Toolkit for Operating a Rural Transportation Voucher Program

Updated August 2017

Acknowledgments

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Transportation Funding Update and Information

August 2017 funding update

Since the *Toolkit for Operating a Transportation Voucher Program* was developed in 1999, there have been changes in the federal funding programs that provide grants to address transportation barriers. We have worked to update this information, but be aware that resources available change periodically, so some of the funding information in this toolkit may become out-of-date.

Specifically, this August 2017 update addresses the merging of the 5317 (New Freedom) and 5316 (JARC- Job Access & Reverse Commute) funding programs into other programs. New Freedom activities are now part of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (5310). JARC activities are now part of Urbanized Area Formula Program Grants (5307) and Formula Grants for Rural Areas (5311).

For more information on these and other Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants, follow the links below.

All FTA Grant Programs
- [Federal Transit Administration Grant Programs](#)

Fact Sheets
- [Urbanized Area Formula Program Grants](#) (49 U.S.C. 5307 and 5340 / FAST Act Sections 3004, 3016)
- [Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities](#) (49 U.S.C. Section 5310 / FAST Act Section 3006)
- [Formula Grants for Rural Areas](#) (49 U.S.C. Section 5311 / FAST Act Section 3007)

For more information on the *Toolkit for Operating a Rural Transportation Voucher Program* and the research that led to its development, visit

- APRIL [Transportation Voucher project: Operation and Results](#)
- RTC:Rural [Develop and Evaluate a Voucher System for Increasing Access to Transportation for People with Disabilities Living in Rural Areas](#)

Introduction

The lack of available, affordable and accessible transportation is one of the most significant and persistent problems faced by people with disabilities. This is especially true for those individuals who live and work in rural America, and is the reason that the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) has been concerned with accessible rural transportation for the past five years. APRIL is a national, nonprofit, grass roots membership network of over 230 rural centers for independent living (CILs), other organizations and individuals who work with people with disabilities in rural America. As a national membership organization, APRIL is dedicated to advancing the rights and responsibilities of people with disabilities in rural America. Through such services as information sharing, networking, training, technical assistance and advocacy, APRIL has created a national voice for rural independent living issues. In the area of rural transportation, our voice has grown in strength thanks to a federally funded transportation project that demonstrated the value of using a transportation voucher model to develop transportation options for our rural constituents who needed rides to work.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is the agency within the Department of Transportation (DOT) that administers the huge transportation programs across the U.S. Historically, public transportation funds have been inequitably allocated between urban and rural areas – 25% of the population lives in rural America, but only 6% of transit funding makes its way there. APRIL believes that the voucher model will play a significant role in providing new and expanded transportation options for people with disabilities in rural America.

Some advantages of a voucher system for rural transportation:
- Allows riders more choices in where they work and live
- Puts resources into the hands of riders rather than agencies
- Places emphasis on rider needs rather than agency considerations
- Promotes rural traditions of volunteers
- Promotes cost-sharing among service agencies, riders, and transit providers

There are three key elements in transportation: vehicles, money, and models for organizing the two so that people can get where they need to go effectively and efficiently. Models are important because they describe how to bring resources and people together; how a system can operate routinely. About a decade ago, at the Rural Institute on Disabilities, University of Montana, Bernier and Seekins[1] studied a voucher model of rural transportation for people with disabilities in seven rural counties. This relatively low-cost approach expanded the transportation options available to people with a broad range of severe disabilities. They used the vouchers for employment, non-emergency medical, daily living chores, and social activities. An agency staff person organized and administered the program, in which rider participants used vouchers to secure rides wherever and whenever they wanted. It was simple, flexible, and easily implemented and it respected rider skills and creativity, and the community's capacity to respond to need.

In the voucher model, eligible riders receive a checkbook with an allocation of miles from a sponsoring agency. The sponsoring agency helps the rider identify and cultivate potential volunteer drivers and the sponsoring agency negotiates with public or private transportation providers to accept the voucher checks as payment for rides. The sponsoring agency financially manages the voucher system by allocating vouchers to riders and reimbursing providers.

APRIL took the voucher idea and obtained funding for a national demonstration project. APRIL worked with local Centers for Independent Living and Section 121 American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation programs to implement and demonstrate the Traveler's Cheque concept at the ten sites shown in Table 1. The ten sites were chosen to reflect the diversity in our rural communities throughout the United States.

The Traveler's Cheque Program is based squarely within the independent living philosophy of consumer-control. Rather than providing transportation to people with disabilities, it provides resources and support to individuals and gives them the opportunity to use their creative talents and personal resources to achieve their own transportation goals.

Text description—Table 1: Ten Demonstration Sites and Their Characteristics
1. ILC. Homer, Alaska. Low population density; experience with a transportation voucher coupon program.
2. BAIN, Inc. Bainbridge, Georgia. No transportation experience; 10% of the county's population has a visual impairment; large black minority population.
3. DSNWK. Hays, Kansas. Transportation provider is the lead organization in partnership with a CIL; transportation experience; large rural service area.
4. Southern Illinois CIL. Carbondale, Illinois. Large rural service area; high unemployment; large black minority population; limited transportation options.
5. South East CIL. Fall River, Massachusetts. High population density, but many remote rural areas; partnership of three CIL's; taxi service available.
6. Southwestern CIL. Marshall, Minnesota. Very large, very rural area; upper Midwest; rural transportation system available.
7. Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Pablo, Montana. Section 121 VR program; high unemployment (49%); limited transportation options and experience.
8. Zuni Entrepreneurial Enterprises. Zuni, New Mexico. Section 121 VR program; high unemployment (67%); transportation experience with tribal transportation system.
9. CIL of Central Pennsylvania. Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. Rural area; several counties; transportation experience; taxi services available.
10. Active Re-Entry. Price, Utah. Very rural area with population density of 5 people per square mile; no transportation experience and very limited transportation.

Toolkit Contents

The following is a brief overview of the basic elements needed to operate a transportation voucher program. Later sections will go into greater detail for each of these areas.

Key Players

- A Sponsoring Agency to operate the program.
- A Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) is identified by the sponsoring agency and is typically an employee of the agency. The CTC provides the day-to-day management of the voucher program including identifying and working with riders, distributing vouchers to eligible program participants, identifying and working with transportation providers, and convening community partners.
- A Site Bookkeeper is responsible for collecting, redeeming and recording vouchers used by the participants, processing payments to local service providers and invoicing the primary funding source for voucher reimbursement.
- Riders who have enrolled in the voucher program are responsible for locating and choosing their volunteer drivers or providers, for maintaining their own mileage balances and not exceeding their allocations, and for assuring that the rides they take are in safe vehicles with insured, licensed drivers.
- Transportation Providers can be public and private systems such as local paratransit, service agency vans, taxi services, or volunteer drivers.

Develop Partnerships

One of the first steps in operating a voucher program is to organize a transportation interest network (TIN) composed of public, private, and political entities interested in human services, disability and access issues, and transportation. The purpose of building such a network is to develop public awareness and support for the program.

Set Goals

The sponsoring agency, along with the TIN, should develop goals and objectives for the voucher program. In communities in which there is no comprehensive transportation system, the partnership may form the foundation for one.

Identify Funding

The critical element in setting up any transportation service is to identify and secure funding. Sources for community-based agencies to seek stable financing for a voucher system include federal, state and local transportation funds, as well as private foundations and community organizations.

Develop Policies

The sponsoring agency must establish written eligibility policies and develop strategies to allocate miles (resources) to riders. It is essential that eligibility and policy guidelines be established in written form to avoid errors, ambiguity and unfair treatment of riders or funding agencies. The TIN may play a role in this process.

Publicize

The most obvious reason to publicize the voucher program is to recruit potential riders. Good publicity may also garner support from potential funders or participation from potential partners with vehicles.

Print Checks

Once the eligibility and policy guidelines have been established one of the next steps will be to print checks and check registers. This may require a lead time of one to three months. Samples of checks are presented later.

Contract with Providers

The original voucher model developed by Seekins and Bernier, had volunteer drivers as the primary transportation providers. It has also been used quite successfully to complement and even help develop public and private systems of transportation. The CTC identifies and negotiates the acceptance of the voucher checks by public and private providers as payment for rides. In addition, while the responsibility for finding and negotiating volunteer drivers rests with the rider, the CTC may assist in this activity as well.

Work with Riders

One of the CTCs major responsibilities is to work with the individual riders to help them learn how to use the voucher checks effectively. This may include explaining how to use the checkbook and check register, how to monitor the number of miles used, how to recruit volunteer drivers and how the rider can get additional miles allocated to his or her account.

Program Management

The CTC is responsible for managing the day-to-day operation of the voucher program. This includes working with the bookkeeper on overall budget strategies, monitoring budget compliance, and timely payment of transportation providers. The CTC also evaluates the program by tracking the number of individual rides provided, miles traveled, types of trips taken, and the overall costs to funding authorities. While this can be a formidable task, the Excel workbook provided with this document can assist with these tasks.

Special Considerations

Special consideration issues include insurance and liability, program abuse, trip purposes, using miles versus dollars in allocations and the use of new technologies.

Key Players

While each community will develop its own operating procedures with adaptations to meet its unique circumstances, the roles of the key players are relatively standard and are described below.

The Sponsoring Agency

The sponsoring agency has several roles to play in the voucher program. The first is to designate staff persons to function in the roles of community transportation coordinator (CTC) and bookkeeper. These two individuals are the key to a successful program. Another role of the sponsoring agency is to provide general oversight for the program, including administrative support, supervision, and program accountability. They will also oversee the development of program policies and procedures, make decisions regarding the methods of allocating resources, assure adequate program liability coverage, be accountable for timely payments to transportation providers and most importantly, take the lead in securing adequate funding to operate the voucher program both in the present and the future.

Sponsoring Agency Roles & Responsibilities
- Designates staff
- Establishes eligibility criteria and mileage allocation policies
- Ensures that the organization has appropriate liability insurance
- Develops a mechanism to pay transportation providers in a timely manner

The Community Transportation Coordinator

The community transportation coordinator (CTC) manages all aspects of the program. In the early stages of planning, the CTC will want to identify or if needed, organize a community transportation interest network, which includes local transportation providers, riders and community leaders. (See Develop Partnerships later)

The CTC also identifies and negotiates with existing transportation providers in the community and works with rider participants to enroll them in the voucher program. The CTC must select forms to use (See Appendix C for samples) and modify them to suit program needs. More broadly, experience has shown that, if the CTC isn't already a leader in transportation issues in the community, their involvement with the voucher program will likely put them in that position.

Community Transportation Coordinator Roles & Responsibilities
- Identify or organize a community transportation interest network to give guidance and help provide coordination and advocacy
- Locates and negotiates rates with public and private transportation providers
- Works with riders to establish an Individual Transportation Plan; makes mileage allocations and trains riders to use the vouchers effectively
- Works with the bookkeeper to manage the allocations and budget
- Develops program forms and procedures
- Communicates with all participants and with the funding agency

The Bookkeeper

Each organization that operates a voucher program will have a different budget, based on a variety of factors. There will be several important common elements, however. In essence, these common factors revolve around a bookkeeper who monitors the allocation and reimbursement of funds using a cash-flow approach. Together, the CTC and the bookkeeper will want to ensure that use does not exceed the budget. As important, they will want to use the available resources to maximize benefit; avoiding excessive unused funds.

Bookkeeper Roles & Responsibilities
- Records trip data and pays providers
- Reimburses volunteers at the federal mileage rate or less
- Reimburses public providers at the rate negotiated by the CTC
- Invoices the funding agency and transmits data forms

The Rider

Each rider is responsible for developing an Individual Transportation Plan (ITP). This plan, developed by the participant with the assistance of the CTC, must consider individual transportation needs and set an allocation of resources or miles available. Riders are responsible for maintaining their own mileage balances and for not exceeding their mileage allocation. They are also responsible for locating, choosing, and making arrangements for the rides they need; whether from among the providers participating in the program or from volunteers (e.g., friends, neighbors, family, co-workers) they know and trust. When other providers are participating (e.g., fixed route systems that accept the vouchers), the participants have the freedom and responsibility to choose those providers as well. When riders use volunteer drivers, the riders must ensure that vehicles are safe, drivers are licensed and proper insurance coverage is in place.

