Jobs Access Program

Annual Assessment

For July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011

June 2011

Capitol Region Council of Governments
241 Main Street, Hartford, CT 06106
phone: 860.522.2217 web: www.crcog.org

Purpose

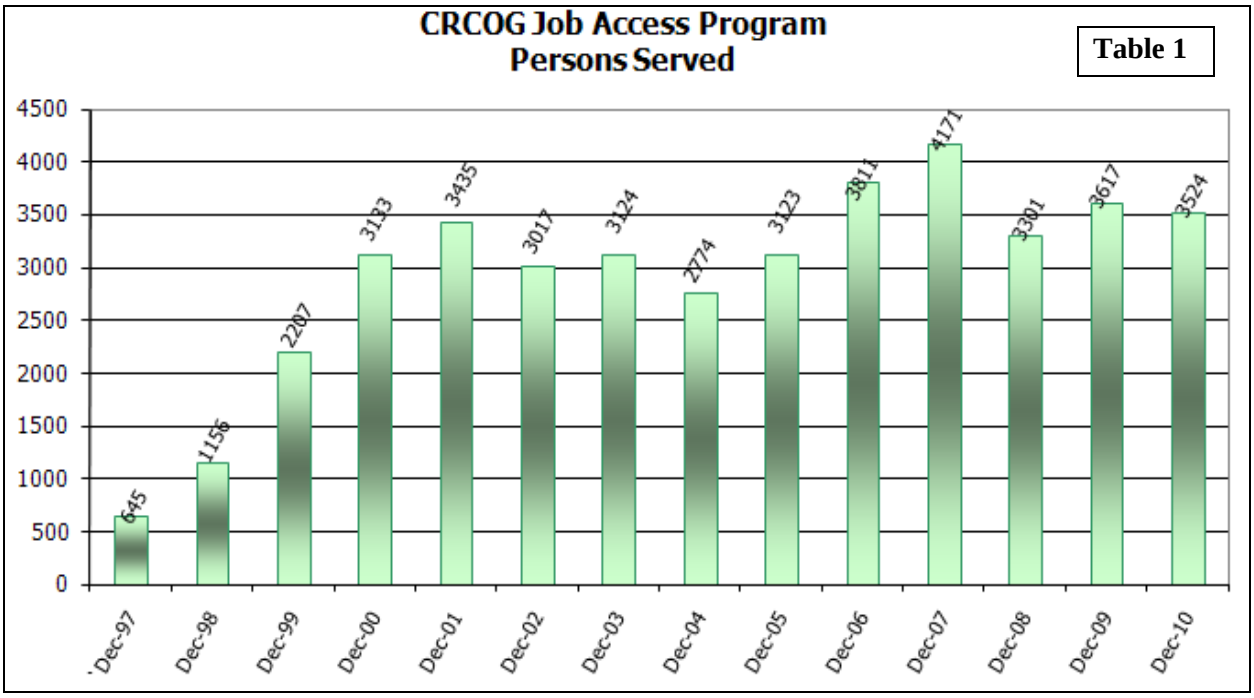
The purpose of this document is to provide an annual review of CRCOG's Jobs Access program. As part of our contractual agreement with the Connecticut Department of Social Services (CT DSS), we agree to provide an annual self-assessment of the program to monitor the program's progress, effectiveness,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

Assessment Committee

The Jobs Access Task Force will continue to 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.

