

Jobs Access Program

Annual Assessment

For January 1, 2008 though December 31, 2008



October 2008

Capitol Region Council of Governments
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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide an annual review of CRCOG’s Jobs Access program. As part of our contractual agreement with the Connecticut Department of Social Services (CT DSS), we agree to provide an annual self-assessment of the program to monitor the program’s goals, progress, effectiveness, and to produce a report with recommendations for the continued success of the program

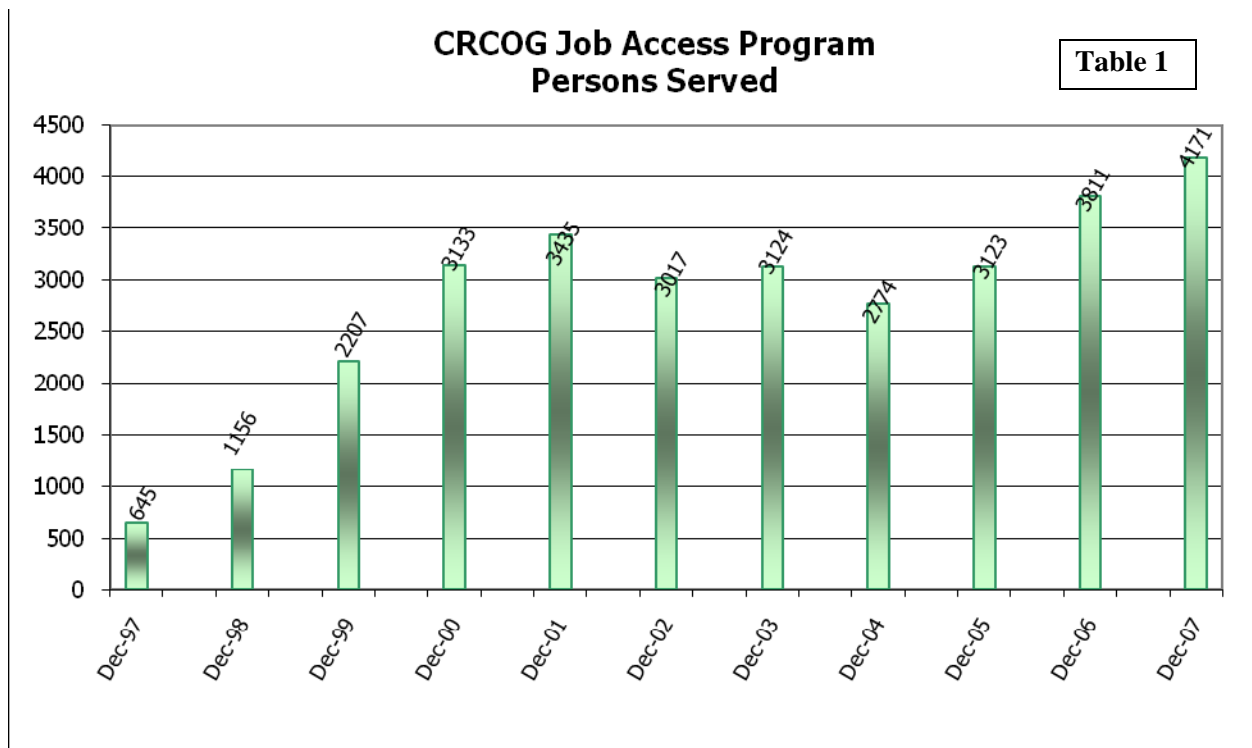
Assessment Committee

This year the Jobs Access Task Force will use the same sub-committee format created last year to review the report. Service providers, social service agencies and workforce development organizations participated in the creation of the report. A list of committee members is provided at the end of this report.