Riders Roles & Responsibilities
- Work with the CTC to complete all forms and develop an Individual Transportation Plan
- Carefully select providers and consider safety and insurance coverage when using volunteer drivers
- Pay providers with the voucher checks and submit the check register to the bookkeeper
- Maintain an accurate mileage balance

The Transportation Provider

Ideally, the CTC will want to use a mix of available public and private transportation providers as well as volunteer drivers. Local public transit systems, private agency van services, taxi cabs and individual volunteer drivers can all benefit from accepting vouchers as payment for rides. Drivers should have established procedures to follow for collecting and processing vouchers and for working with riders who may have difficulty completing the forms.

Transportation Providers Roles & Responsibilities
- Accept vouchers, provide transportation and submit the vouchers to the site for payment
- May be individual volunteers paid at the federal mileage reimbursement rate or may be any public or private provider willing to accept the vouchers at the rate negotiated
- Both public and private providers should establish procedures for accepting and processing vouchers.

Develop Partnerships

One of the first steps in designing a voucher program is to organize a transportation interest network (TIN) composed of public, private, and political entities interested in human services, disability and access issues, and transportation. The purpose of building such a network is to develop public awareness and support for the program.

The TIN does not need to be a formal organization and one may already exist in the community. Nonetheless, this group should be informed of efforts to provide transportation to riders through a voucher program. Members of this group may be able to help at different stages of the process or alert the sponsoring agency to possible problems not yet recognized. They may also be able to help identify potential transportation providers and support the development of funds to maintain or expand the program in the future.

NOTE: Most federal transit dollars for community transportation projects require coordination at the local level.

Table 2 presents a range of possible partners and agencies that may serve the community, even if they are located in another town. Table 2 also lists some of the contributions that these partners can make.

Text description: Table 2—Potential Community Partners and Possible Contributions
- County Commission: funding, advocacy
- City Council: funding, advocacy
- Chamber of Commerce: advocacy
- Faith community: vehicles or volunteer drivers, advocacy, identify riders
- Center for Independent Living: advocacy, identify riders
- Vocational Rehabilitation: funding, advocacy, identify riders
- Senior center: vehicles or volunteer drivers, advocacy, identify riders
- Mental health center: vehicles or volunteer drivers, advocacy, identify riders
- Hospital or clinic: vehicles or volunteer drivers, advocacy, identify riders
- Developmental disability providers: vehicles or volunteer drivers, advocacy, identify riders
- Employment services: advocacy, identify riders
- State DOT: advocacy, identify riders
- Riders: vehicles or volunteer drivers, advocacy, identify riders
- Transportation providers: vehicles or volunteer drivers, advocacy, identify riders

Most of the agencies who will want to join the TIN, will understand the transportation issues in the community. Some may even provide transportation and be interested in accepting the voucher checks in payment for rides. Hold a meeting to discuss using vouchers as an approach to addressing transportation issues. Including local officials in the TIN may be one of the most important steps that can be taken. An effective voucher program needs a consistent funding stream. Local officials may be able to supply the funds or support efforts to seek funding from other sources like the state Department of Transportation (DOT).

The sponsoring agency may wish to call on the TIN to help design the local application for funding of the voucher program. The CTC should keep them informed of program progress and accomplishments by providing timely and regular reports on the number of people enrolled

in the program, the number of rides, the miles of transportation provided, and the purposes for which the trips were made. The TIN should also meet regularly to review program progress and to set long-range goals.

Partner with state agency staff members and other state organizations. The DOT state coordinators for Sections 5310 and 5311 are among the first people that should be contacted. These people manage the federal and state funds that support the transportation programs for the elderly and individuals with disabilities (5310) and the rural transportation program (5311). They can be key gatekeepers and supporters in efforts, to put the CTC in contact with others in the local area interested in transportation and to relevant state transportation associations for additional allies. Any applications for Section 5310 funding will need to include a coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan as part of the application. State officials can help guide the process and the TIN will be helpful in developing that coordinated plan for community transportation.

Set Goals

The sponsoring agency and the CTC, perhaps in conjunction with the TIN will want to establish both short and long-term goals for transportation in the community. Depending on local circumstances, these goals may be narrow in focus dealing only with the voucher program, or they may include a broader "family" of transportation services. If the community is very small, and no one else is addressing transportation, goals may be short term and focused only on immediate needs. For example some possible short-term goals might be:

- Secure a certain level of funding to operate the voucher program
- Increase the number of transportation providers willing to accept the vouchers
- Recruit a certain number of riders eligible to participate in the voucher program

Long-term goals may be more appropriate as the TIN grows and as transportation options expand within the community. For example, possible long-term goals might include:

- Develop a comprehensive transportation plan to serve the area.
- Organize a public awareness campaign to bring attention to transportation needs.
- Get involved in transportation planning at the regional and state level to facilitate resources flowing to your community.

Seek Funding

We have identified two general strategies for community-based rural agencies to secure stable financing for a voucher system. The first develops financial support from those state agencies (usually the DOT) administering Section 5310 and 5311 funds and the second seeks funding from the government of the county in which the program operates.

While Section 5310 Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Program is typically used for funding vehicles for private non-profits, it also permits voucher systems under the contract for services provision. As such, a mechanism to fund the adoption of voucher models is in place, but the decision to do so is made during a state's transportation planning process.

In a small community in Georgia, the county commission provided the initial funding for a voucher program's operation, a commitment which has continued for eight years. In another case, a CIL in central Pennsylvania organized riders into local transportation advocacy groups to advocate for support from their county commissions, town councils, and state agencies.

Funding to support riders may come from other local service agencies. For example, vocational rehabilitation agencies can support work-related transportation for their clients. Some voucher programs also make a provision for the riders to make a contribution to the cost of the rides by developing a rider "buy-in" program. With rider "buy-in", the rider may pay a set or sliding scale fee for a certain mileage allocation or for a certain number of checks, according to the policies developed by the sponsoring organization.

Of course, there is always the possibility of acquiring community social service block grant funding, corporate or foundation support, or local service club contributions to help get the voucher program off the ground.

Develop Policies

The sponsoring agency, the CTC, as well as members of the TIN and potential riders should contribute to the development of program policies and procedures. It is essential that eligibility policies and guidelines be recorded in written form to avoid errors, ambiguity and unfair treatment of riders or funding agencies. The following discussion highlights some of the issues that should be addressed in your written policies.

Eligibility

One of the first questions to be addressed is the issue of eligibility. There are many individuals living in rural communities unable to participate fully in community life due to lack of transportation: senior citizens, people with very low incomes and people with disabilities. "Access for all" is an important concept that implies all people have the right to access any service that affords them the opportunity to live, work, play and fully participate in their communities. The reality exists however, that resource limitations or other factors may force a community to limit eligibility or participation. In considering eligibility for the voucher program you may need to address the following issues:

- Residency and how it is defined

- Age
- Disability and how it is defined
- Household income

Trip Purpose

Depending on the funding source and community input, there may be a need to address the issue of allowable trip purposes, destinations or total distance allowed. For example, are longer trips out of the county or state permitted? While long trips may be more expensive, long trips out of the county to regional medical or training centers may be one of the most effective uses of a voucher program. In some rural communities, short trips within town are available, but transportation options to more distant sites may not be available.

Likewise, many funding sources may want to dictate the kinds of rides they are willing or legally permitted to fund (i.e. employment, medical and school are OK, but religious or social travel are not).

Mileage Allocations

Frequently, budget constraints will limit the number of miles you will be able to provide to riders. Should there be an enrollment of a large number of eligible riders provided with very limited mileage allocations, or should only a few people be enrolled and provided with all the miles they need? Should those who cannot be served be put on a waiting list? If there is a waiting list, is there a maximum length of time someone can remain on the program? Is there a strategy that would permit some riders to transition to other transportation options? To stretch the voucher program funds available, should a "co-pay" option be considered? If so, should it be implemented on a per-mile or per check basis or vary by income or other variable?

Special Needs

In many rural communities, locating volunteer drivers with accessible vehicles may be very difficult. Is there a strategy to meet the needs of all individuals in the community? Can arrangements be made with a local non-profit that has an accessible van to provide the service, or can a volunteer driver be found who is willing to drive a van that is available in the community?

Types of Providers Permitted

If "high-cost" taxi service is available in the community and they agree to accept the vouchers, will riders be permitted to use the taxi service? Using higher cost providers will limit the number of riders who can be served, but it will provide an option for people who are not able to recruit a volunteer. Should taxi use be permitted for short in-town trips only?

Another question that will arise is whether family members can be the transportation provider. Or there may be a situation where the person with a disability is able to "drive themselves". At the sites in our program in which a "drive themselves" option was used a reduced mileage rate (20 cents per mile) was paid and the individual had to have a transition plan with voucher use approved on a time-limited basis. Normally this situation occurred when a rider had found a job, but could not get to work because there was no gas money.

At one site, a young man had obtained his first job at a local fast food restaurant. Although he could drive, there was no car in his household. He noticed that an elderly gentleman who lived across the road had an older car parked by his house that was seldom if ever used. After getting permission from the CTC, he negotiated with the man across the road to use his car for transportation using the mileage reimbursement to 'pay' for the use of the car.

Inappropriate Use

If a rider exceeds his or her mileage allocation, will consequences be imposed? Will a warning be issued for the first violation and additional guidance on voucher use provided? If trips over a certain distance or for certain purposes are not permitted, what actions will be taken if these rules are not observed? Limitations on trip purpose or distance, is information that should also be shared with the transportation providers. If a provider gives an individual a ride in good faith and submits the voucher, there should be a mechanism in place to pay that provider even if the funding source prohibits payment.

Calculating Provider Miles

If a volunteer driver must travel 11 miles to pick up a rider who then takes a 10 mile trip, will the provider be reimbursed for the 11 miles it took to reach the rider? Will special requests be considered?

Timing Provider Payments

The CTC will need to establish a payment schedule for issuing checks to reimburse providers. Typically, issuing payments once every two weeks is a good compromise between rapid reimbursement and operational efficiency. Riders should inform the drivers about such policies.

Waiving the Rules

Once written policies are established, there will be cases in which special circumstances and common sense forces deviation from the rules. There should be a simple mechanism to handle special cases.

ACCESS FOR ALL! As you develop your policies and procedures, we encourage you to consider 'access for all' and full community participation by everyone as a cornerstone of your mission.

Publicize

There are several reasons to publicize the voucher program:

- The most obvious is to increase awareness about the program among potential riders. Advertising the program may also target multiple audiences with multiple goals. For example, you may want to advertise the program to develop support among potential funding agencies or to increase the likelihood that agencies with vehicles will participate in the TIN.

- Publicizing the program may also increase the number of potential volunteer drivers, their willingness to accept the voucher checks, and the proper use of the program.

- Publicizing the program involves educating the general public about the transportation needs in the community and efforts to address them constructively.

- Keeping the program in the public eye helps solidify and build support for continuing the program and for improving public transportation options in the community.

The voucher program may begin with a defined population of riders and ride providers (e.g., participating agencies) or the decision may be to have an open enrollment and include other new riders in the community. In either case, over time, expect to expand the number of riders participating in the program. In general, always be looking to include new ride providers in the program in order to expand rider options. Some expansion will come simply from word-of-mouth among potential riders and between agency staffs.

Advertising can take many forms; not just ads in a newspaper, or on the radio. Here are a few suggestions on how to publicize your program:

- Post and distribute fliers among human service agencies and their clients.

- Write stories about the voucher program for agencies that have a newsletter.

- Make presentations to the boards of directors of the human service agencies.

- Make presentations at staff meetings of those same agencies.

