

The Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) is a partnership of members from the legislature, state agencies, transportation providers and consumer advocates whose mission is to direct and promote activities that efficiently use all available state and community resources for special needs transportation across the state. ACCT was created by the legislature in 1998 to facilitate coordination and eliminate cross-jurisdictional and government program barriers to transportation. The ACCT Council will concentrate on three critical areas: Identify and Address Barriers, Focus on Results, and Increase Advocacy.

ACCT meets bi-monthly and held its last meeting in Seattle on October 3, 2003 in conjunction with the Washington State Disabilities Conference. This bulletin is the first issue of a new communication service that will bring important information to you about ongoing coordination activities and issues.

## **IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS BARRIERS**

### **New Federal Emphasis on Coordination**

In August, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Health and Human Services (HHS) launched a joint effort to reduce federal program barriers to transportation. Rick Krochalis, Region X FTA Administrator, reported that this emphasis was based, in part, on a 2003 General Accounting Office report that found:

- There are federal barriers to transportation including an ineffective coordinating council, lack of strategic planning, and inconsistent financial accountability requirements
- There are state and local barriers to transportation
- Coordination is an efficient and effective way to use public resources

This renewed emphasis was highlighted at a regional coordination conference sponsored by FTA and HHS in Seattle on September 11. WSDOT's ACCT staff and Council members attended this meeting and participated in discussions about how to improve coordination. Specific federal regulations governing payment of transportation charges were identified as significant barriers to coordination.

### **ACCT Encourages DSHS to Reinforce Coordination with Brokers**

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) spends about \$40 million each year purchasing 2.6 million trips for medical assistance clients. DSHS uses a system in which nine regional brokers arrange for and purchase rides on behalf of DSHS clients across the state. At the October meeting, the Council discussed the potential this brokerage system has to coordinate statewide transportation for a variety of programs with different funding sources.

In January of 2004, DSHS will be issuing a solicitation for new statewide brokerage contracts. ACCT has sent a letter to DSHS urging that the following actions be incorporated

into the solicitation and contracting activities:

- Make current participation in local coordination activities a criterion for scoring and selecting brokers
- Require selected brokers to participate meaningfully in local coordinating coalitions

The ACCT Council encourages the continued positive relationships that have developed between the DSHS brokers and the local community coalitions.

## **FOCUS ON RESULTS**

### **ACCT and CTAA Team Up to Provide Training for Enhanced Coordination**

ACCT and the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) are entering into an agreement to provide technical assistance for local coordination across the state. ACCT will provide funds to match a federal grant to CTAA for providing training to local communities to create transportation choices for people with special needs, innovative services, and community partnerships for efficient use of public resources. Priorities will be given to projects that have measurable results.

## **INCREASE ADVOCACY**

### **Governor and ACCT Urge USDOT and HHS to Remove Barriers**

Following the September conference, ACCT sent a letter to the Secretaries of USDOT and HHS urging those agencies to engage in a comprehensive discussion on the potential benefits of greater flexibility in use of transportation funds than is provided by current interpretations of the rules regarding payment of transportation charges. Governor Locke sent a similar message to the federal agency heads.

For additional information, contact

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