

It's not just a ride

Developing Flexible Service and
Accommodating Special Needs within a
Coordinated System

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ACCESS Transportation Systems Pittsburgh, PA

- Sponsored by Port Authority of Allegheny County
- ACCESS serves as broker since 1979
- 1.7 million rides provided annually in the coordinated system
- Decentralized service model with 8 service providers
- 125 sponsoring agencies



A Seat for Everyone

- ADA Paratransit
- 65 Plus Program – PA Lottery
- Area Agency on Aging
- Medicaid Transportation
- Churches
- Nursing/personal care homes
- Veteran's Administration
- Community based human service agencies
- JARC – access to work
- Protective service, prisoners, community emergency
- Vanpool emergency ride home



Problem Statement

- Some transportation exists, yet unmet needs
- Restrictions of funders limit who can ride
- Duplication – silo offerings -3 vans at the hospital
- Human service agencies find themselves in the transportation business
- Increasing ADA demand and cost
- Local opportunity - how can we cooperate to:
 - Serve more people
 - Provide more service
 - Use capacity and existing resources effectively

More than a Ride

- Amenities make service usable
- No benefit to availability without usability
- Engage the community
- What are the perceived barriers
 - Level of assistance
 - Cost
 - Ease of use – understandability, stress, anxiety
 - Personal safety
- What can be addressed and how much will it cost
 - Trade offs and decisions
 - Affecting cost with policy
 - What each partner can bring to the table

Find a Way to Say Yes!

- Transportation as a local asset
 - Variety of amenities
 - Responds to stated needs
 - Service designed for usability
- Create “premium” service offerings
 - What do people request
 - What would it take to do it?
 - How can we make their ride a success?
- Integrated vs. separate services
- Improve efficiency by filling empty seats
- Establish cost sharing
- Conversation shift from the transportation problem to the transportation solution



Basic Paratransit

Our basic service model

- Advance reservation
- Curb to curb as base system
- Limited driver assistance
- On time window
- Shared ride
- Possible capacity constraints
- Low fares, high costs
- Days / hours / service area may be limited
- Small vehicles
- Accessible



Who makes the rules?

- Agreement on essential policies and procedures that define the service
- Sufficient flexibility for diverse sponsors to add individual elements
 - Cost sharing
 - Eligibility
- Who is ultimately responsible
 - For implementation and accountability
 - For cost recovery and fare setting

Amenities – *Assistance*

Consider the person – not the ride

- Driver assistance
 - Door to door
 - Door through door
 - Hand to hand
 - Packages
- Difficult or challenging behaviors
- Children / car seats

Most Requested Services

NCST

- Higher level of assistance
 - To and from the vehicle
 - At the destination
- Integrating people with Alzheimer's and dementia into transportation services
- Variety of service options




Higher level service

Benefit of establishing special programs

- Rules clearly understood by all parties
- Greater consistency
- Training, safety, liability
- Cost, if any, evaluated and included
- May ultimately be less expensive
 - Individual review
 - Documentation
 - Are you going to do it anyway?
 - “Special Requests”
- Policies do not preclude flexibility

Adult Day Health

- Consumers have Alzheimer's / dementia
 - Can't be left alone
 - Can't tolerate long rides
 - May have difficult behaviors
 - Only certain clients
- 
- Hand to hand supervision and assistance
 - "Safety net" – emergency backup procedures
 - Regular, set runs
 - Driver training
 - Incident reporting
 - Language, communication
 - Strategies – team approach

Implementing “Hand to Hand”

- Safety net – no one home
- Identify which riders
- Driver training
- Responsibilities clearly communicated in writing
 - Driver and system
 - Family – written signed agreement
 - Program
- It works!
 - King County, WA (Seattle)
 - Arlington, VA
 - Pittsburgh, PA
- Shift from ADA to community based service?



Serving the most frail



- Pilot project with Area Agency on Agency
 - Care managers
 - Client profiles
 - Initial home visit
- Modest additional assistance – enough to make the trip possible
 - Help with coat
 - A little extra time
 - Outdoor steps
- Additional driver training
 - OT, how to provide assist
- Preserving independence
- Avoiding institutionalization
- Cost analysis and operational considerations

Escorted transportation

- Increasingly in demand (NCST)
- Demands on caregivers
- Maintaining people in the community

JFCS Minneapolis

Accompanied Transportation

- NCST high profile grant 2009
- Designed for “nearly poor”
 - Do not qualify for other assistance
- Volunteer driver
- Volunteer Escort
 - Accompanies riders who need a higher level of assistance
- Sliding scale fees (\$7 - \$13 per hour)
 - Volunteer programs are not “free”
- Any trip purpose
 - Assumed medical was most important
 - Greater need for shopping and errands

I'd love to do my own shopping....



- If only I could get help with my packages
- Cited as a transportation problem
 - Is it the ride or the amenities?
 - Test driver assist (rather than vols.)
- Pilot with Area Agency on Aging
 - “Need” for assist vs. “want”
 - How much and what type
 - Demand
 - Outcomes
 - Nutrition
 - Quality of life
 - Cost

For Profit Offerings

- Silver Rides - www.silverride.com
- Combines driver and personal assistant
- Hourly rate
 - Transportation to and from the store
 - Accompany / assist through the store
 - Help put groceries away at home

Food Bank Shuttles

If only we had transportation.....