- Make presentations at community organizations and clubs such as the Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis, churches, and other gathering places.

- Arrange for media interviews about the program. Even small counties have weekly newspapers and are often served by at least one radio station. These media outlets often look for stories with local interest.

- Distribute information about the program at the county fair or other community celebrations.

Printing Checks

Once policies and procedures have been established, one of the next steps will be to have checks and check registers printed. While it is possible to print vouchers and a corresponding check register in any format, there is good reason to take a little extra time, expense and effort to provide riders with professional looking checks. This may require a lead time of one to three months and is a cost that must be factored into the budget.

The voucher checks can be printed on standard checkbook paper using a format and size very similar to a standard personal check. Look for a printing company that normally prints business forms. Riders in APRIL's Traveler's Cheque Program were very satisfied with this style and format and appreciated the convenient size and the professional appearance of the checks. A novelty supply company provided the specially designed checkbook covers.

The check register can also be printed and bound by the form printing company. A sample layout is shown in Figure 3.

Text description: Figure 3—Sample Check Register
This image shows a check register with columns to record information about the checks. The first column is for the check number, the second for the date. The third is for the purpose of the trip, which could be work, medical, social/religious, school/training, or shopping. The directions say to circle one. The fourth is to record the driver, and the fifth is to record the miles. The sixth and last column is to keep a running tally of the balance.

The register should have a thick backing for insertion into the checkbook cover. Note that the reverse side the form must be printed "upside down" so that the entire register can be used. Work closely with the printer to ensure that the final product can be used effectively.

This system of recording trips and maintaining a mileage balance may be a new experience for many participants who have never used a checkbook. The CTC should provide training so that riders can use the register and checks. A larger version of the checks and registers can also be printed for those who need a large print version. If a larger version is printed a bold type face should be used.

Contract with Providers

The original voucher model developed by Seekins and Bernier used volunteer drivers as the primary transportation providers. Since then, the model has also been used quite successfully to complement and even help develop public and private (e.g. Taxi and bus companies) systems of transportation.

Volunteers

It is important to start with volunteers because they provide the baseline for a lot of rural transportation. Volunteer drivers can be reimbursed up to the federal maximum rate for mileage reimbursement (the current rate in January of 2006 was 44.5 cents per mile). If volunteers are reimbursed at a higher rate, then they are seen as earning a "profit" by providing transportation because the reimbursement exceeds established costs. If they make a "profit," they fall into a category of transportation provider that may require them to get special licenses, permits, insurance, and meet other standards. Obviously most volunteers don't want to do that.

It is important to emphasize that there are two broad ways volunteers can be involved in a voucher program. They can be identified and organized by each participant, or the CTC can organize a network of volunteers willing to provide rides. Each of these approaches has implications for the sponsoring agency's responsibility and liability. In general, when riders take on the responsibility for organizing their own network of volunteer riders, the sponsoring agency's responsibilities are significantly reduced. When the sponsoring agency takes on the responsibility of organizing a pool of volunteers, their liability profile is increased. This issue is discussed later.

Public and Private Providers

A voucher model can complement any existing public or private transportation system. To make the voucher program work with these systems, first identify the transportation providers and then negotiate with them to accept vouchers as payment for rides.

While many rural areas have no public or private (e.g. taxi) transportation, many have at least some means of transport that may be of used in a voucher program. These may include a private taxi that operates in one or more communities in the area, an intercity bus system that runs through one or more communities, or human service agencies (e.g., Councils on Aging and Centers for Independent Living) that operate vehicles or even van services. Other options may include a church or other faith-based organization that provides rides, a medical service or Medicaid transportation provider, an employment program that provides rides, a large employer that provides some form of group transportation, or even a para-transit, dial-a-ride, or coordinated system. There may be others, as well, such as a hospital or a guide service.

As these providers are identified, the CTC will want to set up a meeting to explain the program, who the targeted riders will be, and the types of rides to anticipate. The CTC can also show them an example of the checks, explain how riders will use them, and how reimbursement will be made.

Some human service agencies that also provide transportation, such as a council on aging or a developmental disability service provider may believe that they can only provide rides

to the participants in their program because they have received Section 5310 federal funds to purchase their vehicle.

This is a misconception that was referenced in a recent report prepared for the Transportation Research Board of the National Research Council (2002 p. 2-6). This report emphasizes that both the U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are clear on such issues: as long as there is excess capacity and service is not being denied to the primary rider group, it is indeed possible to use vehicles and other resources to serve a variety of riders, and it is permitted to have riders from different sponsoring agencies in vehicles at the same time.

In fact the issue of coordination has been addressed at the very highest level of government. A federal initiative title "United We Ride" has brought together several federal agencies that fund transportation and this group is guiding states and local communities to do the same. Visit their website at www.unitedweride.gov. In addition, language in the new law SAFETEA-LU actually requires that funds for Section 5310 (Elderly and Disabled) and Section 5317 (New Freedom for People with Disabilities) be awarded only if a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan has been adopted.

Transportation providers have varying fares and billing procedures. Some local providers charge by the trip within a certain area regardless of the distance; others by the mile; still others by zones. The job of the CTC is to work with interested providers to establish a standard reimbursement rate for services using the voucher reimbursement system.

In this process of negotiating reimbursement rates, don't assume that these providers will charge exorbitant fees. Though some may, others will not, because additional riders may not result in additional costs. Instead they may represent welcomed supplemental income to their program, or extend a mission of public service. Private providers may even give discounts for volume or may be able to write off some costs as a contribution.

For example, in one case a Medicaid transportation provider responded positively when the then current rate of 32 cents per mile was described as the standard reimbursement rate. Her basic costs were covered by her Medicaid passengers. Those using the voucher checks represented additional revenue for her at little additional cost.

Other transportation providers have different needs and capabilities. The role of the CTC is to negotiate a meaningful agreement with as many providers as possible to give riders options. Then, "market forces" will influence who uses which providers, for what purposes, and when.

The CTC will also have to work out the details of how riders can arrange for rides with a provider, the limitations those providers may impose (e.g., time of day), and other issues like reimbursement procedures, how to submit voucher checks for reimbursement and how payments will be made to those providers.

Coordinate With Local Employers for Ride Sharing

In some areas, local or regional employers either provide transportation or organize transportation systems for their employees. There may be opportunities to include such transportation in the voucher program, especially if the driver is looking for additional revenue.

Riders who are employees of these businesses may also be able to use the voucher checks to pay for rides, if the employer requires this.

Work With Riders

The CTC works with participants individually or in groups to acquaint them with the program and teach them how to maximize benefits.

Enroll Riders and Develop an ITP

Once potential riders are identified the next step is to enroll them in the program and develop an individual transportation plan (ITP). In the Traveler's Cheque voucher program, we used two rider forms that were completed by each rider prior to enrollment.

- Rider Form #1: The Traveler's Cheque Program Trip Diary (Appendix C) was a "three-day trip diary" where riders recorded the rides they needed or wanted to take, the rides they actually took and the cost of the trip if they took it. In many cases the CTC worked with the riders in person or on the phone to complete the trip diary.

- Rider Form #2: Individual Transportation Plan (Appendix C) is the actual enrollment form and individual transportation plan (ITP). This form collects basic contact information and helps identify transportation resources, possible transportation providers and defines the rider's transportation goals. The ITP includes an initial mileage allocation, and a brief form to assist in calculating the number of miles of transportation needed by the rider on a weekly basis.

The purpose of the rider forms is to enable the CTC to explore transportation needs and options with the rider, and to assist in developing appropriate strategies to obtain volunteer drivers or other providers. If it is necessary to verify eligibility, demographic questions such as age or type of disability, or other required information may be added to Rider Form #2.

A completed trip diary and ITP will also help estimate the number of miles to allocate to a rider. An initial mileage allocation will need to be made to the rider at the time of enrollment that is based on the individual needs of the rider, the total number of anticipated riders, any allocation policies adopted by the sponsoring agency, and the overall voucher budget. One additional factor to consider in making that initial mileage allocation is to determine what amount of time it will cover. Initially, a one-month allocation may be most appropriate until experience with each rider is gained. As the program progresses and more operating experience gained, quarterly allocations may be more expedient.

Use of the Checkbook

In explaining how to use the checkbook to riders, it will be helpful to show them some sample checks and review how to fill in each blank. Figure 4 shows a sample check.

Text description—Figure 4: Sample Completed Check
Figure 4 shows an image of a sample check, which is a modified version of a personal bank check. The top left corner contains the site name and address. The top right corner contains the check number and a spot to fill in the date. Below these, going across the middle of the check, it says "Pay to the order of" with a blank line for the rider to write in who the payment goes to. On the right side of this space is a box to put the total number of miles this check is paying for. Below this line is a space to write in the number of one-way rides. Below this is a

space for the rider to circle the purpose of the ride. The purposes listed are work, medical, social/religious, school, and shopping. In the bottom right corner of the check is a blank line for the rider to sign their name. The check says "submit for payment within 90 days" across the lower left and center.

The rider should enter the date of the trip, record the name of the provider to whom payment is to be made - either by writing in a volunteer's name or the name of the organization to which payment is to be made. Next, the rider should record the total number of miles of the trip. This should be as close an estimate as possible to the actual mileage and is the basis for reimbursement, especially for volunteers.

Once the mileage and number of trips are recorded, the rider should note the purpose of the ride and sign the check. Explain that accurately completing the check is important for both reimbursing the ride provider and evaluating the program. Also explain to the rider how the provider should submit checks for reimbursement. Finally, the rider should record the check and total mileage in the check register, subtracting the number of miles used from the balance (just like a standard check book).

Multiple Trips per Check

Riders who use the voucher program for rides to and from work each day, five days per week will use the checks very rapidly. Permitting riders to use one check for multiple trips is effective in reducing the amount of paperwork involved in the entire process. In the traveler's check program, we permitted multiple rides per check when each ride was for the same purpose, and the same length, over a one-week period. Thus, for 10 one-way trips during a one-week period to and from work, the rider entered the date of the last trip during the week, entered the total mileage and noted that the voucher was for 10 one-way trips. To use this option, riders need to fully understand the rules and limitations. In other cases, a trip to and from a medical appointment or for shopping, involves two one-way trips. A rider can enter the total mileage and then indicate that the voucher is for two one-way rides.

Explain Program Operation

The following procedures should be explained to the rider.

- How and when to get additional miles added to their account.

- Information about transportation providers. This might include a flier or handout with the names, phone numbers, and any limitations imposed by the providers.

- Negotiated rates and how they may vary by provider.

- How to wisely use the checks to maximize the amount of transportation available to them, and to other riders in the program.

- How over-use of "high-cost" providers will reduce the number of rides for all.

- How to pay volunteer drivers with a voucher.

- How to act with good judgment and common sense in establishing relationships with volunteer drivers and how to ensure that the driver and vehicle are safe, that the driver is not intoxicated, that the vehicle is not dangerous or in disrepair, and that the driver is licensed and insured.

- That the agency administrating the voucher program is not responsible for evaluating the safety and reliability of volunteer drivers selected by the rider.

Program Management

The CTC and the bookkeeper are responsible for managing the day to day operation of the voucher program. This includes overall budget strategies, monitoring overall budget compliance, tracking individual riders and their use of the program, and the timely payment of transportation providers. They are also responsible for reporting and summarizing the number of riders, number of rides provided, miles provided, types of trips and overall costs to funding authorities and others in the community. While this can be a formidable task, the Excel workbook provided with this document can assist with these tasks.

The bookkeeper will enter the name of each rider and the mileage allocations the rider receives into Excel. The bookkeeper will also record each check received from the provider. With this information, the worksheet will automatically calculate totals and statistics for each rider and for the program as a whole. The Excel workbook and instructions for using it are in Appendix D.

