

# Jobs Access Program

## Annual Assessment

For July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009



September 2009

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**Purpose**

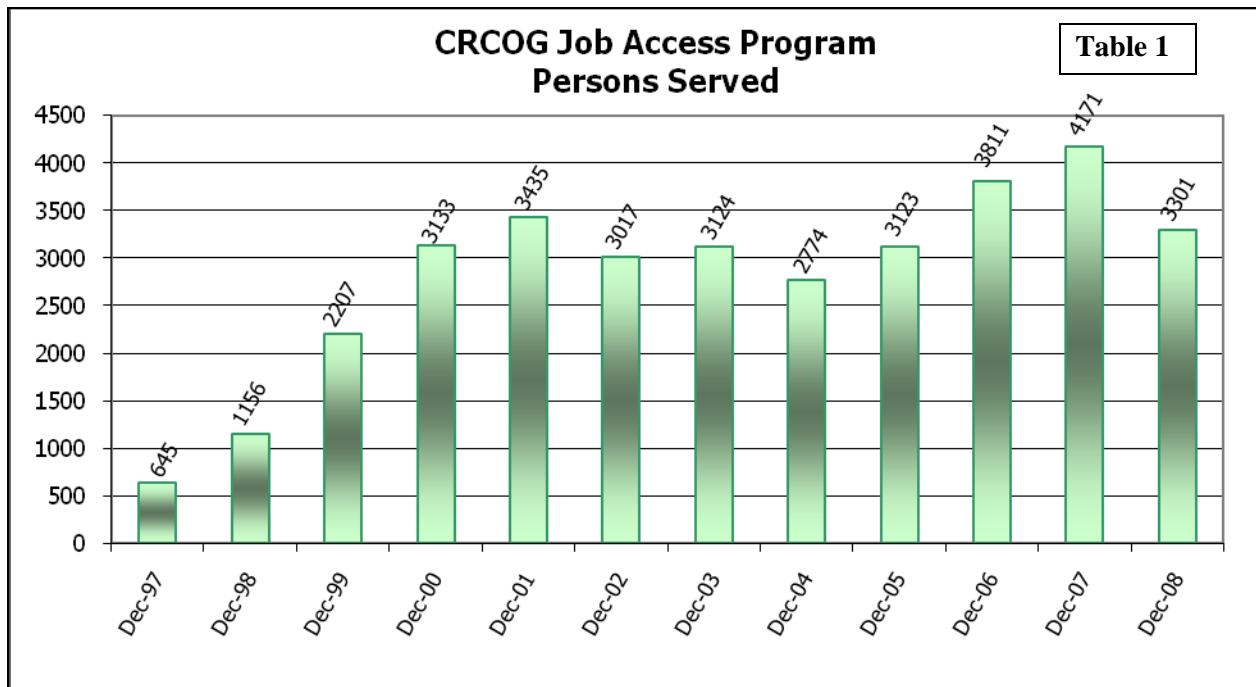
The purpose of this document is to provide an annual review of CRCOG’s Jobs Access program. As part of our contractual agreement with the Connecticut Department of Social Services (CT DSS), we agree to provide an annual self-assessment of the program to monitor the program’s progress, effectiveness, 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 in 2007 to review the report. Service providers, social service agencies and workforce development organizations participated in the creation of the report through a review and comment process. 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 12 years, the program has grown substantially (see Table 1) and continues to serve approximately 3,400 riders on an average daily basis. We receive \$985,210 from CT DSS (this total does not include the special appropriation for providing the Southeast service) and \$1,463,907 from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to administer and operate the program for the region.



The first six months of 2009 have been very difficult for the Jobs Access Program. The Task Force has dealt with cuts in program funding which have resulted in service reductions and eliminations which began in October 2008 and continued into the beginning of this year. CT DSS funding was reduced in 2008 and the program is preparing for another reduction at the start of the new State Fiscal year; the reduction could be as high as \$200,000. The Task Force has already made the necessary service cuts to maintain a balanced budget (see list below). Regardless of the decreases in funding and cuts in service, the program ridership continues to remain steady indicating the value of the services being provided.

Below are a list of the service reductions and eliminations. Note that service eliminations were selected based on this consideration; "Will the removal of this trip cause an individual to lose their employment?" The cuts make service less convenient but do not make job sites inaccessible.

#### CT Transit (Hartford)

Route 92 (L-Tower Avenue Crosstown) – Eliminated the last 2 trips, Monday – Saturday.  
Cost savings = Approx. \$75,000.

Route 30 (Bradley Flyer) – Eliminated the 11:10am outbound trip and 11:42 inbound trip. Rescheduled the 12:10pm outbound and 12:42 inbound trips to 11:40am and 12:12pm respectively.  
Cost savings = Approx. \$18,500.

