete).

Figure 3-3   Project Level of Completion

Funded Projects

Funded projects for both programs were categorized into seven types:

- **Fixed Route or Demand Responsive** (23%) service, provide new or extended bus routes or shuttle service that serve targeted populations, or a transportation service in which pickups are requested by eligible riders;

- **Planning and Promotional Activities** (17%) that involve human service and transportation coordinated planning or marketing of existing transportation services, such as the Regional Transportation Information Clearinghouse;

- **Transportation Vouchers**– Projects that provide a coupon for people to use taxis or other alternative transportation resources (17%)

- **Car Loans** (14%) projects support the needs of individuals to purchase their own personal vehicle to ensure access to employment

- **Travel Training** (11%) provides guidance to individuals on how to use transportation options, especially Metrobus and Metrorail.

- **Tailored Transportation Services** (9%), or projects that were designed to operate transportation services to specific markets or services, such as door-through-door passenger assistance;

- **Accessible Cabs** (9%) are a means of increasing the mobility of persons with disabilities who utilize wheelchairs, by ensuring that several taxicab companies in the District of Columbia have fleets that can accommodate individuals in wheelchairs unable to transfer to a sedan.

Figure 3-4   Percentage of All Projects by Type (Number of Projects)
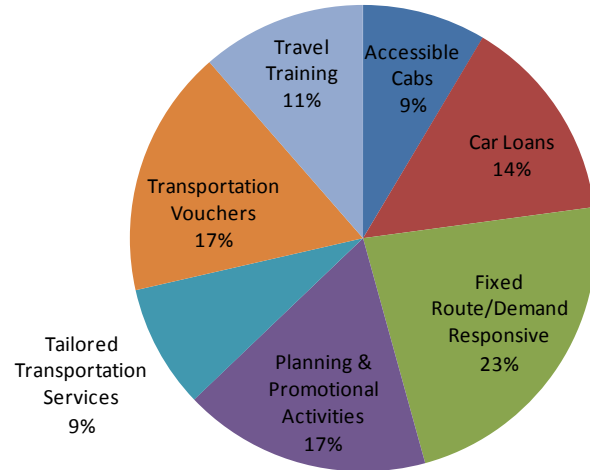
Figure 3-5   JARC Projects by Type
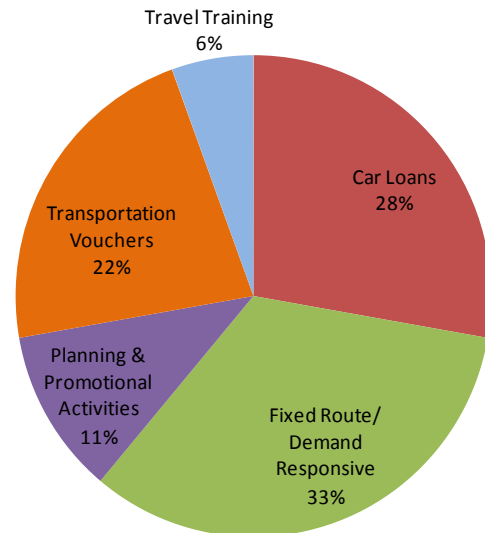
These categories are based on those defined by TPB staff and used in its Coordinated Plan Update from 2009.

Programs funded with JARC funds were more focused on services (55%) as compared with New Freedom (39%) (See Figure 3-4 and Figure 3-6). In the TPB region, both JARC and New Freedom funds were used for capital purchases.

Overall, the funding allocated to different project types is similar to the distribution of project types. An exception to this is that Transportation Vouchers, which accounted for 17% of all funded projects, but received 8% of the program funding. Travel Training projects also accounted for 11% of projects funded, but received 18% of all funding. Among New Freedom projects, there is a pattern in which some categories with fewer projects, such as Accessible Cabs and Tailored Transportation Services, receive a larger slice of the funding, while Planning and Promotional Activities, and Transportation Vouchers, for which a greater number of projects were funded, receive a smaller portion of the funding.

Figure 3-6   New Freedom Projects by Type
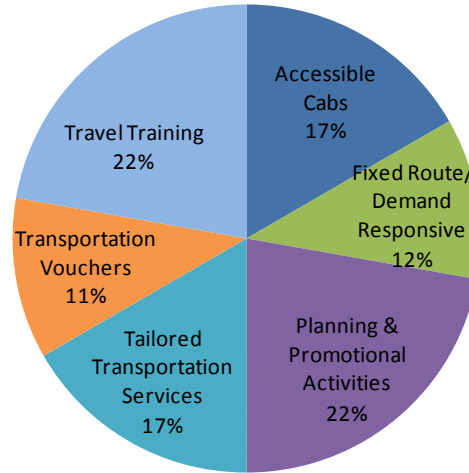
Figure 3-7   All Project Types by Funding Amount
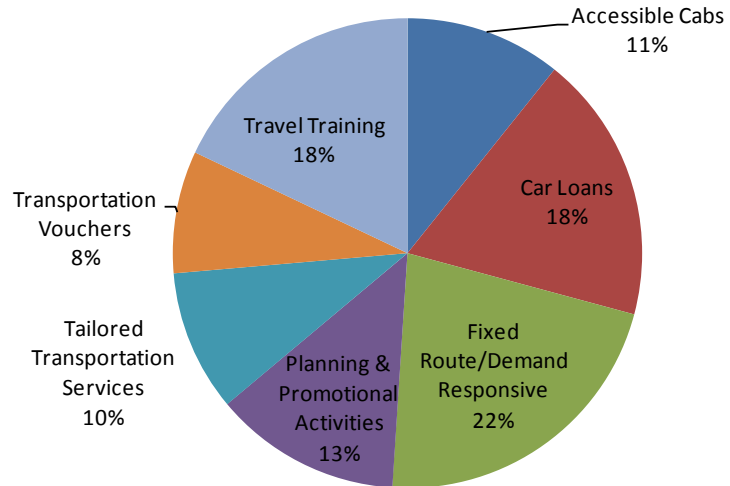
Figure 3-8   JARC Projects by Funding Amount   Figure 3-9   New Freedom Projects by Funding Amount
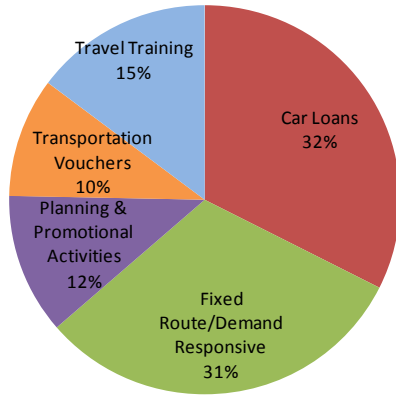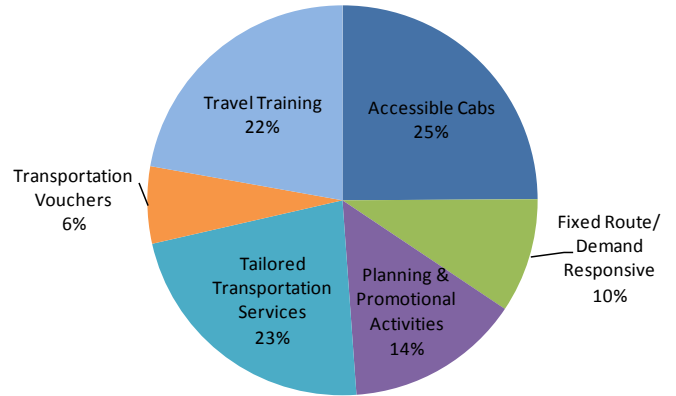
Figure 3-10   Projects by Funding Amount Category
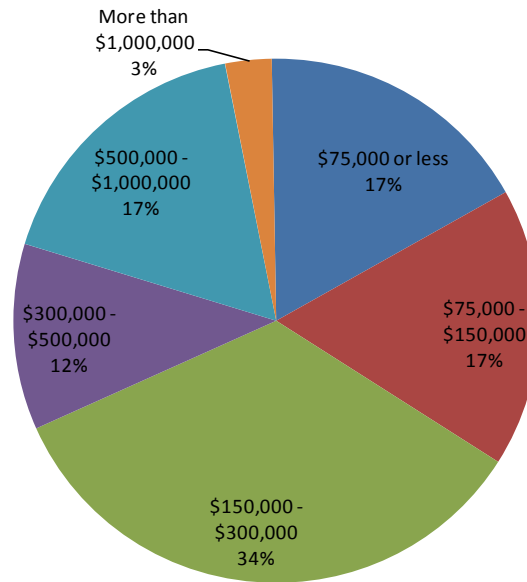
Grant amounts range from a low of $33,000 to a high of more than one million dollars. About one third of the projects fall within the budget range of between $150,000 and $300,000.

Figure 3-11 illustrates match funds generated by agency type. Social service agencies account for 34% of match funds generated, private for profit entities account for 24%, transportation agencies for 28%, and non-profit agencies for 14%. Match funds received for 16 projects totaled $1,371,730.

Figure 3-11   Match Funds Generated by Agency Type
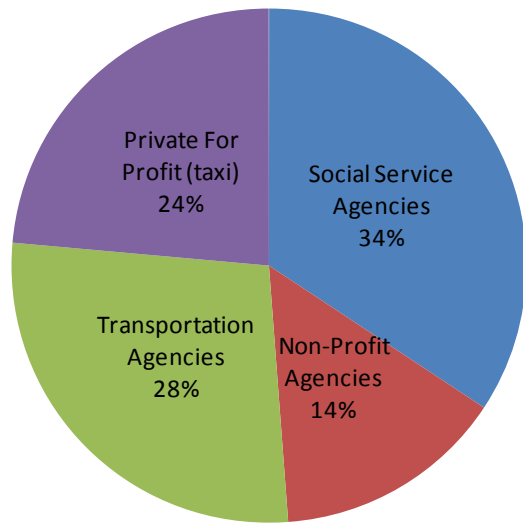
Figure 3-12 illustrates that 74% of match funds are provided with agency funds, while 26% are either "soft" (in-kind) match or donations.

Figure 3-12   Match Funds by Type
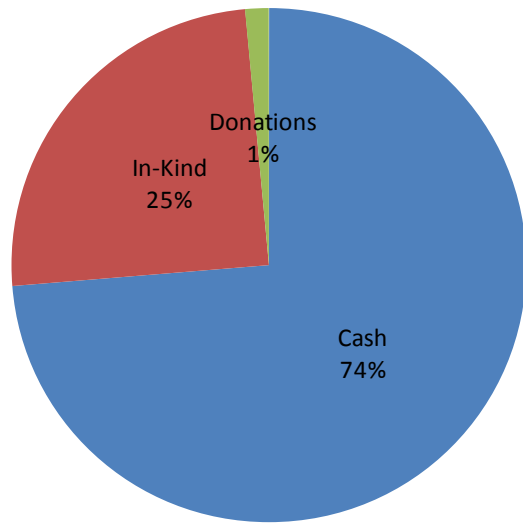
4 JARC AND NEW FREEDOM PROJECT ASSESSMENT

OVERVIEW AND KEY FINDINGS

A key objective of this assessment is to examine the performance of the projects funded. Namely, have they accomplished what they set out to do? Have they resulted in best practices that could be replicated elsewhere? What has the region learned as a result of investing more than $10 million ($3,500,000 for the 15 projects that are completed or approaching completion) in pilot projects? Most importantly, have they resulted in improved mobility for low-income persons and for persons with disabilities? As this chapter will indicate, some of these questions can be answered, while others cannot.

Local project sponsors cited numerous examples of successful projects. In some cases, a particular planning or operational element was highlighted as a reason for the project's success. For example, the first phase of a project sponsored by Prince William County Area Agency on Aging resulted in a comprehensive plan that enabled it to be well positioned for program implementation. For other projects, success emerged through a high level of stakeholder collaboration or newly established partnerships; for example, WMATA's relationship with three Centers for Independent Living. Other funded projects created new services that improved mobility in unique ways (i.e. car loan and donated vehicle programs). This chapter reports on program findings and outcomes as a whole.

Overall, the following findings resulted from this review of completed projects:

- Fifteen of the 35 projects funded are considered far enough along to document their quantitative results. The others are less than half completed (as evidenced by funding expended), and therefore it is premature to draw conclusions about their results. This is especially true because many projects have "up-front costs" which may inflate the actual cost per unit of service.

- None of the 15 reviewed projects can accurately compare the project outcomes compared to the primary original project goal of services anticipated to be provided (i.e. number of persons served, number of trips provided, etc.) as included in their project applications, primarily because data is missing or has not yet been reported. It should be noted, however, that some project applications referenced multiple goals and objectives; in many cases some of these other objectives have been met.

- In some cases, quantifying services provided is very difficult if not impossible to document; for example, the number of new trips taken on a fixed route service intended to benefit low-income people. In some cases, estimates were prepared in consultation with the project sponsor and utilizing other program documentation, such as surveys.

- For those who have reported data, most projects' actual outcomes did not meet the estimated number of trips or persons served as stated in the application.

- Some project sponsors reported on more qualitative factors resulting from their services, in an ad hoc manner, since project sponsors were not asked to report on this aspect of their project.

- Cost metrics are not reported because doing so could present information that is misleading or inaccurate. Many projects were slow in starting, or needed time to maximize service delivery; additionally, cost reports do not accurately reflect true operating costs in that they do not distinguish between capital, overhead, or other administrative costs.

- It is inappropriate to compare one project to another, as doing so would compare "apples to oranges" in that project services vary significantly, ranging from fixed route trips, to escort services for frail elderly, to travel training, etc.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Establishing consistent criteria is challenging for any program, but it is especially true for funding programs such as JARC and New Freedom, which are specifically designed to support innovative and in some cases, untested ideas. Some programs are designed to work in areas where traditional public transportation services are not financially feasible. In addition, the programs are comprised of a diversity of projects that include capital purchases, individual training, service operation and marketing programs. In fact, both JARC and New Freedom guidelines encourage a variety of mobility solutions to fill gaps identified through the Coordinated Plan; these solutions may be unique to a particular community or population group. While new or expanded fixed route services can—and do—meet the transportation needs of many low income communities, it does not make sense nor is it financially feasible to operate fixed route transit in all cases. Many of the gaps identified through the planning processes may be better served by projects that complement fixed route service.

Because JARC and New Freedom projects are usually not considered "traditional" transportation projects, they are not always appropriately compared to typical public transportation performance indicators, such as cost per rider, farebox recovery ratio, or trips per hour. Many projects by definition are not considered highly efficient because they are dictated by non-traditional needs and may be providing services during off-peak hours when ridership is lower, or otherwise operating under specialized circumstances. Additionally, the Washington metropolitan area itself is very diverse. As a result, the transportation operating environments within the counties differ considerably. For example, low-income communities served by projects within the District of Columbia tend to be located in dense urban neighborhoods, whereas low-income and/or disabled populations in outlying counties are more scattered or dispersed. Therefore it is difficult, if not impossible, to establish the same performance criteria for all projects when determining which have proven "most" successful. Ideally, each project's outcomes should be compared to its own original expectations, and compared to the broader program goals and objectives rather than to pre-established productivity objectives.

Throughout this planning process, project sponsors have stressed the importance of considering the qualitative aspects of program outcomes as well as measuring quantitative outcomes. While qualitative aspects—such as customer satisfaction, enhanced independence and mobility, and improved financial stability—are more difficult to document and quantify, these are frequently mentioned as program benefits. Furthermore, the benefits can be exponential in nature, meaning

they continue to grow over time. For example, each person who is successfully travel trained can be expected to take many trips over time, also resulting in cost savings for the transit agency not providing more expensive paratransit services; likewise, a low-income person who is provided a loan for an automobile will not only be able to access job sites, but is also better positioned to have more options that may result in obtaining a higher paying job. These qualitative benefits are also far reaching in that other family members or caretakers may also indirectly benefit as cited in some examples below.

The study team identified two quantitative and four qualitative measures:

Quantitative measures:

- Ability of projects to meet local established priorities
- Program outcomes for assessed projects compared to original primary service goal as stated in the project application

Qualitative measures:

- Opinions and experiences of project sponsors
- Ability of TPB to encourage participation by wide range of project sponsors
- Benefits to direct users of the programs
- Other program outcomes for projects analyzed compared to original goals as stated in the project application

QUANTITATIVE FACTORS

Data for the quantitative assessment was conducted using data provided by TPB, including the annual performance reports.

Ability of Projects to Meet Local Established Priorities

As part of its planning process, TPB facilitates discussions with the Task Force to identify priority projects that are then communicated to potential project applicants. A number of priority projects were first identified in the Coordinated Plan adopted in 2007, and the projects are now updated on an annual basis. The list of recommended priority projects is indicated below, along with an indication of whether such a project has actually been funded. This assessment indicates that more than half of the recommended priority projects have been funded (sometimes by more than one sponsor, and that an estimated 80% of grant funds have been dedicated to funding priority projects. Of the 13 priority projects listed below, 8 are specific to New Freedom projects, and 5 are specific to JARC.

Figure 4-1   Recommended priority projects as identified by Task Force and included in
Coordinated Plan and Updates

Priority Project—New Freedom	Funded?
Accessible taxi service subsidy pilot	Yes
Sensitivity and Customer Service Training	Yes
Door through Door Service	Yes
Range of travel training to older adults and persons with disabilities	Yes
Volunteer driver program	No
Same day paratransit service pilot	No
Accessible infrastructure support for transit stations	No
Develop transportation ombudsman position	No
Priority Project—JARC	**Funded?**
Loan program for low-income workers to purchase cars	Yes
Shuttle service or vanpools to employment sites	Yes
Expanded guaranteed ride home program/vouchers for low-income workers	Yes
Expanded transit in underserved neighborhoods	No
Brochure for low income workers	No

Program Outcomes for Assessed Projects Compared to Service Goal as Stated in Application

This criterion proved most difficult to quantify and as a result, it is not possible to draw an accurate conclusion. Through this project, the actual project outcomes were compared to the primary service goal expressed in the original application. Although 35 projects have been funded, most of them have not yet been completed and in fact some have only recently started. Furthermore, some projects were delayed in getting started or have taken time to become fully operational. Therefore, it is premature to consider the outcomes of all the projects that have been funded; this assessment more appropriately focuses on the outcomes of those projects that are completed, or can be considered 50% completed based on their total program expenditures as of December 31, 2010. Even for those projects still underway, it is not possible to accurately predict the final outcomes.

Since 2007, fifteen projects have either been completed or have expended at least 50% of their budget, indicating that they are close to completion.   These projects are examined in more detail, below, and include:

- Montgomery County Ride On
- Prince George's County Department of Public Works & Transportation UPS Employment Shuttle
- Northern Virginia Family Service Ways to Work Program (3 separate projects)
- District Department of Transportation, Georgetown Metro Connection Shuttle

- Boat People SOS: RISE Employment Support Project
- Jewish Council for the Aging Travel Training
- Arlington Agency on Aging: Door-through-Door Service Pilot
- Diamond Transportation: Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Project Education and Training
- Yellow Cab Company: Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Project
- Liberty Cab Company: Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Project
- DC Office on Aging: Caregivers Respite Escort Service for Transportation
- Melwood Horticultural Training Center: Route Optimization Project
- Prince William County Area Agency on Aging: Mobility Management Plan

For these projects, performance reports and annual report, if available, were reviewed. In some cases, no performance measures have been reported (in some cases because they had not been operating long enough to require one). There is also variation in completing the Annual Performance Measures Report, with some agencies providing detailed quantitative outcomes from their project, while others focusing on more qualitative results. It should be noted, however, that not all projects can effectively report on quantitative aspects of their project, i.e. the Melwood Route optimization project. Other important goals or desired outcomes that are more qualitative in nature include the level of coordination by the project sponsor and other organizations, meeting identified regional need, partnership with private sector partners, and innovation.