Program Facts

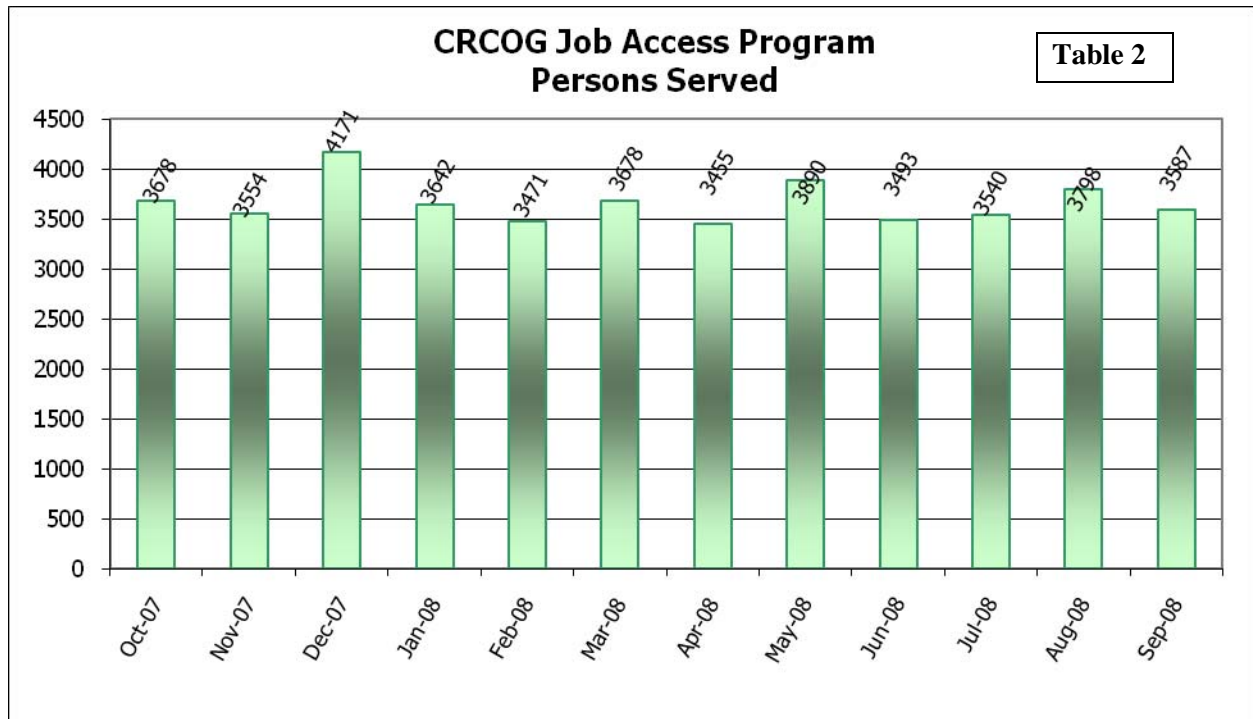
The Jobs Access program began in August of 1997 with a grant from the Connecticut Department of Social Services (CT DSS) in the amount of \$300,000. The program started with 355 riders that month and ended with 645 riders for the year. Over the past 11 years, the program has grown to serve approximately 3,600 riders on an average daily basis (see **Table 1**). We receive \$1,132,414 from CT DSS and approximately another \$1,200,000 from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to administer and operate the program for the region.

CT DSS funding has remained steady in the past, which contributed to our ability to maintain current ridership. In 2007 the program received \$1,232,414 to provide services and for 2008 the funding amount was decreased to a base funding amount of \$1,132,414 (this total does not include the special appropriation for providing the Southeast service). Regardless of the decrease in funding, the program ridership continues to increase, in part, due to the rising cost of fuel in Connecticut.



Goals

The main focus of the Jobs Access program continues to be to provide transportation services to TFA (Temporary Family Assistance) and low-income individuals. The program has been providing these transportation services to welfare to work and low-income individuals since 1997. As CRCOG enters the 12th year of the program, we continue to reach thousands of individuals that have come to rely on the services being provided to many locations in the region. The original goal of the program was to reach 2,400 riders on an average daily basis. The program has gone well beyond that goal and now averages 3,600 (see **Table 2**) riders reaching a high of 4,171 in December 2007. Our challenge continues to be to provide cost-effective transportation services as job markets, funding conditions, and employment centers change and costs to provide the services rise.