During the course of the year it will be necessary to summarize the progress and status of the voucher program to the various funding sources. This will include the number of people served, the number of rides, the number of miles of transportation provided and the costs associated with the program. It may be necessary to provide this information for the entire duration of the project and on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis. The workbook provided in this Toolkit includes a Summary Data Worksheet that continually updates information entered on the Individual Rider Worksheets and makes reporting a fairly simple process

Appendix E contains a sample workbook and a discussion for a sample voucher program with information recorded for three participants. Also discussed are possible problems that may be encountered and how to fix the problems. This Excel workbook is intended to assist sponsoring agencies in implementing their voucher program. No guarantees can be made that all features will work as described. A sponsoring agency may already have their own system or may want to develop their own workbook and the one presented here will provide ideas on features to incorporate.

Special Considerations

No Toolkit would be complete with out a section on the "what if's?"

During the five years of the Traveler's Cheque demonstration project we encountered many possible scenarios, but you will discover new issues and concerns. We will attempt to address several of the more common issues so you'll be prepared if and when they emerge in the process of setting up your voucher program.

Insurance and Liability Issues

It is worth raising the question of insurance liability here. Liability is a perennial issue in community transportation services. In the past, issues of insurance and liability have loomed so large that they often squelched efforts to organize community transportation. In general, a voucher program sponsor can maintain a limited liability, if it restricts its involvement to serving primarily as a fund management service; simply reimbursing drivers the value of the vouchers. The sponsoring agency does not provide transportation, it provides resource management services.

Agency liability is limited when there is little or no involvement in providing transportation or selecting the transportation provider (Rott, 1994).2 When a sponsoring agency secures agreements with local public or private transportation providers', that agency is obligated to verify that the providers are indeed licensed and have insurance coverage. As part of that licensing process, such transportation providers are responsible for meeting state requirements and securing liability coverage.

When the sponsoring agency prefers to take a greater role in organizing a pool of volunteer drivers, they should contact their own insurance carriers to extend existing insurance to cover volunteers using their own vehicles. This is sometimes referred to as a "non-owned volunteer vehicle insurance rider". In such a case, the sponsoring agency does take on greater responsibility (and liability) for insuring that the volunteer drivers being recruited have adequate insurance, a safe vehicle and a valid driver's license. Other elements of organizing a volunteer driver program like driver training, background checks etc, may also be pursued. Bottom line, the more responsibility the sponsoring agency takes for arranging rides, the greater its liability.

Today, insurance and liability issues are more easily resolved than in the past. They need not be an obstacle in developing a safe, effective transportation program. For example, Montana's Legislature exempted transportation of people with disabilities by nonprofit agencies from state regulation. For questions about liability issues contact the state's insurance commissioner or your insurance carrier, the state public service commission, or the transit program in the Department of Transportation.

Program Abuse "Gaming the System"

Misuse of Checks

Some agencies who consider implementing a voucher program have concerns about riders who might "game the system." For example, a participant might trade a check to someone else for cash. Then, the person with the check cashes it, without ever having provided a ride.

While this is clearly cheating and potentially even fraud, it could be hard to catch if you are operating a very large voucher program and do not know the riders.

In practice we found that two procedures prevented misuse of the funds. At our sites, the CTC (or designee) worked with each rider during the enrollment process to establish needs for transportation and the options for obtaining that transportation. By making mileage allocations that were "in-line" with their needs, the rider had very little incentive to "game the system." In addition, the CTCs knew each participant and the number of miles required for various activities. With the CTC carefully monitoring the data reports from the bookkeeper, it was easy to spot discrepancies in the two or three instances where abuse may have occurred.

Mileage Abuse
When large mileage allocations were made to a rider, we did not observe fraud, but two participants at one site, used a considerable number of miles to "take advantage" of their newfound freedom. While these two folks enjoyed their free rides, their actions ultimately resulted in mileage allocations being reduced not only for them, but for all participants in order for the site to remain on budget.

Having mileage allocation policies in place, and making mileage allocations appropriate to address the needs of all riders can alleviate the problem of mileage abuse.

Ideally, if adequate funding were available, all riders would have the freedom to fully participate in all activities in their communities. Having a rider advisory board and having riders participate in the development of the mileage allocation policies can help everyone understand the necessity to use the resources wisely.

In cases where there is a large rider base (over 100 people) across several communities, it may be more difficult for one person to monitor the program carefully. Distributing the enrollment and monitoring functions to other staff who know the riders, can be helpful if multiple communities are served.

It is recommended that the sponsoring agency develop a policy against cheating and that check use be monitored. Sanctions, such as suspension from, or removal from the program, should be a part of program policies. However, we also suggest that you rely on the honesty of the riders to use the vouchers appropriately. We recommend against spending program funds to create a cumbersome monitoring system for two simple reasons. First, no one individual typically receives much in terms of an allocation, so very little money is involved. Second, by far, most individuals will use the vouchers to secure the transportation they need.

The vast majority of participants were so excited to have the dignity of being able to 'pay' for the rides they needed – instead of begging, that they used the available resources very wisely and effectively.

Trip Purposes
We understand that budget constraints may require a sponsoring agency to limit the purpose of rides. For example, at one of our sites, the use of the vouchers was limited to transportation needed to secure and maintain employment. Two issues arise when you limit the purposes for which the vouchers may be used. What is the exact definition of acceptable and

unacceptable rides? And what is the consequence to a rider for using the vouchers for a ride that is not included in that definition?

If it is at all fiscally possible, we recommend not limiting the use of the vouchers to any specific type of ride for these specific reasons:

- Most people with disabilities and others who are transit dependent will likely need transportation for all of life's activities.

- It can be very difficult to create a clear definition of what is included and excluded from the type of ride you want to support. For example, a trip to an interview for a job might be an employment-related trip but what about one to school for a training program or a trip to a doctor to refill a prescription needed to maintain health or manage symptoms that can interfere with work?

- Many trips combine purposes and it can be difficult to determine how much of a trip meets the definition of rides that are included.

- As described above, it can be difficult to monitor the actual use of vouchers.

Miles vs. Dollars

The question must surely arise as to why use "mileage" allocations rather than just "dollars." Wouldn't it just be easier to fill in a check with dollars instead of miles?

Allocations made on a "dollar" basis involve making an allocation based on the amount of money the rider will have for rides. There are advantages to this approach. It does resemble a checking account and the program participants know exactly how much money they have. It might also make it easier on the bookkeeper and CTC to track individual expenditures and expenditures for the entire program.

The one major disadvantage, however, is that riders need to know the different rates that different providers may charge. For example, if the rider uses a volunteer driver, a senior van service participating in the voucher program, and a fixed route system, there could easily be three different rates involved. The volunteer driver is limited to accepting only the current federal rate for mileage reimbursement, while the senior van and fixed route systems may charge different rates.

Allocating in miles has at least two advantages. First, all trips involve distance and most distances are easy to estimate. A program participant can estimate the miles of a trip and write a check for that amount. Then, the bookkeeper can calculate the amount due to the provider based on the different rates negotiated with providers and the current federal mileage reimbursement cap. The second reason for basing the allocations on miles needed is to emphasize the need for mobility for the individual, and not assigning a monetary worth to life's activities.

The major disadvantage is more work for the bookkeeper. The bookkeeper has to keep a list of the various rates that apply and calculate payments based on those rates.

New Technologies

As the voucher program has evolved since the early 1990s, the application of new technologies in transportation has emerged, and is commonly referred to as Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). One of those technologies involves the credit card equivalent to the checkbook. In some transportation systems, riders use magnetic strip cards to pay for rides. These cards contain electronic imprints of identifying information about the rider, including the programs that may reimburse the transit provider. Each month, the agency providing transportation simply downloads the electronic information from the swipe card machines mounted in their vehicles and submits a bill to the appropriate agencies for riders they served.

Such swipe-card systems hold a great deal of promise for promoting cooperative transportation systems; particularly in rural communities with multiple agencies that operate vehicles independently. One draw back of this technology, however, is that it does not transfer easily to volunteer drivers, who can't really be expected to install a swipe card machine in order to provide a ride to a neighbor.

Appendix A: APRIL's Transportation Voucher Project: Operation and Results

National Demonstration of a Rural Employment Transportation Model: Placing Control in Our Hands.

As part of our transportation initiative APRIL has received a major grant to demonstrate the effectiveness of a voucher model to provide transportation for people with disabilities living in rural areas. The grant is funded by RSA (U. S. Department of Education) for $1,494,218 over a five-year period (2001-2006).

Overview and Project Objectives

This demonstration of the Traveler's Cheque (TC) program was designed to explore the strategy of using vouchers for transportation provision to people with disabilities living in rural areas and to provide effective strategies for addressing this important problem. The demonstration focused on how small towns and rural communities can successfully organize and operate a flexible supported transportation program for people with disabilities.

The goal of our project was to demonstrate the effectiveness of a voucher model to provide employment related transportation for people with disabilities who live in rural areas. Objectives included the following:

- Select ten sites to provide diversity in geographical location, disability population served, availability of transportation resources and population density.
- Implement the voucher model at each of the ten sites and evaluate the effectiveness of the model.
- Develop operational strategies and resource materials and provide ongoing technical assistance to the sites.
- Convene a national summit on accessible rural transportation and develop a replication kit that communities can use to operate a traveler's cheque program.

Methods

We chose to work with CILs and Section 121 American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation programs across the US because their missions include creating community options for people with disabilities and their structure, goals, and knowledge base are similar. Annually, the 336 CILs and their 253 satellite offices serve 1,896 counties (1,224 of which are rural) and approximately 212,000 people. In addition, 50 Section 121 programs operate in 18 states.

Utah, Kansas, New Mexico, Alaska, Montana, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Georgia, and Minnesota participated in the project. Four sites, three CILs and a Section 121 project, collaborated in the development of the grant proposal and were pre-selected to participate in the project. We used a "mini-grants" program to recruit the additional six demonstration sites.

A total of 50 programs submitted applications to the competition and we selected the final ten sites to represent ten very diverse communities so that the results and replication

materials developed could be widely applied. Diversity in location, population density, geography, minority populations, disability groups served, transportation availability and transportation experience were emphasized. Table 1 lists the 10 sites and highlights community characteristics.

Text description—Table 1: Ten Demonstration Sites and Their Characteristics
1. ILC. Homer, Alaska. Low population density; experience with a transportation voucher coupon program.
2. BAIN, Inc. Bainbridge, Georgia. No transportation experience; 10% of the county's population has a visual impairment; large black minority population.
3. DSNWK. Hays, Kansas. Transportation provider is the lead organization in partnership with a CIL; transportation experience; large rural service area.
4. Southern Illinois CIL. Carbondale, Illinois. Large rural service area; high unemployment; large black minority population; limited transportation options.
5. South East CIL. Fall River, Massachusetts. High population density, but many remote rural areas; partnership of three CIL's; taxi service available.
6. Southwestern CIL. Marshall, Minnesota. Very large, very rural area; upper Midwest; rural transportation system available.
7. Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Pablo, Montana. Section 121 VR program; high unemployment (49%); limited transportation options and experience.
8. Zuni Entrepreneurial Enterprises. Zuni, New Mexico. Section 121 VR program; high unemployment (67%); transportation experience with tribal transportation system.
9. CIL of Central Pennsylvania. Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. Rural area; several counties; transportation experience; taxi services available.
10. Active Re-Entry. Price, Utah. Very rural area with population density of 5 people per square mile; no transportation experience and very limited transportation.

Procedures

Each selected site received a standard contract listing the responsibilities of the site and the project staff. Each TC site's designated lead staff member or "Community Transportation Coordinator" (CTC) attended a two-day program implementation training in May, 2002.

Service Model and Innovative Elements

At each site, there are five key players. Each has significant roles and responsibilities as follows:

- Sponsoring organization: Establishes eligibility and other policies; ensures that appropriate liability insurance is available.

- Community Transportation Coordinator (site program manager): Establishes a Transportation Interest Network, which includes local providers, service organizations, consumers, and other community leaders to provide coordination and advocacy; Locates and works with consumers to establish an Individual Transportation/Employment Plan, makes mileage allocations to each consumer and trains consumers to use the vouchers (traveler's cheques) effectively.