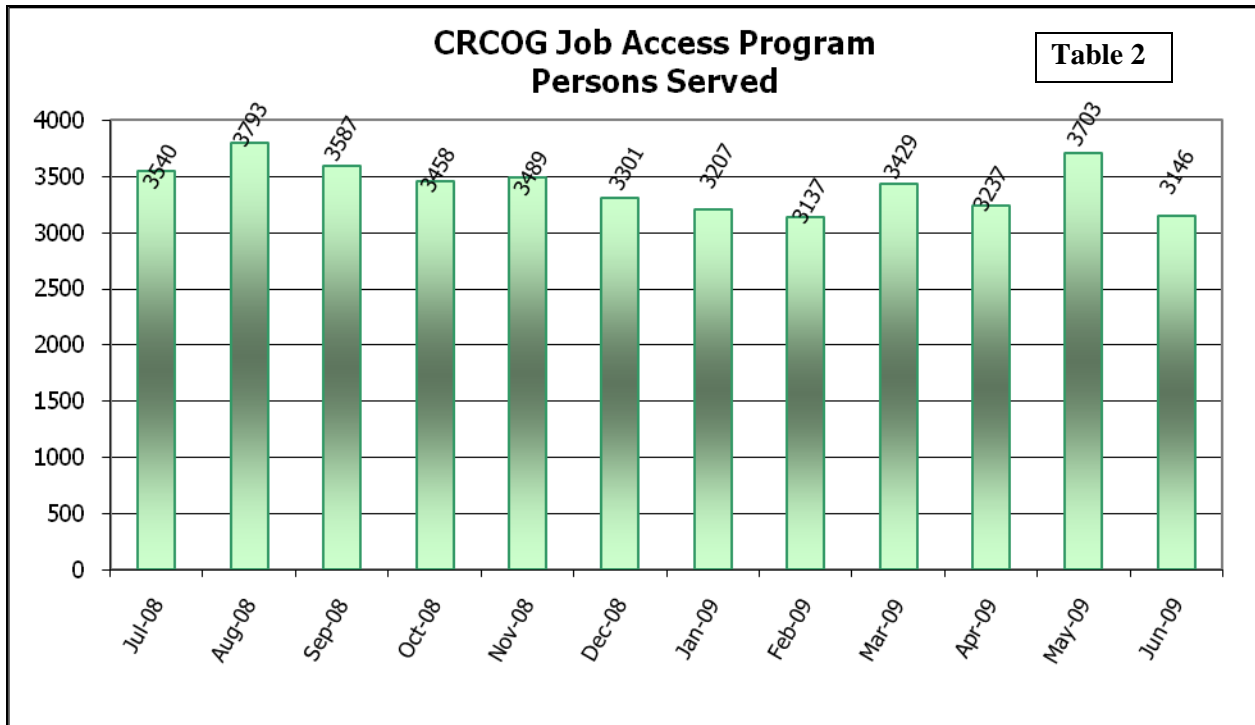
Route 45 (Berlin Turnpike Flyer) – Eliminated multiple low passenger trips through the schedule.  
Cost savings = Approx. \$43,250.

#### The Rideshare Company

McDonalds (Avon & Canton) stopped providing vanpools for their employees.  
Tempo Staffing - the owners of Tempo Staffing sold their business and the new owners did not want to offer the vanpools to their employees.  
Cost savings = Approx. \$100,500.

### **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 13<sup>th</sup> 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 3,400 (see Table 2) riders reaching a high of 3,793 in August 2008 and 3,703 in May 2009. Our challenge continues to be to provide cost-effective transportation services as job markets and employment centers change, costs to provide the services rise and funding levels are reduced.



**Progress**

The Jobs Access program continually reviews existing services and service requests to assure that the services being provided are effective and cost efficient. By providing information on our services to Info 211, as well as advertising our information on local public access television, we have been able to maintain ridership levels even with funding reductions and increasing costs. Below are a few key services being provided:

**CT Transit (Hartford)**

C&S Wholesale Foods – This fixed route extension began last 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 30 workers. The ridership has fallen since inception but continues to serve approximately 2,256 trips annually and 16 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 111,025 trips annually and 503 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. Last year, 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 151,434 trips annually and 631 average monthly riders are served.

#### CT Transit (New Britain)

Oak Street Service on Saturday morning – This fixed route extension began at the beginning of last 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. Two additional hours were added on Saturday mornings. Approximately 1,100 trips annually and 36 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 45,500 trips annually and 185 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 530 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 18,000 trips annually and 45 average monthly riders are served with 70% of the current riders riding the bus since June 2003. At the beginning of last year, we reduced the size of the vehicle used to transport these employees in an effort to decrease costs.

#### The Rideshare Company

Valassis is an advertising company from Windsor that utilizes a vanpool to provide a ridesharing program for its employees, transporting them to work in Windsor from the Hartford area. This service is designed to provide transportation at a low cost to meet non-traditional start times that do not meet existing fixed route services. Approximately 3,300 trips annually and 9 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.
- Continued service to Stew Leonard's on the Berlin Turnpike in Newington.
- Continued Sunday service to Vernon/Rockville.
- Continued second shift service to HomeGoods in Bloomfield.
- Continued 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 – Continue to reach out through the public access channels that serve the Hartford and New Britain areas. These channels 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 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.