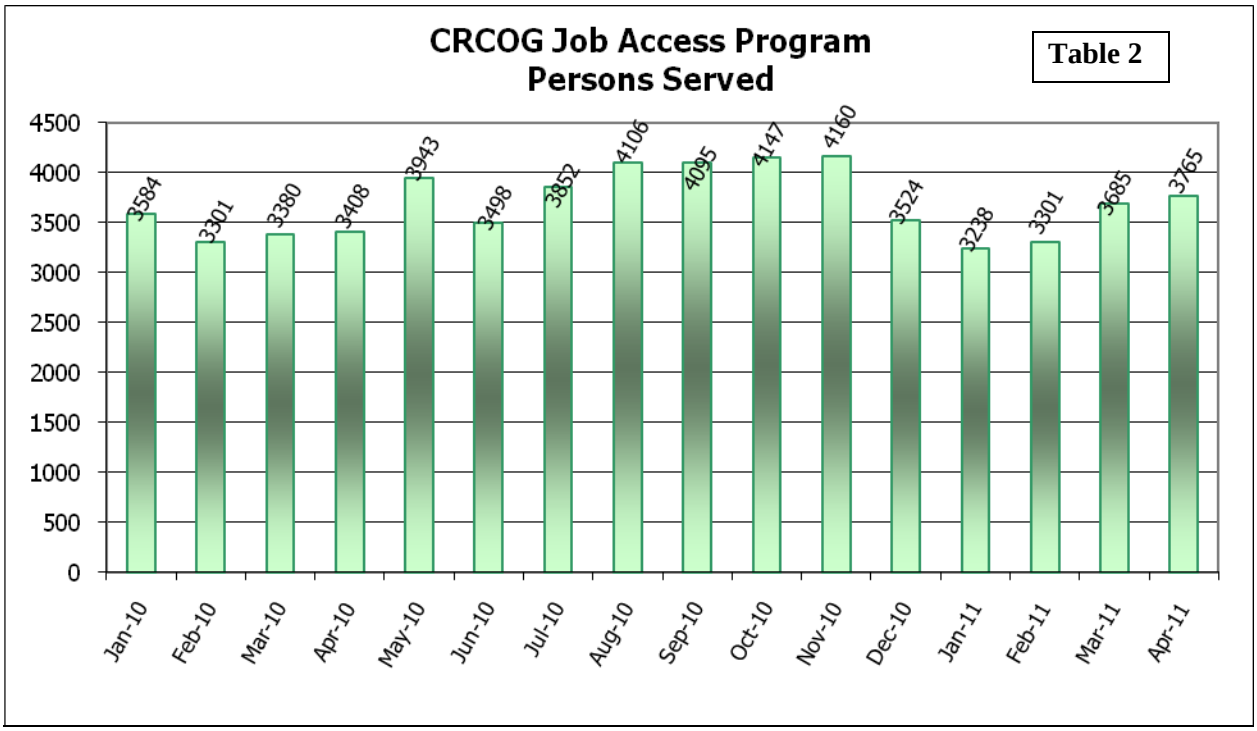
Program Facts

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 14 years, the program has grown substantially (see **Table 1**) and continues to serve approximately 3,700 riders on an average daily basis. We receive $807,568 from CT DSS (this total does not include the special appropriation for providing the Southeast CT Transportation service) and $1,392,712 from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to administer and operate the program for the region.



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 by enhancing public transit services to welfare recipients and other low-income populations for the purposes of commuting to places of employment or employment related activities. The Jobs Access Program transportation services are available, but not limited to, families with dependent children currently receiving or eligible to receive Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), welfare to work clients and low-income workers and can include the general public on CT Transit service. The services are advertised on our website, through brochures at public libraries and on CPTV in the Greater Hartford and New Britain areas. The program has been providing these transportation services to welfare to work and low-income individuals since 1997. As CRCOG enters the 15th year of the program, we continue to reach thousands of individuals that have come to rely on the services being provided to numerous 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 3,700 (see **Table 2**) riders reaching a record high of 4,171 in December 2007. 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 reductions.



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)

Route 92 (L-Tower Avenue Crosstown) - 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. This route also serves Weaver High School and Mount Sinai Hospital. Approximately 104,522 trips annually and 428 average monthly riders are served.

Route 30 (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 139,630 trips annually and 598 average monthly riders are served.

CT Transit (New Britain)

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 79,065 trips annually and 307 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 57,000 trips annually and 564 average monthly riders are served.

Peter Pan/Arrow

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 12,400 trips annually and 32 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 2,500 trips annually and 7 average monthly riders are served.

Other Key Services

- Continued service to Stew Leonard's on the Berlin Turnpike in Newington (Route 45/47).
- Continued Sunday service to Vernon/Rockville (Route 84).
- Continued second shift service to HomeGoods in Bloomfield (Route 32N).
- 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.
- The Greater Hartford Transit District provides subscription services to meet training, interviewing and other job related needs.
- 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.
- 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 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 bi-monthly to review monthly ridership reports, provide program and budget planning, and review requests for new services. 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**). Other factors not included in the table below are the job impacts and costs of state aid if services are eliminated.