- Bookkeeper: Records all trips and associated data and makes payments to providers; Invoices APRIL for reimbursements and transmits data forms for record keeping.

- Providers: May be individual volunteers (paid at 34.5 cents per mile) or any public or private provider willing to accept the vouchers at the rate negotiated with the Community Transportation Coordinator.

- Consumers: Work with the CTC to complete all forms and develop an Individual Transportation/Employment Plan; carefully select providers and consider safety and insurance coverage when using individual volunteers; maintain an accurate mileage balance as vouchers are used.

Local Implementation

The trained Community Transportation Coordinators (CTCs) initiated the local programs. First, they determined how to allocate TC resources (i.e., number of participants to be served, amounts per person, etc.).

We encouraged the CTCs to negotiate with local public and private providers to accept the vouchers at a negotiated rate and then directed them to recruit participants. Individual participants were registered, enrolled and completed an extensive enrollment form. The rider and the CTC then developed an Individual Transportation Plan which was designed to help each participant formulate a plan to effectively use the vouchers using either volunteer drivers, public, private, or any other available providers in the community. Participants calculated their needs in terms of number of rides and number of miles per ride. They then received an initial allocation in miles and an orientation in how to use TRAVELER'S CHEQUES.

As the designated "bookkeeper" received each voucher, it was entered it into an EXCEL workbook (check number, date, the provider, the mileage, the number of one way trips, the trip purpose and the total mileage). The spreadsheet automatically calculated current balances and summary numbers for each consumer and automatically posted them onto the summary sheet. The site then issued a check to the transportation provider on a set schedule (normally once each week or on a biweekly or monthly basis).

Results

To date, a total of 588 adults with varied kinds of disabling impairments have participated in the TC program.

- Fifty-one percent of riders were male and the average age of riders was 41 years at enrollment.
- Sixty-four percent of riders were Caucasian, 23% were American Indian, Alaskan Native, or Native Hawaiian, and 10% were are African American.
- Thirty-eight percent lived in a single person household.
- Sixty-nine percent of participants reported annual household incomes below $10,000 and another 24% had annual household incomes between $10,000 and $20,000.
- Forty-nine percent of the households did not own a vehicle.

Table 2 lists the impairments reported by participants.

Text description—Table 2: Impairments reported by voucher system participants.
Each impairment is listed, followed by the percent reporting.

- Mental or emotional: 18%
- Mobility or physical: 13%
- Visual: 9%
- Cognitive: 7%
- Hearing: 1%
- Multiple responses: 34%
- Other: 18%

Table 3 presents the total miles of transportation provided, the number of trips received, the average miles per trip, and the average cost per trip over the first four years of the project.

Text description—Table 3: Productivity of program over four years
- Total consumers. Year 1 = 173; Year 2 = 378; Year 3 = 482; Total = 588
- Miles provided. Year 1 = 53,520. Year 2 = 304, 467. Year 3 = 346,832. Year 4 = 313, 572. Total = 1,018,391.
- Trips provided. Year 1 = 4,100. Year 2 = 29,553. Year 3 = 32,524. Year 4 = 26,410. Total = 92,587.
- Payments to providers. Year 1 = $19,710. Year 2 = $127,233. Year 3 = $131,215. Year 4 = $123,478. Total = $401,636.
- Average cost per trip. Year 1 = $4.81. Year 2 = $4.31. Year 3 = $4.03. Year 4 = $4.68. Total = $4.34.

Table 4 presents the total number of riders, total number of rides provided, the total number of miles of transportation, the average cost per trip, and the average cost per mile across the ten sites. Wide variations were seen among the various communities in terms of cost per trip ($1.15 to $16.80), cost per mile ($0.29 to $1.18), and number of consumers served (26 to 104). Most of the variation was due to geography (longer trips required at some sites) and the use of higher cost taxi providers primarily at two sites (PA and MA).The number of consumers served was related to the priorities established by the sites. Some sites elected to provide a large number of consumers with partial support of their transportation needs, while other sites provided full support to a smaller number of consumers.

Text description—Table 4: Riders, trips, miles and cost across the ten sites over four years
This information is listed in the following order for each of the ten sites: Site, riders, trips, miles, cost per trip in dollars, cost per mile in dollars.
- Alaska; 40; 7,141; 97,355; 4.70; 0.345
- Georgia; 56; 10,572; 91,099; 3.65; 0.424
- Illinois; 36; 5,014; 95,942; 6.44; 0.336
- Kansas; 104; 30,946; 94;919; 1.15; 0.376
- Massachusetts; 44; 2,655; 37,805; 16.80; 1.180
- Minnesota; 89; 11,775; 160,085; 3.979; 0.292
- Montana; 60; 4,652; 106,631; 7.82; 0.341
- New Mexico; 93; 10,287; 123,196; 4.13; 0.345
- Pennsylvania; 40; 5,305; 69,335; 9.33; 0.714
- Utah; 26; 4,240; 142,024; 9.68; 0.294
- Total; 588; 92,587; 1,018,391; 4.34; 0.394

Table 5 presents the distribution of provider types across the five ten sites over the four years of operation. Taxi providers are used at four sites (GA, IL, MA and PA) although both GA and IL limited their use. In five communities either rural transit (KS, MN and NM) or very limited Section 5310 federal program funds (MT and IL) cooperated with the Traveler's Cheque Program. In two states (AK and UT) only volunteer providers were used or permitted by the site. Volunteer drivers were permitted and used at all the sites and are recruited and chosen by the consumers. To reduce insurance liability issues the sites did not actively recruit, certify or recommend volunteer drivers who were reimbursed at the allowable federal rate. The number of rides and the number of miles of transportation by provider type varied significantly by site.

Text description: Table 5—Distribution in choice of transportation providers across sites
- Type of provider- public transit; percent of rides- 44%; percent of miles- 21%
- Type of provider- volunteers; percent of rides- 43%; percent of miles- 71%
- Type of provider—taxis; percent of rides- 13%; percent of miles- 7%

Although volunteer drivers provided only 43% of the trips, they accounted for 71% of the total miles used by consumers. Transit systems provided 44% of the rides, but only accounted for 21% of the miles logged by consumers. Transit providers tended to provide many short rides in the larger "cities," for example Hays, KS and Marshall, MN. Taxi providers also tended to be used for shorter trips within town and accounted for 13% of the trips, but only 7% of the miles.

Consumers could choose to use any providers available to them. Their choices averaged over all ten sites were as follows: 42.2% of consumers used only volunteers, 31.5% used only available public transit services, 11.9% used only taxis, 9.5% used volunteers and public transit only, and 4.6% used volunteers and taxis.

Table 6 presents the distribution of rides by type across the ten sites. Most of the rides provided were for transportation to and from work (84%).The remaining 16% were provided for MEDICAL, SHOPPING, SOCIAL/RELIGIOUS and SCHOOL purposes when these trips were documented as necessary to maintain, seek or prepare for employment. Trips for SOCIAL/RELIGIOUS purposes were disallowed by the funding source during the second year of operation and were immediately discontinued.

Text description: Table 6—Number of rides for each trip purpose across the ten sites over four years
- Alaska: work = 3,861; medical = 787; social = 223; school = 870; shopping = 1,395; total = 7,141
- Georgia: work = 9,748; medical = 202; social = 187; school = 296; shopping = 131; total = 10,572
- Illinois: work = 2,639; medical = 404; social = 300; school = 1,395; shopping = 339; total = 5,014
- Kansas: work = 30,939; medical = 0; social = 0; school = 0; shopping = 0; total = 30,946
- Massachusetts: work = 1,714; medical = 133; social = 240; school = 435; shopping = 127; total = 2,655
- Minnesota: work = 9,580; medical = 394; social = 445; school = 1,040; shopping= 318; total = 11,775
- Montana: work = 3,222; medical = 319; social = 121; school = 904; shopping = 282; total = 4,652
- New Mexico: work = 9,443; medical = 81; social = 30; school = 204; shopping = 0; total = 10,287

- Pennsylvania: work = 4,739; medical = 274; social = 130; school = 97; shopping = 74; total = 5,305
- Utah: work = 1,492; medical = 874; social = 0; school = 1,864; shopping = 10; total = 4,240
- Total: work = 77,377; medical = 3,468; social = 1,676; school = 7,105; shopping = 2,676; total = 92,587

The trip purpose percentages varied significantly by site. For example, in Kansas only trips to and from work were permitted and 100% of the trips were for work. In Utah, where a Center for Independent Living is partnering with the local Vocational Rehabilitation office only 35% of the trips were to and from work, while 44% of the trips were for transportation to and from school and 21% were for medical purposes.

Finally, Table 7 presents employment outcomes associated with the project. At the time of enrollment, 31% of riders were employed part-time and 14% were employed full-time while 13% were in a paid internship, in school, or in a training program. During the first four years of this project 171 people obtained employment (93 full time and 78 part time jobs). The number of new jobs obtained during the third and fourth years was higher than during the first two years especially at sites where strong working relationships with VR were developed. A similar number of consumers who were employed when they enrolled in the program or who obtained jobs in previous years reported that the program has either helped them maintain their current job or improve their employment (found a better job, were able to increase the number of hours worked or obtained a more rewarding job with their original employer).

Text description: Table 7—Employment obtained over four years
- In Year 1, there were 173 total consumers. 11 obtained part-time jobs and 20 obtained full-time jobs, for a total of 31 jobs obtained.
- In Year 2, there were 378 total consumers. 8 obtained part-time jobs and 17 obtained full-time jobs, for a total of 25 jobs obtained.
- In Year 3, there were 482 total consumers. 33 obtained part-time jobs and 28 obtained full-time jobs, for a total of 61 jobs obtained.
- In Year 4, there were 588 total consumers. 26 obtained part-time jobs and 28 obtained full-time jobs, for a total of 54 jobs obtained.
- In total, there were 588 total consumers. 78 obtained part-time jobs and 93 obtained full-time jobs, for a total of 171 jobs obtained.

Lessons Learned

The Traveler's Cheque voucher demonstration clearly showed that, given the resources, people with disabilities can effectively meet their own employment and IL goals. The Traveler's Cheque program appears to be highly effective in helping people with disabilities in a wide variety of rural U.S. areas to develop and secure transportation.

Resources Required for Operation

The role of the Community Transportation Coordinator was critical in effectively implementing and administering the TC program. The coordinator needs to have the leadership skills and the time available to consistently develop and mentor the transportation interest network within the community and the CTC must monitor and manage the budget and the success and failure of the individual riders. The duties of the CTC may be handled by a team, but the team must effectively communicate with each other and the consumers.

Community Transportation Resources and Program Utility

The program functioned effectively in two significant ways depending on the status of transportation options available in the communities:

- In rural areas where there is little or no public transportation, this innovative strategy is a method for directly increasing opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in community life.

- Where some public transportation is available, it offers a supplementary strategy that can make transportation affordable or provide transportation during time periods when public transit is not available.

Program Operational Stability

Consistent and stable program operation is necessary to maintain a transportation program that is reliable and effective for consumers. In a few cases it was necessary to temporarily interrupt or significantly reduce the number of vouchers available for transportation to remain on budget for the fiscal year at a few of the sites. Program interruptions caused significant hardships for consumers who were relying on the program. The most significant factor which led to spending levels that exceeded expectations was the use of taxi providers with the very limited budgets available for a site. With budgets ranging from twelve to fourteen thousand dollars per site and with taxi providers costing approximately $1.70 per mile sites could only support six or seven consumers effectively and consistently if taxis were used. With a small number of consumers on the program any changes in the use of vouchers by two or three consumers significantly altered the rates of spending. If spending per consumer dropped sites expanded the number of consumers and then when circumstances of a few consumers changed, large oscillations in the rates of spending occurred.

