

June 2012

TRANSPORTATION-
DISADVANTAGED
POPULATIONS

Federal Coordination
Efforts Could Be
Further
Strengthened



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Highlights of [GAO-12-647](#), a report to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

Millions of Americans are unable to provide their own transportation or have difficulty accessing public transportation. Such transportation-disadvantaged individuals may include those who are elderly, have disabilities, or have low incomes. The Departments of Education, Health and Human Services (HHS), Labor (DOL), Transportation (DOT), Veterans Affairs (VA), and other federal agencies may provide funds to state and local entities to help these individuals access human service programs. As requested, GAO examined (1) federal programs that may fund transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged; (2) federal coordination efforts undertaken since 2003; and (3) coordination at the state and local levels. GAO analyzed information from the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance; interviewed federal officials; and interviewed state and local officials in five states, chosen based on a variety of characteristics, including geographic diversity.

What GAO Recommends

To promote and enhance federal, state, and local coordination activities, the Secretary of Transportation and the Coordinating Council should meet to (1) complete and publish a strategic plan; and (2) report on progress of recommendations made by the Council in its 2005 Report to the President and develop a plan to address outstanding recommendations. Education and VA agreed with GAO's recommendations. HHS, DOL, DOT, and other federal agencies neither agreed nor disagreed with the report. Technical comments were incorporated as appropriate.

View [GAO-12-647](#). For more information, contact David J. Wise at (202) 512-2834 or wised@gao.gov.

June 2012

TRANSPORTATION-DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS

Federal Coordination Efforts Could Be Further Strengthened

What GAO Found

Eighty federal programs are authorized to fund transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged, but transportation is not the primary mission of most of the programs GAO identified. Of these, the Department of Transportation administers 7 programs that support public transportation. The remaining 73 programs are administered by 7 other federal agencies and provide a variety of human services, such as job training, education, or medical care, which incorporate transportation as an eligible expense in support of program goals. Total federal spending on transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged remains unknown because, in many cases, federal departments do not separately track spending for these services. However, total funding for the 28 programs that do track or estimate transportation spending, including obligations and expenditures, was at least \$11.8 billion in fiscal year 2010.

The interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility, which the Secretary of Transportation chairs, has led governmentwide transportation coordination efforts since 2003. The Coordinating Council has undertaken a number of activities through its "United We Ride" initiative aimed at improving coordination at the federal level and providing assistance for state and local coordination. For example, its 2005 Report to the President on Human Service Transportation Coordination outlined collective and individual department actions and recommendations to decrease duplication, enhance efficiencies, and simplify access for consumers. Key challenges to federal interagency coordination efforts include a lack of activity at the leadership level of the Coordinating Council in recent years—the Coordinating Council leadership has not met since 2008—and the absence of key guidance documents for furthering agency coordination efforts. For example, the Coordinating Council lacks a strategic plan that contains agency roles and responsibilities, measurable outcomes, or required follow-up. GAO has previously reported that defining and articulating a common outcome and reinforcing agency accountability through agency plans and reports are important elements for agencies to enhance and sustain collaborative efforts.

State and local officials GAO interviewed use a variety of planning and service coordination efforts to serve the transportation disadvantaged. Efforts include state coordinating councils, regional and local planning, one-call centers, mobility managers, and vehicle sharing. For example, state coordinating councils provide a forum for federal, state, and local agencies to discuss and resolve problems related to the provision of transportation services to the transportation disadvantaged. In other examples, one-call centers can provide clients with transportation program information and referrals for appropriate service providers and mobility managers may serve many functions—as policy coordinators, operations service brokers, and customer travel navigators. However, state and local governments face several challenges in coordinating these services—including insufficient federal leadership, changes to state legislation and policies that may hamper coordination efforts, and limited financial resources in the face of growing disadvantaged populations.

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Abbreviations

ACCT	Washington's Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation
CMS	Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
DOL	U.S. Department of Labor
DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
ICTC	Wisconsin's Interagency Council on Transportation Coordination
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
NRC	National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
VA	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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Accountability * Integrity * Reliability

United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

June 20, 2012

The Honorable Tim Johnson
Chairman
The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
Ranking Member
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
United States Senate

Access to transportation services is essential for millions of Americans to participate fully in society and be able to access human services, including health, education, and job training programs. However, many individuals are unable to provide their own transportation or have difficulty accessing public transportation due to their age, disability, or income constraints. We have previously identified a myriad of federal programs that are authorized to use federal funds for transportation services to assist these “transportation-disadvantaged” individuals in accessing human service programs.

Federal agencies, including the Departments of Agriculture (USDA), Education, Health and Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Interior, Labor (DOL), Transportation (DOT), and Veterans Affairs (VA), provide funds to state and local agencies that can be used for transportation to help individuals access federal programs, including education, employment, medical care, or other human services.¹ In March 2011, we reported that improved coordination of these programs and the transportation services they provide has the potential to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of these services, while also reducing duplication, overlap, and fragmentation of services.² Coordination of transportation services can take many forms, including information sharing among programs, pooling resources, and

¹Some federal programs, such as those administered by VA, may provide direct transportation services to beneficiaries, as opposed to funds to state and local agencies to provide these services.

²See GAO, *Opportunities to Reduce Potential Duplication in Government Programs, Save Tax Dollars, and Enhance Revenue*, [GAO-11-318SP](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 1, 2011) and *List of Selected Federal Programs That Have Similar or Overlapping Objectives, Provide Similar Services, or Are Fragmented Across Government Missions*, [GAO-11-474R](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 18, 2011).

consolidating trips provided by various agencies. In our 2011 report, we found that additional action by federal departments was necessary to better coordinate their programs and eliminate the potential for duplication and fragmentation.³

Given these concerns, you asked us to review (1) which federal programs provide funding for transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged; (2) what federal coordination efforts have been undertaken since 2003 and what challenges remain; and (3) what types of coordination have occurred at the state and local levels.

To identify the universe of federal programs that provide funding for transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged, we examined our prior work on the topic, conducted a search of the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, reviewed program information provided by federal officials, and reviewed relevant federal laws governing the use of federal funds for transportation services. To determine what federal coordination efforts have taken place since 2003 and what challenges remain, we conducted interviews with officials from eight federal agencies—USDA, Education, HHS, HUD, Interior, DOL, DOT, and VA—and reviewed relevant documentation provided by agency officials. We chose these agencies because they administered programs that were authorized to provide funding for transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged in fiscal year 2010 and were identified by executive order⁴ to participate in coordination. We also interviewed transportation researchers and officials from relevant industry and advocacy groups. To identify the types of coordination that have occurred at the state and local level, we conducted interviews with state and local officials from five states—Florida, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. We chose these states based on a variety of characteristics, including target populations who use these services, existence of a state coordinating body, and geographic diversity. As part of our site visit interviews, we spoke with officials from state and local human service and transportation agencies, metropolitan planning organizations, transportation providers, and interest and advocacy groups. Appendix I contains a more detailed discussion of our objectives, scope, and methodology.

³[GAO-11-318SP](#).

⁴Human Service Transportation Coordination, Exec. Order No. 13330 (Feb. 24, 2004).

We conducted this performance audit from June 2011 to June 2012 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

Transportation-disadvantaged populations, including those that cannot provide their own transportation due to age, disability, or income constraints, may face challenges in accessing transportation, such as lack of access to public transportation or a private vehicle. For example, according to a 2011 report by the National Council on Disability, people with disabilities are more likely than people without disabilities to report that they have inadequate transportation (34 percent versus 16 percent, respectively).⁵ We have previously reported that people in need of transportation often benefit from greater and higher quality services when transportation providers coordinate their operations.⁶ In addition, we have reported that coordination has the potential to reduce federal transportation program costs by clustering passengers; using fewer one-way trips; and sharing the use of personnel, equipment, and facilities.

Federal agencies, including USDA, Education, HHS, HUD, Interior, DOL, DOT, and VA, play an important role in helping transportation-disadvantaged populations access federal programs by providing funds to state and local grantees. Federal programs that provide funding for transportation cover a variety of services, including education, job training, employment, nutrition, health, medical care, or other human services. As we have previously reported, many federally funded programs purchase transportation services from existing private or public providers.⁷ This includes contracting for services with private

⁵National Council on Disability, *National Disability Policy: A Progress Report* (Washington, D.C.: October 2011).

⁶GAO, *Transportation Coordination: Benefits and Barriers Exist, and Planning Efforts Progress Slowly*, [GAO/RCED-00-1](#) (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 22, 1999).

⁷GAO, *Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations: Some Coordination Efforts Among Programs Providing Transportation Services, but Obstacles Persist*, [GAO-03-697](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 30, 2003).

transportation providers or providing transit passes, taxi vouchers, or mileage reimbursement to program participants, or some combination of these methods. Some programs may use federal funds to purchase and operate their own vehicles.

DOT and HHS formed the Coordinating Council on Human Services Transportation (Coordinating Council)⁸ in 1986 to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of human service transportation⁹ by coordinating related programs at the federal level and promoting the maximum feasible coordination at the state and local levels.¹⁰ In 2003, we reported that coordination efforts at the federal, state, and local levels varied greatly, and while some coordination efforts showed promising results, obstacles continued to impede coordination.¹¹ As a result, we recommended that, among other things, the Coordinating Council be expanded to include additional federal agencies. The Coordinating Council was expanded to 11 federal agencies in 2004 by Executive Order 13330 and renamed the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility.¹² The expanded Coordinating Council was charged with, among other things, promoting interagency cooperation and establishing

⁸The Coordinating Council underwent several name changes, notably in 1998 and 2004, but for the purposes of this report, we will refer to it as the Coordinating Council throughout its existence.