The complete list of projects funded, and their level of completion as of December 2010, is indicated in Figure 4-2.

Figure 4-2   Project Completion by Percentage of Budget Expended

Year Funded	Sponsor	JARC Project	Project Category	% Completed
2010	Northern Virginia Family Service	Vehicles for Change	Car Loans	0%
2010	Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind	Taxi Voucher Program	Voucher	0%
2010	Boat People SOS	Continuation-Road to Independence through Savings and Education (RISE) Employment	Fixed Route/Demand Responsive	0%
2010	SkillSource Group	Transportation Voucher project	Voucher	0%
2010	Prince George's County Department of Public Works & Transportation	Shuttle from Southern Ave. to National Harbor Convention Ctr.	Fixed Route/Demand Responsive	0%
2010	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments	Regional Transportation Information Clearinghouse Update	Planning & Promotional Activities	0%
2009	Northern Virginia Family Service	Ways to Work Program	Car Loans	88%
2009	Family Matters of Greater Washington	Ways to Work Program	Car Loans	32%
2009	Doorways for Women & Families	Taxi Voucher Program	Voucher	46%
2009	Prince George's County Department of Public Works & Transportation	UPS Reverse Commute Shuttle	Fixed Route/Demand Responsive	37%
2008	Northern Virginia Family Service	Ways to Work Program	Car Loans	70%
2008	District Department of Transportation	Georgetown Metro Connection Shuttle	Fixed Route/Demand Responsive	100%
2008	Boat People SOS	Employment Support Project (RISE)	Fixed Route/Demand Responsive	92%
2008	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments	Regional Transportation Information Clearinghouse	Planning & Promotional Activities	15%
2007	Northern Virginia Family Service	Ways to Work Program	Car Loans	100%
2007	Montgomery County Ride On*	Isolated Communities Taxi Voucher Program	Voucher	30%
2007	Prince George's County Department of Public Works & Transportation	UPS Employment Shuttle	Fixed Route/Demand Responsive	100%

* Although only 30% of the project funds were expended, this project is considered complete as the project sponsor ended the program

Projects in gray are complete or more than 50% complete

Year Funded	Sponsor	New Freedom Project	Project Category	% Completed
2010	Prince William County Area Agency on Aging	Taxi Voucher Program	Voucher	0%
2010	Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind	Door to Door Agency Transportation for Youth	Fixed Route/Demand Responsive	0%
2010	Prince George's County Department of Public Works & Transportation	Voice Annunciation Bus Pilot and Rider Survey	Planning & Promotional Activities	0%
2010	DC Office on Aging	Purchase 2 Wheelchair Vans and Taxi Voucher Program	Voucher	0%
2009	Prince William County Area Agency on Aging	Mobility Management Plan	Planning & Promotional Activities	54%
2009	Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind	Travel Training Project	Travel Training	34%
2009	Boat People SOS	Travel Training Project	Travel Training	44%
2009	DC Office on Aging	ADRC Promotion Project	Planning & Promotional Activities	26%
2009	Melwood Horticultural Training Center	Route Optimization Project	Fixed Route/Demand Responsive	52%
2008	DC Office on Aging	Caregivers Respite Escort Service for Transportation	Tailored Transportation Services	62%
2008	Arlington Agency on Aging	Enhanced Transportation Project	Tailored Transportation Services	10%
2008	Yellow Cab Company of DC	Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Project	Accessible Cabs	85%
2008	Liberty Cab Company	Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Project	Accessible Cabs	74%
2008	O'Donnell + Company	Coordinated Taxi Marketing	Planning & Promotional Activities	0%
2008	Diamond Transportation Education and Training	Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Driver Training	Accessible Cabs	67%
2007	Jewish Council for the Aging	Travel Training for Seniors with Disabilities	Travel Training	83%
2007	Arlington Agency on Aging	Door-through-Door Service Pilot	Tailored Transportation Services	100%

Projects in gray are complete or more than 50% complete

Year Funded	Sponsor	JARC and New Freedom Project	Project Category	% Completed
2009	WMATA	Comprehensive Individualized Level of Travel Training Project	Travel Training	44%

This section provides the data as reported by each project sponsor for projects considered more than 50% complete as indicated in Figure 4-2. A brief description of each project is provided, along with summary information, if available, to compare the original primary service goal to actual program outcomes, as well as any other goals identified in the application. The information was assembled by reviewing the original application document along with the quarterly reports.

JARC Projects Completed: Description and Outcomes

2007 – Montgomery County Ride On

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation, Transit Services Division, put together the Isolated Communities Taxi Voucher Program. The goal of this program was to provide the residents of Tobytown, a neighborhood with no access to public transportation, with taxi vouchers to the nearest bus (Ride On) or Metrorail station. According to the application, transportation service had long been sought for this area, but the isolation of the community made public transit infeasible. Through this project, the sponsors anticipated meeting an identified need and expected to serve approximately 100 to 150 residents with transportation to employment, medical services, and/or quality of life trips. Administration of the program involved selling subsidized taxi coupon books. In its application, the project sponsor indicated that coordination would be taking place between the Montgomery County DOT and a private management services program which was responsible for verifying eligibility of participants and this activity did take place. This company also served as a private partner for the project. The sponsors suggested that this project was potentially replicable in their application.

For a number of reasons, there was not full participation in the project. One notable fact is the economy; even though the vouchers were subsidized, residents were still unable to pay for them. Accomplishments of this project included the initiation of a marketing campaign that increased participation in the program by 50%. Lessons learned included: start up was slower than anticipated, and project sponsors underestimated the need for marketing, a challenge which the project sponsors were able to address through the campaign mentioned above. Montgomery County Ride On expended 30% of its budget, and the project is considered completed.

2007 – Prince George's County Department of Public Works & Transportation UPS Employment Shuttle

The Prince George's County Department of Public Works & Transportation used JARC funds to expand its existing Call-A-Bus and TheBus service from the Greenbelt Metrorail, Prince George's Community College, and the United Parcel Service Facility in Laurel, MD to provide service earlier in the day. The project was also selected for funding in 2009, and expended slightly more than 35% of that budget as of December 2010. The goals and planned implementation of that project were the same as those described in the 2007 application.

The application describes that there are 1,900 individuals receiving welfare benefits and/or with low income in the region who might benefit from this service. Under the service conditions prior to the benefit of JARC funding, the average annual ridership for the entire public transit system was 12,600 daily passengers, with approximately 3% of those as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients. The application identifies the projected number of monthly one-way trips as 1,050 and described the significant need that this service has been and would be meeting, by extending the hours of public transit serving this location The route had been developed as a

partnership between the Department of Public Works and Transportation, the Department of Social Services, and the United Parcel Service, a private partner in the project.

The FY2009 Annual Performance Measures Report, sharing information from nine months of service in 2008 and 12 months in 2009 is limited in its reporting of program outcomes. While it describes how increased ridership and requests for additional service hours indicated the success of the project, it does not provide hard numbers to support those statements. Also mentioned is a favorable service per passenger operating cost, but that number is not identified. The report does describe how the service is meeting an important need and provides access for persons with low incomes to jobs that they otherwise would not be able to reach. In correspondence with the project sponsor, 9,105 trips were provided in FY2007 and 8,186 were provided in FY2008.

2007, 2008, 2009 – Northern Virginia Family Service Ways to Work Program

Northern Virginia Family Service has received JARC funding for its Ways to Work Program, which assists with low-interest loans to purchase cars or maintenance services. This program has been funded in 2007, 2008, and 2009, and has completed its program for 2007, is 70% complete for 2008, and has expended 88% of its budget for 2009. In 2009, the funding was used to support car repair grants for working families with low income. In 2010, the organization received JARC funding for a related program, Vehicles for Change , through which NVFS will purchase vehicles and provide the cars to program participants for a small fee, and support them in seeking to maintain these vehicles.

According to its 2007 subgrant contract, the JARC funding was intended to support 48 loans to agency clients for the purchase of vehicles and/or their maintenance. In 2008, the subgrant agreement indicated that money would support 96 such loans. In 2009, the subgrant agreement noted the change in structure of the program, to provide car repair grants to participants, and anticipated that it would the program would serve between 50 and 55 clients during its one-year project period.

In its 2009 application, NVFS describes some of the ways the project has meet other criteria for JARC projects. A Loan Advisory Committee utilizes interagency cooperation to monitor and ensure success of the project, highlighting the coordination among partners for the project. A private partner has included a bank and the Ways to Work national program which provides inexpensive car repair to project participants. The project also has proven successful in meeting a regional need for access to jobs through personal transportation options.

NVFS also provided detailed information from its own annual and mid-year reports to illuminate the impacts of this program.

2008 JARC District Department of Transportation: Georgetown Metro Connection Shuttle

In 2008, the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) received JARC funding to support the Georgetown Business Improvement District's Georgetown Metro Connection Shuttle. The shuttle was intended to provide 10-minute frequency bus service between the Rosslyn and Dupont Circle Metrorail stations and the businesses in Georgetown, so that individuals with low-income could access employment there.

Based on its application, DDOT estimated that 600 individuals with low-income would compose the daily ridership and would utilize this service. The application also anticipated 16,380 one-way trips per month, and 196,560 one-way trips annually. DDOT conducted an on-board survey, and

also analyzed the ridership usage based on farebox categories (i.e. discounted fares for elderly and disabled passengers); however, documenting a realistic number of new passengers who used the service as a result of this grant is not possible. The application also describes how this service meets a need of bringing persons with low incomes to jobs in Georgetown, as well as how several different partners have been part of the service, including the District of Columbia, Arlington County, and the Georgetown BID, as well as private partner Veolia Transportation.

Though it appears, from results described above, that estimates for actual ridership that are lower than the application anticipated, it is likely that the bus did connect individuals with low income to employment. From the survey, 50% of respondents indicated that they ride the bus 5-7 days per week, and with nearly 70% identifying work trips as the purpose, the bus clearly is a key mode in bringing people to their jobs. Additionally, nearly 30% of respondents said that they did not have a car, and this segment of users likely includes a significant portion of persons with low income.

2008 – Boat People SOS: RISE Employment Support Project

Boat People SOS is a national organization dedicated to supporting Vietnamese-Americans, with an office in Falls Church, Virginia. That office has received TPB funding for three projects, two JARC and one New Freedom. The organization's 2008 JARC project, which provided transportation support for its Road to Independence through Savings and Employment project, is nearly complete, and has received additional support through a second JARC award for 2010. In its 2010 application, the project sponsor describes the organization's participation in Access for All, as part of its coordination activities, and its partnering with SkillSource Centers that provide referrals to the RISE service. That application also identifies how this project has met a significant need in connecting participants with interviews and jobs.

According to its subgrant contract, the program "will prepare low-income Vietnamese refugees and immigrants with employment training and assistance and place them in jobs," and will provide "job training, vocational ESL, resume preparation...and transportation to job interviews." After successful job placement, Boat People SOS will continue to provide transportation for three months, so that the individuals amass savings to purchase a car. For this project, Boat People SOS received funding to purchase a 15-passenger van, along with money to provide vouchers for gas to encourage carpooling among neighbors, as well as provide training on various transportation modes to best meet participants' needs.

According to the contract, the organization would select 15 workers to receive vouchers and will begin service for 45 individuals a day, and increasing that service to 75 individuals per day. According to the FY2009 Annual Performance Measures report, with the service in place for nine months, they had completed 120 one-way trips and had been able to achieve 40 targeted jobs. The planned implementation of the 2010 project was the same as those described in the 2008 application, with a goal of serving at least 200 participants in the first year, and providing an average of 140 one-way trips each month.

New Freedom Projects Completed—Description and Outcomes

2007 – Jewish Council for the Aging

The Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA) provides a variety of services for older adults in the Greater Washington area. The project was funded in 2007 to sponsor a travel training program. The goal of the project was to teach 30 seniors with disabilities, aged 70 or older, to use public

transportation, including regional bus services, Metrobus, and Metrorail. JCA pursued partnerships with one community-based organization in each Washington, DC, Montgomery County, MD, and Fairfax County, VA, and planned to provide training to ten individuals at each location. Other partners in coordination included WMATA, the Fairfax Connector, and Ride-on Buses, and the application describes the critical need for this training among older adults with disabilities, particularly those resulting from advancing age that no longer allow them to operate cars.

According to their FY2009 Annual Performance Measures Report, which includes activities for eight months in 2008 and twelve in 2009, the program exceeded its goal of training 30 individuals by training more than 250 adults above the age 65. The report describes that group trainings have been very successful; however, the challenge lies in encouraging people to use fixed route transit on their own. As the program has continued, however, more participants reported being comfortable with public transit. While the report does not offer numeric estimates of how many rides these trained older adults have taken after learning more about the public transit, it does indicate that "public transit ridership among older disabled adults seems to have increased."

2007 – Arlington Agency on Aging: Door-through-Door Service Pilot

The Arlington Agency on Aging received funding in 2007 for a Door-through-Door Service Pilot, which, according to the subgrant contract, provides "personal care attendants to clients with disabilities who need assistance using paratransit to get to medical appointments." The Arlington Agency on Aging partnered with the Alexandria Agency on Aging and Home Care Partners to provide this service. This program was supported again with funding in 2008 to continue its passenger assistance. It also expanded the services provided funding for a disability awareness course for taxi cab drivers, as well as a mobility manager at Home Care Partners to assist with coordinating appointments and provide information about transportation options and services. The 2007 project is completed, while the 2008 program has expended only 10% of its budget as of December 2010.

The application identifies meeting an important regional need in providing this type of assistance to individuals with disabilities. It also provides letters of support and involvement from the STAR call center, Red Top Cab and Diamond Transportation Service, the American Red Cross (Arlington Chapter) and Senior Services of Alexandria.

According to the 2007 application, the Arlington Agency on Aging assumed that participants in the program would have two medical appointments per month, and also assumed that each trip would take four hours, allowing the aides to assist two participants per day. The estimate in the application is that the program would serve 120 people in its first year, and provide assistance on 240 one-way trips per month. According to the FY2009 Annual Performance Measures Report, the program has provided 661 one-way trips in 2008, with six months of service, and 1,614 in 2009, with 12 months of service. These trip numbers average 110 in 2008 and nearly 135 in 2009. The project was broadened in 2009 to include sensitivity training for drivers; to date, 38 drivers have been trained.

In its report, the most significant accomplishment of the program is identified as the providing clients with the ability to travel safely to medical appointments, allowing family members and friends to know that the participant will not be waiting for transportation to an appointment alone, and will have assistance once at the appointment.

2008 – Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Project—Yellow Cab Company and Royal Cab Company

Previous to initiation of this project, there were no accessible taxi cabs available for wheelchair users in Washington, D.C. despite the fact that disability advocates had asked for accessible taxi service for DC for many years. The city tried to get accessible taxis, but the unique regulatory structure of the city's taxi industry proved a significant challenge. Complex federal procurement procedures were considered a barrier discouraging private contractors from purchasing vehicles directly, and local stakeholders also recognized the need for a coordinated marketing effort to support the roll out of the new accessible vehicles.

Given the lack of an obvious oversight agency to administer a project of this nature, the TPB took the initiative in 2007 to sponsor a pilot project using New Freedom funds, working with several local organizations. The TPB facilitated planning meetings with the two taxi companies, the DC Taxicab Commission and the DC Office of Disability Rights to develop parameters for the accessible taxi service and coordinate the components necessary to start accessible taxi service in D.C. The TPB also purchased 20 vehicles which have been made available to two taxi companies, Yellow Cab Company and Royal Cab Company. This project has met several New Freedom goals, in increasing the mobility options for persons with disabilities and utilizing coordination to implement the projects, with both public and private partners playing key roles.

This service began a testing phase in early 2010, with only 5 taxis. Twenty ramp-equipped taxi vehicles are now available for service, operated by Yellow Cab of D.C. and Royal Cab. The mini-van taxi vehicles are designed to serve people who use wheelchairs and scooters and who cannot use traditional taxi sedans.

Because it was not being fully promoted for more than a year, the statistics currently available do not fully reflect the results of a project that has been in the public eye for 50% of its existence. To date, it has expended approximately 85% of its funding because of the significant start-up costs due to purchasing the vehicles. The project established monthly performance review to ensure that the number of wheelchair rides is increasing and wait time is minimized. A survey research firm conducts quarterly phone interviews with customers to ensure the project is getting feedback from users. The number of trips between February 2010 and March 2011 increased 7 fold, and the average wait time for a wheelchair accessible cab to arrive has been between 22-38 minutes (as of April 2011).

2008 – Diamond Transportation: Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Project Education and Training

The Diamond Transportation Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Project Education and Training was conducted as a complement to the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Project. Through this project, taxi drivers of accessible cabs received training in how to accommodate wheelchairs in the vehicles, as well as how to provide good customer service to persons with disabilities. Funding to support this activity was set aside by the selection committee as part of the selection process to support the accessible taxi project, and then an RFP was issued to find qualified training consultants.

There have been five training classes for this project, starting in December 2009, and continuing until March 2011. A final training class will be in the late summer of 2011. An average of between seven and eight people have been trained at each session, with a high of ten at the first training, and a low of four at another. With each driver participating in the full training day, there have been 228 hours of training total. An evaluation component is also included in this project; drivers

that complete the class fill out an evaluation and an overall evaluation report created. The quarterly customer satisfaction phone survey also asks for feedback on the drivers customer service. In facilitating the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Project and providing a higher quality of service for passengers with disabilities, this project has met several program goals.

2008 – DC Office on Aging: Caregivers Respite Escort Service for Transportation

The DC Office on Aging (DCOA) Caregivers Respite Escort Service for Transportation, working with Home Care Partners, provided passenger assistance for persons with disabilities to get to medical and other essential appointments utilizing Washington Elderly Handicapped Transportation Services. In its application, the project anticipates that 80 individuals will be served by the program, with 1,920 trips provided. The FY2009 Annual Performance Measures indicated that approximately 206 trips were provided for 12 individuals. The partnership with two other organizations for project implementation and in working with the Senior Service Network, composed of 22 agencies to help publicize the project, highlights the coordination activities for this endeavor. By facilitating the safe transport of a variety of passengers with disabilities, this program meets an important regional need.

One of the interesting things that the sponsors of the CREST program found is that clients tend to use the service repeatedly, particularly if they are undergoing regular medical treatment such as chemotherapy, dialysis or physical therapy. As a result, the number of unduplicated clients that can be served is reduced.

2009 – Melwood Horticultural Training Center: Route Optimization Project

This project focused on providing direct trips for employees to their employers, rather than having them gather at the initial facility in the morning and afternoon. As a result, less time was spent getting to and from work. By having the hardware and software needed to better route their vehicles through this project, Melwood is able to better serve its participants, ensuring they spend more time at their jobs and less time in transit and transferring. This project continues to meet the same regional need it had been doing, but does so in a more efficient manner

According to the application, this project was anticipated to serve 100 people, and provide 4,000 trips. Performance Measures for this project have not been received by TPB, and therefore any additional metrics cannot be derived. A review of the most recent quarterly report from Melwood, for April through June 2011, found that the project sponsors indicates significant challenges in terms of tracking the number of clients and trips served through this project. Reconciling various pieces of information, including work days and payroll, would provide this data, but is time consuming, and the organization is short on staff time to handle this task.

2009 – Prince William County Area Agency on Aging:
Mobility Management Plan

The Prince William County Area Agency on Aging received funding to develop a Mobility Management Plan intended to conduct an assessment of mobility needs for older adults, persons with disabilities, and individuals with low income within Prince William County. This project involved numerous partnering stakeholder agencies, and has provided a clear path forward for the prioritization of projects that service the target population. An important element of this project was to complete a demand analysis, which stratified demand estimates to differentiate trip types and trip patterns on order to gauge how many of the trips not currently being made because

of mobility limitations could potentially be made by existing public transportation services vs. trips that could not.