Using primarily volunteer drivers at 34.5 cents per mile permitted many more consumers to be enrolled and changes in the need for transportation by a few riders did not drastically alter the rates of spending. Programs with at least 20 or 30 consumers tended to operate with much more consistent rates of spending. As long as budget levels were large enough to accommodate 20 or 30 consumers the use of higher cost providers would pose no significant operational problems. The use of taxi providers raised the cost per mile and cost per ride, but consumers had much more flexibility in the communities where taxi providers were available to consumers.

Advantages

The TC voucher model is extremely flexible and adoptable by any local public or private agency, or a consortium of agencies as a stand-alone program or supplement to existing transportation systems. The TC model offers many advantages over traditional, agency-driven systems. Unlike scheduled services, rides need not be restricted to hours and days of operation; more hours of service can be available to riders. Second, service agencies (i.e. Area Agencies on Aging, CILs) may have lower direct overhead and administrative costs that can be shifted to actual trips. Third, vouchers can increase public/private cooperation and business for local bus services or taxis. Fourth, the TC voucher model can start with minimal investment or risk and grow incrementally as demand and resources permit. Finally, because the vouchers themselves document trips, their use can be monitored with a high degree of detail and accuracy.

Disadvantages

Of course, there may also be disadvantages to voucher systems. Limited numbers of subsidized trips may be available to riders and a community may have few lift-equipped vehicles. Without adequate monitoring, vouchers could potentially be misused. Careful planning and management may overcome these obstacles and offer many rural communities and their citizens with disabilities a promising alternative for increasing participation in work and community life.

The Traveler's Cheque program is a viable new transportation strategy for supporting people with disabilities that builds on the independent living paradigm and philosophy of consumer control. Participants improved the quality of their lives and their community participation by creatively combining and using these and other resources. Participants described their sense of relief and security, knowing that they could get a ride, if they needed it and they expressed their renewed self-respect because they were now able to pay for rides provided by others.

Appendix B: Eligibility Criteria and Policy Guidelines for APRIL's Traveler's Cheque Program

The eligibility and guidelines that APRIL adopted for this project are provided here as an example.The criteria and guidelines are quite restrictive and were necessary to meet federal regulations governing the use of the funds. APRIL believes that transportation programs should be available to all. Programs should be structured so that all people in our rural areas who need transportation are served.

The Traveler's Cheque Program National Eligibility Criteria and Policy Guidelines

Adopted May 1, 2003

Background

The Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) has received a five-year grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration, United States Department of Education, to fund a voucher program to provide transportation for employment and appropriate employment-related activities for people with disabilities living in rural areas.

Purpose

The purpose of this grant is to demonstrate and evaluate the effectiveness of an innovative, voucher model of transportation to promote the achievement of high-quality employment outcomes for people with disabilities. To promote high-quality employment outcomes, The Traveler's Cheque Program provides viable and affordable transportation for persons with disabilities living in rural areas through a consumer controlled voucher system administered by Centers for Independent Living or Section 121 VR Programs.

Eligibility

All participants must meet the following criteria:

- Participants must have a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Participants must be employed, seeking employment, or receiving vocational rehabilitation services from public or private organizations such as State Vocational Rehabilitation, Ticket-to-Work, Employment Network or One-Stop Centers.
  - o Employment may include full-time employment, part-time employment or self-employment.
  - o Participants seeking employment may be in various stages of the employment seeking process. Transportation may be needed for training, education, counseling, placement, skills development or other services that would enhance the individual's ability to seek and successfully obtain appropriate employment
  - o Participants seeking employment and receiving VR services should have an active Individual Plan for Employment (IPE).
  - o All participants must have an Individual Transportation/Employment Plan (ITEP) which documents the employment or employment seeking goal for the consumer. The ITEP must define the types/purposes of rides that vouchers may be used for.
- Participants must reside in geographic areas in which public transportation or paratransit service is not available or, if available, does not adequately meet the needs of the consumers (e.g., need for 24-hour service). In cases where existing paratransit or transit

services may be inadequate for a large number of consumers due to a high cost relative to household income, the site may document that the service does not adequately meet the needs of consumers by developing policies or eligibility criteria that address the issue of relative income levels and transportation costs. If existing paratransit or transit services are inadequate due to either hours or days of operation or limited service area, the site should document these deficiencies.

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Eligible trip purposes

As outlined in the grant application submitted to RSA we have defined trip purposes on the vouchers to include WORK, MEDICAL, SOCIAL/RELIGIOUS, SCHOOL or SHOPPING. The use of vouchers for these activities is limited as defined in this section:

Work

- Vouchers may be used for transportation to and from work when the consumer is employed. If the consumer is self-employed or participates in tele-commuting or equivalent programs, work trips may be used to meet with clients or employers or to pursue appropriate work related activities. Other work-related activities may be considered to be work trips as follows:

  o Looking for work or seeking employment.
  o Non-paid volunteer activities or placements designed to develop employment skills.
  o Trips to secure goods or services related to getting or keeping a job.
  o Events or activities sponsored by the consumer's employer.

School

- Vouchers may be used for trips to obtain services that may include, but are not limited to, training, education, counseling, placement, and follow-up activities that would allow the consumer to possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete for jobs with the potential for career advancement and higher wages and benefits. Traveler's Cheques may also be used to provide career advancement opportunities for consumers who are currently employed or other trips related to completing education or training leading to increased employment capacity. Trips necessary to meet with VR counselors or with other appropriate agencies such as Centers for Independent Living may be included in this category.

Medical and shopping

- Trips for medical or shopping purposes must be documented in the consumer's ITEP or in the IPE if the consumer is a VR client. Trips for medical and shopping purposes are permitted only when they directly impact the consumer's ability to either maintain or seek employment.

Social/religious

- Trips for social/religious purposes are no longer available under this project.

Sponsored trips

To expand transportation options and to provide continuation funding following the period of this grant, sites have been trained and are seeking supplementary funds to expand or

continue the Traveler's Cheque Program. Funds obtained from other sources may be used to extend transportation options for individuals with disabilities using the voucher program. Funds obtained from other sources may be used to extend the eligibility criteria for enrollment and to fund trips for purposes that can not be funded by The Traveler's Cheque Program. Appropriate documentation and accounting procedures must be followed and must be approved in advance by APRIL.

Implementation schedule

These eligibility criteria and policy guidelines will be effective immediately for all newly enrolled consumers. All currently enrolled consumers will be provided with the new criteria and policies. Consumers who do not meet the new eligibility criteria will be assisted by the Community Transportation Coordinator in seeking other alternatives.

Appendix C: Enrollment Forms

- Rider Form #1: Three-Day Trip Diary
- Rider Form #2: Individual Transportation Plan and Enrollment Data

Rider Form #1: The Traveler's Cheque Program Trip Diary

We are initiating a new program to improve transportation options in our community. The program is called the Traveler's Cheque Program. As a first step to being a part of this new project, we ask you to complete this form which is a three-day Trip Diary. The Trip Diary will help us develop your Individual Transportation Plan (ITP) and help us define the transportation options that may be most effective for you.

Three-Day Trip Diary

We ask you to keep a brief for the next three days. The diary asks you to write down a record of the trips you need or want to take and the ones you actually do take on three consecutive days of one week. Only list the trips you wanted to take for which you needed a ride in a car, van, bus, taxi, or other vehicle. It is best to complete the forms for each day at the end of the day or the very next morning.

Remember: When filling in the Trip Diary to:

1. Mark the reason for each ride you need or want to take when you need to take it.

2. Use a new row for each destination, even if you would or do combine trips. So, if you need to go to school and the doctor, use one line for each destination.

3. Write down the distance in miles that the trip would take. (As good a guess as you can is fine.)

4. Indicate whether you were actually able to get there and back.

5. Finally, if the trip or ride cost you anything, write down how much it cost.

When you have completed recording the three days in the Trip Diary return it to us. You and the Community Transportation Coordinator will then develop your Individual Transportation Plan and you will receive your first book of Traveler's Cheques.

Trip Diary: Day #1

ID#:

Name:

Date:

Please answer the following questions about the trips you wanted and needed to take. Only list the trips you wanted to take for which you needed a ride in a car, van, bus, taxi, or other vehicle.

What day of the week is this?

Trips you took and wanted to take today

1. List each trip you wanted to take today, even if you didn't go. Use a new row for each destination, even if you combined trips.
2. List the reason (select from list) and the round-trip distance (how many miles it is to this place and back).
- Reasons for rides needed:
    o Medical
    o Shopping
    o Work
    o School
    o Social/religious

3. For each trip you did take today, answer the following questions.

- Were you able to get there and back? (Yes or No)
- If you personally paid for a ride, how much did you pay?

4. If you had trouble getting where you needed to go today, what was the main problem or reason?

Trip Diary: Day #2

ID#:

Name:

Date:

Please answer the following questions about the trips you wanted and needed to take. Only list the trips you wanted to take for which you needed a ride in a car, van, bus, taxi, or other vehicle.

What day of the week is this?

Trips you took and wanted to take today

1. List each trip you wanted to take today, even if you didn't go. Use a new row for each destination, even if you combined trips.
2. List the reason (select from list) and the round-trip distance (how many miles it is to this place and back).

- Reasons for rides needed:
    - Medical
    - Shopping
    - Work
    - School
    - Social/religious

For each trip you did take today, answer the following questions.

- Were you able to get there and back? (Yes or No)
- If you personally paid for a ride, how much did you pay?

If you had trouble getting where you needed to go today, what was the main problem or reason?

Trip Diary: Day #3

ID#:

Name:

Date:

Please answer the following questions about the trips you wanted and needed to take. Only list the trips you wanted to take for which you needed a ride in a car, van, bus, taxi, or other vehicle.

What day of the week is this?

Trips you took and wanted to take today

1. List each trip you wanted to take today, even if you didn't go. Use a new row for each destination, even if you combined trips.
2. List the reason (select from list) and the round-trip distance (how many miles it is to this place and back).
- Reasons for rides needed:
    - Medical
    - Shopping
    - Work
    - School
    - Social/religious

For each trip you did take today, answer the following questions.

- Were you able to get there and back? (Yes or No)
- If you personally paid for a ride, how much did you pay?

If you had trouble getting where you needed to go today, what was the main problem or reason?

Rider Form #2: Individual Transportation Plan

We have initiated the Traveler's Cheque Program in our community to improve rural accessible transportation.

Thank you for your interest in this program and for completing the three-day Trip Diary. The next step in becoming a participant in this program is to complete the Individual Transportation Plan to help you manage and identify your transportation resources and to help us manage the Traveler's Cheque Program.

Name:

Address:

Phone #:

City:

State:

ZIP Code:

Email Address:

Date:

To be completed by CTC or Designee:

Today's Date:

ID# Assigned:

Rider's Name:

Mileage Allocation Today:

Mileage Expiration Date (if any):

Individual Transportation Plan

1. Your Name:

2. Gender:

3. How many people in your household, including yourself?

4. Do you or anyone in your house own a vehicle? (please mark all that apply)

    a. No

    b. Yes, an ordinary car, van, or pickup

    c. Yes, a vehicle with a ramp or lift

    d. Yes, a vehicle with hand controls

    e. Yes, a vehicle with other accessibility features. Please specify:

5. What sort of vehicle accommodation do you need as a rider? (please mark all that apply)

    a. None, I can ride in most any passenger vehicle

    b. I need a lift-equipped or ramped vehicle

    c. I need help getting in and out of a vehicle

    d. I need other accommodations. Please specify:

6. What transportation resources do you currently have and use? (please mark all that apply)

    a. Personal or family car or truck

    b. Personal or family motorcycle

    c. Agency van

    d. Taxi

    e. Friends

    f. Church van

    g. Public van or bus

    h. Neighbors

    i. Employer

    j. Coworker

    k. Ride share

     l. Commercial airplane/air taxi

     m. Private airplane

7. Do you receive help paying for transportation?

     a. Yes, from:

     b. No

8. Which transportation providers do you think will take your traveler's cheques? (please mark all that apply). Say which providers you will use, which you think you can arrange, and while you would like help arranging.

     a. Family

     b. Friends

     c. Neighbors

     d. Coworkers

     e. Ride share

     f. Employer car/van

     g. Taxi car/van

     h. Church van- specify:

     i. Agency van- specify:

     j. Agency van- specify:

     k. Agency van- specify:

     l. Public van or bus

     m. Other- specify:

     n. Other- specify:

Comments:

9. What are your most important transportation goals?

When you consider your need for transportation, what are your most important goals? For example, your most important goal may be to get to work or school. Understanding your goals will help develop your mileage plan and help identify the types of transportation you need.