⁹According to the Federal Transit Administration, human service transportation is transportation services provided by or on behalf of a human services agency to provide access to agency services and to meet the basic, day-to-day mobility needs of transportation-disadvantaged populations, especially individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes.

¹⁰In a 1999 report on transportation coordination, we found that coordination efforts of DOT and HHS, as members of the Coordinating Council, were ongoing but needed strengthening. See [GAO/RCED-00-1](#).

¹¹In 2003, we also reported that state and local agencies that provide transportation services under a myriad of federally funded programs run the risk of duplication of effort and inefficiencies in providing transportation when those agencies do not coordinate. See [GAO-03-697](#). In 2004, we issued a report on agencies' progress in implementing our 2003 recommendations. See GAO, *Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations: Federal Agencies Are Taking Steps to Assist States and Local Agencies in Coordinating Transportation Services*, [GAO-04-420R](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 24, 2004).

¹²Membership of the Coordinating Council was expanded to include the Secretaries of Transportation, Health and Human Services, Education, Labor, Veterans Affairs, Agriculture, Housing and Urban Development, and Interior, the Attorney General, the Commissioner of Social Security, and an eleventh member designated by the Chairman of the Coordinating Council, the Chairman of the National Council on Disability.

appropriate mechanisms to minimize duplication and overlap of federal programs and services so that transportation-disadvantaged persons have access to improved transportation services.

More recently, in 2011, we reported that reducing or eliminating duplication, overlap, and fragmentation among government programs and activities could save tax dollars and help agencies to provide more efficient and effective services.¹³ With regard to transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged, we found that, while some federal agencies were developing guidance and technical assistance for transportation coordination, federal departments still had more work to do in identifying and assessing their transportation programs, working with other departments to identify opportunities for additional coordination, and developing and disseminating policies and grantee guidance for coordinating transportation services.¹⁴ As we have previously reported, many federal efforts transcend more than one agency, yet agencies face a range of challenges and barriers when they attempt to work collaboratively.¹⁵ Both Congress and the executive branch have recognized this, and in January 2011, the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 was enacted, updating the almost two-decades-old Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA).¹⁶ This act establishes a new framework aimed at taking a more crosscutting and integrated approach to focusing on results and improving government performance. As we reported in February 2012, effective implementation of this act could play an important role in clarifying desired outcomes; addressing program performance spanning multiple organizations; and facilitating future actions to reduce unnecessary duplication, overlap, and fragmentation.¹⁷

¹³See [GAO-11-318SP](#) and [GAO-11-474R](#).

¹⁴In February 2012, we reported that federal departments had not yet fully addressed these actions. See GAO, *Follow-up on 2011 Report: Status of Actions Taken to Reduce Duplication, Overlap, and Fragmentation, Save Tax Dollars, and Enhance Revenue*, [GAO-12-453SP](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 28, 2012).

¹⁵See GAO, *2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue*, [GAO-12-342SP](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 28, 2012).

¹⁶Pub. L. No. 111-352, 124 Stat. 3866 (2011), amending 5 U.S.C. §§ 301 and 306 and 31 U.S.C. §§ 1115, 1116, and adding 31 U.S.C. §§ 1120-1125 (GPRA).

¹⁷[GAO-12-342SP](#).

In recent years, Congress has supported increased transportation coordination, as reflected in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).¹⁸ Enacted in 2005, SAFETEA-LU amended several human services transportation coordination provisions¹⁹ sharpening the focus on transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with lower incomes. Currently, the law requires the establishment of a locally developed, coordinated, public transit-human services transportation plan for all of DOT's human service transportation programs administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Further, it requires the plan to be developed by a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services communities, including the public. Federal law also has promoted coordinated funding for non-DOT programs to be used as matching funds for specific transportation programs. More recently, FTA's fiscal year 2013 budget request proposed consolidating some existing programs to give communities more flexibility in designing and coordinating FTA-sponsored human service programs.

Eighty Federal Programs Fund Transportation Services for the Transportation Disadvantaged and Total Spending Is Unknown

Federal Programs

We identified 80 federal programs that fund a variety of transportation services for transportation-disadvantaged populations (see fig. 1). Thirty-one of these programs are administered by HHS. The Departments of Education and HUD each administer 12 programs; DOT administers 7

¹⁸Pub. L. No. 109-59, 119 Stat. 1144 (2005).

¹⁹49 U.S.C. ch. 53; SAFETEA-LU, § 3046 (49 U.S.C. § 5338 Note).

programs; and DOL, VA, Interior, and USDA administer 18 programs combined. Out of the 80 federal programs identified, 4 programs focus expressly on supporting transportation services for transportation-disadvantaged populations, including DOT's Capital Assistance Program for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities, Job Access and Reverse Commute Program, Capital and Training Assistance Program for Over-the-Road Bus Accessibility, and the New Freedom Program. A full list of programs is in appendix II.

Figure 1: Number of Federal Programs GAO Identified Authorized to Provide Transportation Services to the Transportation Disadvantaged in Fiscal Year 2010, by Agency



Transportation is not the primary mission for the vast majority of the programs we identified. Except for the 7 DOT programs, where all funds are used to support public transportation, the remaining 73 programs we identified primarily provide a variety of human services, such as job training, employment, education, medical care, or other services, which incorporate transportation as an eligible program expense to ensure participants can access a service. In addition, the types of transportation services provided to the transportation-disadvantaged population through these federal programs vary, and may include capital investments (e.g., purchasing vehicles), reimbursement of transportation costs (e.g., transit fares, gas, bus passes), or direct provision of transportation service to program clients (e.g., operating vehicles). Examples of transportation services authorized for funding include the following:

- HHS's Medicaid program reimburses states that provide Medicaid beneficiaries with bus passes to access eligible medical services, among other transportation options.
- DOL's Workforce Investment Act-funded programs can provide funding for transportation services so that recipients can access employment and participate in required work activities. Types of transportation services include bus passes and cab fare.
- DOT's Job Access and Reverse Commute Program allows for grantee agencies to purchase vehicles such as vans to improve access to transportation for employment-related services.
- VA's Beneficiary Travel Program, as part of Veterans Medical Care Benefits, can provide mileage reimbursement to low-income or disabled veterans for travel to receive medical services at their VA hospital.²⁰

Federal Spending

Total spending on transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged remains unknown because, in many cases, federal departments do not separately track spending for these services. Of the

²⁰According to VA officials, VA's Beneficiary Travel Program, as part of Veterans Medical Care Benefits, provides mileage reimbursement, common carrier transportation (e.g., plane, boat, taxi, bus), and, when medically indicated, special mode transport (ambulance, wheelchair van, etc.) to low-income or disabled veterans for travel to receive treatment, care, or services at VA or VA-authorized medical facilities.

80 programs we identified, roughly two-thirds of the programs were unable to provide spending information for eligible transportation services. However, total expenditures and obligations for the 28 programs that do track or estimate transportation spending were at least \$11.8 billion in fiscal year 2010 (see table 1).²¹ DOT's 7 programs accounted for about \$9.5 billion of this total amount. Of the non-DOT programs, HHS's Medicaid program and VA's Veterans Medical Care Benefits program each reported spending over \$700 million in fiscal year 2010.

Table 1: Available Financial Program Information for Fiscal Year 2010

Dollars in thousands

Program name	Agency	Fiscal year 2010 federal spending for transportation ^a
Urbanized Area Formula Program	Transportation	\$4,849,411 (obligated)
Capital Investment Grants	Transportation	\$3,566,690 (obligated)
Medicaid	Health and Human Services	\$786,967 (partial) ^b
Veterans Medical Care Benefits	Veterans Affairs	\$745,315 (obligated)
Nonurbanized Area Formula Program	Transportation	\$624,837 (obligated)
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	Health and Human Services	\$445,119 (expended)
Capital Assistance Program for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities	Transportation	\$176,237 (obligated)
Job Access and Reverse Commute	Transportation	\$163,977 (obligated)
New Freedom Program	Transportation	\$90,141 (obligated)
State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program	Education	\$81,000 (estimate)
Special Programs for the Aging, Title III, Part B, Grants for Supportive Services and Senior Centers	Health and Human Services	\$73,586 (expended)
Indian Schools - Student Transportation	Interior	\$52,638 (obligated)
Health Centers	Health and Human Services	\$26,300 (expended)
Job Corps	Labor	\$24,100 (estimate)
Social Services Block Grants	Health and Human Services	\$22,864 (estimate)
HIV Emergency Relief Project Grants	Health and Human Services	\$10,750 (estimate)
HIV Care Formula Grants	Health and Human Services	\$5,598 (estimate)

²¹Spending was reported by program officials, and we did not verify the information. Amounts obligated or expended on transportation are given, depending upon the information available. When actual information was not available, agency officials provided estimates.

Dollars in thousands

Program name	Agency	Fiscal year 2010 federal spending for transportation ^a	
Community Development Block Grants/Entitlement Grants	Housing and Urban Development	\$4,218	(expenditure)
Children's Health Insurance Program	Health and Human Services	\$3,682	(partial) ^b
Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS	Housing and Urban Development	\$1,530	(expended)
VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program	Veterans Affairs	\$720	(obligated)
Capital and Training Assistance Program for Over-the-Road Bus Accessibility	Transportation	\$544	(obligated)
Special Diabetes Program for Indians Diabetes Prevention and Treatment Projects	Health and Human Services	\$419	(estimate)
Indian Child and Family Education	Interior	\$373	(estimate)
Community Development Block Grants/State's Program and Non-Entitlement Grants in Hawaii	Housing and Urban Development	\$19	(expended)
Urban Indian Health Services	Health and Human Services	\$7	(estimate)
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services-Access to Recovery	Health and Human Services	\$4	(estimate)
Community Development Block Grants/Special Purpose Grants/Insular Areas	Housing and Urban Development	\$0	(expended) ^c
Total		\$11,757,046^d	

Source: GAO analysis of spending data reported by program officials.