Data gathered on providers included trip purposes and areas of need for improvement, as well as general information about providers' fleets and rates. Among consumers, needs identified were increases in the operating hours and service area, frequency and connectivity of public transit, as well as service on the weekends. Faith-based organizations, service organizations, and independent living centers were also targeted, indicating their fleet information as well as availability of vehicles for other uses and whether they would be interested in coordinated transportation.

The plan has resulted in a variety of preliminary conclusions, including:

- There are private providers in the area available and interested in expanding service hours, but their prevailing market rates are financially prohibitive for would-be users if they are required to bear the entire cost.
- A call center is considered a necessary step to move forward with improved transportation
- Service organizations may be a resource for volunteers; however, use of volunteer organizations as both an immediate and ongoing resource was not deemed feasible. Therefore, the design of a voucher program was considered more viable.

An outcome of this project was the prioritization of a voucher program, for which the Prince William County AAA received additional New Freedom funding. The next phase of this project includes interviews with the managers implementing that pilot program. Other recommendations from the Plan include developing an information exchange program and training for call takers, developing a travel orientation program, and providing training for groups that would like to start a volunteer driver program. Currently, a voucher program design study is currently underway, which will prepare a set of recommendations for a sustainable voucher program.

JARC Projects in Progress and Status to Date

2008 and 2010 - TPB Regional Transportation Information Clearinghouse

The TPB is a recipient of JARC funding for the Regional Transportation Information Clearinghouse, for 2008, and the Maintenance Funding, for 2010, to provide both a call center and website for persons with disabilities, older adults, persons with low income, and people with limited English proficiency to access information about transportation services. This project, known as "Reach a Ride," is intended to be a one-stop point of access for information throughout northern Virginia, southern Maryland, and Washington, DC, provided in both English and Spanish.

WMATA first approached the TPB to lead this project, with support from the Task Force, since TPB's jurisdiction spans two states and D.C. The TPB was considered a likely project sponsor because of its regional role, and its ability to leverage financial and planning participation from three Departments of Transportation. The application was for Mobility Management JARC funding, with WMATA provided the largest portion of the match, and with additional funding from the Maryland Transit Administration, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and the District Department of Transportation. The project arose out of a need

for better information, which was one of the needs identified in the coordinated plan, and a lack of information for the multi-state region showing the full spectrum of transportation resources.

The project has involved a major data collection effort, which TPB contracted out to KFH Group, a consulting firm, to gather information about operation details, eligibility, and similar information regarding transit agencies, social and human service agencies, and private nonprofit providers. Building a robust online searchable database, with multiple search variables, such as trip types, user needs and provider service area, has also been a focus of the project. A critical part of the project has been to ensure that the website is highly accessible to people with visual impairments. TPB has contracted with AFB Consulting, a firm that specializes in accessible websites, for testing and technical support.

TPB launched the site in October 2011. In order to keep information current, the goal is to put together a plan that will allow for quarterly updates for a portion of the providers, so that each record is updated at least once per year. Maintaining current records is a challenge for this project, and raises the question of longer-term funding.

The successes of this project include positive feedback from those who have reviewed the prototype website. A Clearinghouse Working Group was established to oversee the implementation of the project and this group oversaw the development of the website's functional requirements and needs analysis. Focus groups have been held to review the site, and several outside groups have reviewed site improvements. Maintaining and generating enthusiasm for the project will make it a success once it is launched.

The challenges include getting all of the information needed from the hundreds of transportation providers in the region and a reluctance to participate by some providers, who expressed concern about their ability to take on a higher volume of riders. Another challenge has included people's understanding of the project, recognizing that the project is not intended for trip scheduling. Finally, finding the funding to maintain the website has been a challenge.

2009 - Doorways for Women & Families - Taxi Voucher Program

This project, sponsored by a nonprofit organization committed to ending homelessness and family and intimate partner violence, provides taxi vouchers for residents of its family homeless shelter, domestic violence shelter, and transitional housing program. These taxi vouchers are used by residents to attend training programs, go to job interviews, and provide a transportation resource to maintain employment. Residents who have a disability or chronic health condition limiting their transportation options are the primary target recipients, with those who have no other transportation alternatives to reach job sites also as a potential beneficiaries of the program. Serving approximately 100 adults each year, the organization planned to utilize the vouchers to serve approximately 35 individuals intensively with taxi vouchers over a period of two months, or a larger group of people with less frequency of voucher use.

2009 - Family Matters of Greater Washington - Ways to Work Program

Ways to Work, which is a national program with approximately 40 sites in 21 states, provides small, low interest loans to individuals to go towards car purchase or repair so that can access a new worksite or maintain employment. This project, serving individuals living in Washington, DC, southeast of the Anacostia River and Prince George's County south of Route 214, not only increases transportation options, but also includes financial literacy education and support for

personal credit repair. The application anticipated that 180 loans would be made to participants in the project.

2010 - Prince George's County Department of Public Work & Transportation - Shuttle from Southern Avenue to National Harbor Convention Center

This project is designed to provide augmented fixed route service connecting a Metrorail station and residential neighborhoods with poverty levels between 16 and 25% (2000 Census), with the Gaylord National Hotel and Convention Center at National Harbor, a major regional employer. With the JARC funding, the route can operate earlier, between 6:00 and 8:00 AM, and can serve the Oxon Hill area, which is a community of great need that previously was unserved. Partnering with Veolia Transportation, the operator of Prince George's County's TheBus service, the sponsor's application notes that there are approximately 1,900 individuals receiving welfare or otherwise considered as having a low income. The service area for this program currently has a weekday/weekend ridership average of 22,470, of which approximately 3% of riders are low wage earners.

2010 SkillSource Group - Transportation Voucher Project

The SkillSource Group operates One Stop Employment Centers in northern Virginia, including Fairfax, Loudon, and Prince William Counties. These centers provide job training and placement for individuals with low income. The project provides participants with either a taxi or gas card voucher so that they can search for a job, and continues to offer this transportation support four to six weeks into a new position. Because many positions are outside of traditional work schedules or are in suburban locations, public transportation is not an option, and workers need the other transportation options. Based on the contract, the project sponsor anticipates issuing 250 vouchers over the two year project period, in proportion to the number of individuals served at each Employment Center.

2010 Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind - Taxi Voucher Project

Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind provides vocational training to individuals who have low vision or are blind to assist clients with employment options. The project is planned to provide clients with vouchers that they can use to obtain transportation to and from work as well as training sessions. Based on their application, the organization anticipates serving approximately 25 adults.

2010 Northern Virginia Family Service - Vehicles for Change Program

This project, sponsored by Northern Virginia Family Service, provides purchased vehicles to families with incomes of up to 200% of the poverty line, living within Arlington, Fairfax, Loudon, and Prince William Counties, as well as the Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park. The sponsor will provide 168 vehicles to participating families for a program fee, and will include a vehicle warranty for a six month period after the car purchase. Financial literacy and saving education are included as part of the program.

New Freedom Projects in Progress and Status to Date

2008 O'Donnell + Company - Coordinated Taxi Marketing

Complementing the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Project, this project is focused on increasing awareness of the existence of these transportation resources. Included in this effort is the development of a marketing plan and marketing materials as well as researching and developing a contact database. Working with subcontractor Arch Street Communications, the sponsor planned a dedication event marking the public opening of the service. Working with subcontractor CIC Research, O'Donnell + Company has also put together a customer feedback survey, completed a large number of interviews of customers, and submitted a draft report to the project team.

2009 DC Office on Aging - ADRC Promotion Project

The DC Office on Aging received funding to market its Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC), which provides referral resources for clients through an intake process, and assists these individuals in determining the best transportation services for their needs. A media consultant, whose services were procured as part of this project, organized an outreach campaign to guide the project. The DC Office on Aging has established agreements with a variety of radio and television stations, as well as for print ads to share information on Metrobus to publicize the ADRC. The sponsor has set a target of assisting one hundred persons with disabilities above the age of 18 through this effort.

2009 Boat People SOS - Travel Training Project

Through this funding, Boat People SOS, an organization that serves the Vietnamese community in the Metro Washington area, is providing individualized travel training to up to three hundred older Vietnamese individuals with disabilities. The project will utilize two types of transportation, taxi service and public transit. The only two Vietnamese-speaking cab drivers in the DC Metro area will be trained to identify older adults with special needs, and will refer these individuals to Boat People SOS for transportation resource assistance. Through these referrals, participating adults will receive vouchers for taxi fare, companions for travel, and will receive training on utilizing public transit.

2009 Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind - Travel Training Project

Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind, which provides services to blind and low vision individuals, will for this activity, hire Orientation and Mobility Specialists to provide travel training to two hundred individuals. This training will include adjustment services and orientation to surroundings, and provide guidance on how to access several modes of transportation, including Metrobus and Metrorail, as well as taxis, buses, and other forms of transportation. Additionally, support will be provided to participants so that they know how to utilize guide dogs and optical aids, as well as how to use a variety of signs and maps within the public transportation system. For the first year and into the first quarter of the second year of this project, 109 individuals have been trained, in 940 hours of training.

2010 DC Office on Aging - Purchase 2 Wheelchair Vans and Taxi Voucher Program

The DC Office of Aging, through its Washington Elderly Handicap Transportation Service (WEHTS), provides transportation to medical appointments and adult day care services for older

adults and persons with disabilities. As the WEHTS fleet has aged, and older vehicles need to be replaced, and this funding will be used to purchase two wheelchair accessible vans, to provide transportation for older adults riding to two new senior wellness centers, in Ward 1 and Ward 6. Where public transit access is limited, taxi vouchers will be provided to program participants so that they might utilize the new wheelchair accessible taxicabs.

2010 Prince George's County Department of Public Work & Transportation - Voice Annunciation Bus Pilot and Rider Survey

For this project, the Prince George's County Department of Public Work & Transportation (Prince George's County DPW&T) received funding to install Voice Annunciation Systems on twenty-two buses to assist people with a variety of disabilities in utilizing public transit. Based on the application, the Prince George's County DPW&T anticipates serving approximately 34,000 individuals with disabilities through this service. Details regarding the Rider Survey were not included in the application or award notification.

2010 Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind - Door to Door Agency Transportation for Youth

The Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind will utilize this 2010 funding to contract with transportation provider "It's About U Transportation" to provide transportation for children and youth who are blind or have low vision to a variety of youth programs in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. Based on the contract, Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind plans on serving one hundred participants per year of the two-year program.

2010 Prince William County Area Agency on Aging - Taxi Voucher Program

After receiving funding in 2009 to put together a Mobility Management Plan, the Prince William County Area Agency on Aging (the Prince William County AAA) received funding to create a project to address needs identified in the plan. Partnering with Independence Empowerment Center, Inc., who is managing and coordinating financial resources, the Prince William County AAA is providing a taxi voucher program to ensure eligible persons receive access to medical appointments, and as funds allow, other destinations. Providers include local taxi companies as well as ambulance-type services for those who can't use taxis.

Combined JARC and New Freedom Projects in Progress and Status to Date

2009 - WMATA Comprehensive Individualized Level of Travel Training Project

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) partnered with a Center for Independent Living (CILS) each in Maryland, Washington, DC, and Virginia, to provide a travel training program teaching people with intellectual disabilities, some of whom are low income and attend vocational programs, on how to use WMATA's fully accessible Metrobus and Metrorail service. While WMATA has its own travel training program, that program is designed to educate individuals who need relatively little instruction about how to use the system. This jointly-funded JARC and New Freedom project is intended to provide more personalized and intensive instruction to participants who need stronger guidance and more support that the WMATA program offers. People with intellectual disabilities have traditionally been considered to be part of a population needing a higher level of travel training assistance.

For this project, WMATA views itself as the administrative partner for the project, familiar with FTA reporting requirements and having the capacity to take on the significant administrative responsibilities for the project. This arrangement is designed to free the Centers for Independent Living and the program's travel trainers from reporting burdens, so they can focus on providing service to the project's participants. The goal of the project, according to WMATA, is to help people live more independent lives by knowing how to use public transit. While one of the benefits of the project is that there might be fewer ADA trips, which in turn can help the program pay for itself, the priority is to mainstream individuals who might not otherwise have the same mobility as persons without disabilities.

An objective of the project is to identify challenges associated with establishing a travel training program for people with intellectual disabilities and to craft solutions for those challenges while delivering meaningful travel training results. One of the challenges identified was difficulty in finding and retaining good travel trainers, particularly as the project was starting. Additionally, participants with intellectual disabilities were found to need greater assistance than anticipated in becoming comfortable with the system, and as a result, fewer participants have been trained than planned in the application. The staffing issue was resolved by an intensive recruiting effort, and the customer instruction issue was solved through improved screening to make sure participants are good candidates for travel training instruction. Other individuals who expressed interest in participating were found to need more baseline mobility instruction, such as how to walk with a cane, before they can benefit from this program, and they were provided appropriate referrals. Additionally, it was found that some persons with more significant disabilities may not be capable of participating in or benefiting from the program.

In addition to the travel training instruction, the program also has an evaluation component, which assesses the level of knowledge and comfort level with transit of the participant prior to the training, at the end of the training, and three months following the completion of the training. As of December 2010, a total of 22 people had completed the training. Fully 92% of those travel trained reported that they were "very confident" or "confident" in their ability to travel independently. Three months later, 78% continued to report that they were "very confident" or "confident" in their travel independently. Travel training has also provided travel independence. Prior to travel training, only 23% reported ever riding bus or rail services independently. Three months later, that population has risen to 72%.

The project is on schedule for on-time completion. The project includes an independent evaluation of the program to capture the benefits of increased use of fixed route and travel independence and to document the issues and solutions found that other transit providers may wish to replicate.

QUALITATIVE FACTORS

Information specific to identifying qualitative program information was gathered primarily in two ways—in-person interviews with project sponsors, and two group meetings held with customers. A meeting was also convened with members of the Task Force that provide program oversight to TPB.

Opinions and Experiences of Project Sponsors

In-person interviews were conducted with nine project sponsors, as indicated below. The sponsors were asked to describe their project, the need it responds to, experiences in carrying out

the project, benefits to project customers, and any barriers or difficulties encountered in either applying for or administering the project.

Figure 4-3   JARC and New Freedom Project Sponsors Interviewed

Interviewee	Agency Represented	Fund Source
Sharon Legrande	Northern Virginia Family Services	JARC
Laura Pennycuff	Doorways for Women and Families	JARC
Ken Sloate and Deanna Archley	Montgomery County Department of Transportation	JARC
Sarah Henry	Prince William County Area Agency on Aging	New Freedom
Roy Spooner	Yellow Cab	New Freedom
Marla Lahat	Arlington County on Aging, DC Office on Aging	New Freedom
Jack Weiner, Glenn Millis and Rikki Epstein	WMATA	JARC and New Freedom
Kim Alfonso	Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind	New Freedom
Loan Hanlon	Boat People SOS	JARC and New Freedom

Key themes emerging from these interviews are as follows:

- Flexibility in funding a variety of projects is important—transit is not an option in some rural or suburban areas, and other solutions are needed.

- Sponsors also universally appreciated the availability of these funding programs. Nearly all sponsors said transportation is one of the most commonly cited concerns of their clientele. They also said without JARC and New Freedom funds, transportation services for their clients could not have been provided.

- All sponsors interviewed consider that their projects are successful in that they have improved mobility for low-income persons and for persons with disabilities.

- Some sponsors expressed that the timing of the grants has been difficult, and that projects had difficulty getting off the ground for a variety of reasons, including lag time from when grant was approved and funding was available, the need to hire staff, or staff turnover.

- Some expressed difficulty in submitting FTA-required quarterly reports and would like more time. Some indicated that the reporting requirements are out of magnitude with the funds awarded, while others indicated preparing quarterly reports is not difficult.

- Universally, stakeholders reported that TPB staff are helpful and available to answer their questions or provide technical assistance.

- All sponsors reported that their largest challenge is coming up with the required match.

- Sustainability of projects is a major concern; most projects cannot continue beyond the grant cycle unless they are provided additional JARC and/or New Freedom funds.

- Having projects be self sustaining over the long term is not considered a viable option, especially in the current economic climate.

- Some reported that program outcomes differed from what was expected; for example, some sponsors with taxi voucher programs found they couldn't group trips as they had anticipated, and others were overly ambitious when establishing their goals.

- Several indicated that, since these projects are considered "pilot projects" or intended to test new service delivery mechanisms, the learning curve is higher. Additionally, they indicated that the results are useful, even if not consistent with original program expectations.

Administrative Responsibilities

Sponsors with at least 50% of the budget expended were asked to share details regarding the time needed to administer grants received. Significant differences were reported by project sponsors as to how much of a burden the reporting placed upon them for receiving JARC or New Freedom funding. Estimates of the time spent on administrative tasks related to receiving funding came in several forms, including the number of hours dedicated, a percentage of the total budget, or a dollar value of time expended. Of the sponsors who provided information, at least two found a great difference between the amount of administrative time they planned for in the budget and what the time they actually spent on managing the project, which could be double the amount they estimated.

Ability of TPB to encourage participation by wide range of project sponsors

One goal of the assessment process was to assess how well TPB is doing at attracting a new and diverse group of project sponsors. Findings suggest that TPB is able to attract a wide range of project sponsors and a broad spectrum of project types, but that there may be room for improvement. The list of program sponsors includes a variety of agencies and agency types ranging from private non-profits to transit agencies and public agencies. The sponsors also represent a diversity of service goals, such as homelessness, refugee resettlement, independent living, employment support and training, and older adults. Project sponsors also include large and small agencies.

Benefits to Direct Users

The study team convened two customer focus groups to hear directly from customers who participated in JARC or New Freedom funded programs. One such meeting was hosted by the Northern Virginia Family Service, which has sponsored an auto loan program, and one meeting was hosted by Independence Now, in Silver Spring, MD, which sponsors a travel training program for persons with disabilities on behalf of WMATA. A summary of each focus group is described below.

Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS) Focus Group

Five individuals participated in the NVFS focus group meeting. All five participants were low-income women who received an automobile either through the Ways to Work Program (auto loan program), or Vehicles for Change (donated vehicle program) Ways to Work Program participants are required to repay the loan, and cover the cost of insurance, registration, maintenance and other related expenses. In the Vehicles for Change program participants are given the vehicle for a small sum ($795) and must pay for all ancillary expenses.

In addition to the focus group, several phone interviews were conducted with other participants in the program, and their input is included as well.

Without exception, the program participants expressed their improved financial status and family stability as a result of having an automobile. Some specific comments and experiences expressed are below:

- Two women lost their jobs because their cars were inoperable and they had no reliable source of transportation to and from work. Getting a car allowed them to re-enter the workplace.

- Several women reported limitations to job opportunities if they had relied on public transportation, because the bus did not go to all job locations. One interviewee shared that she had to be at work at 5:45 AM, but public transit did not accommodate that schedule. With her own car, she is able to make it to work on time, and no longer had to borrow other people's vehicles to get to work. Additionally, the cost of using public transportation on a daily basis was cited as a barrier.

- Several women reported with a vehicle they were able to find and hold higher pay jobs. One woman reported that initially she took a job at her son's day care center out of convenience and to make sure he got to day care. Once she had a car, she was able to find a higher paying job.

- The participants reported other, less tangible benefits, such as establishing a credit record by repaying the loans.

- They also appreciated the training they received in money management, and reported they were well prepared and understood ahead of time the program requirements, which were communicated with them. "There were no surprises."

- For the most part, participants learned about the program through their caseworkers, but one heard about it from a neighbor, and another through an internet search.

- All expressed strong support for the program, and recommended it be continued.

