Kent, Ohio, Traveler Management Coordination Center (TMCC) Project
Final Report

Background

More than 60 federal programs have transportation components, hundreds of regional agencies have oversight responsibilities, and literally thousands of local agencies are charged with the administration of these programs, resulting in significant barriers to coordinating human service transportation. The first step in determining how coordination can be continuously assured is an inventory of local institutional assets, strengths, and weaknesses that would be germane to new organizations and relationships.

This study was designed to address broad issues of public policy, constituent interest, and client needs as well as significant technical issues in Geauga and Portage counties in Ohio leading to coordination of transportation services. A total of 16 human services agencies and transportation providers have some type of transportation capabilities in these two counties.

Objectives

The U.S. Department of Transportation's vision for coordination has been expressed as a Travel Management Coordination Center or TMCC, a coordinated, simplified point-of-access, customer-based travel reservation, information, and trip planning service.

Findings and Conclusions

Through the use of ITS technologies, the Kent TMCC is delivering expected efficiencies and carries the promise of considerably greater effectiveness for transportation services in Portage and Geauga counties.

This report documents the major results of the 15-month effort to design a system of human service transportation coordination using Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies in Portage and Geauga counties. The report summarizes the system development and design work conducted to support a TMCC for the residents of the two counties. Through surveys, interviews, facilitated group processes, and presentations, the study team and early stakeholders established a detailed vision of a system of transportation coordination using IT technologies. This vision included the following:

- New partnerships and employment of new technologies will be developed to provide substantially more convenient and responsive transportation services.
- People will be able to make work trips more easily and can combine them with access to child and adult daycare.
- More convenient access to medical and service facilities, including out-of-county facilities, will be provided.
- End-users will dial one number for transportation service, including trip scheduling, reservation, and dispatch, which will be much closer to real-time, and travel information and scheduling capability will originate from a single source.
- Vehicle specification and operator capability training and procedures will be appropriate for each passenger and every type of clientele.
- Customer personal information will be secure.
- Funding will be aggregated as needed without creating auditing dilemmas.

The resulting TMCC is known as NEORide and has been structured to employ the transportation resources of its members, obtain greater efficiencies and effectiveness through the capture and application of information, and enhance the range and utility of shared-ride transportation. It was concluded that shared transportation information, especially when captured efficiently, stored, and processed correctly and reported accurately, added considerable value to every aspect of transportation service provision. Each function that was conceived for the TMCC yielded a service enhancement such as efficiency, convenience, or security, and many of the enhancements could generate revenue for the operation of the TMCC.

Benefits

This project was one of eight demonstration grant sites, and although each began with similar assumptions and a prescribed methodology, each developed a unique approach to the problem and generated different models. The Kent TMCC program will increase the mobility of populations in Portage and Geauga counties and can be adapted to other areas.