^aWe did not verify the information provided. Obligated refers to a definite commitment by the federal government to make payments. Partial refers to spending reported by some states, but not all states. Expended refers to spending that has been paid.

^bDue to differences in the way states report their Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program expenses, transportation spending information for these programs does not include all states, so it is a partial accounting of total spending on transportation.

^cThis program did not expend funds on transportation in fiscal year 2010.

^dFigures do not add to total due to rounding.

Most of the programs we identified do not separately track transportation spending.²² According to federal officials, transportation spending may not be tracked for several reasons, including the following:

- Some programs allow for transportation spending as an optional service, but it is not required so they do not ask grantees to provide spending information. For example, HHS's Head Start program, which provides comprehensive child development services to low-income children and their families, reported that many of its grantees may provide transportation, but the agency does not collect specific data on transportation spending.
- Some federal programs give states and localities broad flexibility to administer program funds, and the program structure may not lend itself to tracking transportation expenses. For example, Education provides grants to states under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for special education and related services to children with disabilities.²³ State education agencies allocate most of these grant funds to local education agencies, usually school systems, to provide these services.²⁴ Education does not collect data on the amount of funds expended by local education agencies for specific services, including transportation services.
- Some agencies may consider transportation services to be an administrative expense, and may include transportation spending with other eligible administrative expenses. As a result, transportation-specific spending is not fully known. For example, HHS's Medicaid

²²In March 2011, we identified actions that federal departments on the Coordinating Council should undertake, including identifying and assessing their transportation programs and related expenditures, in order to promote federal coordination and reduce the potential for fragmentation, overlap, and duplication. See [GAO-11-318SP](#). In February 2012, we reported that federal departments had not yet fully addressed these actions and that most federal departments on the Coordinating Council do not have an inventory of existing programs or related expenditure information for transportation services. See [GAO-12-453SP](#).

²³Including Special Education Grants to States, Special Education Preschool Grants, and Special Education-Grants for Infants and Toddlers.

²⁴In order for a local education agency to use IDEA funds to purchase vehicles, the local education agency would need to obtain approval from the state educational agency and demonstrate that the vehicle purchase was necessary for proper administration of the IDEA program.

program has two allowable methods for states to report the costs of transportation services to the program—as expenditures for nonemergency medical transportation benefits or as an administrative expense, which is combined with other nontransportation expenses.²⁵ As a result, HHS does not fully capture the total transportation costs provided under its Medicaid program.

- Resources necessary to track this information in some federal departments may outweigh the potential benefits, according to HUD officials who told us that for some HUD programs, requiring grantees to report transportation expenses would require a new reporting effort and that the resulting information may not be analyzed due to resource constraints.²⁶

Federal Coordination Efforts Are Led by an Interagency Council, but Key Challenges Remain

Coordinating Council

The interagency Coordinating Council, chaired by DOT, has been charged with leading governmentwide transportation coordination efforts since 2003.²⁷ The Coordinating Council launched the “United We Ride” initiative in fall 2003, designed to establish an interagency forum for communication and help states and communities overcome obstacles to coordination. The Coordinating Council undertook a number of activities through its United We Ride initiative, largely between 2003 and 2007.

²⁵Each state has an individual agreement with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, called a state plan.

²⁶Some other HUD programs, such as the Community Development Block Grant programs, track federal transportation spending, as shown in table 1.

²⁷In 2003, the Coordinating Council, consisting of HHS and DOT, invited DOL and Education to join, as they had been actively working under the council. The Coordinating Council was expanded by executive order in February 2004 to include 10 federal agencies—one more agency was added by the chair to bring its membership to 11 federal entities.

Coordinating Council actions included issuing publications such as policy statements and progress reports on efforts taken, providing funding through FTA to help states and localities promote coordinated services and planning, and supporting technical assistance efforts (see table 2). For example, the Coordinating Council's 2005 Report to the President outlined the council's action plan for implementing the 2004 executive order, reported on the council's accomplishments, and made specific recommendations to improve human services transportation coordination. The Coordinating Council is structured in several levels, including the Secretary-level members, an Executive Council consisting of senior-level appointees from each member agency, and interagency working groups (seven in fiscal year 2011) that cut across issue areas at the programmatic level.²⁸ The Coordinating Council is staffed by officials from FTA. The Secretary-level members of the Coordinating Council last met in 2008.²⁹ However, according to DOT officials, more recent Coordinating Council efforts have taken place at the working group level.

²⁸Working groups cover such areas as coordination infrastructure, emergency preparedness, and current administration priorities such as veterans' transportation.

²⁹According to DOT, the Secretary-level members of the Coordinating Council, or their designees, met annually in 2004, 2005, 2007, and 2008. The Executive Council met from 2004 through 2007—quarterly in 2004 and biannually from 2005 through 2007.

Table 2: Examples of Coordinating Council Actions

Actions	Description
Reports and policy statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>2003 Framework for Action</i>: The 2003 planning and assessment tool provides a step-by-step guide for states and communities to assess their transportation delivery systems and develop a plan for a fully coordinated human services transportation system. • <i>2005 Report to the President on Human Service Transportation Coordination</i>: The 2005 report outlined collective and individual department actions and recommendations to decrease duplication, enhance efficiencies, and simplify access for consumers, as required by Executive Order 13330. Recommendations included: (1) Coordinated Transportation Planning: seek mechanisms to require human service transportation programs to participate in coordinated planning; (2) Vehicle Sharing: promote vehicle sharing between federal programs; and (3) Cost Sharing: develop standard transportation cost allocation principles for federal human service and transportation agencies.^a • <i>2006 Policy Statement on Coordinated Human Service Transportation Planning</i>: The 2006 policy statement encouraged member agencies to ensure that grantees participate in local coordinated planning. Each agency took a pledge to implement the coordination plan within 6 months of Coordinating Council adoption. • <i>2006 Policy Statement on Vehicle Sharing</i>: The 2006 policy statement clarified that federal grantees are allowed to share the use of their own vehicles so long as costs are also shared. • <i>2007 Progress Report on Implementation of Executive Order 13330</i>: The 2007 Progress Report described actions taken since the 2005 Report to the President, including recommendation follow-up. Actions taken on 2005 recommendations included: (1) Coordinated Transportation Planning: the Coordinating Council adopted the 2006 policy statement; (2) Vehicle Sharing: the Coordinating Council adopted the 2006 policy statement; and (3) Cost Sharing: the Coordinating Council reported it was working on cost-sharing principles that would be adopted by the Council and implemented by member agencies.^b
Funding opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>United We Ride State Grants</i>: FTA awarded three cycles of state grants in 2004, 2006, and 2009. These grants are intended to (1) support the development of state-level coordinated plans, (2) implement target elements of state action plans, and (3) help develop mobility management efforts, respectively. • <i>Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative Grant Program</i>: This federal initiative supports one-call transportation resource centers, developed and supported by the Coordinating Council's veterans' affairs working group in partnership with the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, Labor, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs. Over \$34 million in federal funding was awarded in 2011 for the first round and \$30 million in federal funding is to be awarded in 2012.^c
Technical assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination (NRC)</i>: Through a cooperative agreement with FTA, the NRC was formed in 2007 to provide states and communities with the support they need to better integrate public transportation services with the services and demands of their human services networks. The NRC also provides technical assistance to the Coordinating Council and its member agencies. • <i>United We Ride Regional Ambassadors</i>: NRC employs transportation professionals, called regional ambassadors, who provide technical assistance to state and local agencies on coordination efforts, including assisting states in developing and implementing coordinated human services transportation plans. • <i>National Partnerships</i>: NRC convenes several partnerships including a national Partnership for Mobility Management, largely funded by FTA, consisting of seven national organizations, formed to promote and support mobility management in states and localities by providing technical assistance, training, and a national communication network for mobility managers.^d

Source: GAO analysis of information from the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility and the National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination.

^aOther Coordinating Council recommendations included: (4) Reporting and Evaluation: develop methods to analyze coordination effectiveness; and (5) Consolidated Access Transportation Demonstration Program: seek statutory authority for a pilot project to consolidate federal funding for a single transportation system to meet the mobility needs of transportation-disadvantaged populations.

^bAdditional recommendation follow-up included: (4) Reporting and Evaluation: the Coordinating Council developed a logic model to measure progress towards goals; and (5) Consolidated Access Transportation Demonstration Program: DOT launched eight demonstration projects in 2007.

^cLargely funded by FTA. VA and DOL are also contributing funds to help support this initiative. According to DOT officials, \$3 million in VA funds have been allocated for hiring and training mobility managers and \$400,000 in DOL funds have been allocated to purchase open government technologies for grantees. DOT officials stated that the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative Grant Program will provide valuable lessons on which to model subsequent program collaborations among members of the Coordinating Council.

^dAccording to FTA, mobility management consists of short-range planning and management activities and projects for improving coordination among public transportation and other transportation service providers.