Independence Now Focus Group Discussion

A focus group meeting was hosted by Independence Now, a Center for Independent Living (CIL), in Silver Spring, Maryland. It was attended by four people—three persons with disabilities, plus the mother of one participant. Independence Now is one of three CILs that provide travel training on behalf of WMATA. The overall purpose of the program is to enable persons with disabilities to use fixed route transit for some or all of their trips. Some specific comments and experiences as expressed by meeting participants are related below:

- Even if they can use the fixed route service, some persons who use wheelchairs or have other mobility devices experienced problems with the infrastructure and lack of accessible bus stops. This is a big deterrent to using the buses.

- Travel training is not necessarily a one-time occurrence; rather, it takes place in phases. One trainee traveled first went with his trainer, then traveled on his own, but with his trainer "trailing" him to be sure he was able to navigate independently.

- Training is sometimes needed on multiple occasions in order to learn new trips, or if the route or bus stops change.

- All expressed appreciation for the skills and compassion shown by the trainers.

- One participant reported greatly improving his mobility status by being able to take the bus to his job and to school. Previously, he relied on family members to take him places.

- The same participant's mother also reported her appreciation that she doesn't need to miss work in order to arrange for transportation for her son.

- All participants did relate difficulties, fears, or problems they have encountered in using public transit. Some of these included elevators not working at rail stations, getting a wheelchair stuck in the train car's gap, unhelpful or rude drivers, or difficulty getting to or from a bus stop or rail station. To some extent, these perceived or real barriers prevent use of transit, even if people are trained and can use it.

Other program outcomes for assessed projects compared to original goals as stated in the project application

In addition to reviewing project performance compared to the estimated number of persons served, projects should be assessed in light of other equally important qualitative criteria as described in their project applications. As noted in the individual write-ups of the 15 projects that are completed or at least 50% complete, all projects met important and identified regional need, either in helping persons with low incomes access jobs, or providing transportation service or support that facilitates transportation for persons with disabilities. All projects incorporated coordination activities, some with just one other organization and agency, and some with many, spanning, the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Projects addressed strategies in the Coordinated Plan, and all were feasible projects, some which were quite innovative. While there are challenges to identifying these outcomes, since they cannot be easily quantified or measured, it is clear that all projects were successful in meeting these other goals.

5 PEER REVIEW

INTRODUCTION AND PEER REVIEW AGENCIES

This chapter summarizes information gained from contacting nine peer programs throughout the country that administer funding for Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom (NF) programs (FTA Sections 5316 and 5317). The purpose is to learn more about how other programs administer JARC and NF programs and the challenges they face by comparing TPB's programs with the experience of other similar sized and positioned programs. Appendix B includes summaries of interviews with the nine peer agencies.

The choice of peer agencies to interview was a collaborative process between the consultants and TPB staff. The consultant researched other agencies that were similar to TPB in population, geographic area, and number of jurisdictions. The consultants also reviewed information on websites to determine the type of JARC and NF programs the other agencies were implementing. Besides the list of potential peer agencies presented to TPB by the consultants, TPB staff added additional names of other agencies with which they were familiar. The final selection was based on the diversity of funded projects—both the types of projects and the types of recipients—as well as the robust process of solicitation and review carried out by the nine agencies chosen as peers.

Two of the peer agencies are public transit operators, one is a Council of Governments (COG), and one is a state Department of Transportation (DOT). The remaining five peer agencies are Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs); however one also operates transit services. The nine agencies included in the peer review are as follows:

- Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)
- Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Regional Transportation Authority (RTA-Chicago)
- North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG-Dallas)
- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)
- Metropolitan Council (Minneapolis)
- Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (TriMet-Portland)
- Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC-San Francisco Bay Area)
- Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

Phone interviews with the staff responsible for the oversight of the JARC and NF programs were conducted in April and May 2011. A summary of each interview was prepared and sent to the interviewee to confirm its accuracy.

Figure 5-1 summarizes each peer program's service area characteristics (size and population of service area) and the JARC and NF apportionments, in comparison to the TPB. The apportionments are for 2010, with the exception of DVRPC and ARC, which are the 2011

apportionments. All peer agencies, except for the Chicago RTA and WSDOT, prepare the regional Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plans. However, two of the agencies—Boston MPO and DVRPC—are not designated recipients of JARC and NF funds.

Figure 5-1   Summary of Peer Program Service Characteristics

Agency	Service Area Characteristics	JARC Apportionment	New Freedom Apportionment	Designated Recipient?	Prepare Plan?	Type of Agency
TPB	District of Columbia, portions of Virginia and Maryland; 3 states[9], portions of 8 counties, 13 cities	$1 million	$900,000	yes	yes	MPO
ARC	10 counties; population 5.1 million; air quality data collected for 20 counties	$1,593,132	$751,574	yes	yes	MPO
Boston MPO	101 cities; population 3.16 million	$3,470,098	$2,264,720	no	yes	MPO
Chicago RTA	6 counties; population 8 million; 7 counties included in JARC/NF process	$4,266,492	$2,638,359	yes	no	Transit
North Central Texas COG	16 counties; population 6.7 million	$3,925,681	$170,200	yes	yes	COG
Delaware Valley RPC	9 counties; population 5.5 million	$550,000 (NJ) $6.4 million (PA) includes total match from PennDOT	$450,000 (NJ) $1.4 million (PA), includes total match from PennDOT	no	yes	MPO
MN Metropolitan Council	7 counties; population 2.8 million	$914,801	$640,876	yes	yes	MPO/Transit
Portland TriMet	3 counties; population 1.8 million	$709,187	$425,000	yes	yes	Transit
Metropolitan Transportation Commission (San Francisco)	9 counties, San Francisco Bay Area, population 7.4 million (5 large urbanized areas administered by MTC in 7 of 9 counties, 7 small urbanized areas administered by Caltrans in 5 of 9 counties)	$2.5 million (large urbanized areas)	$1,780,000 (large urbanized areas)	yes	yes	MPO
Washington DOT	State of Washington	$1,635,130 (excluding urbanized areas)	$979,173 (excluding urbanized areas)	Yes (small urbanized and rural areas)	no	DOT

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[9] Including District of Columbia

PEER PROGRAM REVIEW KEY FINDINGS

All except one of the peer agencies administer the selection process. The selection process in the MTC region occurs at the county level.

Not all peer agencies apply for the federal funds or have oversight responsibilities. The peer review reflected a range of involvement among the agencies assigned to oversee the program. Some are not involved beyond the selection process. Some apply for some of the funds, and other agencies (DOT or transit agency) apply for the remainder. Others have responsibilities for reporting and compliance oversight.

The majority (six out of nine) of agencies employ quantitative scoring in the selection process, based on criteria in the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP). The remaining three judge the projects according to criteria derived from the HSTP, but do not assign points or percentages to the criteria.

Only two peer agencies indicated they evaluate the success of funded projects. These are milestones, such as number of trips or vouchers provided, vehicle miles traveled, progress on infrastructure improvements, cost per passenger, or progress toward goals stated in the application. Others may conduct site visits for compliance, but do not render judgment on the success of the project.

Peer agencies award JARC and NF funds to a wide variety of projects; however, fixed route and demand response operating funds and shuttles are on almost all agencies' list of projects. Only DVRPC reported that it spends most of its JARC funds on fixed route projects; the other agencies included a mix of projects in their federal award programs. TriMet did not report funding fixed route operations with these grants.

Most of the agencies allocate at least half of the JARC funds to fixed route and demand response transit projects. The only exception is Boston MPO, which awarded the highest amount to Mobility Management projects. All other peer agencies range from a low of 50% to a high of 90% (DVRPC) of the funds awarded to fixed route and demand response transit projects.

All agencies except one solicit projects for both JARC and NF concurrently. MTC in the San Francisco Bay Area has a separate grant period for each of the programs.

Few schools or tribal governments have been awarded grants by the peer agencies. Only two agencies awarded to for-profit agencies. Public transit operators and other public agencies, social service agencies, and non-profit organizations all received grants from most of the peer agencies. TriMet contracts with a community college to operate a shuttle service.

Peer agencies are not concerned about the source of the matching funds, as long as it is not from federal transportation dollars. A notable source of the match is from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, which provides the entire local match for DVPRC applicants in Pennsylvania.   In the State of Washington's process, applicants are given a higher ranking if they provide their own match, although it is not required. All other peer agencies reported a variety of match sources, such as state and local operating assistance, city and county general funds, motor vehicle excise taxes, sales taxes, employers, private donations, rental income, capital improvement bonds, foundation grants, and in-kind administration.

Figure 5-2 summarizes the responsibilities of the peer agencies. The first column indicates which agencies use quantitative scoring in their selection process. The second column shows which

agencies are responsible for reports to the FTA on compliance with JARC and New Freedom requirements. The third column depicts peer agencies that are involved in evaluating whether the funded projects are considered successful by tracking the milestones stated in the applications.

Figure 5-2   Peer Program Responsibilities

Agency	Quantitative Scoring	Responsible for FTA Reports	Track Milestones to Determine Success
TPB	Yes	Yes	Yes
ARC	Yes	Yes	Yes
Boston MPO	No	No	No
Chicago RTA	Yes	Yes for its projects	No
North Central Texas COG	No	Yes for its projects	Yes
Delaware Valley RPC	Yes	No	No
MN Metropolitan Council	Yes	Yes	No
Portland TriMet	No	Yes	No
MTC-San Francisco	No	Yes	No
Washington DOT	Yes	Yes	No

CHALLENGES

The main challenges mentioned by the peer agencies had to do with the FTA programs themselves:

FTA rules, regulations, and processes are difficult to understand. Non-transit entities have difficulty understanding the FTA process, according to RTA. This difficulty was echoed by the Minnesota Metropolitan Council interviewee, who noted that small cities have difficulty understanding or responding to the program requirements, and therefore, don't apply. As a result, the Council's 2009 New Freedom funds have not all been allocated. Some potential applicants are deterred by uncertainty about whether funding for the JARC and NF programs will be continued by Congress, and potential promising projects have not been funded because sponsors are reluctant to apply in the first place.

Timelines can be cumbersome. The RTA noted that timeline of three years to obligate funds is not conducive to developing a strong project. Both the Boston MPO and the North Central Texas COG stated that the lengthy process led to delays in implementation by project sponsors. The Minnesota Metropolitan Council and WSDOT also discussed the staff time necessary to carry out the process and the subsequent oversight.

Finding matching funds is difficult for many sponsors. The requirement for 50% matching funds for operating projects was cited by multiple peer agencies as a deterrent which prevented a more robust pool of applicants. In fact, some sponsors are reluctant to apply for funds, preventing some projects from reaching fruition.

Other challenges mentioned include:

- The need for more funding to permit adding new projects in addition to existing ones;
- The need for adequate funds to attract a larger pool of applicants;
- The time and ability to build relationships with non-transit agencies;
- Consistency with regional objectives and coordination with multiple program administrators when project selection occurs at a sub-regional level; and
- The existence of multiple governmental boundaries, which make it difficult to create a regional project.

Best Practices Projects

The following projects are highlights of the Best Practices cited by peer agencies as exemplary projects in their regions. Additional projects are described in the agencies' profiles in Appendix B.

Of the best practices cited by the peer agencies, the projects that demonstrated a high level of coordination are particularly noteworthy. These projects stood out because of the complexity involved in achieving partnerships among many different organizations.

- Ride-in-Kane, funded by the RTA in Chicago, provided funds for a coordinated demand response service in Kane County outside of Chicago.   Currently 17 private, non-profit organizations and local units of government participate in the program – both by contributing funding and also using the service.
- A Mobility Management Program sponsored by the Community Council of Greater Dallas engaged 120 partners to provide local mobility management services. Mobility management is also the cornerstone of Mystic Valley Elderly Services in the Boston area, where a one-call center has been provided in conjunction with transportation service providers, including its volunteer driver program.
- A New Freedom project funded by MTC will create a web-based mobility management tool to coordinate human service transportation. The web-based tool will include agency profiles, agency member registration, trip reservation and billing functions, volunteer driver programs, gas cards, agency fleet inventories, and GIS mapping of key locations.

One unique project funded by the RTA is a low-cost shuttle to jobs for previously incarcerated individuals. At a program cost of only $11,000, the Safer Foundations leases a Pace van to transport these individuals to food service jobs at the Navy Base. RTA considers this an ideal example of a JARC program aimed at low-income people with unusual challenges.

Another population-specific shuttle is one funded by MTC. A Parents Shuttle transports parents of elementary school children in a low-income area with little pedestrian access. Providing transportation has resulted in improved participation by the parents in school activities, such as parent-teacher conferences, literacy classes, and volunteer work.

MTC also funds a Bicycle Program which provides bicycles that have been donated to the program for low-income residents of East Oakland. Training is provided on bicycle safety, as well as how to access and use public transit by bicycle.

Two capital projects funded by MTC's New Freedom program to benefit the visually and hearing impaired consist of (1) a series of tactile and large print maps, called strip maps, designed to provide route information for four major Bay Area transit providers, and (2) rolling text-based,

LED signs to be mounted inside the interior of a large bus operator's fleet. The signs will display bus stop location information, helping hearing-impaired passengers, as well as the general public, with general navigation and alighting decisions.

Some projects are a perfect fit with the federal guidelines. For example, DVRPC pointed out a vanpool run by a small local organization from central Philadelphia to job opportunities in the suburbs as one that matches the examples given in FTA Section 5316 about the JARC program. Similarly, the travel training programs funded by RTA and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) are examples of projects listed in the FTA Section 5317 New Freedom guidelines.

SUMMARIES OF INTERVIEWS WITH PEER AGENCIES

Details of each of the peer agencies' programs are provided in Appendix B.

6 KEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarizes key findings and observations emerging from this assessment, and reiterates findings that were previously discussed and considered especially relevant. It is important to remember that providing, or even supporting through funding, transportation for low income individuals, reverse commute trips and individuals with disabilities is challenging. Indeed, both JARC and New Freedom programs are designed to serve transportation markets that traditional forms of public transportation cannot always successfully meet. Consequently, key goals of the JARC and New Freedom programs are to encourage innovation and develop new ideas to help address these challenging transportation needs. As a result, JARC and New Freedom sponsored services typically do not favorably compare in cost-effectiveness with other fixed-route public transportation services and in many cases, if the markets could be easily served, they would be served by traditional services.

As described below, the FTA regulations, requirements and restrictions have proven difficult for project sponsors to navigate, especially private non-profit agencies whose primary mission does not focus on direct delivery of transportation services. Likewise, other agencies, whether they are private or public in nature, have difficulty in obtaining the match or in meeting other federal requirements. It is against this backdrop that the results from the combined program assessment efforts and identified findings are presented. These findings are intended to establish a baseline for developing recommendations for program improvement.

Federal Program Requirements

The JARC and New Freedom programs are administered by the FTA; as such, use of these funds is subject to the same federal rules, regulations and guidelines as other federal transportation programs. Although entities other than public transit providers--such as private non-profit agencies, local jurisdictions, or other public agencies—are eligible to use JARC and New Freedom funds, the procedures to access the funds are challenging. Some of these challenges are described below.

First, JARC and New Freedom funds are provided on a reimbursement basis, requiring multiple steps. A project sponsor must incur project expenses up-front, and submit a request for reimbursement to the TPB. The TPB in turn seeks reimbursement from FTA before the sponsor is paid; these arrangements can be time consuming and difficult for small agencies with a limited cash flow.

Procurement procedures for purchasing capital equipment or vehicles are also cumbersome and time-consuming, sometimes discouraging potential project sponsors from applying for JARC and New Freedom funds.

Program guidelines are not always flexible or responsive to program needs. For example, JARC funds can only be used for job access services for low-income persons, and New Freedom funds are limited to new services for persons with disabilities. Neither fund source can be used to purchase transit fares, although the need to provide fares has been cited through planning efforts.

Finally, meeting the match requirements to support the service (50% for an operations project, 20% for a capital or mobility management project) was the challenge mentioned most frequently by sponsors—or potential sponsors—and also emerged as a key factor in the peer review.

TPB Program Administration and Oversight

As discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, the TPB is responsible for a range of activities related to program administration and oversight. These include developing the coordinated plan, determining an annual set of priority projects, soliciting for project sponsors, providing technical assistance, guiding the project award process, overseeing an ongoing program assessment process and actively managing grantees.

A hierarchy of goals guides how the TPB administers the JARC and New Freedom programs. At the highest level, the programs are guided by the federal funding guidelines; goals are then reflected in the locally developed coordinated plan, and finally a series of priority projects are set annually by the Task Force. The goals are consistent with each other, reflect broad input from a variety of stakeholders and incorporate current needs. The hierarchy works well for the TPB because it ensures the agency works within the federal guidelines but also allows the process to be responsive and flexible to changing needs.

Key findings related to TPB's oversight of the program include:

- Compared to most of its peers, TPB takes a more pro-active role in program administration.
- The region has allocated all of its JARC and New Freedom funds, which is not necessarily a common practice. In other parts of the country, MPOs and states have been challenged to obligate federal funds, especially for New Freedom. Administration of the JARC and New Freedom grant process is straightforward, clear and effective. No significant changes are called for at this time.
- TPB's funded projects meet federal program guidelines and are consistent with the coordinated plan.
- One relatively unique aspect of TPB's management of the JARC and New Freedom programs is that the agency functions as both the recipient of the funds (and program manager) and a project sponsor. The rationale for TPB's assuming a more pro-active role in sponsoring the Regional Clearinghouse Information Project and the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Project is described in more detail in Chapter 4.

Project Solicitation and Selection Process

This assessment explored the TPB's role in attracting and working with project sponsors, and administering the project selection process. One goal was also to assess how well TPB is doing at attracting a new and diverse group of project sponsors.

The project selection process employed by TPB is similar to what is used by its peers. A project selection committee comprised of Task Force members and outside agency personnel reviews and scores all the applications according to criteria included in the application. A member of the TPB serves as chair of the committee. Again, while no major overhaul is called for in the project selection process, it is important that the process continue to be transparent, and that funding decisions continue to be based on clear rationale that can be articulated to others.

About half of the priority projects identified through the planning process have been funded, and about 80% of program resources have been dedicated to these projects. The unfunded priority projects include a variety of strategies, ranging from relatively low-cost projects such as developing marketing materials and establishing volunteer programs to higher-cost strategies such as establishing vanpools. In all cases, however, the priority projects are established strategies that have successfully been implemented elsewhere.

Key findings related to the project solicitation and selection process include:

- The TPB is able to attract a wide range of project sponsors and a broad spectrum of project types, but there may be room for improvement, especially in attracting sponsors for priority projects that have not yet been funded.
- There may be opportunities for TPB to build on the pre-proposal conference to include more technical information and potentially peer-to-peer exchanges.
- The project selection process is straightforward and clearly defined in the project application process.
- About half of priority projects established by the Task Force have been funded. However, these projects account for approximately 80% of JARC and New Freedom resources .
- Compared to its peers, the TPB has not focused on providing expanded fixed route or paratransit services; rather, the focus of the grants has been to fill niche markets that traditional transit programs cannot serve well.

Project Reporting and Monitoring

As mentioned, TPB plays an active role in ongoing program management, which is achieved through a combination of structured and unstructured methods. The structured methods include the contracting process, FTA-required quarterly and annual performance reporting process. The unstructured methods include informal contact with the program sponsors that may include advice and suggestions about program management, marketing and reporting.

Tracking Project Performance

As revealed in this assessment, the FTA structured reports are not adequately or accurately capturing program results. The review of the quarterly and annual reports suggest that some program sponsors are not able to collect the required data and/or are unwilling to report project progress. Currently, TPB's program management procedures do not include a mechanism to follow up with program sponsors when they submit an incomplete report, nor is there a process for how to work with program sponsors that are not achieving their stated goals.