Progress

The Jobs Access program continually reviews services and ride requests to assure that the services being provided are effective and cost efficient. By providing information on our services to area job developers and employers, as well as advertising our information on local public access television, we have been able to grow our existing services even though we were limited due to level funding and increasing costs. We have also been made aware of new opportunities where service was needed to new employers moving into the region. These have been key reasons for increasing the program's ridership over the last year. Below are a few key services being provided:

CT Transit (Hartford)

C&S Wholesale Foods (NEW) – This fixed route extension began this year at the request of area job developers working with C&S Foods. Bus service was already offered to an existing location but not to their new facility. With funding from the program, we were able to add trips to the new facility for about 40 workers. Approximately 4,464 trips annually and 33 average monthly riders are served.

L-Tower Avenue Crosstown Route - This fixed route transit service provides a direct transit link between low-income neighborhoods of Hartford's north end and job sites. Two major connections are the Copaco Shopping Center in Bloomfield and Buckland Hills Mall in Manchester. This route allows potential

employees the ability to avoid traveling into downtown Hartford and making a time-consuming, and thus discouraging, transfer. This route not only provides the necessary transportation to work but also meets other basic needs like medical and grocery shopping. Approximately 110,000 trips annually and 480 average monthly riders are served.

Bradley Flyer - This fixed route transit service provides another direct link from downtown Hartford quickly and directly to Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks with “limited stop” service to job sites near the airport. This service was designed to provide transportation primarily to service jobs at or near the airport. It began with a small vanpool of people and grew into a large and effective job link. It provides service tailored to the actual working shift hours at the airport and some nearby locations. Recently, helper trips were added in the morning and afternoon due to the success of the service. Several employers, i.e., UPS, FEDEX, Huntleigh Security, Taco Bell, Burger King, Double Tree Inn, Hampton Inn, located at the airport take advantage of this service to get their employees to work. Approximately 139,000 trips annually and 380 average monthly riders are served.

CT Transit (New Britain)

Oak Street Service on Saturday morning (*NEW*) – This fixed route extension began at the beginning of the year at the request of passengers needing an early ride to work on Saturday mornings. This trip already existed Monday through Friday but many of the retail and food service jobs are 7 days a week. So two additional hours were added on Saturday mornings and serve about 40 passengers. Approximately 1,200 trips annually and 41 average monthly riders are served.

Westfield Mall - This fixed route transit service provides transportation from downtown New Britain to the Westfield Mall in Meriden. This service was designed to provide transportation primarily to meet employment needs at the mall. It provides service tailored to the actual work shifts. Many mall employers and New Britain residents take advantage of this service. Approximately 46,000 trips annually and 150 average monthly riders are served.

Evening Service – These fixed route transit services provide transportation from New Britain to the West Farms Mall. Previously, New Britain residents could not access job opportunities at the mall or other locations because there was no transit services being provided after 6:00pm. With the hours being extended to 10:30pm, residents now have the opportunity to secure employment at the mall. The routes are tailored to the actual evening work shifts. Approximately 55,000 trips annually and 470 average monthly riders are served.

Arrow/Peter Pan

Southeast Employment Run - This subscription service provides transportation from downtown Hartford to Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun for casino employees. This service was designed to provide transportation to service jobs at the casinos. It provides service tailored to the actual work shift hours. Residents from New Britain are also utilizing this service. Approximately 16,000 trips annually and 44 average monthly riders are served with 80% of the current riders riding the bus since June 2003. At the beginning of this year, we reduced the size of the vehicle used to transport these employees in an effort to decrease costs.

The Rideshare Company

Tempo Staffing is a temporary staffing agency from Hartford that uses vanpools to provide a ridesharing program transporting individuals to employers in and around the Greater Hartford area. This service was designed to provide transportation to service temporary jobs at multiple locations with the hopes that they will become permanent positions or gain work experience that will help them find a permanent job. Approximately 16,000 trips annually and 100 average monthly riders are served.