FTA also funds a variety of technical assistance efforts for states and localities to help foster state leadership in human services transportation coordination. In addition to funding the NRC and its efforts, FTA supports Easter Seals Project ACTION,³⁰ the National Center on Senior Transportation,³¹ the National Rural Transit Assistance Program,³² and the Joblinks Program³³ (in cooperation with DOL), among other efforts, to

³⁰Easter Seals Project ACTION's mission is to promote universal access to transportation for people with disabilities under federal law and beyond by partnering with transportation providers, the disability community, and others through the provision of training, technical assistance, applied research, outreach, and communication. Project ACTION is funded through a cooperative agreement with FTA. According to FTA, Easter Seals Project ACTION is instrumental in fostering mobility management techniques.

³¹The National Center on Senior Transportation's mission is to increase transportation options for older adults and enhance their ability to live more independently within their communities throughout the United States. The center is funded through a cooperative agreement with FTA.

³²The National Rural Transit Assistance Program's mission is to address the needs of rural, small urban, and tribal transit operators across the nation. The program is funded through a cooperative agreement with FTA.

³³Joblinks focuses on the mobility needs of low-wage job seekers and earners, as well as workers with disabilities, youth, veterans, and older workers and works to connect workforce development agencies, transportation providers, and other stakeholders with transportation-to-work solutions that are affordable, reliable, and accessible. Joblinks activities are funded by FTA and DOL. According to FTA, the Joblinks Employment Resource Center developed a One Call-One Click toolkit with resources for communities and states interested in developing a One Call-One Click Transportation Center, which has helped to support coordinated transportation for transit-dependent populations.

support coordinated transportation and mobility management at the state and local levels. FTA and DOL also provided funding to the National Council of State Legislatures to study and report on state transportation coordination strategies.³⁴

Some agency programs we reviewed require or encourage their grantees to coordinate transportation services through regulations, guidance, or agency initiatives. For example, DOT's Job Access and Reverse Commute, New Freedom, and Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities programs require grantees to coordinate their transportation services and establish locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plans.³⁵ Similarly, HHS's Head Start program issued regulations in 2001 requiring its grantees to participate in coordinated planning processes, when possible.³⁶ In addition, some programs have provided guidance to their grantees to encourage transportation coordination. For example, in 2012, DOL's Employment and Training Administration developed and disseminated a Training and Employment Notice encouraging state workforce agencies and One-Stop Career Centers to participate in local human services transportation coordination planning.³⁷ In addition, the Veterans Health Administration has a new initiative under way, the Veterans Transportation Service, to help veterans access transportation resources to obtain care by

³⁴National Conference of State Legislatures, *State Human Service Transportation Coordinating Councils: An Overview and State Profiles* (Denver, Colo., April 2010).

³⁵DOT issued guidance requiring the establishment of a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan for all FTA human service transportation program grants, effective in 2007. See *Job Access and Reverse Commute Program: FTA C 9050.1*, *New Freedom Program: FTA C 9045.1*, *Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program: FTA C 9070.1*. FTA verifies the existence of a coordinated plan but does not evaluate the plans. In addition, DOT issued guidance that defined and made mobility management activities eligible as a capital expense under all FTA formula programs, while permitting other non-DOT federal funds to be used as matches for FTA human service transportation grant programs. FTA's planning programs (5305(e) and (f)) can also be used to support the coordinated planning effort. According to FTA, this adds significant resources for data collection, forecasting, and transit market analysis of the mobility needs of transportation-disadvantaged individuals. Planning is an eligible activity under Section 5307.

³⁶66 Fed. Reg. 5296 (Jan. 18, 2001).

³⁷Training and Employment Notice No. 21-11 (Jan. 3, 2012). DOL also developed and disseminated a Training and Employment Notice to the public workforce system on human services transportation coordination in 2007. See Training and Employment Notice No. 36-06 (June 21, 2007).

improving resource coordination with other community transportation service providers.³⁸

Key Challenges in Coordination Efforts

Although some agencies have coordination efforts under way, there are still several challenges to federal interagency coordination efforts including a recent lack of activity at the leadership level of the Coordinating Council and the absence of key guidance documents for furthering agency coordination efforts. The Secretary-level leaders of the 11 Coordinating Council members have not met since 2008, and the Executive Council designees have not met since 2007. According to some agency officials, this lack of direction and visible activity on coordination from agency leaders contributes to a lack of buy-in from federal program officials, which may affect how program coordination is treated at the state and local levels. For example, some agency officials told us that direction and formal buy-in at the executive level is needed for improvements in coordination to occur. While presidential executive orders remain in effect from one administration to the next unless they are revised or rescinded, some agency officials said it was unclear whether the 2004 executive order outlining federal coordination efforts effectively translated from one administration to the next. Some officials attributed this uncertainty to explain why the Coordinating Council's activity level has decreased since 2008.

Key guidance documents, including those discussed below, for furthering agency coordination are absent or incomplete, hindering federal coordination efforts.³⁹

³⁸The Veterans Health Administration also issued an information letter in 2007 to VA medical centers to coordinate transportation services with their local community and other federal agencies, including allowing excess capacity VA transportation services to be used by other federal agencies provided there are agreements in place for reimbursement. See IL 10-2007-006 (Mar. 2, 2007).

³⁹In March 2011, we identified several actions that federal departments on the Coordinating Council should undertake to promote federal coordination and reduce the potential for fragmentation, overlap, and duplication, which include developing and disseminating additional policies and grantee guidance for coordinating transportation services, such as a cost-sharing policy. See [GAO-11-318SP](#). In February 2012, we reported that most of the federal departments on the Coordinating Council that we reviewed had not yet addressed these actions. See [GAO-12-453SP](#).

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- *Strategic plan:* The Coordinating Council lacks a strategic plan that identifies agency roles and responsibilities, measurable outcomes, or required follow-up. According to agency officials, the Coordinating Council is drafting a strategic plan, but officials were unable to provide an estimate for when the plan might be finalized.⁴⁰ As previously discussed, the executive order contained reporting and recommendation requirements, resulting in the 2005 Report to the President and the 2007 Progress Report. However, since those reports, no other guidance document has been created, or is required, to report on actions taken or to plan additional actions. We have previously reported that defining and articulating a common outcome, agreeing on agency roles and responsibilities, and reinforcing agency accountability through agency plans and reports are important elements for agencies to enhance and sustain collaborative efforts.⁴¹ Further, we have reported that federal agencies engaged in collaborative efforts need to create the means to monitor, evaluate, and report on their efforts to enable them to identify areas for improvement. There are several practices involved in strategic planning that could be useful to help the Council determine and communicate its long-term goals and objectives.⁴² However, without a plan to help reinforce agency goals and responsibilities, the Coordinating Council may be hampered in articulating a strategy to help strengthen interagency collaboration and lack the elements needed to remain a viable interagency effort.
 - *Cost-sharing policy:* A joint cost-sharing policy has not been endorsed by all Coordinating Council members, even though development of a cost allocation policy was one of the recommendations of the

⁴⁰The 2010 United We Ride National Dialogue was held to help shape future policy direction and provide input into the strategic plan. See National Academy of Public Administration, *A Report by a Panel of the National Academy of Public Administration for the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility: The United We Ride National Dialogue* (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 2010).

⁴¹See GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: Practices That Can Help Enhance and Sustain Collaboration among Federal Agencies*, [GAO-06-15](#) (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 21, 2005).

⁴²See GAO, *Agencies' Strategic Plans Under GPRA: Key Questions to Facilitate Congressional Review*, [GAO/GGD-10.1.16](#) (Washington, D.C.: 1997) and GAO, *Executive Guide: Effectively Implementing the Government Performance and Results Act*, [GAO/GGD-96-118](#) (Washington, D.C.: 1996).

Coordinating Council in its 2005 Report to the President.⁴³ According to the 2005 report, a major obstacle to sharing transportation resources has been the difficulty of reaching agreements at the local level about the appropriate allocation of costs to each agency. Federal, state, and local agency officials that we spoke with noted that this continues to be a significant impediment. Further, as part of a discussion hosted by the National Academy of Public Administration in 2009, which brought together key stakeholders to discuss ways to improve access to reliable transportation for the transportation disadvantaged, explicit and clear guidance for cost sharing was said to be needed in order to address significant federal policy barriers to coordination.⁴⁴

- *Coordinated transportation planning*: Coordinating Council members pledged to take actions to accomplish federal program grantee participation in locally developed, coordinated planning processes as part of their 2006 Coordinated Human Service Transportation Planning Policy Statement, but it is unclear if the Coordinating Council's members have consistently followed through on their 2006 pledge. According to the Coordinating Council's 2006 policy statement, federal grantees' participation in their local human services transportation planning process is necessary to reduce duplication of services, increase service efficiency, and expand access for transportation-disadvantaged populations. However, the discussion hosted by the National Academy of Public Administration in 2009 indicated that the process for creating coordinated transportation plans continues to need improvement and recommended that Coordinating Council members with grant programs create incentives for their grantees to participate in coordinated planning at the state and local levels.⁴⁵ According to participants, while the Coordinating Council has issued a joint policy on coordinated planning, challenges remain to fully engage agencies that are not funded by DOT in the

⁴³According to FTA, while a final federal cost-sharing policy has not been issued, FTA funded a Transit Cooperative Research Program study which aims to provide guidance for state and local agencies to begin sharing costs with partners. However, this report has not been endorsed by all member agencies of the Coordinating Council. See Transportation Research Board, Transit Cooperative Research Program, *Sharing the Costs of Human Services Transportation* (Washington, D.C.: 2011).

⁴⁴National Academy of Public Administration, *The United We Ride National Dialogue*.

⁴⁵National Academy of Public Administration, *The United We Ride National Dialogue*.

planning process at the local levels. DOT's FTA is the only agency that has adopted a coordinated human services transportation planning requirement, which has resulted in broadened participation in the transportation planning processes.