A companion finding to the challenges associated with tracking program performance is in the qualitative findings. Qualitatively, program sponsors are able to articulate their challenges and successes in meaningful ways. In many cases, the sponsors have achieved considerable success with their project and still not been able to demonstrate their success in the program because performance reports are not able to effectively capture and report on this success. This suggests a

potential mismatch in either the reporting requirements and/or grantee understanding of the reporting requirements. The review also suggests there may be a need to document the ad hoc qualitative findings.

It is interesting to note that this theme is not uncommon among the TPB's fellow agencies. According to the report *A Review of Human Services Transportation Plans and Grant Programs* as prepared on behalf of the National Highway Transportation Research Program, (July 2011), "study respondents expressed a strong desire and need for additional federal guidance on performance measures that look beyond basic service indicators and consider the effectiveness of funded projects in promoting job sustainability; effectiveness of the providers in supplying these services against the baseline conditions (such as unemployment, senior/disabled population, and distribution of customers and destinations); and measuring the number of customers graduating from the need for JARC transportation. Quantitatively, relatively few interviewees mentioned performance measures playing a significant role in evaluating the effectiveness."

Ability to Realize Estimated Service Goal in a Timely Manner

Building on the previous finding, the assessment process also highlighted the fact that it is not readily known whether programs have met their primary goal for number of services or persons served) anticipated to be provided; indeed, many of the funded programs in TPB's portfolio apparently have not achieved this goal in the time originally estimated in the grant application; however, because many applications reference multiple project goals and objectives, other goals have been met.

This finding suggests a variety of things, but does not necessarily imply the project is not successful or is deficient in any way. For example, project sponsors may be overstating their likely accomplishments in the grant application. They may do this out of a lack of experience or documented needs assessment, a desire to compete well through the selection process, or by because sponsors know that they will not be held accountable to their stated goals. TPB may consider clarifying expectations for documenting project goals and outcomes in a consistent manner, as well as the implications for not meeting goals and/or how to effectively estimate likely project goals.

Several funded projects took several weeks or months to get started. Indeed, even projects being implemented internally by TPB have faced challenges getting initiated. Reasons cited for delayed implementation include the availability of funding, mismatches between grant and agency cycles and/or staff turnover. According to TPB staff, about one-third of the projects have requested and received timeline (no additional cost) extensions because it has taken longer to complete the project than originally intended.

Key findings and observations related to project outcomes include:

- Projects are considered "pilot projects" or intended to test new service delivery mechanisms. Therefore, the learning curve is higher.
- Many projects are labor intensive and not meant to be "efficient."
- Comparing one project to another is comparing "apples to oranges" because they differ greatly in services provided.
- Grant data on costs and trips provided is lacking or not consistently reported.
- Current FTA reporting mechanisms do not capture qualitative benefits—there is a need to consider both qualitative and quantitative measures

- Most project sponsors are not realizing goals originally anticipated in their applications.
- About 1/3 of project sponsors have requested time extensions (at no additional cost); the majority of projects are still in progress so final outcomes are not known.
- There are no consequences or opportunities for a "mid-course correction" for those sponsors who are not meeting original objectives stated in the grant application
- Peer agencies also report on the difficulty in performance tracking and reporting.
- The FTA reporting requirements do not adequately capture relevant project outcomes.

Opportunities for Technical Support

TPB currently provides considerable support to potential grantees during the application process. Indeed, stakeholders were appreciative of technical assistance provided by TPB, and did not indicate a high level of administrative difficulty in managing projects.

Comments provided by the program sponsors, however, suggest there is a need for additional and/or different types of technical support such as:

- **Project marketing and outreach information** - several funded programs experienced challenges with marketing their services (and subsequently efficiently spending down their grants). In some cases sponsors were able to develop effective marketing campaigns but only after they were challenged to find participants. If TPB sponsored technical advice on marketing and outreach, they might be able to improve participation rates and to use grant funds more efficiently. There may be opportunities for peer-to-peer training for this type of technical support.

- **Program management** – many program sponsors faced challenges filling out the quarterly and annual reports, either because they did not know how to collect the data, did not understand the reporting requirements or they were reluctant to report results. Providing sponsors with clarification on both the process for collecting the data and the outcomes associated with reporting accurate data would help improve the quality of the program data.

- **Reporting** – although all funded program sponsors prepared FTA-required quarterly reports, these are focused primarily on financial reporting, with wide variation in how much attention and detail is provided regarding the sponsor's progress in meeting project milestones. Many project sponsors did not complete FTA- required annual reports, and if they did, many of the reports were incomplete, suggesting a lack of understanding or technical ability. To improve the quality of the information received from grantees and subsequently improve program administration, TPB may consider providing technical support on reporting and follow up, at least initially, to ensure they are completed and submitted in a timely and consistent manner.

- **Assistance with match resources** – nearly all programs sponsors reported challenges with finding matching resources, including ways to use non-DOT federal sources to match federal resources as well as guidelines and methods to effectively use in-kind resources as match.

    It is important to reiterate that match requirements are established through federal legislation and are beyond the control of the TPB. It is also important to note that, according to the peer and literature review, many other areas of the country struggle with the match requirements, especially during the current economic downturn.

Despite these challenges, there are agencies and organizations that have achieved some level of success matching DOT and non-DOT funds, such as Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation funding, those available through the Veteran's Association, etc. Providing an opportunity for TPB partner agencies to work with or learn from these agencies would likely be beneficial.

Lessons Learned: Challenges, Program Benefits and Best Practices

The project evaluation demonstrates that the combined experience of the TPB and its program sponsors demonstrates several successful programs and projects. Many of these lessons learned could be more universally disseminated among the broader program to expand regional expertise and experience. The following section highlights the more salient lessons learned as articulated by program sponsors; they are organized by topic.

Program Challenges

Program sponsors offer the following "lessons learned" with regards to implementing JARC or New Freedom projects:

- FTA guidelines sometimes present challenges; for example, JARC cannot be used to subsidize transit fares, and New Freedom funds must be used for "new" projects. Other FTA requirements regarding reporting requirements and the need to allow for adequate cash flow prior to program reimbursement also pose challenges. Procurement requirements are also considered cumbersome and time-consuming.

- Given the current economic climate, it is difficult or impossible to sustain projects beyond the initial grant cycle unless projects are provided additional grant funds.

- Ensure awareness of geographical area served, as it can be difficult to serve participants in a large area. In most cases, programs would be better off to serve a smaller area and expand based on demand and success.

- Keeping track of clients, depending upon their relationship to the sponsor, can also be difficult. Developing strategies to keep track of the clients and beneficiaries, however, is an important element to being able to report on program success.

- Working with state agencies (such as the DMV for a voucher program) can be hard. These challenges need to be considered during project planning.

- The lag between project approval and start-up can be long and conditions can change that affect implementation. Opportunities to discuss these challenges and allow for mid-program changes are needed.

- Limitations on service should be made clear to potential users, particularly for passenger escort services.

- Flexibility in implementation is important, as more staff may be needed than anticipated. During program start-up, it is especially important to allocate sufficient staffing resources.

- Agencies implementing similar projects as those previously completed should consult with predecessors and utilize techniques developed previously, so each agency does not have to "reinvent the wheel". The TPB can support this through technical training and the "program templates" developed as part of this project.

- Sponsors receiving grants to continue projects among multiple funding cycles indicated that the projects are evolving and changing over time. They also indicated that the level of effort and learning curve to administer and oversee these projects diminished over time.

Program Benefits

Despite the lack of quantifiable data, project sponsors confirmed in a number of ways that their projects have proven successful in that they have resulted in improving mobility—both in the short and long term—for their client groups. Some examples are mentioned previously in this report, but warrant repeating:

- Several travel training projects have been funded. All report on the success of these programs, to improve access and awareness of public transportation options for persons with disabilities as well as low-income persons seeking job opportunities.

- Travel training provides benefits that accrue and grow over time. When successfully trained for one trip, a customer can expand his or her horizons and take even more trips on public transit to a variety of destinations.

- Every trip taken by public transit potentially reduces the cost of providing more expensive paratransit.

- Providing door-through-door escorted service for some customers, while labor intensive, can enable that person to remain in their home, avoiding more costly supportive services.

- Low-income persons who have received loans to purchase an automobile reported on how having reliable transportation has increased their quality of life, and has resulted in their ability to seek and retain jobs in locations not served by public transit.

- For the first time, District residents and visitors who use wheelchairs are able to use the same taxi cab service as other members of the public, rather than having to rely on (and reserve ahead of time) paratransit service.

Program Administration and Planning

- At least one project sponsor (WMATA) included in its application an element intended to evaluate and document project outcomes. As part of this effort, it retained an independent research firm for purposes of assessing the quantitative aspects of its travel training program. Likewise, Northern Virginia Family Services programs are routinely evaluated, including the projects funded through JARC.

- Some project sponsors indicated that advanced planning helped refine project goals and objectives; for example, the Prince William County Area Agency on Aging, through a mobility management grant, conducted a comprehensive plan to evaluate mobility options for its clientele; as a result of this study, an additional grant was allocated for program implementation of a taxi voucher program.

- One key to success is that project sponsors have the organizational capacity to take on the oversight of JARC and New Freedom projects. For the most part, project sponsors are not professional transportation providers, and must either contract with providers or arrange for services to be delivered in-house, which may not be a core function of the agency's overall mission. It is important that staff be dedicated to ensure the project runs smoothly, reports are submitted in a timely manner, etc.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This JARC and New Freedom assessment culminates with the development and presentation of recommendations intended to improve the ways in which JARC and New Freedom projects are funded within the greater Washington, DC metropolitan area, as well as how they are administered and delivered by the TPB and its grant recipients. In particular, the TPB staff has suggested it would be helpful for the consultant team to:

- Suggest any improvements for the TPB's JARC and New Freedom solicitation and selection process to enhance customer benefits;
- Recommend innovative and effective JARC and New Freedom projects for consideration in future solicitations;
- Identify necessary project elements to ensure successful pilot projects that can be replicated and expanded;
- Develop several templates for different innovative project types that applicants can use to submit an application;
- Identify challenges with federal JARC and New Freedom requirements and make suggestions for consideration during the next reauthorization; and
- Recommend appropriate performance measures for various project types.

This chapter identifies recommendations intended to improve the oversight and administration of the program as a whole, as well as recommendations intended to enhance the effectiveness of project delivery for current and potential future project sponsors. It builds upon findings emerging from earlier steps in the project, especially the key findings discussed in Chapter 6.

The TPB's Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force was briefed on the findings from the assessment at its November 2011 meeting. Based on the findings, recommendations were drafted and then the recommendations were reviewed, with the Task Force at its December 2011 meeting before being finalized. The Task Force had no concerns and about the recommendations and found them to be   feasible to implement.

Project templates have been prepared as a tool for TPB staff and others to used as a method to provide guidance to potential sponsors, especially new sponsors who may not be familiar with program requirements and/or steps needed to plan for and implement new services. The templates are included as Appendix C to this document.

To ensure resulting recommendations are relevant, appropriate and meaningful, the study team adhered to the following principles:

- Recommendation should **respond to an initial finding** and either builds upon an existing program strength, or responds to a perceived shortcoming

- Recommendation should be **feasible to implement**; meaning that they have support from the range of stakeholders responsible to plan for, fund and implement projects; is not overly cumbersome or complicated to implement; and is does not result in significant new costs

- Recommendation should **improve program oversight, administration, and/or service delivery**

- Recommendation, when implemented, should **benefit the customer** or end user of the service

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT KEY FINDINGS

Chapter 6 discussed in detail a series of key findings that were identified as a result of the assessment of the JARC and New Freedom projects. These findings establish the framework for developing recommendations as presented in this chapter. The most relevant of these findings include:

- Compared to its peers, TPB takes a more pro-active role in program administration. The agency is responsible for developing the coordinated plan, annually determining a set of priority projects, soliciting for project sponsors, providing technical assistance, guiding the project award process, overseeing an ongoing program assessment process and actively managing grantees.

- TPB currently provides considerable support to potential grantees during the application process. Stakeholders were appreciative of technical assistance provided, and did not indicate a high level of administrative difficulty in managing projects.

- Once the application is funded, however, there is less program oversight or technical support available to the project sponsors.

- Since only six projects have been completed, and nine projects are at least 50% completed, the project results are not yet available. As a result, the TPB is not yet able to fully document the success and challenges of funded projects in a comprehensive manner.

- The current FTA-performance reporting mechanisms do not always capture project benefits or qualitative results of the project.

- It is not readily known whether programs have met their stated goals; indeed, for a variety of reasons, many of the funded programs in the TPB's portfolio apparently have not achieved their stated goals.

- The TPB does not have a clear policy or guidance for how to treat funded programs that do not achieve their estimated primary service goal

- Some projects are not yet completed; therefore, it is premature to draw conclusions for these projects or for the program as a whole.

- About half of the priority projects identified through the planning process have been funded. This also means that about half have not been funded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

TPB Program Administration and Oversight

As evidenced by this assessment, there are many positive outcomes resulting from the implementation of the 15 JARC and New Freedom projects in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Some of these include:

- A diverse range of projects has been funded and implemented by various types of sponsors.
- The services and programs funded have responded to documented unmet needs.
- New partnerships and collaborations have developed between human service agencies and transportation providers.
- Significant short-term and long-term qualitative benefits have been expressed by project sponsors and customers alike.
- All JARC and New Freedom funds have been obligated in accordance with federal guidelines.
- Local projects are consistent with federal program objectives.
- Numerous local best practices have been identified.

Any subsequent revisions to the program should continue to recognize and articulate the best practices (as well as lessons learned) to share with others, and to better inform potential project sponsors of elements that have worked well. One way to do this could be to distribute project templates developed as part of this project and included as Appendix C of the report. Over time, the program will continue to evolve and, as more projects are completed, additional lessons learned will come to light.

There is no indication that a major overhaul or restructuring of program administration, project selection process or project implementation is called for at this time. There are, however, numerous steps that could be taken to improve service delivery as indicated further in this chapter.

Update Task Force Membership

One of the TPB's primary roles is to staff and facilitate discussions among members of the Task Force, which provides program and policy oversight for TPB's activities related to human service planning and grant funding, and it consists of some 40-45 members representing program interests. In particular, Task Force members include representatives from two states and the District of Columbia, as well as transit agencies, human service agencies, and consumers representing low-income individuals, and persons with disabilities

Not surprisingly, some members are more active than others, and there is not always consistent participation among all committee members. As a result, it would behoove the TPB and its stakeholders to ensure that the Task Force membership is "refreshed" to make sure there is a good balance among the respective interest groups representing those served by JARC and New Freedom projects.

Recommendation: *The TPB should build on identified program strengths, and continue to articulate best practices to local stakeholders and future potential project sponsors. This may be*

achieved through a series of technical training sessions where existing program sponsors offer their experiences to newly funded projects or new sponsors.

Recommendation: *Update Task Force membership to ensure there is a good balance of Task Force members representing low-income persons, and persons with disabilities.*

Project Solicitation and Selection Process

Encourage New Sponsors

It is in the region's best interest to recruit a robust pool of qualified entities available to serve as project sponsors for JARC and New Freedom funds. While the program currently is served by a variety of project sponsors, including private non-profit agencies, private for-profit entities, and public agencies, there is less emphasis on funding expanded fixed route or paratransit services than reported by TPB's peers.

There may be a benefit to solicit sponsors for such projects because transit agencies are likely to offer the infrastructure and institutional capacity to carry out projects. In addition, a number of priority projects have been identified (i.e., expanded transit in underserved neighborhoods, testing of same day paratransit service). It is important to note, however, that subsequent applications will need to be evaluated through the competitive process, and consideration given to the potential cost of providing such service compared to other applicants. It is important to note that many human service agencies also directly provide client-based transportation, and may be suitable sponsors for broader-based community services.

Additionally, several agencies, while attending the pre-proposal conferences, did not submit applications. The most common reasons mentioned were difficulty in identifying matching funds, and lack of an identifiable project. In addition, some potential sponsors are reluctant or unwilling to submit applications because of concern that projects cannot be sustained in the long-term. It may prove useful to conduct additional outreach to those agencies that could potentially sponsor identified priority projects to encourage their participation, or to otherwise address barriers preventing them from applying.

Recommendation: *The Task Force should explore the possibility of actively recruiting public transportation providers and human service agencies that directly provide transportation to apply for public or community-based transportation services; suggest specific projects which could respond to priority project needs, such as providing additional service in underserved neighborhoods, serving key employment sites with use of JARC funds, or providing same-day paratransit service by using New Freedom funds.*

Recommendation: *Conduct targeted outreach to other potential agencies that could sponsor other identified priority projects and provide technical assistance, if needed, to encourage their application.*

Encourage Applications for Priority Projects

Federal regulations require that projects funded by JARC and New Freedom be derived from a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. Each year, the Task Force updates priority projects it has identified as most likely to respond to local unmet transportation needs. This process should be continued as it ensures the Plan is current and relevant, and it directly ties the planning process to project selection. As pointed out in Chapter 2, however, only

about half the priority projects have actually been funded. It is recommended that more pro-active steps be taken to solicit and fund priority projects. Such steps could include conducting outreach to targeted agencies, or weighting the selection process with points awarded for these projects.

Presently, seven of 35 projects, or 20 percent, are considered to be mobility management projects. There could be an opportunity to fund more projects in this category; the advantage to this approach is that a lower match threshold is required. In addition, some identified priority projects not yet funded could potentially be considered mobility management; for example, "Develop transportation ombudsman position."

Recommendation: *Revise the project selection process to favor projects that would result in implementation of priority projects.*

Recommendation: *Seek to recruit or work with sponsors to structure more mobility management projects, which require a lower match.*

Recommendation: *Use existing (or create new) project templates to articulate the priority projects. The templates could be included with the "call for projects" issued by TPB with a note explaining the prioritization process and new program scoring (if implemented). Templates are being prepared to support applications for Travel Training (New Freedom), Auto Loan (JARC), Vanpooling and Ridesharing (JARC), and Volunteer Driver Programs (New Freedom).*

Seek Balance in Funding New and Continuation Projects

A difficult policy question facing the TPB, as well as many of its peers, is whether to give preference to projects that would like to continue beyond the initial grant period. This is a difficult question because, on one hand, continuing to fund the same projects limits the potential for new projects to start up. On the other hand, as evidenced by this assessment, many projects take time to reach fruition, and are likely to become more effective over time. Furthermore, there is less disruption for participants if projects are allowed to continue. Arguably, the advantages of continuing to fund existing projects outweigh the disadvantages; however, such projects should be required to demonstrate they have met original program goals and are worthy of continuation.

While it is not recommended in the short term that a formula be established for funding new or continuing projects, the TPB may wish, over the long run and in consultation with the Task Force, to discuss how best to balance resources in order to sustain and continue successful projects while encouraging new ones.

Recommendation: *Continue to fund both new and continuation projects; however, require that continuation projects demonstrate or document their performance in a more systematic manner before receiving continuing funds.*

Rotate Selection Committee Membership

The project selection process employed by TPB is straightforward and similar to what is used by its peers. A project selection committee comprised of Task Force members and outside agency personnel reviews and scores all the applications according to criteria included in the application to provide an independent and arms-length selection process. Again, while no major overhaul is called for in the project selection process, it is important that the process be transparent, and that funding decisions continue to be based on clear rationale that can be articulated to others.

The TPB is fortunate in that a number of national transportation organizations or advocacy groups are situated in the Washington, DC area, and in the past have participated in the local project selection process. Such representatives are able to provide policy and program expertise but do not represent a conflict of interest in that they are not applying for funds. This practice should be continued; however, it is recommended that turnover be encouraged to ensure there is fresh perspective and adequate representation from population groups served by the projects. Though some "institutional memory" may be lost and there is effort involved in educating new committee members, such an approach will avoid a perception of unfairness, or of "business as usual."