- Increase Food Bank utilization
 - Target populations
 - Delivering food vs. getting a ride
 - Waiting for return ride
- Identify current excess capacity
 - Weekends, evenings
 - Pregrouping to improve productivity
- Can we afford it?
 - Getting the most rides for the money
 - “Natural” partners
 - Funding, volunteers
 - Extra assist time vs. productivity



Menu of options

Arlington, VA

Innovative transportation resources

Funded through Human Service Grants

■ STAR Assisted Transportation

- Assist from the driver through the door, through the building to medical office waiting room, visit to family in nursing home

■ Door-Through-Door Assisted Transportation

- Home care aide assistance to health care appointments
- Help prepare for the trip, get to the office, if needed attend the appointment, assist home and report back to family

■ Interim STAR

- While awaiting an ADA eligibility determination, trips for medical appointments

Family Friendly Solutions

- Grandparents as primary caregivers
- Disability may prevent use of bus
- No car in family
- Caring for several young children
- “Lending” car seats
- Car seats remain with vehicle



Amenities

Information

- Array of program offerings
- Real time information
- Non-English speaking customers
- Fare payment

Information

- Cited by NCST as a major barrier to use
- Multiple and confusion choices
- Offerings usually presented according to program eligibility
- Responses:
 - Transportation options counseling (aging)
 - Mobility management (transportation)

Mobility Management in Operations

- One call
- One trip request
- Centralized info re: multiple options and eligibility
- Decisions based on policies of coordinated system
- Place customer on best sponsor choice for trip



Personal Transportation Profile

- Lists of services creates a barrier
- Create an individual profile linked to services and program offerings
 - Tell us about yourself
 - Demographics and preferences
- System searches options and finds the “best” personal solution for the trip
- “Warm” referral for registration
- Tool to collect information re: gaps

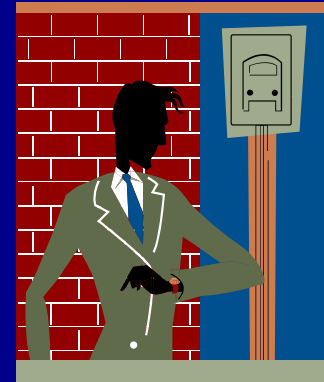
We don't have all the good ideas....

- “Best thinking” group assembled
 - Talk about not how, but what
 - Agencies and customers
 - Rank issues
- “The waiting is the worst”
- Unpredictability of arrival causes significant stress – even when on time
 - When will the driver arrive
 - Will I be late
 - Anxiety of waiting and watching
 - Comfort
 - Agencies and families as well

Worries about waiting

Reduce anxiety with information

- Real time information
 - 10 minute advance call out
 - When will the driver arrive
 - Tell me if you're going to be late
 - Anxiety of waiting and watching
 - Agencies and families
- Practical and affordable
- Tool to reduce:
 - No shows
 - Dwell time



Unintended consequences

- Reminder call to every rider the day prior with cancellation option
- Hundreds of complaints from responsible riders
- Sensitivity to time of day call is made
- No impact at all on “worst offenders”
- Discontinued after 3 month trial

Cultural / Language Barriers

Partnering with faith based organization

- Non-English speaking elderly Russian Jewish immigrants
- Living in large public housing complex
 - Fearful, lacking trust
 - No natural supports within housing community
 - Increasing isolation creates risk
- Services available at local community center and kosher food pantry
- If only they could get there - “They need transportation”
- The ride was not enough
 - Dedicated vehicle and driver – standing order
 - Trusted individual who speaks Russian
 - Partnership of three agencies

A Flexible solution

Transportation vouchers

- Issued or sold to eligible individuals
- Eligibility determined by sponsor
 - Disability
 - Income
 - Employment
- Used to purchase trips
 - Public or private providers
- Self directed – consumers make own decisions and take responsibility for arrangements
- Flexible
- Uses existing community resources
 - Going beyond taxis
- Cited by NCST as emerging best practice – personal choice

APRIL's Travelers Cheques

- Sponsoring agency
 - Determines eligibility
 - Assists in providing insurance
- Community Transportation Coordinator
 - Establishes network of providers and users
 - Manages voucher program
- Individual Transportation Plan
 - Participant and CTC
 - Allocation of resources
 - Instruction and assistance
- Provider network
 - Public, private, volunteers, taxis, family and friends

Non Traditional Partners

Faith Based Community

- Beyond fliers on the bulletin board
- How can we work together?
- Collaboration with volunteer driver and assistance programs
- Supplement their own service
 - Accessible
 - Broad service area
- Powerful community partners



Partner with human service agencies

- Area Agency on Aging
 - Invitation to start a conversation
 - Connection between Aging Service plan and HST coordinated planning process
- Surveys and focus groups
 - Meaningful outreach to the community

Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging

Our First and Favorite Partner



- Transportation supports all AAA sponsored services,
- 350,000 annual rides
 - Senior Centers, grocery shopping
 - Adult Day Health
 - Home and community based waiver programs
 - Senior Companions / Senior Employment
 - Health care and medical appointments
 - Protective service
 - Emergency response (Cooling Islands)
- Gave up its own fleet

Value....

Inclusion and flexibility

Many needs require many solutions

- Focus on rider rather than ride
- Design reflects community standards
- Why can't everyone ride?

Value....

Stewardship of public resources

- Use what you have before creating something new
- Least expensive, most appropriate
- Affordable
 - For users
 - For funders
- Sustainable
- Rational basis for establishing cost sharing, fares
- Level of administrative effort required
- Demonstrated and measurable value
 - Impact and satisfaction as well as cost

Value....

Accountability

Rigorous evaluation and standards

- Pre and post satisfaction surveys
- Community involvement “Beyond the usual suspects”
 - Consumers
 - Families
 - Community service providers
 - Drivers, calltakers and dispatchers
- Ridership trends
- Administrative cost
- Productivity – cost per trip
- On time pickups and arrivals
- Reliability of technology

Sharing the ride and our resources



Connecting people to life



ACCESS Transportation Systems