Other Key Services

- The Greater Hartford Transit District provides subscription services to meet training, interviewing and other job related needs.
- Added service to Stew Leonard's on the Berlin Turnpike in Newington.
- Added Sunday service to Vernon/Rockville.
- Added second shift service to HomeGoods in Bloomfield.
- Extended CT Transit (Hartford) service hours to the West Farms Mall and Buckland Hills Mall to 10:00 p.m. to coincide with the end of shifts. This will allow riders to make connections to the pulse system in Hartford.
- Guaranteed Ride Home - Continue to offer people a guaranteed emergency ride home. This ensures that a person using the program can get a ride home for any emergency or if requested to work overtime.
- Bus Pass Program - The Jump Start program began in 2006. With cooperation from the CT Works offices in the NorthCentral region, we continue to assist new employees by giving them a bus pass (up to two months) in order to get to work for those newly hired. 180 passes were purchased for the pilot program. The Capital Workforce Partners also provided match funding through the Workforce Investment Act to purchase additional bus passes and gas cards.
- Ads on Public Television (*NEW*) - This year we reached out to the public access channels that serve the Hartford and New Britain areas to run ads promoting our website and services. We also continue to meet with employers looking for transportation for their employees as well as hand out brochures through the public libraries.

We will continue to review all the services on a regular basis to insure that they continue to be utilized and so that services can be modified as necessary.

Monthly Service Reviews

The Jobs Access Task Force that CRCOG formed back in 1997 still monitors the Jobs Access program today. The task force is made up of metropolitan planning organizations, transportation providers, social service agencies, and job development organizations. They include Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA), Capital Workforce Partners, the Connecticut Department of Social Services, the Connecticut Department of Labor, CT Works, the City of Hartford, the Hartford Job Developers Consortium, the Greater Hartford Transit District, CT Transit (Hartford & New Britain divisions), The Greater Hartford Ridesharing Company, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency, and the Capitol Region Council of Governments. We have assembled most or all of the key players in the region and they have committed themselves to providing real transportation solutions for the region.

The task force meets monthly to review requests for new services, to provide program planning, and review monthly ridership reports. The task force is also charged with the difficult decisions concerning eliminating, reducing, or denying services when necessary. Decisions are based on factors such as cost per trip, ridership and cost of the service (see **Table 3**).



Job Access Program Monthly Summary

Table 3

July 2007

Recipient	Sponsor	Hours /Month	Pax Trips /Month	Current Month			Previous Month		
				Persons	Invoice	Cost/Trip	Persons	Invoice	Cost/Trip
Arrow Line Inc.									
ECTAP Employment Run - Hartford	ECTAP	372.00	1,216.00	38	\$30,079.68	\$24.74	37	\$28,658.40	\$22.55
		372.00	1,216.00	38	\$30,079.68	\$24.74	37	\$28,658.40	\$22.55
CT Transit									
Berlin TPK - Stew Leonards	CDOT	222.01	1,084.00	56	\$9,977.53	\$9.20	64	\$9,395.30	\$7.76
Berlin Turnpike Flyer	DSS	142.25	2,944.00	141	\$8,385.59	\$2.85	142	\$7,838.08	\$2.65
Bradley Flyer Weekday Service	CDOT	546.00	9,746.00	382	\$29,917.40	\$3.07	413	\$28,823.45	\$2.74
Bradley Flyer Weekend Service	CDOT	187.00	2,985.00	293	\$3,054.50	\$1.02	264	\$2,749.05	\$1.02
Ext Bloomfield Service (M/F)	CDOT	78.75	1,055.00	83	\$6,358.31	\$6.03	90	\$6,384.66	\$5.59
Home Goods	DSS	27.93	496.00	39	\$1,311.87	\$2.64	56	\$1,111.27	\$1.56
Home Goods (2nd Shift)	DSS	44.73	242.00	19	\$2,370.11	\$9.79	11	\$2,450.86	\$18.02
Imperial Nurseries	DSS	3.57	247.00	19	\$0.00	\$0.00	24	\$0.00	\$0.00
L-Tower Avenue Crosstown	CDOT	991.79	7,781.00	417	\$51,641.06	\$6.64	402	\$51,760.41	\$6.75
Saturday Night Service	DSS	123.48	1,440.00	282	\$4,820.42	\$3.35	277	\$6,355.32	\$4.50
Sunday & Holiday Evening Service	DSS	97.86	1,979.00	388	\$3,494.08	\$1.77	237	\$2,423.17	\$2.00
Sunday & Holiday Morning Service	DSS	64.98	1,268.00	249	\$2,389.83	\$1.88	189	\$1,492.35	\$1.55
ZZ Shuttle	DSS	85.62	751.00	147	\$6,133.12	\$8.17	132	\$3,940.57	\$5.84
		2,616.97	32,018.00	2,615	\$129,863.82	\$4.06	2,301	\$124,724.49	\$3.94
GHID									
HCI	DSS	90.00	450.00	15	\$3,600.00	\$8.00	15	\$2,400.00	\$8.00
		90.00	450.00	15	\$3,600.00	\$8.00	15	\$2,400.00	\$8.00
NBT									