Recommendation: *Ensure Selection Committee members are rotated and that there is adequate representation by organizations that serve both low-income persons and persons with disabilities. At the same time, allow for continuity and consistency of approach.*

Refine Funding Cycle Timelines

Currently, the cycle for selecting projects is nearly a year-long process. Having a predictable schedule is important for project sponsors, and is also more likely to result in better planning and the program as a whole. However, considerable staff time involved with project solicitation and selection.   The TPB should consider a funding cycle that would take place every two years. This approach would allow for a more robust funding "pot," and would free staff time for more time on follow-up and evaluation activities during the off year. The two-year cycle would have to be considered in such a way that the FTA Fiscal year funds can by obligated by the deadline.

Recommendation: *Maintain predictable schedule with established steps; however, explore opportunities to conduct project selection process every two years rather than on an annual basis taking into account future extensions and reauthorization of the surface transportation program*

Recommendation: *Use longer funding cycle to provide increased technical support to program sponsors after funding has been allocated. The approach may result in fewer, but more targeted and more successful programs.*

Project Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation

As described below, numerous opportunities exist to improve the way projects are monitored, and how sponsors report on their progress for the duration of their projects. Virtually none of the projects included in this assessment met the primary service objective as stated in the grant application for funds. This information is presented with the caveat that not all projects are completed, which is important because many projects will evolve and/or adapt to circumstances over time, or require longer time frames to achieve stated goals. Even if the primary service goal has not have been met, this is not necessarily an indication of an unsuccessful project. Rather, that some sponsors have experienced difficulty in accurately predicting or anticipating program usage. One step to mitigate this situation would be for project sponsors to provide stronger needs assessments, based on surveys or other program documentation that would better estimate program usage.

Existing FTA-performance reports do not always accurately reflect actual program outcomes; they should be tailored to be more appropriate for the type of project. For example, a performance report for a travel training project may be structured differently than for a project that provides information and referral services, such as the Clearinghouse Project. It is also important that

performance indicators consider both quantitative and qualitative aspects. Although it may prove difficult to measure qualitative aspects of the project, as discussed numerous times in this report, these results are compelling, and need to be considered together with quantitative measures.

The expectation that project sponsors report on project outcomes should be articulated from the beginning of the process by including information in the application, in the subsequent funding agreement, and in quarterly and annual performance reports.

Public transit operators or other agencies eligible to receive FTA funds directly, and therefore submit quarterly reports only to FTA, should also provide reports to the TPB so that the TPB has a comprehensive overview of all projects it funds, and can consider the program outcomes more holistically.

Finally, it would behoove the TPB and the Task Force to review the project outcomes and qualitative experiences reported by the sponsors on a regular basis. Such a review should go above and beyond what is submitted on quarterly and annual reports. This review should compare the outcomes to original expectations, and document in more detail barriers or challenges experienced by the sponsor, as well as qualitative outcomes and lessons learned.

It is envisioned that this type of program evaluation could occur during the year projects are not solicited (assuming the TPB decides on a two year funding cycle). Even if only a random (or representative) sample of grants were included in such an evaluation, the results could help inform the TPB and its selection committee in its deliberations and could result in new lessons learned to share with others.

Recommendation: *Provide technical assistance on the application by offering workshops or peer support, to assist project sponsors better prepare a statement of need and to estimate resulting services. Require sponsors to provide a rationale and methodology used to estimate project outcomes.*

Recommendation: *Modify existing FTA-required performance reports so they better document actual program outcomes. Tailor them for the type of project, and include both qualitative and quantitative outcomes.*

Recommendation: *Clearly document expectations for performance measuring in the project application and subsequent subgrant agreement. For projects that do not meet original project objectives in the subgrant agreement and are not meeting their milestones, require a mitigation plan, and provide technical assistance to help the sponsor achieve the revised goals.*

Recommendation: *Conduct ongoing evaluation activities either in-house (through the TPB) or by retaining outside consultant assistance. Use evaluation results to inform upcoming funding cycle(s).*

Suggest Revisions to JARC and New Freedom Regulations

As mentioned in the introduction to this report, funding to support the JARC and New Freedom programs was authorized by the passage of SAFETEA-LU, which was originally signed into law in 2005; it expired on September 30, 2009 and is now operating under a series of continuing resolutions until new legislation is enacted. Unfortunately, the current economic downturn has resulted in many transportation and human service agencies throughout the country having to reduce services or eliminate programs. The political uncertainty of the JARC and New Freedom Programs' future will require ongoing vigilance on the part of the TPB and its partners to carefully track potential changes to the programs or, indeed, potential elimination of the programs.

Assuming the programs are reauthorized under similar program guidelines, the following recommendations are suggested specific to the federal guidelines. As mentioned throughout this report, federal guidelines, procedures and policies have been identified as significant program challenges for local project sponsors. The following recommendations are intended to address the most significant of these challenges.

Recommendation: *support a reduced match requirement for JARC and NF operating projects to be 20 % for all projects.*

Recommendation: *Streamline and reduce administrative requirements designed for larger program structures (such as procuring vehicles) on focused programs.*

Recommendation: *Expand the eligible activities for JARC funding. Eligible JARC activities are limited, and do not adequately address the transportation concerns of lower-income workers, particularly those with young children. As an example, JARC funding cannot be used to purchase transit passes. The restriction on using JARC funds to purchase transit passes should be eliminated. Transportation costs related to childcare for low-income workers should also be an eligible expense.*

The recommendations are summarized in Figure 7-1 below.

Figure 7-1   Summary of Program Recommendations

Program Area	Recommendation
TPB Program Administration and Oversight	*The TPB should build on identified program strengths, and continue to articulate best practices to local stakeholders and future potential project sponsors. This may be achieved through a series of technical training sessions where existing program sponsors offer their experiences to newly funded projects or new sponsors.* *Update Task Force membership to ensure there is a good balance between agencies representing low-income persons, and persons with disabilities.*
Project Solicitation and Selection Process	*The Task Force should explore the possibility of actively recruiting agencies providing public or community-based transportation services to participate in the program; suggest specific projects which could respond to priority project needs, such as providing additional service in underserved neighborhoods, serving key employment sites with use of JARC funds, or providing same-day paratransit service by using New Freedom funds.* *Conduct targeted outreach to other potential agencies that could sponsor other identified priority projects and provide technical assistance, if needed, to encourage their application.* *Revise the project selection process to favor projects that would result in implementation of priority projects.* *Seek to recruit or work with sponsors to structure more mobility management projects, which require a lower match.* *Use existing (or create new) project templates to articulate the priority projects. The templates could be included with the "call for projects" issued by TPB with a note explaining the prioritization process and new program scoring (if implemented). Templates are being prepared to support applications for Travel Training (JARC and/or New Freedom), Auto Loan (JARC), Vanpooling and Ridesharing (JARC), and Volunteer Driver Programs (New Freedom).* *Ensure Selection Committee members are rotated and that there is adequate representation by organizations that serve both low-income persons and persons with disabilities. At the same time, allow for continuity and consistency of approach.* *Maintain predictable schedule with established steps; however, explore opportunities to conduct project selection process every two years rather than on an annual basis.* *Use longer funding cycle to provide increased technical support to program sponsors after funding has been allocated. The approach may result in fewer, but more targeted and more successful programs.*

Program Area	Recommendation
Project Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation	*Provide technical assistance on the application by offering workshops or peer support, to assist project sponsors better prepare a statement of need and to estimate resulting services. Require sponsors to provide a rationale and methodology used to estimate project outcomes.* *Modify existing FTA-required performance reports so they better document actual program outcomes. Tailor them for the type of project, and include both qualitative and quantitative outcomes.* *Clearly document expectations for performance measuring in the project application and subsequent subgrant agreement. For projects that do not meet original project objectives in the subgrant agreement and are not meeting their milestones, require a mitigation plan, and provide technical assistance to help the sponsor achieve the revised goals.* *Conduct ongoing evaluation activities either in-house (through the TPB) or by retaining outside consultant assistance. Use evaluation results to inform upcoming funding cycle(s).*
Suggest Revisions to JARC and New Freedom Requirements	*Support a reduced match requirement for JARC and NF operating projects to be 20 % for all projects.* *Streamline and reduce administrative requirements designed for larger program structures (such as procuring transit capital) on focused programs.* *Expand the eligible activities for JARC funding. Eligible JARC activities are limited, and do not adequately address the transportation concerns of lower-income workers, particularly those with young children.*

APPENDIX A
Survey of Non-Applicants

On-Line survey distributed via email link to 33 agencies that attended TPB's Pre-Proposal Conferences, but did not submit an application for JARC or New Freedom funds.

1. What was the reason for your attendance at the JARC/New Freedom Information Session?

    a. My organization was seeking sources of funding for a new project

    b. My organization was seeking new sources of funding for existing project

    c. My organization was looking to partner with another organization for a project

    d. Other (please specify)

2. Why did you choose not to apply for JARC/New Freedom funding? (Select all that apply.)

    a. The application paperwork too much of an administrative burden for my organization

    b. If the project had been selected for funding, the ongoing administrative reporting and federal requirements would be too much of a burden for my organization

    c. My organization was seeking sources of funding for a new project

    d. My organization was seeking new sources of funding for existing project

    e. My organization was looking to partner with another organization for a project

    f. Other (please specify)

3. How likely is your organization to apply for JARC/New Freedom funding in the future?

    a. Very Likely

    b. Likely

    c. Very Unlikely

4. Is there anything that could be done to make you more likely to apply?

5. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share regarding the JARC/New Freedom program?

APPENDIX B
Summaries of Interviews with Peer Agencies

Atlanta Regional Commission

Agency Background, Process and Appropriations

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is one of 12 regional commissions in the state of Georgia. It is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the 10-county Atlanta area, but is also the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for all or portions of 18 counties and produces and collects data for a larger, 20-county area for air quality purposes. The population in the ARC service area is 5.1 million.

ARC and the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) are the designated recipients of JARC and New Freedom funds. Because MARTA also applies for the competitive grants, ARC manages the selection of recipients and the amounts received. A staff selection committee of 8-10 people scores the proposed projects according to criteria spelled out in the Coordinated Human Services Transportation (HST) Plan. The selection committee represents different departments within ARC, including transportation planning, Area Agency on Aging, workforce development, transportation demand management, community outreach, and governmental services. With different departmental perspectives and expertise, the selection committee operates on consensus, using weighted criteria as follows:

25%	improve accessibility and mobility for the transportation disadvantaged
20%	improve customer service for HST users and providers
15%	improve coordination between HST programs
15%	maximize project cost effectiveness
20%	statement of need/organizational capacity
5%	project budget

Portions of the proposals may be funded, they may be funded in their entirety, or the proposer may be asked to submit a revised budget. After there is agreement on the selected projects, the list is forwarded to ARC management, who then incorporates it into the Transportation Improvement Program, which is approved by the Board of Directors. Although this process is working, ARC performs an annual or biennial review of the process to take into account changes that may have occurred in the region, in state priorities, or in FTA guidance.

Recipients are public transit operators, city or county departments of transportation, city or county social service agencies, other public agencies, and private non-profit agencies. ARC will accept any proposal that is eligible under FTA regulations (therefore, all projects and programs on the TPB list are eligible). There is no typical percentage given out for a type of project, as projects vary from year to year. Any type of non-DOT fund for local match is acceptable, such as government general funds, taxes, private donations, grants, and farebox revenue. ARC applies directly to FTA for the selected non-profit and for-profit agencies, while MARTA applies to FTA for the government agencies that have been selected. Both agencies also submit required quarterly reports to FTA.

In 2009 more than $2.5 million of federal funds were distributed in JARC and New Freedom funds. The largest grants, over $800,000, were to MARTA and Cobb County Department of Transportation for JARC bus routes. Cobb County DOT also received a grant for pedestrian access improvement and travel training. Grants of around $100,000 or less were made for

transportation voucher programs for older adults and persons with disabilities operated by non-profits and senior centers.

The 2010 awards, announced in May 2011, amounted to more than $2.3 million in JARC and New Freedom funds distributed to 10 recipients. MARTA and Cobb County DOT each received $525,395 for JARC bus routes, and Cobb County again received a grant for pedestrian access improvements and travel training, but at a smaller amount than the previous cycle. Two non-profit agencies received JARC grants to serve low-income families. The remainder, in amounts ranging from $50,000 to $160,000, went to non-profit agencies serving seniors, people with disabilities, and adult daycare participants.

Oversight and Evaluation

Agencies that receive funding are required to submit quarterly reports to ARC outlining the milestones they have achieved and explaining how they will achieve milestones not yet met. These milestones are derived from the measures of success in their proposals, such as number of trips or vouchers provided, vehicle miles traveled, progress on infrastructure improvements, etc.

Challenges

One challenge that ARC cited is the difficulty in attracting a robust pool of applicants when the funding is insufficient to carry out a project. Another challenge is the multiplicity of boundaries within the ARC service area, making it difficult to design a truly regional project.

Project Illustrating Best Practices

A funded project that illustrates best practices is travel training combined with a mobility voucher. Travel training reduces the demand on paratransit while empowering the individual with a choice that is familiar and safe to use. The voucher allows an individual a level of independence to travel at a reduced rate for quality of life trips without a reservation via a network of providers and volunteers at a reduce rate.

Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization

Agency Background, Process and Appropriations

The Boston MPO region serves 101 cities and towns in a region of 3.16 million people. It is one of five MPOs in the Boston Urbanized Area that compete for JARC and New Freedom funds administered by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). The FFY2010 funds available through MassDOT were $3,470,098 for JARC grants and $2,264,720 for the New Freedom program. These funds include carry-over funds from previous years. Matching funds are commonly state and local operating assistance and in kind funding for administration. One recipient listed rental income as the match.

Proposals submitted to the Boston MPO must meet the strategies and priorities detailed in the MPO's Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. Three MPO staff members rate the projects according to these adopted criteria:

- the needs, goals and objectives;
- the implementation plan;
- management capability;
- project budget;
- coordination and program outreach (the project must collaborate with at least one other group);
- program effectiveness and performance indicators; and
- innovation (e.g., ideas that could be applied elsewhere).

Ranked projects are then submitted by MPO staff to the MPO's standing working committee, the Transportation Planning and Program Committee (TPPC). The TPPC is comprised of 14 MPO voting members representing the cities and towns, MassDOT, and the City of Boston and to the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (RTAC) which also votes. The TPPC decides on which projects will be recommended to MassDOT for funding.

Since 2008, 36 proposals submitted by the Boston MPO's TPPC have been funded. The category receiving the most funding is Mobility Management. This category primarily includes studies, such as how to coordinate services in the region; the best model for a volunteer driver program for elderly who give up their cars; and the best model for a one-call center for transportation services. Other top categories include demand response capital and operating funds, followed by ITS-related hardware or software investments and shuttles. Projects for accessible taxis and fixed route operating funds have also been funded. Recipients have been public transit operators; private for-profit providers of public transportation; private non-profit agencies; and local government and state authorities.

Oversight and Evaluation

MassDOT applies to FTA directly for JARC and New Freedom funds. MassDOT also performs oversight through the quarterly updates that the recipients are required to submit to it. Although the Boston MPO is not currently involved in oversight, it is proposing to set up its own evaluation process for the projects that are funded in its region. The evaluation process will analyze the success of the funded projects and help determine what types of projects should or should not be recommended in the future.

Challenges

The challenges faced by the recipients include the lengthy process and the subsequent delay in getting the contract signed to go forward.

Projects Illustrating Best Practices

Examples of successful projects are those awarded to Mystic Valley Elderly Services, which is working in conjunction with transportation service providers. Its mobility management projects are for a one-number call center and a volunteer driver program. The projects were submitted in phases with milestones identified. The MPO can see what has been accomplished in the study phase and how that phase will merge into implementation in the next phase.

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Agency Background, Process and Appropriations

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) serves 5.5 million people in the nine counties located in the Delaware River Valley: four counties in suburban New Jersey, the City and County of Philadelphia, and four counties in suburban Pennsylvania. As a result of this bi-state composition and the different agencies acting as Designated Recipients, DVRPC manages separate processes for each state. DVRPC is not, however, the designated recipient of the funds: New Jersey Transit on the New Jersey side and Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) on the Pennsylvania side are the recipients.

Approximately 90% of the JARC funds are spent on fixed route projects of the transit agencies and the county Transportation Management Associations (TMAs). Many of these provide extra late night or early service runs and last mile extensions of service into employment areas. Some funding also supports fixed route and closed door shuttles or vanpool projects. New Freedom funds are split between capital projects, including ADA related improvements near train stations, and operating projects such as travel training programs. Project applications for individual vehicles, accessible taxis, car-sharing, and ITS hardware and software have not been historically funded because they have not been identified as regional priorities. Recipients include public transit operators, city or county transportation departments and social service agencies, and private non-profit TMAs.

Pennsylvania selection process

The Pennsylvania selection committee includes a staff representative from each of the five counties, an advocate for the low-income population, an advocate for people with disabilities, and a representative from the DVRPC Regional Citizens Committee. The applications must first be vetted through the relevant County staff and address the strategies or goals for unmet needs identified in the regional Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan.

JARC projects are submitted and scored every year, while New Freedom projects are on a two year cycle. JARC submittals are scored according to the following criteria. New Freedom criteria are the same, with minor wording changes.

- 1-5 points

  Project Background and Funding Program Relevance (service days and hours match JARC program goals; number of low-income in target population; number of jobs accessed; number of rides provided)

- 1-5 points

  Sustainability and Capacity (continuation beyond current round of funding)

- 1-5 points

  Management and Organizational Structure (ability to implement)

- 1-5 points

  Enhanced Coordination (complements existing transportation)

- 0-5 points

  Unmet Needs of the Target Population (meets high priority goals = 5 points; medium priority = 3 points; low priority = 1 point; none = 0)

- 0-5 points

Budget (identification of local match: 0% = 0; 1-10% = 1; 11-20% = 2; 21-30% = 3; 31-40% = 4; 41-50% = 5)

- 1-5 points

    Cost per Rider (cost per rider ratios will be rank ordered by DVRPC, divided into quintiles, with 1 to 5 scores assigned each category, low to high)

Each Pennsylvania county also submits a ranked list of the top three JARC projects, based on individual county priorities. These three are assigned additional points and added to the individual application score totals.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) provides the required local match and over the last few years has provided an overmatch to the declining federal dollars. Projects which provide some local match are given additional points, as shown under the Budget criterion. Because the demand for projects outstrips the available funding, there are low ranked projects which are not recommended for funding. In the last funding cycle, the total amount, which includes the PennDOT matching contributions, was $6.4 million. Of this, the Federal JARC program was only $2.4 million. The last selection round for New Freedom applications recommended projects for two years, with approximately $1.4 million allocated for FY 2011, and approximately $1.7 million allocated for FY 2012 (both totals include FTA and PennDOT funds).

A challenge of the Pennsylvania process is reaching consensus when there are fewer dollars than those requested. The situation is exacerbated because some applicants consider the grants "free" money since there is no requirement for matching funds. For example, in the most recent cycle, 28 submittals were recommended out of 35 applications. While the federal money is decreasing, the projects' operating costs are increasing.

New Jersey selection process

New Jersey's process differs from Pennsylvania's in a couple of ways; one way is that any application must be part of the priorities in the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan of each county. The amount of money is less in New Jersey, and there has historically only been enough money to fund each county's top project priority, and then only to the extent that a match can be secured. Agencies submitting applications are generally service agencies in their respective counties and are active participants in coordinating groups such as United We Ride. Combined with smaller population and less available funding, fewer applicants apply for JARC and New Freedom funds than in Pennsylvania. The applicant group is also smaller because they must come up with their own local match, unlike applicants in Pennsylvania.