Individual Transportation Plan—Transportation Goals

- Goal one:

- Goal two:

- Goal three:

- Goal four:

- Goal five:

10. Individual transportation plan- mileage planner guide

Use this form to estimate the number of miles to allocate. Review the information recorded above and in the Transportation diary to consider answers to the following questions. Multiply the number of round trips needed to each destination by the number of miles in the round trip to calculate the estimated total miles needed for each listed destination during a typical week.

Remember, you and the Community Transportation Coordinator have flexibility within the limits of the available resources. In making your final determination of the number of miles to allocate, consider the number of miles needed and the importance of each destination. If the most important destinations require a large number of trips or miles, you may be able to negotiate the allocation. If you have many important trips to make, you may get more miles than someone who as fewer such needs.

Mileage Planner Guide

For each destination, fill out the following information.

- Destination:
- Days of the week you need to go there:
- Potential providers for this destination:
- How many round trips do you need to this destination each week?
- About how many miles is the round trip?
- Estimate # of miles per week:

When you are done, add together the estimated number of miles per week for each separate destination to calculate the total number of miles for all destinations you need in a week.

Appendix D: Workbook

Traveler's Cheque Workbook Discussion

Understanding and Using the Excel Workbook

The Excel Workbook discussion included here has been developed to assist you in recording and analyzing data and enables you to determine the current status of each individual participant as well as the program as a whole. The Excel workbook "Travelers Cheque Workbook" is included on the compact disk (CD) that accompanies this Toolkit. It is ready for you to enter data, with all the formulas and calculations in place. What follows is an attempt to explain what has already been set-up, so that you have a better understanding of the Excel workbook/worksheet process. Bottom line, if you have Microsoft Office with Excel, you don't have to worry about "understanding" how it works. You only need to enter the data from the checks and the workbook calculates and summarizes all your data. A sample workbook with entries is provided in APPENDIX E.

This Excel Workbook contains 202 worksheets; however, only 102 of them are currently visible. These sheets include the instruction sheet, a summary sheet and an additional sheet for each participant (capable of handling up to 200 participants). Condensed printouts of the workbook are shown later in this APPENDIX. The Summary Sheet and the worksheet for Rider Number 3 are shown. Some rows have been deleted to permit printing on one page. Each traveler's check is recorded on the participant's worksheet and the current status (number of rides, mileage, balances) is calculated and tabulated. The summary sheet "reads" the data from each participant's worksheet and automatically calculates and summarizes the status of all program participants for the site. The hidden sheets and rows can be unhidden when they are needed. They have been hidden to make the spreadsheet easier to use and to eliminate the printing of "empty" rows. This is described later.

Step By Step Procedure for Entering Data

To record each trip and to summarize all the individual trips, you will enter and record data as follows:

- On the summary sheet, enter the name of your organization in cell A2. This is the only entry you will ever make on the summary sheet. All other values are read from the individual participant worksheets and posted to the summary page automatically.

- As each participant enrolls in the program you will assign a worksheet and CS number for the participant (for example, CS 1 or CS 33) and enter the participant's name (Last name, First name) in the upper left hand corner of the Worksheet (cell A2). You must also enter the initial mileage allocation in the column noted "Mileage Allocation." (cell B7) and enter the date the participant initially enrolls in the next column "Date of Check or Allocation (cell C7). As additional mileage allocations are made they may be entered at any point in column B along with the date of the allocation in column C.

- As each voucher is received for payment from a ride provider, you will record the following from each voucher on the participant's worksheet in the spaces provided:

    o Check number

- o Date of the check.

- o Provider name (if a check is voided, enter the check number and enter void under provider).

- o Miles. This is the total mileage, even if the check is for more than one ride. The worksheet does not show or print fractions of a mile due to space limitations.

- o Record the number of trips, under the appropriate category. If multiple trips for the same purpose are permitted on one voucher, enter the number of trips shown on the voucher under ride purpose. A one week limit per voucher is suggested and each voucher should only be for multiple identical rides for a single purpose. For example, ten work rides per week.

- o Rate of payment. Note that this column should only be used if a fixed rate per mile is used. For example, enter 0.445 if the rate of reimbursement is .445 dollars per mile. If a more complex formula is used, you may leave this column blank and calculate the payment separately. In cases where a fixed mileage rate is used you may enter it once and then "drag" the value to other cells in the column. If the mileage rate changes simply enter the new mileage rate in the column.

- o Enter the amount actually paid to the provider in the appropriate column. Do not include a $ sign.

- • The worksheet will then calculate and record all data and automatically transfer it to the Summary sheet.

The worksheet calculates the number of days each participant has been or was participating in the program. Should he/she withdraw from the project, the date of withdrawal should be entered on the worksheet in the space provided in the upper left hand corner below the name (Cell A3). Should that same participant return to the program, the simplest way to handle it is to delete the withdraw date. This process will cause the number of days on the program calculation to be over estimated, but is simple to implement.

Password Protection

This workbook and each of the individual worksheets have been password protected to prevent accidental errors that could occur during data entry. Note: that a specific password has not been provided and that you may protect and unprotect sheets without a password. All equations, spacing, column widths row heights and formats have been carefully set to permit printing on a variety of computer and printer platforms. You will not be able to alter these values or erase any of the many equations accidentally. If you receive an error message that the cell you are trying to modify is password protected, do not remove the protection it is quite likely that you are trying to make a change that could cause serious problems with worksheet operation. You should double check that you are trying to make an entry in the appropriate cell.

Un-hiding Rows

Each participant worksheet has 80 rows that are currently visible. An additional 220 rows are available for data entry if they are un-hidden. To unhide rows for a participant follow the steps outlined below:

- On the participant worksheet left click on tools at the top of the page and then move to protection and left click on unprotect sheet.

- Left click on row number 79. Then hold down the shift key and left click on row number 301. Next, right click and then chose unhide by left clicking on unhide. Rows 80 through 300 will automatically appear and are ready for use once you have protected the sheet.

- Before using the additional rows, please be sure to protect the sheet by again left clicking on tools at the top of the page. Then move to protection and left click on "protect sheet". Once the sheet is protected you may begin to use the rows you have now un-hidden.

Adding Rows

If you find it is necessary to add additional rows (beyond the 300 provided) to a participant worksheet the procedure is outlined here.

- Save the worksheet with a new name – that way if you make a mistake you will not permanently destroy the data that is saved on the original.

- Unprotect the summary sheet and the workbook.

- Unprotect the participant worksheet you wish to change.

- Choose several rows that have not yet been used for data entry by clicking on the row numbers while holding down the shift key.

- Right click and choose insert.

- Continue inserting until you have added the number of rows desired. This adds additional rows, but the equations that should be located in columns K, M, and O will be missing from some rows.

- To fill these columns with the appropriate equations it is necessary to drag the equations down from the rows where they still exist.

- Check to see that the sums in the TOTAL row are correct and that the values being read into the summary sheet for this participant are still correct.

- Finally, protect the workbook, protect the participant worksheet and protect the summary sheet.

- Rename the new workbook and continue using it.

Un-hiding Additional Participant Worksheets

The workbook actually contains worksheets for 200 participants; the worksheets for CS 101 through CS 200 are also hidden on the Summary sheet. To un-hide these sheets follow these steps:

- First, unprotect the workbook by left clicking on "Tools and then choosing "Protection" and then "Unprotect Workbook".

- You must unhide the participant worksheets one at a time. Click on "Format" at the top of the page and then choose "Sheet" and "Unhide". When asked which sheet to unhide choose CS 101. You may repeat this process as often as you wish and continue un-hiding worksheets.

- Now click on "Tools", choose "Protection" and then "Protect the Workbook".

- Now that you have unhidden the worksheets, you need to unhide the rows on the Summary sheet that summarize these sheets. Choose the "Summary sheet", choose "Tools" at the top of the page and "Unprotect" the sheet.

- Left click on Row 105, then hold down the shift key and left click on Row 205. Next, right click and then left click on the unhide option. The Summary sheet will now display all participants from CS 1 through CS 200. Finally, click on "Tools" and "Protect" the sheet.

If you determine that you need to record data for more than 200 participants, we suggest that you use two Workbooks with different names and then manually combine the summary results. If you are adept at Excel you can create a separate Workbook that merges the information contained in the two separate Workbooks. The Workbook as it now exists is quite large and takes some time to perform Save and Auto-Save functions. While the Workbook is being saved you will not be able to enter data. You need to be careful that you do not try to enter data while the program is being saved because it will not be entered.

Avoiding computer disasters

As you work with the workbook, you will want to preserve and safeguard your efforts from evil computer disasters. Preventing these disasters involves two steps:

- Start by making it a habit to save your workbook entries and making frequent back-up copies of the workbook. As you enter data you should routinely save the workbook so that any computer malfunction does not negate the data entries you have made

- The second step is to preserve the large data set you are creating. To do this you should frequently store the workbook on a storage device (CD for example) that is maintained separately from the computer. If the computer "dies" you do not want to lose everything. The back-up should be stored in a separated physical location in case of fire or other disaster.

- Another technique you may wish to use is to save the workbook with a different name that includes the date at frequent intervals. For example the name could be Traveler's Check Workbook 2006-3-22.xls. Using this technique will permit you to "look back" at the program over time. You should be aware that this will preserve all the data on the worksheet as of that date, except for the number of days on the program. Whenever the workbook is opened the number of days on the program is updated using the current date.

Appendix E: Sample Workbook

Traveler's Cheque Workbook Sample Entries and Discussion

Sample Workbook

To illustrate and discuss the use of the workbook and other program management details four sheets from a "sample site" that has enrolled three participants are shown in this appendix. The name of the site is "Sample Site, Ohio" and the name was entered on the "Summary" sheet in the workbook. For this example three participants: George Washington (CS1), John Adams (CS2) and Abe Lincoln (CS3) were enrolled on January 3, 4 and 5 respectively. During the enrollment process George was allocated 800 miles, John received 300 miles and Abe received 400 miles based on their anticipated transportation needs for a one month period. For each of the three participants, their name was entered on the CS1, CS2, or CS3 worksheet. The date of their mileage allocation and the number of miles allocated were entered on row 7 of the worksheet.

Example #1

Between January 5 and January 13, George made several 12 mile trips from home to work and back home again. A co-worker, Mr. G. W. Timmons provided the rides. To record each voucher, the bookkeeper recorded the check numbers given to George and then entered from each voucher the following information: Date, Provider, Miles, "1" under work and the actual payment. The bookkeeper also entered the rate of payment as 0.445 dollars per mile. To enter the other 0.445 values she left clicked on the first value and holding the left click down so that the solid, black cross appeared, she drug the 0.445 into all the cells in the column.

As Checks from other providers for other purposes were received they were also recorded as shown on the worksheet. After the first week, George was encouraged to use one voucher for all of his work trips that occurred during a one week period. Thus, on January 20th a check for 120 miles for 10 one-way trips was recorded. This was repeated during future weeks and reduced the paperwork for all involved (George, Mr. Timmons and the bookkeeper).

As shown on the CS1 sheet, the CTC discussed the use of the vouchers with George on February 3rd and made an additional allocation of 600 miles. The 600 mile allocation was made on the same line that a voucher was recorded on since both occurred on the same day. If you wish, you may put allocations on their own lines. Either method is acceptable.

From the "Total" row at the bottom of George's worksheet (CS1), you can see that he took 70 rides totaling 900 miles at a cost of $436.51. The same summary information is "automatically" shown on the "Summary" sheet.