Friday, September 28, 2007

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User Surveys

A survey of Jobs Access service users was conducted to assess eligibility and program effectiveness. Over 1,100 surveys were collected. Although the eligibility criteria (including income and asset limits) vary from CT DSS program to program, a family must meet the definition of a needy family to qualify for transportation services funded by CT DSS through the Jobs Access program (see definition below).

Other Jobs Access services funded through FTA are not restricted to TFA (Temporary Family Assistance) eligible residents, therefore it is not expected that 100% of the riders surveyed will meet the eligibility criteria. However, the survey results demonstrate that the funded services have effectively targeted the TFA population the program is intended to serve as well as FTA eligible riders.

Table 4 provides the results of the surveys. The table shows the number of persons interviewed on each service, and the number of those who are TFA eligible under the TFA eligibility criteria. The TFA eligible riders are shown as a percentage (%) and the information is provided in the last column. As the table shows, close to 50% of those using the Jobs Access services are TFA eligible.

Table 4	Total Respondents	Eligible Respondents	% TFA Eligible	% working over 90 days
CT Transit	928	404	44%	60%
All JA routes	928	404	44%	62%
NBT	148	90	61%	65%
All JA routes	148	90	61%	69%
Rideshare	40	32	80%	98%
Valassis	8	7	88%	100%
McDonalds	13	8	62%	100%
Tempo	19	17	89%	85%
GHTD	13	9	69%	N/A *
HCJI	13	9	69%	N/A *
Arrow	31	17	55%	71%
SE Run	31	17	55%	71%
TOTALS	1,160	552	48%	63%

Conclusion 1: The basic finding is that about 46% of those surveyed that utilize the public transit services subsidized by CT DSS are TFA eligible and the percentage increases to 70% on the dedicated /subscription services provided by program.

Conclusion 2: As part of the same survey analysis, we reviewed the number of users who are eligible under the FTA eligibility guidelines. Under these guidelines, the percentage eligible increases to 86%.

* This service was provided for training purposes.

Needy Family Definition

Connecticut defines a needy family as a family with gross income less than 75% of Connecticut's median income level (SMI). The family must include a dependent child and a caretaker relative. The income limits are based on family size and are provided in the chart below.

Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	6 or more
75% (SMI)	\$35,959.95	\$47,024.55	\$58,089.15	\$69,153.75	\$80,218.35	\$91,282.95

Recommendations

Continue to monitor the overall program to ensure that every effort is taken to run an efficient and effective program meeting the needs of TFA and low-income individuals. Continue to coordinate efforts with employers and job developers to make them aware of the program and what it has to offer. Begin program planning for 2009.

Sub Committee

Jon Colman – The Greater Hartford Ridesharing Company

David Lee – CT Transit

Pam Nabors – Capital Workforce Partners

Vicki Shotland – The Greater Hartford Transit District

Alan Sylvestre – Connecticut Department of Labor