The selection criteria are outlined below:

Need for Project 20 points

- Project is a continuation of a previously funded SUCCESSFUL JARC service (5 pts.)
- Project serves an IDENTIFIED disadvantaged, low income area (5 pts.)
- Project enhances employment opportunities (0 to 10 pts.)
- Project serves an Employment Area– 1- 10 pts
- Project does not enhance employment opportunities– 0 pts

Benefits Received 45 points

- Relationship of Benefits Received (0 to 10 pts.)
- Project provides Transportation Service directly to user (Operations) –10 pts

- Project has "Indirect Service" directly to user (e.g., planning, mobility mgmt.)—5 pts
- Project has indirect benefits – 0 pts
- Service area eligibility (0 to 10 pts.)
- Inter-County Service/Inter-County Riders—10 pts OR IntCoServ& Intra CoRiders 7pts
- Intra-County Service – 5 pts (for above, consider degree distance across "border")
- Intra-municipal service – 0 pts
- Project reaches wide range of low income individuals – (0-5 pts.)
- Estimate % of employment type trips (10 pts.)
- Estimate % of trips for low income individuals (10 pts.)

Project Sustainability and Coordination 35 points

- A portion of matching funds from additional agencies or sources (other than government State/County/Casino/TIF/TANF...). Examples: employers, foundations...(5 -10 pts.)
- Quality of application and Level of Detail- Reviewer Discretion 0-10 (Bonus Points) (0-10 pts.)
- Project provides access to/coordination with /use of other services (5 pts.)
- Project budget is realistic(0- 10 pts.)

In the most recent application cycle (2011), the amount for JARC and New Freedom projects in DVRPC's New Jersey counties was approximately $550,000 for JARC and $450,000 for New Freedom.

Oversight and Evaluation

SEPTA and New Jersey Transit are the designated recipients and directly submit projects to the FTA. They track projects via invoices and as appropriate according to internal, state, and FTA requirements. The project sponsors submit monthly budget reports and quarterly reports to the transit agencies, and the transit agencies submit the required reports to FTA. SEPTA tracks historical cost data and rates of project expenditure as general evaluative tools. New Jersey Transit periodically requires that sub-recipients survey riders as part of its evaluation of the projects' success.

DVRPC acts as the facilitator of project selection in both states. It makes adjustments to this process in order to maintain transparency and build consensus between the stakeholders, designated recipients, and state governments. DVRPC has no role in evaluating the funded projects and will defer to the transit agencies for any changes to the process or evaluation.

Challenges

The application and selection process in both states is highly competitive. There are many more applications for funding than can be met with the available funding. As the money has decreased over the last couple years, the number of funded projects has decreased and the means of evaluation have grown more procedural. This has been the case particularly in Pennsylvania, where Counties have sought increasing documentation of the process in order to limit backlash from previously funded projects being denied funding.

Projects Illustrating Best Practices

One example of a best practice in Pennsylvania is that of a small local organization running a vanpool from central Philadelphia to job opportunities in the suburbs. This project fits the very definition of the JARC program.

Another example is an evaluation program put into place by Chester County in southeastern Pennsylvania. The County provides some matching funds and wants to ensure that its projects will continue to get funding. For this reason, it sends County employees to ride JARC routes to evaluate the success of the routes. Its proactive approach is a best practice in evaluation.

Metropolitan Council (Minneapolis and St. Paul)

Agency Background, Process and Appropriations

The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning agency serving the Twin Cities seven-county metropolitan area of about 2,975 square miles with 2.8 million people. Besides planning, the agency provides services such as wastewater treatment, affordable housing, and parks, and also operates the region's largest bus system, Metro Transit and Metro Mobility (the ADA provider).

The Council is the designated recipient for JARC and New Freedom funds, and also uses some of the funds itself as a subrecipient for its transit functions. The biennial solicitation, which occurred in January 2011, has the following available funds:

Federal Fiscal Year of Allocation	JARC Apportionment
2010	$914,801
2011	$980,000 (estimated)
Solicitation Total	$1,894,801

Federal Fiscal Year of Allocation	New Freedom Apportionment
2009 Remaining Unspent Funds	$652,995
2010	$640,876
2011	$680,000 (estimated)
Solicitation Total	$1,973,871

The solicitation process includes a Selection Recommendation Committee to score the applications and make a recommendation to the 17-member Metropolitan Council. The committee is made of five staff members representing Metro Mobility, the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee; Minnesota DOT, the Metropolitan Council, and two at-large members, usually from the suburban transit providers. Although there are seven criteria, each member is given only about three criteria to score. The reason is to avoid skewing a project's total score, since some of the Selection Committee members may also be applicants. The scores from all members are then totaled and the projects are ranked. The final approval is by the Metropolitan Council, after which the list becomes an amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program.

The project selection criteria are weighted according to the following areas of focus:

- 10%   Application and Project Clarity (completeness and understandability of the application and project
- 25%   Populations and Destinations Served (ability to serve targeted population groups and destinations, including specific sites)
- 20%   Service Coordination, Gaps, and Outreach (project cohesiveness with other transit programs and its ability to fill regional transportation needs and gaps)
- 10%   Effectiveness and Performance Measures (project cost effectiveness and ability of applicant to measure performance and provide summaries)

- ▪ 10%   Project Sustainability (long-term project outlook for continuing service and funding beyond FTA grants)
- ▪ 20%   Implementation Plan (applicant staff plan, organization, timeline, and processes in place to ensure a successful project implementation and ongoing management)
- ▪ 5%   Innovation (new or innovative approaches to expand transportation access for the targeted populations)

The projects must serve a gap in transit service identified in the Public Transit Human Services Transportation Coordination Action Plan. However, the plan does not identify priorities, which is a change the Council staff has discussed making this year in its update, upon input from the Solicitation scoring committee. The types of projects funded are shown in the following matrix:

Project Type	yes	no	Estimated % of total
Vehicle for individual		x	
Accessible taxi		x	
Vanpools	x		17%
Car-sharing		x	
ITS-related hardware or software investments		x	
Fixed route capital		x	
Fixed route operating	x		33%
Demand response capital	x		3%
Demand response operating	x		14%
Shuttles	x		17%
Pedestrian or bicycle improvements: Accessible Pedestrian Signals	x		6%
Mobility Management (Explain) Coordinate services and develop individualized transportation plans	x		2%
Other (Explain) Purchase transit rides (part of Mobility Management above)	x		3%
Other (Explain) Client screening and case management for vehicles loans	x		17%

Matching funds are typically city, county, state and local grants; private foundation grants; State appropriations; motor vehicle excise tax; and capital improvement bonds.

Oversight and Evaluation

The Council applies directly to FTA for the funds and passes them through to the selected project sponsors. Although the Council staff first reviews their quarterly and annual reports, the project sponsors are responsible for submitting the reports on the FTA website. The project sponsors must also submit a detailed invoice to the Council staff, who review the expenses against the budget in the contract. There are no additional evaluations of how successful the projects are.

Challenges

A key challenge is the fact that the Council has not received enough applicants for New Freedom funding. It is awarding the 2009 unspent funds in the current funding cycle and has to decide if it

will have another solicitation round in the Fall. If the 2010 funds are not allocated, they will be lost. There are several reasons for the lack of applicants. First, the State funding aid to the cities has been reduced. As a result, cities' budgets are being cut so they do not have the matching funds for the New Freedom grants. Non-profits face a similar issue with a decline in donations and funding. In addition, with staff cuts, New Freedom applications aren't a top priority for staff members' workloads. And with 184 cities and townships, in addition to Minneapolis and St. Paul, in the Metropolitan Council's region, many staff in smaller cities may not understand the program. For this last problem, the Council staff is considering how they can better get the word out about eligible projects and programs to the suburban cities, townships, and transit agencies.

Although all the JARC funds are being expended, the number of applications has been dropping. One challenge that may be deterring prospective applicants is the need for a 50% match. The Council staff itself faces a challenge in having sufficient time to carry out the process for both JARC and New Freedom grants—soliciting for projects, applying for funding, preparing contracts, checking invoices and paying them.

Project Illustrating Best Practices

AnokAccess is an example of a funded project considered a best practice because it demonstrates human services and transit coordination. The agency provides a coordinator who works with human services clients and the transit provider to meet the clients' transportation needs. The coordinator purchases transit rides through vouchers for the bus, taxis and other private providers.

Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)—
San Francisco, CA Bay Area

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The total population of the Bay Area is 7.4 million people, and the area encompasses 7000 square miles.

MTC administers its JARC and New Freedom programs separately, as explained below.

JARC

Since Welfare Reform legislation was passed during the 1990's, MTC has played an active role in planning for and funding transportation programs for low-income communities. Currently, MTC administers the Lifeline Transportation Program, which is funded by JARC but is also supplemented by two other state sources of funding. MTC's Lifeline Transportation Program, implemented locally by the nine Bay Area county Congestion Management Agencies (CMA) under policy direction from MTC, funds a variety of transportation projects throughout the region to benefit low-income people and communities. In December 2005, the MTC adopted Resolution 3726, establishing guidelines for an initial three-year Lifeline Transportation Program. These guidelines established the program to support community-based transportation projects that:

- Are developed through a collaborative and inclusive planning process that includes broad partnerships among a variety of stakeholders.
- Address transportation gaps and/or barriers identified through a Community-Based

Transportation Plan (CBTP) or are otherwise based on a documented assessment of needs within the designated communities of concern.

- Improve a range of transportation choices by adding a variety of new or expanded services.

MTC has—or will—sponsor community or neighborhood based plans in each of 41 low-income communities. The Lifeline Transportation Program is intended to fund gaps and needs emerging from these plans, and which have suggested local solutions. Funding sources for the program include a combination of state and federal transportation funds for both capital and operating projects, described in more detail below. Projects are selected at the county level and are tailored to local priorities, including fixed-route transit, transit stop improvements, pedestrian and bicycle access improvements, senior and children's transportation, community shuttles, auto loan programs, and mobility management activities.

In 2006, 39 projects were funded through the first interim funding cycle totaling $18 million. In 2008, MTC completed an interim Lifeline Program Evaluation focusing on the program's administrative framework. This evaluation provided an initial assessment of the selection of the program's administration and oversight, the selection of projects relative to program goals, and an analysis of funding sources available relative to identified needs. A second funding cycle in 2009 has funded an additional 75 projects totaling more than $50 million to date.

A summary of project types is reflected in the following figure:
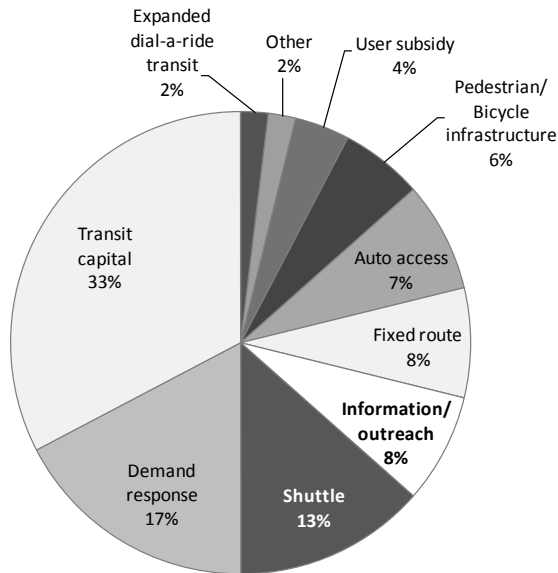
Challenges

There are a number of challenges associated with MTC's oversight of the program, as described below:

Multiple Funding Sources

The Lifeline Program has consisted of three funding sources; each has its own conditions, requirements and reporting processes. Some funds, such as JARC and STA, can be used for either capital or operating purposes, while Proposition 1B funds can only be used for capital purposes. JARC requires a local match, where STA and Proposition 1B do not. Only transit operators are eligible to directly receive STA and Proposition 1 B funds. The figure below summarizes the program funding sources and associated requirements. As a result, MTC, CMAs and local project sponsors are sometimes challenged to match projects within the "boxes" of funding sources.

Fund Source	Program Administrator	Eligible Recipients	Eligible Project	Local Match
STATE OF CALIFORNIA FUNDS				
STA	MTC	Transit Operators	Capital or Operating	None
Proposition 1B	Caltrans	Transit Operators	Capital; no bike or pedestrian projects	None
FEDERAL FUNDS				
JARC	FTA	Transit Operators, Cities, Counties, Tribes, Non-Profits, others	Capital or Operating; Projects must be "derived from" Coordinated Plan	50% for Operating 20% for Capital
CMAQ	FTA	Transit	Capital or Operating (pilot projects limited to 3 years); Must demonstrate air quality improvement; Bike and pedestrian projects	None

Multiple Local Project Administrators

Another challenge facing MTC is that of working with nine separate project administrators, because each is responsible to conduct local community-based planning and to select projects that best meet needs identified in those plans. While MTC has established regional program goals and objectives, it can be challenging to allow for unique program and funding flexibility at the local level, while maintaining regional consistency. Furthermore, although the local agencies carry out the selection process, it falls upon MTC to enter into funding agreements and manage the mechanics of ensuring funds are received by the subrecipients in a timely manner.

Local Match

While only JARC funds require a local match, an operating project requires a 50% match, which can be difficult to identify. STA funds can be used as local match; however, such a strategy further reduces funding available for the overall project. While JARC guidelines allow for in-kind services to be included as part of the match, they must be carefully documented and accounted for.

Funding agreements and Reimbursement Procedures

Although in principal administration of the Lifeline Transportation Program has been delegated to the CMAs, in reality, MTC continues to have a key role in allocating and/or disbursing funds, negotiating funding agreements and managing reimbursement requests.

Best Practices

MTC is currently engaged in conducting a comprehensive program review which may result in programmatic or administrative changes to the program. In general, stakeholders report upon the value of a variety of projects that are funded. Three best practices were identified through the evaluation, including:

1. A Bicycle Program that provides bicycles that have been donated to the program to low-income residents of East Oakland. Training is provided on bicycle safety, as well as how to

access and use public transit by bicycle. The program is relatively low cost ($75,000 per year) and can be easily replicated.

2. A Parents Shuttle transports parents of elementary school children in a low-income area with little pedestrian access. Providing transportation has resulted in improved participation by the parents in school activities, such as parent-teacher conferences, literacy classes, and volunteer work.

3. Family of Services is a program sponsored by a private non-profit agency in San Jose that tailors a specific transportation solution for program recipients. The recipient may receive a bicycle, taxi vouchers, or an auto loan, depending on their circumstances. In addition, each enrollee receives extensive training on how to use public transit, and an individualized transportation plan is prepared for them.

New Freedom

Unlike most other peer agencies, MTC administers New Freedom funds separately from JARC, primarily because JARC funds are dedicated to the larger Lifeline Transportation Program.

New Freedom projects are solicited through a Call for Projects issued by MTC for the urbanized areas on an annual basis. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) solicits projects for small urbanized and rural areas. For FY 2010, the MTC region received $1.97 million in New Freedom funds. Transit agencies are required to receive funds directly from FTA while MTC serves as a "pass through" for other types of agencies (i.e. private non-profits). MTC has recently begun to take 5% (of an allowable 10%) of program funds to administer the program.

Following an initial eligibility screening by MTC staff, eligible projects are evaluated by a panel consisting of Bay Area representatives of disabled population interests and MTC staff.

Applications are evaluated based on the following criteria:

Need and Benefits (maximum 40 points)

Extent to which project addresses critical needs for disabled individuals as identified in the Coordinated Plan

Effectiveness at mitigating or eliminating transportation barriers for disabled individuals

Extent to which project promotes integration of disabled individuals into the work force and their full participation in society

Extent to which project could only be funded by New Freedom Program or federal human service grant programs

Extent to which project provides additional benefits

Coordination, Partnership, & Outreach (maximum 30 points)

Extent of coordination with other affected transportation systems, providers, and services, and with related social service programs

Extent to which project advances the development and implementation of coordinated transportation services

Extent of community support

Thoroughness of plan for marketing the project to beneficiaries

Project Readiness (maximum 30 points)

Reasonableness and completeness of funding plan

Project sustainability beyond the grant period

Thoroughness of implementation plan and reasonableness of project schedule

Ability to use New Freedom grant to leverage additional resources

Sponsor's experience in managing services for disabled individuals

How project fits into a larger program with well-defined goals, objectives, and performance standards

Sponsor's institutional capacity to manage the project

Sponsor's history of managing federal transportation funds

A variety of projects are funded, including:

- Continue and expand the Mobility Ambassador Program; implement a Vehicle Sharing Demonstration Program; update, reprint, and distribute the Senior Mobility Guide; coordinate an information and referral network of call centers; market and promote the development of volunteer ride programs.

- Create a transportation brokerage to serve as the main coordinating entity and one-stop provider of transportation services for Marin's disabled, senior, and low-income populations. Create a new volunteer driver program that will provide door-to door escorted "safety net" transportation for frail and disabled seniors who for health reasons cannot tolerate shared ride services.

- Provide semi-escorted door through door transportation service for fragile seniors who have disabilities in the tri-city area of Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda. The service transports passengers to essential errands, a nutrition program, appointments, and occasional social outings.

- Provide classroom and field training to elderly and disabled persons to increase their awareness, knowledge, and skills in using public transportation within their communities, including AC Transit, Union City Transit, and BART.

- Convert an existing comprehensive inventory of transportation services available to seniors and people with disabilities into a web based search tool for agencies and the general public.

- Create a series of tactile and large print maps, called strip maps, designed to provide route and route segment information for BART, MUNI, SamTrans, and CalTrain; and (2)

Implement an Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Training program to meet the specific transit needs of individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

▪ Purchase and install 120 Mobile Data Computers (MDCs) with GPS capability on all SF Paratransit vans to allow remote interactive connectivity to the paratransit routing and scheduling system; purchase and install management software at the Paratransit Broker's office to allow for live trip dispatching and trip management.

▪ Create a web-based mobility management tool to coordinate human service transportation. The web-based tool will include agency profiles, agency member registration, trip reservation and billing functions, volunteer driver programs, gas cards, agency fleet inventories, and GIS mapping of key locations. (2) Purchase ten accessible taxis, provide them to licensed local taxi companies, and include them in the fleet that is available to the trip reservation function in the web portal.

▪ Purchase and install rolling text-based, LED signs to be mounted inside the interior of AC Transit's revenue vehicle fleet. The signs will display bus stop location information, helping hearing-impaired passengers, as well as the general public, with general navigation and alighting decisions.

▪ Provide a reimbursement-based taxi program (Para-Taxi) for LAVTA's ADA-certified paratransit patrons making trips to and from Dublin and Pleasanton.

▪ Continue and expand Get Up & Go, an escorted transportation and socialization program serving San Mateo County older adults who can no longer drive due to disability or frailty.

▪ Provide door through door transportation to and from the Mt. Diablo Center (MDC) Adult Day Health Care program for MDC participants, and (2) provide a nutrition/shopping shuttle for senior/disabled Concord residents during MDC's program hours.

▪ Implement Riding to Independence, an expansion of CIL's existing travel and mobility device training program for youth with disabilities and their families, and seniors and adults with disabilities.

▪ Ensure that aging-in-place needs are met for homebound seniors, 60 years and older by providing escorted rides for ambulatory seniors to appointments and essential errands and providing transportation information/referral services.

▪ Provide enhanced demand responsive/deviated fixed route service to the Oakmont Community in Santa Rosa. The service will deviate approximately 3/4 mile off of the fixed route to pick up or drop off paratransit eligible patrons; (2) Purchase a 30' low floor bus to be used on the deviated fixed route service in Oakmont.