Coordination of services is also challenging due to differences in federal program requirements and perceived regulatory or statutory barriers, according to officials. For example, coordinated planning is generally only a requirement for FTA-funded human service transportation programs, and while a handful of programs may encourage coordination, other federal program rules are unclear about coordination of transportation services between programs. Also, programs may have perceived or actual statutory or regulatory barriers related to sharing costs, or have differences in service requirements and eligibility. For example, HHS's Medicaid program is the largest source of federal funds for nonemergency medical transportation for qualified low-income beneficiaries;⁴⁶ however, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) officials expressed concern about coordinating transportation services due to concerns about commingling federal program funds⁴⁷ and the potential for fraud.⁴⁸ CMS has issued rules that allow states to contract with one or more transportation brokers to manage their Medicaid transportation to, among other things, reduce costs.⁴⁹ However, these rules could result in fragmented transportation services at the state

⁴⁶Under 42 C.F.R. § 431.53, states are required in their state plans to ensure necessary transportation of Medicaid beneficiaries to and from medical providers. Expenditures for transportation may be claimed as administrative costs, or a state may elect to include transportation as a medical benefit under its state Medicaid plan.

⁴⁷CMS officials trace their concern to restrictions against the use of Medicaid funds for purposes other than to deliver medical services to eligible Medicaid beneficiaries, which they argue is implemented by CMS's regulations and policy. Further, according to CMS officials, federal Medicaid funding must be matched by nonfederal funding unless there is express authority under federal law for other federal funds to be used for purposes of the nonfederal Medicaid matching share.

⁴⁸The Medicaid program is on GAO's High-Risk List, in part because of improper payments submitted by providers for ineligible claims. See GAO, *High-Risk Series, an Update*, [GAO-11-278](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 2011).

⁴⁹HHS issued regulations (42 C.F.R. § 440.170(a)(4)) that permit states to establish, under the state plan, a nonemergency medical transportation brokerage program. Under such a program, the state contracts with one or more brokers to manage the provision of nonemergency medical transportation services for beneficiaries who need transportation to or from medical providers.

and local levels because some brokers transport only Medicaid-eligible beneficiaries, and may not coordinate their transportation services with other programs. In another example, VA officials explained that VA only has the authority to provide transportation at the agency's expense to certain qualifying veterans and nonveterans in relation to VA health care, but has no legal authority to transport nonbeneficiaries.

State and Local Efforts Include Transportation Planning and Service Coordination, but Challenges Continue

State and Local Transportation Coordination Efforts

State and local officials in the five states we selected used a variety of coordinated planning and service efforts to serve the transportation disadvantaged. One way that states facilitate coordination efforts is through statewide coordinating bodies—some created by legislative actions and others by executive order or initiative—to oversee the implementation of coordinated transportation for transportation-disadvantaged populations in their states. State coordinating bodies can help to facilitate collaboration between federal, state, and local agencies by providing a venue for agencies to discuss and resolve transportation issues to better coordinate transportation activities related to the provision of human services and enhance services for transportation-disadvantaged populations. Three of the five states we selected had state coordinating bodies in 2010.⁵⁰ In addition to state coordinating councils,

⁵⁰In 2010, the National Conference of State Legislatures reported that about half of the states in the United States have created state coordinating councils. We did not verify the accuracy of this number but verified that three of our five selected states—Florida, Washington, and Wisconsin— did have a coordinating council in 2010; Texas and Virginia did not. See National Conference of State Legislatures, *State Human Service Transportation Coordinating Councils: An Overview and State Profiles* (Denver, Colo.: Apr. 2010). According to this report, many state coordinating councils were created as a result of the United We Ride initiative to improve coordination of human services transportation activities.

efforts include regional and local planning, one-call centers, mobility managers, and vehicle sharing (see table 3).

Table 3: Types of State and Local Transportation Coordination Efforts

Coordination activity	Description
State coordinating council	Several states have created statewide coordinating bodies to oversee the implementation of coordinated transportation for the transportation disadvantaged in their states. For example, Florida has created a Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged that partners with a number of state, local, and private transportation and human services entities to coordinate transportation services for the state's transportation disadvantaged. According to a 2008 Florida State University study, each dollar invested in transportation-disadvantaged program trips throughout the state in 2007 generated benefits of \$8.35. ^a Based on these figures, the study concluded that the estimated benefits of providing coordinated trips for transportation-disadvantaged programs outweighed their costs.
Regional and local planning	With regional and local planning, some combination of human service and transportation agencies and providers work together to plan transportation services for their clients. For example, Texas encourages its 24 regions, each with a lead agency, to develop regional plans for transportation coordination, in an effort to ensure that the state's public transportation resources benefits are maximized. Representation on the regional planning councils includes regional transportation planners, public transportation and health and human services agencies, transportation providers, and local government officials.
One-call center	One-call centers support human service and other specialized transportation services by providing program information such as service characteristics, eligibility criteria, and referrals for appropriate service providers. For example, a regional planning commission in Virginia operates a one-call center that provides clients with information on the public, private, and volunteer transportation options available in the region. According to officials, in addition to providing information on transportation options, the one-call center also provides referral services for transportation-disadvantaged populations.
Mobility manager	Mobility managers can serve as policy coordinators, operations service brokers, and customer travel navigators. ^b For example, Wisconsin currently has about 52 mobility managers serving its counties and tribes. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation developed a mobility manager training program and pilot using United We Ride/New Freedom grant funding. While funding for this effort has been discontinued, mobility managers in Wisconsin have formed a Wisconsin Association of Mobility Managers, which now holds monthly meetings to discuss their work. According to officials, mobility managers in Wisconsin have made a positive impact on transportation coordination in the state.
Vehicle sharing	With vehicle sharing, one agency may provide transportation for clients of multiple programs, or each program may own its own vehicles but allow them to be used by other programs. For example, in Washington, Mason County Transit and the Superintendent of Schools coordinated so that school buses could be used as transit buses after school hours. According to an official with whom we spoke, this coordination began with a transportation need—and the transit agency and education system worked together to address that need.
Other	Other coordination activities include outreach efforts and continued improvement in communications. For example, in Washington, local outreach efforts serve pockets of unmet transportation needs among minority and Native American populations and also help different programs work together. In rural communities in particular, special outreach is used to help make people aware of the program services for which they qualify. Similarly, communities and service providers are invited to discussions about available services, eligibility, and how to apply for services.

Source: GAO analysis of interviews with officials from selected states.

^aThe Marketing Institute, Florida State University College of Business, *Florida Transportation Disadvantaged Programs: Return on Investment Study* (Mar. 2008).

^bAs policy coordinators, mobility managers may help communities develop coordination plans, programs, and policies, and build local partnerships. As brokers, they coordinate transportation services among all customer groups, service providers, and funding agencies. As travel navigators, mobility managers work with human services agencies and workforce centers that coordinate clients' travel and trip planning needs.

Several state and local agency officials said that federal requirements for the establishment of locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plans for FTA's human service transportation programs have had a positive impact on transportation coordination in their state. According to officials, these planning efforts help to bring relevant stakeholders to the table to discuss needs for the transportation disadvantaged and to resolve problems. For example, in Virginia, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation has taken the lead in implementing this requirement, assisting 21 planning district commissions to formulate human services transportation coordination plans for their districts, and formulating a statewide plan which draws from these local plans. According to officials of a regional planning commission in Virginia, transportation coordination in the state would not be at the same point it is currently without these requirements. These officials said that the federal requirements created one place for people to come together to learn what programs are available, raise awareness, and avoid duplication. Also, a Virginia Regional Transit official told us that the increased communication among agencies due to coordinated planning efforts made it possible for providers to transport more people, including those who were not currently being served, thus opening access to larger and broader groups of people.

Challenges to State and Local Efforts

State and local entities' efforts to coordinate services for the transportation disadvantaged are not without challenges. According to officials, challenges include insufficient federal leadership, changes to state legislation and policies, and limited financial resources in the face of growing unmet needs.

Insufficient federal leadership

Several state and local officials told us that there is not sufficient federal leadership and guidance on how to coordinate transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged and that varying federal program requirements may hinder coordination of transportation services. State and local officials in four out of the five states we selected said that with the exception of DOT, other federal agencies were not actively encouraging transportation coordination. For example, Texas Department of Transportation officials told us there is a disconnect between human services and transportation agencies and that the general perception is

that other human services programs, such as some of those funded by HHS, are exempt from coordination. These officials also said that federal leadership is needed to promote buy-in for transportation coordination among human services agencies and transportation agencies at the state level.

Officials in each of the five states that we selected said that the federal government could provide state and local entities with improved guidance on transportation coordination—especially as it relates to instructions on how to share costs across programs (i.e., determining what portion of a trip should be paid by whom). State and local officials in Virginia, Texas, and Washington identified a fear of losing federal funding if they improperly shared funding with other federal programs. These officials said that federal cost-sharing guidance would help facilitate transportation coordination between programs. Further, state Medicaid officials said that their main priority is to make sure they are following Medicaid requirements, and some officials expressed concerns about their ability to ensure Medicaid funds are being appropriately spent and properly accounted for if they coordinated with other programs. For example, Medicaid officials in one state said that they would need to obtain approval from CMS before adopting any cost-sharing strategies with other programs to ensure the appropriateness of their state program's expenditures. When we spoke with CMS officials, they told us that CMS is not opposed to coordinating transportation services; however, the agency does have concerns that coordination would result in Medicaid funds being improperly commingled with other federal program funds.