Job Access Program Monthly Summary

Table 3

Recipient	Sponsor	Hours/Mo	Pax Trips/Mo	Persons	Invoice	Cost/Trip
March 2010						
Arrow Line Inc.						
SE Employment Run - Hartford	DSS	372.00	1229.00	33.00	$26,849.00	$21.85
		372.00	1229.00	33.00	$26,849.00	$21.85
CT Transit						
30 Bradley Flyer Weekday Service	CDOT	633.65	9873.00	387.00	$48,949.78	$4.96
30 Bradley Flyer Weekend Service	CDOT	0.00	1922.00	188.00	$2,443.60	$1.27
32N Windsor (Home Goods 2nd)	DSS	48.99	266.00	21.00	$3,230.14	$12.14
45 Berlin Turnpike Flyer	DSS	67.18	2937.00	134.00	$5,550.79	$1.89
45/47 Berlin Tpk/Franklin Ave (Stew Leonards)	CDOT	223.84	526.00	32.00	$12,491.68	$23.75
54 Blue Hills (Home Goods)	DSS	30.59	1246.00	98.00	$1,227.22	$0.98
54 Blue Hills Ave (Imperial Nurseries)	DSS	3.91	18.00	2.00	$155.90	$8.66
54/54x Blue Hills Extension	CDOT	86.25	2512.00	197.00	$8,167.39	$3.25
84 Rockville Shuttle	DSS	57.08	558.00	109.00	$4,421.13	$7.92
92 L-Tower Avenue Crosstown	CDOT	567.74	9241.00	447.00	$38,581.75	$4.18
C5 Express (C&S Foods)	DSS	59.34	195.00	15.00	$4,033.23	$20.68
Saturday Night Service	DSS	123.48	1671.00	328.00	$5,811.45	$3.48
Sunday & Holiday Evening Service	DSS	65.24	1388.00	272.00	$2,976.89	$2.14
Sunday & Holiday Morning Service	DSS	43.32	864.00	169.00	$2,056.18	$2.38
		2010.61	33217.00	2399.00	$140,097.13	$4.22
NBT						
Arch St./Meriden Square (M-F Evenings)	DSS	97.75	722.00	57.00	$4,418.24	$6.12
Arch St./Meriden Square (Sat. Evenings)	DSS	17.00	182.00	36.00	$756.94	$4.16

Thursday, April 29, 2010 **Page 1 of 2**

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 continue to 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 contractor, 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.

Table 4

	Total Respondents	Eligible Respondents	% TFA Eligible	% FTA Eligible
CT Transit	**1214**	**573**	**47%**	**91%**
All JA routes	1214	573	47%	91%
NBT	**323**	**215**	**67%**	**97%**
All JA routes	323	215	65%	97%
Rideshare	**5**	**4**	**80%**	**100%**
All JA routes	5	4	80%	100%
Peter Pan/Arrow	**27**	**19**	**70%**	**100%**
SE Run	27	19	70%	100%
TOTALS	**1,569**	**811**	**52%**	**94%**

* This service was provided for training purposes.

Conclusion 1: The basic finding is that Approximately 54% of those surveyed that utilize the public transit services subsidized by CT DSS are TFA eligible and the percentage increases to 75% 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 94%.

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)	$39,640.77	$51,837.93	$64,035.09	$76,232.25	$88,429.41	$100,626.57

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 in the region. Continue to coordinate efforts with employers and job developers to make them aware of the program and what it has to offer. Advocate for continued funding of the Jobs Access service for TFA and low-income individuals. Begin program planning for FY2012 and beyond.

Sub Committee

Jon Colman – The Greater Hartford Ridesharing Company
James Johnson Jr – City of Hartford, Department of Human Services
David Lee – CT Transit
Shelly Henderson – Capital Workforce Partners
Vicki Shotland – The Greater Hartford Transit District
Alan Sylvestre – Connecticut Department of Labor