North Central Texas Council of Governments

Agency Background, Process and Appropriations

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) service area has approximately 6.7 million people, 12,500 square miles, and is composed of 16 counties. The NCTCOG is the designated recipient for two urbanized areas within the region, the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington urbanized area, which is significantly larger than the other, which is the Denton-Lewisville urbanized area. Small urban and rural JARC and New Freedom funds are apportioned to the state.

For FY2010, these were the following apportionments for NCTCOG:

Area	JARC	New Freedom
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington	$2,540,015	$106,443
Denton-Lewisville	1,385,666	$63,757

Match sources depend upon the entity submitting the project. Typically the transit authorities for the urbanized areas—Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), the Fort Worth Transportation Authority (The T) and Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA)—provide sales tax revenue as a match, while those projects from cities are matched through the city's general revenues. However, there are not many projects from cities. For nonprofits and human services agencies, the match sources can include donor money, funding from another grant or from a foundation. For particularly high-quality projects that would not be possible without an in-kind match, such match is allowed on a case-by-case basis, but the preference is a cash match.

Based on sheer numbers, nonprofits and local human service agencies (often times with a loose governmental affiliation, such as an organization dedicated to addressing mental health issues) are the most common projects. However, based on the dollar amount received, an estimated 45% of the total funding goes to the transit authorities, while 55% goes to smaller transportation providers, nonprofits and other entities.

NCTCOG does a competitive call for projects, laying out the criteria and asking for submittals. Evaluators do consider the Coordinated Public Transportation Plan when they look at projects and make sure those selected are consistent with the goals, policies, and strategies detailed in the plan.

Once they receive project applications, there is a two-step review process:

1. An initial vetting process with an answer of "no" to any question removing that application from further consideration: Is the application complete? Is the entity applying an eligible recipient? Is the project eligible under this funding program? Is the project consistent with the Coordination Plan?
2. Actual evaluation – The NCTCOG does not use a hard quantitative scoring process, but looks at the project holistically and considers how
   a. well project meets Program goals and objectives
   b. well thought out and implementable is the work plan
   c. well does it address goals in the Coordination Plan
   d. many stakeholders does it involve
   e. effective the project would be

f. likely it is to reach stated performance measures

g. replicable it is

h. innovative it is

i. reasonable the budget is

After each project is evaluated by NCTCOG staff, they develop recommendations and take those to the public and technical committee for review and comment. Recommendations are then presented to its policy body, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), which determines which projects to fund. The Executive Board of the NCTCOG is the fiduciary agent, affirming the RTC's recommendations and giving the staff the ability to enter into contracts with the subrecipients.

There is not a top priority in evaluating applications, but rather a consideration of comprehensive impact of project. The agency has not utilized hard quantitative scoring, but is considering moving to that in the future, or at least incorporating elements of it. It generally funds projects addressing the highest needs in the area. NCTCOG has completed three competitive calls for projects to date and will be doing another this summer.

NCTCOG submits one combined grant application on behalf of all the approved projects, with the exception of those project sponsors receiving Section 5307 funding, as those projects go directly to FTA.

Funded Projects and Recipients

Project Type	yes	no	Estimated % of total
Vehicle for individual		x	
Accessible taxi	x		
Vanpools	x		
Car-sharing		x	
ITS-related hardware or software investments	x		
Fixed route capital		x	
Fixed route operating	x		
Demand response capital	x		
Demand response operating-medical appts.	x		
Shuttles-employment	x		
Pedestrian or bicycle improvements (Explain)**	x		
Mobility Management (Explain)	x		
Other (Explain)***	x		

**Pedestrian and bicycle improvements relates to a New Freedom project that funded fixed-route bus stop accessibility improvements at targeted locations.

Mobility management projects have been two projects focused on more localized and intensive human service public transit coordination planning, with one offering individualized trip planning assistance and the other funding a mobility manager.

***In the "Other" category, the project constituted passenger assistance, with a companion to assist in getting an individual from her door onto a vehicle, to an appointment and back home. There have been two such projects.

Recipients include:

- public transit operators – in the large urban areas
- Rural transit districts
- Cities
- City/county social service agencies
- private for-profit entities – funded a taxi company
- private non-profit agencies
- other: Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, which is a public agency

Oversight and Evaluation

NCTCOG signs project agreements with every JARC/NF subrecipient and makes sure they meet the required FTA rules and regulations. NCTCOG reviews monthly invoices and status reports, and there is a near constant review of subrecipients' compliance. NCTCOG spends a significant amount of resources in the implementation, management, and oversight of projects. They provide technical assistance to all projects, particularly when requested or if one needs help to meet scope.

Because there is an individual review, it can be hard to evaluate the different types of projects. Typically projects are evaluated against performance measures and expectations described in project proposals. For transit projects, it is easier to evaluate with more traditional cost per

passenger metrics, while for others, a reasonableness test can be given- is it meeting stated goals, is it progressing, etc.?

Challenges

Local match is a major hurdle. NCTCOG works to help with identifying funding partners, but that can be biggest stumbling block to project. Meeting FTA rules and regulations can also be difficult. Also, adjusting to the changes in situation from the time of application to implementation- since there is a lag, conditions may change.

Changes NCTCOG is considering include adopting a scoring process, as well as giving some additional consideration to who is involved in the evaluation process. The agency is also considering doing as TPB has done by setting a focus in the call for projects on a particular type of project, such prioritizing funding for voucher programs. It is also considering more performance oriented measures or goals once a project is underway, to include floating targets that adjust based on the progress of the project.

Projects Illustrating Best Practices

The Community Council of Greater Dallas and its work through the Community Transportation Network in engaging partners (120) and both identifying and addressing needs would be a best practice. It has done particularly well with connecting to human service agencies and nonprofits. Other keys to success include organizational commitment to the project, innovation, multiple partnerships, and having mobility management on a more localized level.

Regional Transportation Authority (Chicago)

Agency Background, Process and Appropriations

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is the third largest public transportation system in North America, with financial and budget oversight of the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra commuter rail, and Pace suburban bus services and with responsibility for regional transit planning issues. The RTA service area comprises six counties with a population of 8 million. When acting as the designated recipient for JARC and New Freedom funds, the RTA includes an additional, seventh county, which is within the boundaries of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, the MPO for the region.

In 2010, the RTA's apportionment was $4,266,492 for JARC projects and $2,638,359 for New Freedom projects. The RTA does not keep statistics on sources of local match; it only documents that the funds are eligible to be used as local match. Recipients were public transit operators, city or county social service agencies, private non-profit agencies, and other public agencies. The types of funded projects are indicated on the following table:

Project Type (To Date)	yes	no	Estimated % of total
Vehicle for individual	x		1%
Accessible taxi		x	
Vanpools		x	
Car-sharing		x	
ITS-related hardware or software investments	x		1%
Fixed route capital		x	
Fixed route operating	x		31%
Demand response capital	x		1%
Demand response operating	x		39%
Shuttles		x	
Pedestrian or bicycle improvements (Bus pads for fixed route—improved accessibility for people with disabilities.)	x		3%
Mobility Management- (The vast majority of this funding is for the operation of call centers.)	x		22%
Other- (Metra-Reverse commuter rail; Ray Graham Association -Training for People with Disabilities; Safer Foundation, Subscription service bringing previously incarcerated individuals to food service jobs at Navy base)	x		2%

All projects included in the JARC and New Freedom Program of Projects must be derived from the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) and subject to the RTA competitive selection process.

A Selection Review Committee (SRC), made up of five staff; one from Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and two each from RTA and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), is charged with developing a recommended Program of Projects by ranking the projects in accordance with the criteria. In addition, the SRC may recommend project approval at an amount and scope less than originally requested. In that instance, consultation will take place with the project sponsors. The SRC may also contact the applicant if clarification is needed on the contents of the application.

The criteria and methods for ranking the projects are designed to affirm project eligibility of the submitted projects and to gauge the relative strengths of the projects with respect to consistency with the Northeastern Illinois HSTP, project readiness and ability to implement, sustainability, need, and efficiency. The criteria and methods for ranking the projects are included in the application.

The first step in the selection process is to screen projects for eligibility—that is, consistency with the FTA guidelines and the Northern Illinois HSTP, the ability to supply a local match, and identification of the unmet needs of the target population, including a description of how the project will address the unmet needs and an estimated quantification of benefits. Projects that are found eligible are then ranked according to the following points:

HSTP Consistency Criteria

Coordination/linkage/resource sharing   0-40 points

> *(regional coordination =40 points; multi-county = 20 points;
> multi-municipality but intra-county =5 points)*

Innovation   0-20 points

Proven strategies successful elsewhere   0-20 points

Degree of coordination with existing human   0-20 points
service agencies or partnerships with non-transit,
non-profit, for-profit organizations

Project Readiness/Ability to Implement Criteria

Ready to implement   30 points

Incomplete but has schedule and milestones   10 points

Have experience with similar projects   5 points

Have managed projects with federal grants   5 points

Sustainability Criteria

If successful, sponsor commits to fund beyond   20 points
project period

Plans in place to monitor and evaluate   10 points

Significant support is demonstrated   0-40 points

> *(Stakeholder letters delineate nature of support and local share commitment = 40
> points; letter of support from key stakeholders = 10 points; stakeholders delineate
> specific participation = 10 points)*

Need Criteria

Existing project that achieved projected ridership	40 points
Ridership increased but not achieved projected ridership or has met other significant objectives	20 points
Severity of need addressed by new or expanded project	0-30points

(if none exists =30 points; or 20 points if two of following exist or 10 points if one of following exists:

> Service not in time period
>
> Service not for specific trip purpose
>
> Service not for same-day needs)

Degree of economic opportunities for target populations	1-20 points
Number of low-income/disabled able to access jobs	20 points maximum
Addresses unmet needs of older adults	1-20 points

Efficiency Criterion

Cost per trip	20 points maximum

Oversight and Evaluation

Metra, CTA and Pace are direct recipients for their recommended projects. As such, they have grant agreements with FTA and report directly to it. The RTA assumes responsibility for all grant management activities of the other project sponsors, that is the subrecipients. The RTA follows a FTA-approved program management plan, which includes site visits with the subrecipients. This activity is regulatory in nature, assuring that all administrative responsibilities are being met. There is no other formal evaluation of the success of the projects. Some subrecipients include benchmarks in their applications, but there is no penalty for not achieving them. However, as shown in the criteria, points are awarded to repeat applicants for existing projects that have achieved their ridership or sustainability goals.

The RTA relies on subrecipients to decide whether a project is a success by continuing to provide the local share or by folding the project into their respective budgets after federal JARC/NF funds are exhausted. All current subrecipients are still operating projects with JARC or New Freedom funds, though two grantees are deciding now whether their projects will continue without federal funds.

The JARC and New Freedom programs are subject to an ongoing evaluation process. Each year the RTA convenes stakeholders to assess the programs and suggest changes, and also consults the RTA Board. Typically, changes have been limited to minor revisions in the application or criteria.

Challenges

The RTA considers challenges to the program exist because, by their very nature, these are unique projects. Some grantees may have little exposure to the FTA, or the project may involve multiple agencies. On the other hand, RTA may not have prior experience with the applicant agency and will need to establish a relationship, particularly if the agency is a non-transit entity. As a rule, these types of projects require extensive oversight and considerable up front planning. The process and its inherent time-line, requiring obligation of funds within three years of federal appropriation, is not always conducive to the development of a strong project. In addition, the 50% local match is a deterrent for some otherwise worthy projects, as well as the knowledge that the federal programs may not continue.

Projects Illustrating Best Practices

The RTA cites three current projects as good models of JARC and New Freedom programs. The RTA was able to creatively use available funds by combining awards of both JARC and New Freedom funds for the first two projects.

The Ride in Kane program is now entering its third year of operation. This program coordinates paratransit services in Kane County into a centralized system that optimizes transportation resources for older adults, persons with disabilities, and low-income individuals. Currently there are 17 private, non-profit organizations and local units of government participating in the program. Approximately 100,000 trips were provided through this program in 2009. This program, operated by the Association for Individuals with Disabilities (AID) is a model that is being adopted throughout the region.

The Transportation Safety Program, operated by the Ray Graham Association for People with Disabilities, provides training to people with disabilities and older adults to improve their ability to use transportation services. At $35,000 it is a low-cost program that teaches people about what services are available and how to use them.

The Safer Foundation is another low-cost program, at $11,000, which helps previously incarcerated individuals by transporting them in a leased Pace van to food service jobs at the Navy Base. It is an ideal example of a JARC program aimed at low-income people with unusual challenges.

Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (TriMet)

Agency Background, Process and Appropriations

The Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (TriMet) is the public transit operator for the Portland, Oregon metropolitan region. The population for the metropolitan area is 1.8 million, and the service area (comprised of most of Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington Counties) is 570 square miles. The process for appropriating JARC and NF funds is different within TriMet.

JARC Program

TriMet has taken a lead role with planning for and implementing projects utilizing JARC funds since 1998. In many ways, it acts in the capacity of the MPO in that it has completed the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan, administers the selection process for identifying JARC funded projects, and applies for JARC funds on behalf of the region, which are then passed through to sub-recipients.

For FY 2009, a total of $709,187 in federal funds was available in JARC funding. All funds are currently dedicated for operating projects, and not for capital purposes. TriMet does not directly claim JARC funds; rather, they are passed through to other sub-recipients that include private non-profit agencies as well as a Community College. All of the program match comes in the form of TriMet's fixed route service.

Projects funded include:

- Low-Interest loans to purchase autos (about 7% of total funding)
- Accessible Taxi (<1%) This consists of a taxi voucher program to serve as an Emergency Ride Home program that is administered by social service agencies.
- Demand Response operating (6% of total funding). Commute services designed to bridge the service gap between home or work and TriMet bus and rail service.
- Three shuttles account for 42% of program resources. The three shuttles operate between Multnomah County Community College campuses, from a major transit center (Rose Quarter) to the Swan Island Industrial Area that is otherwise not well served by public transit, and the Tualatin Shuttle, which provides reverse commute service to a neighboring suburb of Portland.
- Bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects account for 14% of the program resources
- Travel training is provided by Ride Connection, Clackamas County Social Services, and Portland Community College, accounting for 30% of program resources.

As mentioned previously, TriMet prepares and updates the region's coordinated plan. It has identified three key areas of need:

- Spatial areas to indicate areas of greatest need (i.e. concentrations of low-income persons)
- Areas where there are high numbers of jobs
- Areas that are underserved by TriMet fixed route services.

Project applications are expected to address one or more of these areas of needs. In addition, applicants are asked to demonstrate that the project is cost effective, that the sponsor is

coordinating with others, and that they can leverage other fund sources. A call for projects is issued every two years.

New Freedom

TriMet's implementation of the New Freedom Program is similar to the arrangement for JARC; that is, TriMet is the direct recipient for all New Freedom funds, administers the competitive funding cycle, and contracts with the (single) sub-recipient for the funds. For FY 2010, TriMet's apportionment of New Freedom funds was $417,000.

All of the funds are passed through to one sub-recipient: Ride Connection, which is a local private-non-profit agency that provides a wide variety of transportation services for older adults and persons with disabilities within the Portland metropolitan region, including services on behalf of TriMet. Although a variety of projects are funded (see below), TriMet has one contract with Ride Connection to carry out all the projects.

The match is all provided by TriMet in-kind services.

Projects funded with New Freedom for Fiscal Year 2009 fall into 3 main categories:

- Operations (provision of community van service in multiple locations (97%)
- Vehicle purchase and maintenance (7%)
- Technology (2%)

Oversight and Evaluation

TriMet assumes a lead role in project oversight. In this capacity, staff (about .5 FTE is dedicated to the JARC program) receives performance indicators from the sub-recipients and provides them to FTA. Once a year, a site visit or phone call is made to confirm other areas of compliance, and to verify that the scope of work is being completed consistent with the original application.

For the New Freedom program, Ride Connection submits quarterly reporting forms, and TriMet monitors trends, and services of the cost to be sure they are consistent with original expectations.

Challenges

Challenges expressed by TriMet about the JARC Program include the need for more funding; some project sponsors find they are running short and need more funding; and, it is difficult to fund new projects. Most projects are continuing projects and there is little or no room for new ones. TriMet may consider setting aside some portion of its JARC funds (for example, 10%) for new projects.

The challenges of New Freedom include concern about future funding and how to sustain existing services, and the need to have a good plan in place that identifies key project priorities.

Project Illustrating Best Practices

TriMet staff considers the Swan Island shuttle service as a JARC Best Practice. It is administered by the Swan Island Transportation Management Agency (TMA), and the TMA has done a very good job of working with local employers, and tailoring the service to meet those employers' needs. The project has been well managed in that it has come in on-budget, and has a robust, regular ridership.

Washington State Department of Transportation

Agency Background, Process and Appropriations

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is a direct recipient of federal 5310 funds statewide, and for JARC and New Freedom funds for small urbanized and rural areas of the state. Three urbanized area Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) directly claim JARC and New Freedom for their regions. These are the MPOs for the Seattle-Tacoma area, Spokane, and Southwest Washington (Vancouver). These MPOs also conduct their own project solicitation process, which is held concurrently with that sponsored by WSDOT.

Coordinated Plans were prepared, with financial assistance provided by WSDOT specific to each region. There are 14 Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) within the State. WSDOT uses a consolidated application for both state and federal public transportation grants. Applicants are asked to describe their project and provide relevant information. Based on the information provided by the applicant, WSDOT determines the appropriate type of funding when awarding projects. Timelines for all state and federal funding awards follow the state biennium, with applicants submitting grant proposals every two years.

Each RTPO is required, as part of its plan update, to identify priority projects. WSDOT assigns each region, based on a population-based formula, a certain number of A,B,C "slots," which are required to be identified by local stakeholders and included in their plan. As part of the evaluation process, these locally identified priorities are weighted in order to ensure local priorities are validated by the state.

Those entities (transit agencies) who can directly apply to FTA for JARC and/or New Freedom funds are expected to do so. For other agencies, including private non-profits, WSDOT passes funds through a funding agreement. WSDOT also monitors projects, prepares necessary certification that federal requirements are met, and conducts a site visit at least once a year.

The benefits to this process include:

- Validation of local priorities in the statewide scoring process
- Project applicant doesn't have to indicate the funding source; WSDOT assigns based on the project type
- Some state funds are used as local match. The applicant is given a higher ranking if they provide their own match, but it is not required.
- Local RTPAs or MPOs do not have to execute funding agreements or pass through funds
- WSDOT assumes much of the administrative and monitoring requirements
- The process is predictable and conducted on a regular basis
- Local match will be provided with state funds in many cases

WSDOT funds a wide variety of projects, but tends not to fund fixed route or paratransit capital, accessible taxis, loans for cars, or shuttles (Washington State has an extensive vanpool program.)

They give priority for continuing projects; sustaining an existing project gets priority over funding a new one. If an entity is applying to continue an existing grant, they are asked to provide documentation that the project is successful and they are asked to report on past performance measures.

Oversight and Evaluation

WSDOT uses the 10% of total JARC and New Freedom funds to administer the program, and they also get 10% of the urban MPO's funding for this purpose; even so, it has not covered costs and WSDOT intends to rethink this arrangement when SAFETEA-LU is reauthorized.

Challenges

See comment above—an extensive effort is required for program oversight.

Project Illustrating Best Practices

The application process itself can be considered a best practice, in that it is highly coordinated throughout the state, and is held in cooperation with the 3 MPOs. Furthermore, WSDOT assumes a high level of oversight and administrative responsibility on behalf of the MPOs. This results in a high degree of flexibility for the applicants, as well, because WSDOT assigns the appropriate funding source and may use state funds as match. Finally, this process closely considers and weights local priorities in funding projects.

APPENDIX C

JARC and New Freedom Program Templates (under development)