Several state and local officials said that varying federal government program requirements may hinder the provision of transportation services and act as barriers to coordination. A regional planning official in Washington told us that varying program requirements may discourage transportation coordination as one program's requirements may not be suitable for another program's clients. For example, if two different program clients were to share school vehicles for special needs populations, each program might have a separate set of rules and requirements. Determining whether drivers meet drug and alcohol testing requirements for both programs could be a challenge, according to this

Changes to state legislation and policies

official.⁵¹ Similarly, an official from the Florida Department of Transportation told us that the federal government could do more to identify standards and requirements that act as barriers to coordination. In Wisconsin, a Department of Transportation study found that key challenges to coordinating transportation services in the state include program regulations or requirements that impede coordination, including different guidance and restrictions on how federal funding could be spent.⁵²

Officials we interviewed in four states identified recent changes in state legislation or state policies as potential challenges to coordinating services for the transportation disadvantaged in their states. According to these officials, such changes have caused some uncertainty in their efforts to coordinate human services transportation in the future. For example, some state coordinating bodies' authority has not been renewed or is about to expire:

- *Executive order not renewed:* In Wisconsin, the governor charged a group of individuals from a number of state agencies to form a state coordinating council in 2005—the Interagency Council on Transportation Coordination (ICTC).⁵³ In addition to sponsoring a statewide coordination conference in 2007, ICTC contracted with a national consultant to develop a Wisconsin Model of Coordination with implementation strategies. Intended outcomes of this model included increasing the quantity and quality of existing transportation resources, supporting and encouraging local coordination efforts, and improving transportation service for users. However, due to a downturn in the economy and a change in the state's administration after the model's completion, its findings were not implemented.

⁵¹A 2011 report prepared for the Washington state legislature found that some of the most significant barriers to coordinating or sharing trips between programs providing transportation stem from differences in federal regulations, especially as they relate to sharing costs between programs. See Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation, *Final Report of the Federal Opportunities Workgroup* (Olympia, Wash.: 2011).

⁵²Wisconsin Department of Transportation, *Wisconsin Human Service Transportation Coordination Model* (July 2008).

⁵³ICTC's membership consists of the Wisconsin Departments of Transportation, Health Services, Veterans Affairs, Workforce Development, and the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance. In addition, ICTC has a multimember Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) which consists of transportation consumers, advocates, providers, and partners who advise ICTC on statewide transportation needs and coordination opportunities.

Because the new administration did not renew the executive order establishing ICTC's authority, ICTC has been inactive since January 2011.

- *Enabling legislation to expire:* In Washington, the state legislature created the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) in 1998 to coordinate with state and local agencies and organizations to provide affordable and accessible transportation choices for the transportation disadvantaged.⁵⁴ Over the years, ACCT has facilitated coordination by helping to form transportation coalitions that include human services representatives, transit services, and community transportation providers. These coalitions plan regional public transportation, evaluate and prioritize project proposals, and implement local coordination strategies. However, enabling legislation for ACCT expires in June 2012 and officials do not expect the legislation to be renewed.

In some states, officials were uncertain about how recent developments may affect their state Medicaid program's participation in state and local efforts to coordinate transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged. For example, in an effort to control program costs, state legislation was signed into law in Florida in June 2011 that moves the responsibility for Medicaid nonemergency medical transportation from the coordinated transportation system run by the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged to a private managed care system. An official with the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged said that it is not known whether the managed care system will choose to operate within the state's coordinated transportation system or contract with private transportation brokers outside of the coordinated system,

⁵⁴ACCT's membership consists of 14 voting members and four nonvoting members. Voting members include representatives from four state agencies—including the Departments of Public Instruction, Transportation, Veterans Affairs, and the Washington Health Care Authority. Ten governor-appointed members serve 2-year terms and include a representative from the Office of the Governor, a representative appointed by the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, a representative appointed by the Developmental Disabilities Council, an at-large consumer of special needs transportation, and representatives from the Washington Association of Pupil Transportation, the Washington State Transit Association, the Community Transportation Association of the Northwest or the Community Action Council Association, regional transportation planning organizations/metropolitan planning organizations, nonemergency medical transportation brokers, and the Washington State Association of Counties. The ACCT Council also consists of four nonvoting legislative members.

which could result in duplication of transportation services. Similarly, officials in Texas and Wisconsin told us that, in an effort to control costs, their state Medicaid program is moving to a transportation brokerage system.⁵⁵ According to some state and local officials, these brokers typically only transport Medicaid-eligible clients and do not often coordinate their transportation services with other federally funded programs. CMS maintains that their brokerage rule does not preclude state Medicaid agencies from coordinating transportation services, as long as they comply with all applicable Medicaid policies and rules and ensure that Medicaid funds are only used for Medicaid services provided to eligible beneficiaries.

Limited financial resources and growing unmet needs

A number of state and local officials in our five selected states told us that limited financial resources and growing unmet needs were challenges for them. In Texas, state and local officials told us that although it is believed that coordination will save costs in the mid- to long-term, state budgets are being reduced in transit and social services agencies, as well as in municipal programs and nonprofit organizations. According to these officials, some agencies and their potential partners find it difficult to come up with funding, even when it is a modest local match for grants. Similarly, state and local officials in Virginia told us that state and local match requirements may preclude some entities from applying for federal funds. State and local officials also mentioned that limited financial resources often promote turf battles—or a mistrust and unwillingness to share resources for fear of losing control of them. Conversely, some officials told us that limited resources were an incentive to coordinate because coordination made the best use of limited resources.

In the face of limited financial resources, state and local officials are also concerned about growing disadvantaged populations and unmet needs—both now and in the future. As part of the discussion hosted by the National Academy of Public Administration in 2009, participants identified continuing transportation gaps in programs across the federal government.⁵⁶ Several state and local officials that we spoke with also

⁵⁵As previously mentioned, CMS has provided states with the authority to establish nonemergency medical transportation brokerage programs in which the state contracts with one or more brokers to manage the provision of transportation services for eligible beneficiaries.

⁵⁶National Academy of Public Administration, *United We Ride National Dialogue*.

expressed concern about their ability to adequately address expected growth in elderly, disabled, low-income, and rural populations. A local transit agency official in Virginia, for example, told us that there is a great need for transportation services for the elderly and disabled and that the need is increasing. This agency official questioned whether transportation providers will have adequate funding and resources to meet this growing demand. In a presentation before the state Senate in 2011, Florida's Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged reported that, statewide, 3.75 million trips had been denied to passengers in the coordinated transportation system during the past 5 years due to a lack of funding or for other reasons. Nevertheless, the commission expects the state's transportation-disadvantaged population to undergo steady growth over the next decade. In addition, a number of state and local entities were concerned about populations in rural areas—primarily because public transportation availability was limited in these areas.

Conclusions

The Coordinating Council was created to, among other things, promote interagency cooperation and minimize duplication and overlap of federal programs providing transportation services to transportation-disadvantaged populations. While some member agencies, including DOT, have remained active in pursuing these goals, sustained interagency activity through the Coordinating Council has lost momentum in recent years. The 11 Coordinating Council members have not met since 2008 and the Executive Council designees have not met since 2007. According to some federal officials, this lack of leadership at the Coordinating Council poses challenges to federal-, state-, and local-level coordination efforts.

Further, the Coordinating Council has been operating without a strategic plan to help determine and communicate its long-term goals and objectives. While Executive Order 13330 spurred Coordinating Council activity beginning in 2004, sustained agency commitment has proved challenging. We have previously reported that articulating a common outcome, agreeing on agency roles and responsibilities, and reinforcing agency accountability through agency plans and reports are important elements for agencies to sustain and improve collaborative efforts. A collaborative interagency strategic planning effort could help to provide the direction and momentum the Coordinating Council needs at this time.

Finally, we have previously reported that federal agencies engaged in collaborative efforts need to create the means to monitor, evaluate, and report on their efforts to enable them to identify areas for improvement. It

is difficult to fully assess activities of the Coordinating Council, in part, because the council has not reported on its activities or reported on progress implementing its own recommendations since 2007. At that time, the Coordinating Council reported that it was working to establish cost-sharing principles for transportation coordination that federal human service and transportation agencies could endorse; however, we found that the council had not accomplished this goal as of June 2012. Also in 2007, the council reported it had issued a policy statement encouraging federally assisted grantees involved in human services transportation to participate in local coordination planning processes. As part of that policy statement, members of the Coordinating Council agreed to take action to implement the policy within 6 months of council adoption; however, it is unclear what implementation actions agencies have taken to date. Despite recent actions that some agencies have taken to encourage coordination and provide technical assistance, without any means to monitor, evaluate, or report on interagency efforts, the Coordinating Council may face barriers to identifying areas for improvement and pursuing its goal of improving transportation services for transportation-disadvantaged populations.

Recommendations for Executive Action

To promote and enhance federal, state, and local coordination activities, we recommend that the Secretary of Transportation, as the chair of the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility, and the Secretaries of the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Labor, and Veterans Affairs, as member agencies of the Coordinating Council, should meet and take the following actions:

- Complete and publish a strategic plan for the Coordinating Council, which should, among other things, clearly outline agency roles and responsibilities and articulate a strategy to help strengthen interagency collaboration and communication.
- Report on the progress of Coordinating Council recommendations made as part of its 2005 Report to the President on Implementation of Executive Order 13330 and develop a plan to address any outstanding recommendations, including the development of a cost-sharing policy endorsed by the Coordinating Council and the actions taken by member agencies to increase federal program grantee participation in locally developed, coordinated planning processes.