Example #2

The second rider, John Adams (CS2), was retired and had a disability that did not permit him to drive. His name, initial enrollment date and initial mileage allocation were entered on the CS2 sheet. John found a retired neighbor, Mr. G. Rush, who served as a volunteer driver for various short, medical, social and shopping trips and the vouchers were entered onto the CS2 sheet as they were received. By entering the check numbers that were provided to John in the first column, it became apparent that two vouchers were not submitted for payment. They may

have been lost or a different volunteer driver may have chosen to not submit them. Note that it is easy to enter the check numbers "automatically" by entering the first number, clicking on that number and then moving the cursor down while depressing the left click button. If the same number is repeated, left click on the little square that pops up and choose "fill series".

On February 21st John learned that his mother was dying in a city over 100 miles away and she wanted to see him one last time. Although John knew his mileage allocation was inadequate, he used the vouchers to recruit another neighbor (Mr. Samaritan) to provide a ride to and from the hospital where his mother was located. The total mileage was 265 miles and resulted in John having a negative balance of 61 miles. Your policies will determine what steps you must take in this case. Other variations on this case will occur: How do you handle a situation in which the participant was unable to know that the mileage balance was exceeded? What if a taxi provider at $1.85 per mile had been used?

Because you have an obligation to pay valid claims that are submitted in good faith, you may want contracts with higher cost providers to contain clauses that state that trips over a certain number of miles require prior approval.

Many scenarios are possible, but having written policies, and being sure that everyone knows the policies can prevent misunderstandings.

Example #3

Abe Lincoln (CS3) enrolled in the program on January 5 and was provided with an allocation of 400 miles to enable him to attend school and visit a medial specialist in another community. During the initial development of this project a special arrangement and contract was developed with the local senior center. They agreed to provide transportation within the community in one of their accessible buses during their "off-peak" hours at a cost of $2.50 per one-way trip. Each of Mr. Lincoln's vouchers was recorded as shown on the worksheet for CS3. The volunteer drivers were reimbursed at the 44.5 cents per mile rate. Each trip on the senior bus was reimbursed at $2.50 per one-way trip.

Possible Errors and Problems

The workbook contains over 900,000 cells that have been formatted and over 180,000 equations. Every effort has been made to verify that each formatted cell and that every equation is correct; however, it is possible that you may encounter an error on one or more of the worksheets. The following discussion highlights approaches you can take to address any problems.

The most likely problem you may encounter is that a cell may show # # # in place of the correct number. This will occur if the number is too large to fit into the cell. In other cases a number may be shown as a date or a date may be displayed as a number. To solve these problems you have several options.

- Save the existing worksheet so that you have a back-up in case you create additional problems.

- Next you should unprotect the sheet on which the error occurred and check the formatting of the number or date that should be displayed. To check the formatting, click on the cell and then right click and chose 'format cell'.

- You can also try to reduce the font size for the cell.

- Another technique you may use is to enlarge the width of the column. If you do this, it is most likely that you will need to reduce the width of one of the other columns on the sheet.

One of these techniques should solve the problem. Once you have solved the problem, be certain to protect the sheet before proceeding.

The second problem that may occur is that one of the equations is entered incorrectly and erroneous numbers are displayed. To solve this problem you should:

- Again save a back-up copy of the worksheet.

- You will then need to examine the equation or equations in the cell, row or column in which the error is occurring. You will notice that the equations in adjacent cells are very similar and follow a distinct pattern. Once you see the pattern you may very well spot the error(s).

- To change the equation you will need to unprotect the sheet and then edit the equation.

- Again, once the changes have been made, you should protect the worksheet.

If you have difficulty spotting the errors, you may want to enlist the assistance of someone familiar with Excel Workbooks and entering and using the formulas in Excel. If all else fails contact Billy Altom at APRIL (bwaltom@sbcglobal.net). If you do find a significant error please report it to APRIL so that they can issue an update to any other sites that may be affected.

Appendix F: Transportation Resources

Websites

- **American Public Transportation Association**
  - Information about advocacy, federal regulations, policy, and legislative issues as well as a resource library and other information.

- **APRIL- Rural Transportation**
  - Information about the FAST Act and other information about rural transportation

- **Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA)**
  - The Passengers with Disabilities page on the CTAA website has links to information specific to programs, grants, and policies regarding the ADA and accessible transportation.

- **Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility**
  - A partnership of federal agencies working to improve the availability, quality, and efficient delivery of transportation to people with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. Website includes resources to support transportation coordination.

- **Developing, Enhancing, and Sustaining Tribal Transit Services: A Guidebook**
  - A guide for planning and implementing a tribal transit system. Useful for planning a new transit system, enhancing an existing service, or sustaining services.

- **Easter Seals Project Action Consulting**
  - Provides training and consultation on ADA-accessible transportation issues.

- **Federal Transit Administration**
  - Website has information on grants and other resources for funding, as well as a section on Civil Rights/ADA.

  - **FTA Emergency Relief Manual and Guide**
    - This guide provides information about disaster preparation for transit agencies, response and recovery funding and resources, and emergency relief program policies and requirements.

- **Independent Transportation Network of America** (ITN)
  - A national non-profit transportation system that provides rides for seniors and adults with vision impairments. Organizations can become affiliates, and ITN will help them set up sustainable, community-based transportation services.

  - **50 State Policy Project** (a ITN project)
    - This website allows you to search policies for all 50 states that:

- remove barriers or create incentives for the use of private resources
- accelerate policy change that is popular with policy makers
- have minimal impact on taxpayers
- expand the resources available to fund consumer-oriented transportation
- contribute to the local economy
- improve mobility and quality of life for older people

- National Aging and Disability Transportation Center
  - Access to materials, publications, webinars, information on grants and funding, as well as related news.

- National Center for Mobility Management
  - Links to resources and guides for developing and operating accessible transportation.

- National Council on Disability Transportation publications
  - These publications describe transportation findings, recommendations, success stories, and models from across the country.

  - Transportation Update: Where We've Gone and What We've Learned (May 4, 2015)
    - Chapter 7 is on Rural Transportation

- National Congress of American Indians: Transportation
  - Information on transportation on reservations and in Tribal communities.
  - Tribes & Transportation: Policy Challenges and Opportunities
    - A paper developed by the National Congress of American Indians through a partnership with The Leadership Conference Education Fund about tribal transportation policy.

- National Volunteer Transportation Center
  - Promotes and supports volunteer transportation, including driver programs, shared vehicle utilization, and ride sharing initiatives.

- Rural & Tribal Passenger Transportation Technical Assistance through CTAA
  - Provides technical assistance for rural and tribal communities with a focus on economic development.

- Transit Planning 4 All
  - Website has extensive list of resources and information on transportation, demonstration programs, and other topics related to public transportation planning.

RTC:Rural publications

The following publications can be accessed on the [Develop and Evaluate a Voucher System for Increasing Access to Transportation for People with Disabilities Living in Rural Areas](#) project page on the RTC:Rural website:

- Fact Sheets
  - [Inequities in Rural Transportation](#) (1999)
  - [Rural Transportation](#) (1998)
  - [Rural Transportation: Using Vouchers to Improve Access](#) (1995)
  - [Supported Volunteer Rural Transportation Project](#) (1995)

- Guide
  - [Making Transportation Work for People with Disabilities in Rural America: The Supported Volunteer Rural Transportation Voucher Program](#) (1996)

- Paper in the *Journal of Transportation and Statistics*
  - [Rural Transportation Voucher Program: Three Case Studies](#) (1999)

Appendix G: Lessons Learned

1. The role of the Community Transportation Coordinator is critical in effectively implementing and administering the program.
2. The scale of this voucher program can be matched to available funding.
3. This is a 'consumer-driven' program in which participants are involved in developing transportation options that best meet their needs and then managing their mobility and arranging for transportation with providers they select.
4. Only a small minority of the riders using the vouchers needed adapted vehicles.
5. The program is highly flexible and adaptable to local conditions. It also utilizes existing local transportation providers, so it is coordinated with local services.
6. For communities with no transportation resources, a voucher project is a Band-Aid that provides 'something where there is nothing'.
7. In communities with some transportation options, a voucher project can expand the options by providing service during evening or weekend hours or it can make existing options more affordable or it can provide service for long distance trips.
8. This voucher program can be started with minimal investment, because it uses existing resources.

Appendix H: Meet Our Riders

John is a VR consumer who is attending school to become an anthropologist. He uses the voucher program to get to and from the community college. He has a visual impairment and cannot drive. The voucher program makes him "...feel that you're in control; more like you're driving." Other students at the community college serve as his drivers.

Carmen is in the Developmental Disability system. She lives 13 miles from town and has developed a business shredding confidential medical records. Her mother, sister and brother currently provide her rides so that she can get to her work at one or more medical sites during the day. Without the voucher program, she could not do as much work and develop her business.

Beth works twice a week as a home care homemaker and has a visual impairment. She worked at a nursing home for six years, which she really enjoyed but had to quit because the cost of her transportation went from $4.40 to $10.00 a day. Beth says, "I need to use volunteer drives from the voucher program and sometimes my friend.' To the question, "Do you think that there is a problem with the small print of the checkbook?" Beth answered, "My husband helps write the checks out. And my drivers are very good and work very well."

Cheryl is a long-time state employee with a visual impairment who lives six miles from work. She began using the program after the family car broke down. Her husband was her driver, but he recently had surgery and is no longer able to drive. She uses the voucher program primarily to get to and from work, and some activities during the day.

Fred lives with his girlfriend. He feels it is much better living in the community than the state hospital. He had a job that paid $5.32 an hour. He worked 4 hours a day cleaning for just over $20 a day. An injury to his knee forced him to quit. He is currently looking for another job. Fred uses his own volunteer drivers. About the program, Fred says, "It is much easier now that I am on the program, to get a ride instead of having to wait a week for a ride. But, I would like to visit my sister who has Hepatitis B. I cannot go visit her with the rules about employment only rides. I cannot see my sister who is dying. I would also like to visit my brother in the cities, but I cannot visit him either."

Valerie is a homemaker who lives 10 miles from a small rural town. She works two days a week cleaning houses and owns her own mobile home on a lot she rents for $50 a month. Before the voucher program, she was limited to taking the bus that came only once a week. To get to her different medial appointments and to get to work she

used to take a cab spending at least $20. "And when I work 2 days a week and get there and they have canceled my work and then I don't get paid, it is a wasted trip for nothing." About the program, she says, "The checkbook helps me practice using a real one. I try to kill 2 birds with one stone. It is lots cheaper to travel to work cleaning and then do other things while I am in the area."

Greg works at the American Legion 1 ½ hours on Saturday and 1 ½ hours on Sunday. He is currently unable to work additional hours due to side effects from his medications. Before the voucher project, he had to pay a bus fare of $2 one way for a total of $8 each week. Greg says, "It did not pay. It gave you no reason to work. The Travelers Checks help me get out in the community. I am in better shape. I am hoping to get a better job someday. This program gives you hope." He adds, "I would like to have social and religion rides too. I cannot go dancing on the money that I make."

Sherry is a disabled veteran with a daughter at home and a husband who works out of town for rotating two week periods. She has significant back pain and cannot drive because of medication. Her husband provides rides for her and her daughter when he is there. Her girlfriend, a neighbor and a co-worker all provide rides through the voucher program. She views the program as more useful, flexible, efficient and responsive than other options that are far too expensive for her.

Cindy is not currently employed, although she was 'on the job training' at one point. DVR is now assisting her in finding a job. She volunteers at the apartment complex in which she lives helping to pick up pine cones. She is a member of the IL center and People First. Cindy recently moved out of her parent's home, but her parents still drive her to many of the places she needs to go. She took the county bus until it stopped running. She wants to learn how to shop by herself. Cindy is pretty happy with the drivers she has gotten. "I had trouble one time with a substitute driver who did not understand the program, but everyone else has been real good."