#### 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 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.

 <b>Job Access Program Monthly Summary</b>									
July 2009									
<b>Table 3</b>									
Recipient	Sponsor	Hours /Month	Pax Trips /Month	Current Month			Previous Month		
				Persons	Invoice	Cost/Trip	Persons	Invoice	Cost/Trip
<b>Arrow Line Inc.</b>									
SE Employment Run - Hartford	DSS	372.00	1,470.00	38	\$26,564.00	\$18.07	45	\$25,440.00	\$19.00
		<b>372.00</b>	<b>1,470.00</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>\$26,564.00</b>	<b>\$18.07</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>\$25,440.00</b>	<b>\$19.00</b>
<b>CT Transit</b>									
Berlin TPK - Stewart Leonard	CDOT	219.09	603.00	37	\$12,485.98	\$20.71	38	\$11,997.88	\$19.23
Berlin Turnpike Flyer	DSS	69.56	3,080.00	140	\$5,575.29	\$1.81	138	\$5,275.13	\$1.79
Bradley Flyer Weekday Service	CDOT	502.09	11,310.00	444	\$40,429.43	\$3.57	433	\$38,474.28	\$3.48
Bradley Flyer Weekend Service	CDOT	0.00	2,228.00	218	\$2,443.60	\$1.10	205	\$2,443.60	\$1.17
C&S Foods	DSS	59.34	186.00	15	\$47,044.80	\$252.93	14	\$3,870.95	\$22.38
Ext Bloomfield Service (M-F)	CDOT	86.25	872.00	68	\$9,626.99	\$11.04	72	\$9,131.08	\$9.91
Home Goods	DSS	30.59	922.00	72	\$1,515.58	\$1.64	70	\$1,445.16	\$1.63
Home Goods (2nd Shift)	DSS	48.99	166.00	13	\$3,319.14	\$19.99	11	\$3,193.33	\$23.14
Imperial Nurseries	DSS	3.91	28.00	2	\$147.00	\$5.25	1	\$153.77	\$12.81
L-Tower Avenue Crosstown	CDOT	848.98	9,358.00	485	\$54,149.25	\$5.79	467	\$54,149.28	\$6.18
Saturday Night Service	DSS	92.61	1,292.00	253	\$4,324.10	\$3.35	287	\$5,995.68	\$4.10
Sunday & Holiday Evening Service	DSS	81.55	1,492.00	293	\$3,937.38	\$2.64	300	\$2,848.73	\$1.86
Sunday & Holiday Morning Service	DSS	54.15	1,140.00	224	\$2,516.83	\$2.21	191	\$1,960.06	\$2.02
ZZ Shuttle	DSS	71.35	635.00	125	\$5,582.04	\$8.79	111	\$4,414.90	\$7.81
		<b>2,168.46</b>	<b>33,312.00</b>	<b>2,389</b>	<b>\$193,097.41</b>	<b>\$5.80</b>	<b>2,338</b>	<b>\$145,353.83</b>	<b>\$4.52</b>
<b>GHID</b>									
HCI	DSS	12.94	26.00	13	\$517.60	\$19.91	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
		<b>12.94</b>	<b>26.00</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>\$517.60</b>	<b>\$19.91</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>#Num!</b>

At a minimum, the task force meets bi-monthly to review monthly ridership reports, provide program and budget planning, and review requests for new services. Since the task force is also charged with the difficult decisions concerning eliminating, reducing, or denying services, additional meetings may occur. Decisions are based on factors such as cost per trip, ridership and cost of the service (see Table 3). Other factors not included in the table below are the job impacts and costs of state aid if services are eliminated.

### User Surveys

A survey of Jobs Access service users was conducted to assess eligibility and program effectiveness. Over 1,400 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 on following page).

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 for each service provider, 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 third column. As the table shows, over 50% of those using the Jobs Access services are TFA eligible.

<b>Table 4</b>				
	Total Respondents	Eligible Respondents	% TFA Eligible	% FTA Eligible
<b>CT Transit</b>	<b>1016</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>93%</b>
All JA routes	922	492	48%	93%
<b>NBT</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>97%</b>
All JA routes	375	242	65%	97%
<b>Rideshare</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Valassis	6	4	67%	100%
Tempo	32	26	81%	100%
<b>Arrow</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>100%</b>
SE Run	26	13	50%	100%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,455</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>95%</b>

Conclusion 1: The basic finding is that about 53% of those surveyed that utilize the public transit services subsidized by CT DSS are TFA eligible and the percentage increases to 80% 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 95%.

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)	\$36,590.19	\$47,848.71	\$59,107.23	\$70,365.75	\$81,624.27	\$92,882.79

**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 2010.

**Sub Committee**

Jon Colman – The Greater Hartford Ridesharing Company

James Johnson Jr – City of Hartford, Department of Human Services

David Lee – CT Transit

Pam Nabors – Capital Workforce Partners

Vicki Shotland – The Greater Hartford Transit District

Alan Sylvestre – Connecticut Department of Labor