Agency Comments

We provided USDA, Education, HHS, HUD, Interior, DOL, DOT, and VA with a draft of this report for their review and comment. In commenting on a draft of this report, Education and VA generally agreed with our conclusions and recommendations. Education also provided technical and written comments, which appear in appendix III. HHS, HUD, and DOT neither agreed nor disagreed with the report and provided technical comments. In their technical comments, DOT officials stated that, as chair of the Coordinating Council, they have been working with the council to refocus its efforts away from policy discussions to the coordination of on-the-ground services, such as through the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative Grant Program, which is discussed in this report. USDA, Interior, and DOL did not comment on our report. We incorporated the technical and clarifying comments that we received from the agencies, as appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to interested congressional committees and the Secretaries of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Labor, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs. We also will make copies available to others upon request. In addition, this report will be available at no charge on GAO's website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact David Wise at 202-512-2834 or WiseD@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made major contributions to this report are listed in appendix IV.



David J. Wise
Director, Physical Infrastructure

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

To identify federal programs that provide funding for transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged, we examined prior GAO work on the topic, conducted an online search of the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, and requested program information from federal agency officials for the programs identified. We included only federal programs that provide nonemergency, nonmilitary, surface transportation services of any kind, targeted to transportation-disadvantaged populations. We then asked program administrators to review and verify the programs identified and the program information collected, including the general target population, types of transportation services and trips typically provided, and program spending on transportation services in fiscal year 2010. We supplemented and modified the inventory based on this information. In addition, we reviewed the relevant federal laws governing these programs including their popular title or original source of program legislation and U.S. Code or other provision cited as authorizing transportation.

To determine what federal coordination efforts have taken place since we last fully reported on this issue in 2003¹ and what challenges remain, we conducted interviews with program officials from eight federal agencies—the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Labor, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs—and reviewed relevant documentation provided by agency officials. We chose these agencies because they administered programs that were authorized to provide funding for transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged in fiscal year 2010 and were identified by executive order² to participate in coordination. We also interviewed officials from the National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination and interviewed or corresponded with transportation researchers and representatives from relevant industry and advocacy groups, including the following:

¹See GAO, *Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations: Some Coordination Efforts Among Programs Providing Transportation Services, but Obstacles Persist*, [GAO-03-697](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 30, 2003).

²Human Service Transportation Coordination, Exec. Order No. 13330 (February 24, 2004).

- American Public Transportation Association
- Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- Easter Seals Project ACTION
- National Conference of State Legislatures
- Westat

To identify the types of coordination that have occurred at the state and local levels, we conducted interviews with state and local officials from five states—Florida, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. We based our selection of these states on a variety of characteristics, including size of target populations per state, geographic diversity, existence of a state coordinating body, and states deemed notable for their transportation coordination efforts. As part of our state and local interviews, we spoke with officials from state and local human services and transportation agencies, metropolitan planning organizations, transportation providers, interest and advocacy groups, and others and reviewed relevant documentation. Because we used a nongeneralizable sample of states, our findings cannot be used to make inferences about other states. However, we determined that the selection of these states was appropriate for our design and objectives and that the selection would generate valid and reliable evidence to support our work. Table 4 provides more detailed information about the state and local entities we interviewed.

Table 4: State and Local Interviews

State	Organization	Description
Florida	Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency	Metropolitan planning organization
	Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged	State coordinating council
	Florida Agency for Health Care Administration	State human services agency
	Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities	State human services agency
	Florida Department of Children and Families	State human services agency
	Florida Department of Economic Opportunity	State human services agency

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

State	Organization	Description
	Florida Department of Elder Affairs	State human services agency
	Florida Department of Transportation	State transportation agency
	StarMetro	Transportation provider
Texas	Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization	Metropolitan planning organization
	Dallas Area Rapid Transit	Transportation provider
	North Central Texas Council of Governments	Metropolitan planning organization
	Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services	State human services agency
	Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services	State human services agency
	Texas Health and Human Services Commission	State human services agency
	Texas Department of Transportation	State transportation agency
	Texas Veterans Commission	State human services agency
Virginia	Virginia Regional Transit	Transportation provider
	Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services	State human services agency
	Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation	State transportation agency
	Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission	Regional planning organization
Washington	Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation, Washington Department of Transportation	State coordinating council
	Alliance of People with Disabilities	Advocates for the needs of clients
	Hopelink	Transportation provider
	Thurston Regional Planning Council	Regional planning organization
	Washington Department of Veterans Affairs	State human services agency
	Washington Health Care Authority	State human services agency
Wisconsin	Dane County, Department of Human Services	Local human services agency
	Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources	Advocates for the needs of its clients
	Madison Area Transportation Planning Board	Metropolitan planning organization
	Wisconsin Association of Mobility Managers	Advocates for the needs of its members

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

State	Organization	Description
	Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Medicaid	State human services agency
	Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Office on Aging	State human services agency
	Wisconsin Department of Transportation	State transportation agency
	Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development	State human services agency
	Wisconsin Urban and Rural Transit Association	Advocates for the needs of its members

Source: GAO.

We also interviewed the appropriate United We Ride Regional Ambassadors for each state. In addition, we reviewed relevant literature and prior GAO and Congressional Research Service reports, as appropriate.

We conducted this performance audit from June 2011 to June 2012 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix II: Inventory of Federal Programs Providing Transportation Services to the Transportation Disadvantaged

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance no.	Program name	Popular title or original source of program legislation	U.S. Code or other provision cited as authorizing transportation	Typical use of transportation funds as reported by program officials	Purpose of trips as reported by program officials	Target population as defined by program officials	Fiscal year 2010 federal spending on transportation ^a
Department of Agriculture							
10.551	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Employment and Training Program	Food Stamp Act of 1977	7 U.S.C. § 2015(d)(4)(I)(i) (I)	Reimbursement or advanced payment for gasoline expenses or bus fare	To access education- and employment-related services	Low-income persons between the ages of 16 and 59	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
10.766	Community Facilities Loans and Grants	Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act of 1972	7 U.S.C. § 1926	Purchase of vehicles	Routine medical appointments, shopping, entertainment, etc.	People who are disabled, senior citizens, and low-income persons	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Department of Education							
84.027	Special Education Grants to States	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	20 U.S.C. §§ 1411(a)(1) and 1401(26)	School district bus expenditures and other modes of transportation, including wheelchair-accessible vans	To access school and special education and related services	Children with disabilities	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
84.126	State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program	Rehabilitation Act of 1973	29 U.S.C. § 723(a)(8)	Transit subsidies for public and private transportation, training in the use of public transportation	To access vocational rehabilitation services	People with disabilities	\$81,000,000 ^b (estimate)
84.132	Centers for Independent Living	Rehabilitation Act of 1973	29 U.S.C. §§ 796f-4(b)(2) and 705(18)(xi)	Transit subsidies for public and private transportation, training in the use of public transportation	To access program services	Individuals with significant disabilities	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency

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84.169	Independent Living State Grants	Rehabilitation Act of 1973	29 U.S.C. §§ 796e-2(1) and 705(18)(xi)	Transit subsidies for public and private transportation, training in the use of public transportation	To access program services	Individuals with significant disabilities	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
84.173	Special Education Preschool Grants	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	20 U.S.C. §§1419(a) and 1401(26)	School district bus expenditures and other modes of transportation, including wheelchair accessible vans	To access programs and special education services	Children with disabilities ages 3-5	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
84.177	Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind	Rehabilitation Act of 1973	29 U.S.C. § 796k(e)(5)	Transit subsidies for public and private transportation, training in the use of public transportation	To access program services	Individuals who are blind and age 55 or older	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
84.181	Special Education-Grants for Infants and Toddlers	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	20 U.S.C. §§1433 and 1432(4)(E)(xiv)	Various modes of transportation, including wheelchair accessible vans	To access program services such as screening and early intervention services	Infants and toddlers with disabilities or at risk, in need of early intervention services	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
84.187	Supported Employment Services for Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities	Rehabilitation Act of 1973	29 U.S.C. §§ 795g and 705(36)	Transit subsidies for public and private transportation, training in the use of public transportation	To access work, training, and vocational rehabilitation services	People with the most significant disabilities	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
84.196	Education for Homeless Children and Youth	McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	42 U.S.C. § 11433(d)(5)	Student transportation to school of origin	To access educational services and programs	Homeless students	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency

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84.250	Rehabilitation Services American Indians with Disabilities	Rehabilitation Act of 1973	29 U.S.C. §§ 741(a) and (b)(1)(B) and 723(a)(8)	Vouchers for transportation services (e.g. fuel and taxi vouchers) and training in the use of transportation	To access vocational rehabilitation services	American Indians with disabilities who live on or near reservations served by the projects	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
84.287	21st-Century Community Learning Centers	Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965	20 U.S.C. § 7173(a)(10)	Student transportation	To access educational services and programs	Students in underserved communities	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
84.361	Voluntary Public School Choice	Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965	20 U.S.C. § 7225a(a)	Lease and operate vehicles, hire bus drivers, and reimburse partnering school districts for transportation	To access educational services and programs	Students from underperforming schools	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Department of Health and Human Services							
93.044	Special Programs for the Aging, Title III, Part B, Grants for Supportive Services and Senior Centers	Older Americans Act of 1965	42 U.S.C. § 3030d(a)(2)	Contract for services	To access supportive services, such as nutrition services and aging services	Adults age 60 and older	\$73,585,717 ^c (expended)
93.047	Special Programs for the Aging, Title VI, Part A, Grants to Indian Tribes, Part B, Grants to Native Hawaiians	Older Americans Act of 1965	42 U.S.C. §§ 3057, 3030d(a)(2)	Purchase and operate vehicles	To access supportive services, including nutrition services	American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian elders	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
93.104	Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children with Serious Emotional Disturbances	Public Health Service Act	42 U.S.C. § 290ff-1	Any transportation-related use	To access program services	Children and families with serious emotional disturbance	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency

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93.193	Urban Indian Health Services	Snyder Act: Indian Health Care Improvement Act	Act of Nov. 2, 1921, ch. 115, 42 Stat. 208, as amended, and Pub. L. No. 94-437, as amended	Public transportation, mileage reimbursement, GSA lease, etc.	Transportation costs for clients/patients	American Indian/Alaska Natives	\$7,318 (estimate)
93.224	Health Centers	Public Health Service Act	42 U.S.C. § 254b	Bus tokens, vouchers, transportation coordinators, and drivers	To access health care services	Medically underserved populations	\$26,300,000 ^d (expended)
93.237	Special Diabetes Program for Indians Diabetes Prevention and Treatment Projects	Indian Health Care Improvement Act: Balanced Budget Act of 1997	42 U.S.C. § 254c-3	Public transportation, mileage reimbursement, etc.	To access diabetes prevention and cardiovascular disease services	American Indian/Alaska Natives	\$419,247 (estimate)
93.275	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services-Access to Recovery	Public Health Service Act	42 U.S.C §§ 290aa(d)(5), 290bb-2	Bus tokens, cab fare, or van purchase by provider	To access substance abuse treatment or recovery support services	Persons with substance use or mental disorders	\$3,800 (estimate)
93.550	Transitional Living for Homeless Youth	Runaway and Homeless Youth Act of 1974	42 U.S.C. §§ 5701, 5712	Information not collected	Education, employment, training, and health care	16 to 21 year olds	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
93.558	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996	42 U.S.C. § 604(a), (k)	States have wide flexibility in what they may fund	To access work, employment training, and child care providers	Low-income families	\$445,118,725 (expended)
93.566	Refugee and Entrant Assistance - State Administered Programs (Transitional and Medical Services and Social Services Formula Grants Only)	Refugee Act of 1980	8 U.S.C. §§ 1522(b)(7)(D), 1522(c)	Bus or transit passes	To access employment services	Refugees and asylees	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency

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93.567	Refugee and Entrant Assistance - Voluntary Agency Programs (Matching Grants Only)	Refugee Act of 1980	8 U.S.C. §§ 1522(b)(7)(D), 1522(c)	Bus or transit passes, vehicle donations, van pools, or volunteer rides	Employment and training purposes	Refugees and asylees	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
93.569	Community Services Block Grant	Community Opportunities, Accountability, Training, and Educational Services Act of 1998	42 U.S.C. § 9904	Access to reliable transportation or a driver's license, public transportation routes, rides, carpool arrangements, car purchase and maintenance	To receive community services, including program services, educational opportunities, and jobs	Low-income populations	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
93.570	Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Awards	Community Opportunities, Accountability, and Training and Educational Services Act of 1998	42 U.S.C. § 9921	Grantees have wide flexibility in what they may fund	Information not collected	Low-income populations	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
93.576	Refugee and Entrant Assistance - Discretionary Grants (Preventive Health, Targeted Assistance and Social Services Discretionary Grants Only)	Refugee Act of 1980	8 U.S.C. §§ 1522(b)(7)(D), 1522(c)	Bus or transit passes	To access employment services	Refugees and asylees	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
93.584	Refugee and Entrant Assistance - Targeted Assistance (Formula Grants Only)	Refugee Act of 1980	8 U.S.C. §§ 1522(b)(7)(D), 1522(c)	Bus or transit passes	To access employment services	Refugees and asylees	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency

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93.594	Native Employment Works	Social Security Act	42 U.S.C. § 612	Grantees have broad flexibility in what they may fund	To access program and employment activities	Members of federally recognized Indian tribes	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
93.600	Head Start	Head Start Act	42 USCA § 9835(a)(5)(B)	Information not provided	Transporting children to Head Start and Early Head Start centers	Low-income children	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
93.612	Native American Programs	Native American Programs Act of 1974	42 U.S.C. §§ 2991-2991c	Bus passenger	Community meetings and activities	Native American communities	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
93.630	State Councils on Developmental Disabilities and Protection and Advocacy Systems	Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000	42 U.S.C. §§ 15002, 15082	General travel expenses	Limited travel expenses to participate in grant activities	People with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, and other grant participants	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
93.631	Developmental Disabilities Projects of National Significance	Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000	42 U.S.C. §§ 15002, 15082	General travel expenses	Limited travel expenses to participate in grant activities	People with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, and other grant participants	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
93.667	Social Services Block Grants	Social Security Act	42 U.S.C. § 1397a(a)(2)(A)	Provide or arrange for travel, such as accessible vans	Access services, or obtain medical care or employment	Adults and children	\$22,863,512 ^e (estimate)
93.674	Chafee Foster Care Independence Program	Foster Care Independence Act of 1999	42 U.S.C. § 677	Information not provided	Information not provided	Foster youths who are transitioning to independence	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
93.767	Children's Health Insurance Program	Social Security Act	42 U.S.C. § 1397jj(a)(26), (27)	Information not collected	Information not collected	Eligible children	\$3,681,903 ^f (partial)

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93.778	Medicaid	Social Security Act	42 U.S.C. §§ 1396a, 1396n(e)(1)(A)	Fixed route transportation, demand response transportation, mileage reimbursement, air transport and nonemergency medical transportation brokerage	To access covered medical services	Medicaid- eligible beneficiaries who do not have any other means of transportation	\$786,966,682 ^g (partial)
93.912	Rural Health Care Services Outreach, Rural Health Network Development, and Small Health Care Provider Quality Improvement Program	Health Centers Consolidation Act of 1996	42 U.S.C. § 254c	Volunteer drivers, private vehicles, vouchers, vanpools	To access health care services, oral health care, elder day care services	Elderly, migrant workers, and general population	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
93.914	HIV Emergency Relief Project Grants	Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act of 1990	42 U.S.C. §§ 300ff-11 – 300ff-20	Bus passes, tokens, taxis, vanpools, vehicle purchase/lease by providers, and mileage reimbursement	To access health care services	Persons with HIV or AIDS	\$10,750,025 ^h (estimate)
93.917	HIV Care Formula Grants	Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act of 1990	42 U.S.C. §§ 300ff-21, 300ff-23(a)(2)(B)	Bus passes, tokens, taxis, vanpools, vehicle purchase/lease by providers, and mileage reimbursement	To access health care services	Persons with HIV or AIDS	\$5,598,234 ^h (estimate)
93.926	Healthy Start Initiative	Public Health Service Act	42 U.S.C. § 254c-8	Bus tokens, taxi vouchers, reimbursement for use of own vehicle	To access health care services	Residents of areas with significant perinatal health disparities	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency

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93.958	Community Mental Health Services Block Grant	ADAMHA Reorganization Act of 1992	42 U.S.C. § 300x-1(b)(1)	Any transportation-related use	To access program services	Adults with mental illness and children with emotional disturbance	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
93.959	Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant	ADAMHA Reorganization Act of 1992	42 U.S.C. § 300x-21	Any transportation-related use	To access program services	Persons with a substance-related disorder	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
93.994	Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant to the States	Social Security Act	42 U.S.C. § 701(a)	States have broad discretion in implementing program	To access prenatal care visits, medical appointments, and other health care services	Maternal and child health population	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Department of Housing and Urban Development							
14.157	Supportive Housing for the Elderly	Housing Act of 1959	12 U.S.C. 1701g(g)(1)	Information not known	To access supportive services, such as medical treatment, employment, or job training, etc.	Very low- income persons aged 62 and older	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
14.170	Congregate Housing Services Program	Congregate Housing Services Act of 1978	42 USCA § 8004	Accessible taxis, local transportation programs, buses, etc.	To access medical appointments, work, shopping, and other services	Elderly and people with disabilities	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
14.218	Community Development Block Grants/Entitlement Grants	Housing and Community Development Act of 1974	42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(8)	Transit services	To access social services, medical services, jobs, etc.	Low- and moderate-income persons, mobility-impaired persons, and jobseekers	\$4,218,209 ^j (expended)
14.225	Community Development Block Grants/Special Purpose Grants/Insular Areas	Housing and Community Development Act of 1974	42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(8)	Transit services	To access social services, medical services, jobs, etc.	Low- and moderate-income persons, mobility-impaired persons, and jobseekers	\$0 (expended)

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14.228	Community Development Block Grants/State's program and Non-Entitlement Grants in Hawaii	Housing and Community Development Act of 1974	42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(8)	Transit services	To access social services, medical services, jobs, etc.	Low- and moderate-income persons, mobility-impaired persons, and jobseekers	\$19,211 (expended)
14.231	Emergency Shelter Grants Program	McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	42 U.S.C. § 11374	Bus or transit tokens, taxi fares, and any related organizational transportation expenses	To access training programs and other services to enhance independence	Homeless	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
14.235	Supportive Housing Program	Housing and Community Development Act of 1992	42 U.S.C. § 11385	Bus or transit tokens, taxi fares, and any related organizational transportation expenses	To access training programs and other services to enhance independence	Homeless	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
14.241	Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS	AIDS Housing Opportunity Act	42 U.S.C. § 12907(a)(3)	Bus tokens, taxi fares, and any related organizational transportation expenses	To access supportive services, such as medical treatment, employment, job training, etc.	Low to extremely low- income persons living with HIV/AIDS	\$1,530,187 (expended)
14.862	Indian Community Development Block Grant	Housing and Community Development Act of 1974	42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(8), 17	Information not collected	To access public services, which are directed toward improving the community's public services and facilities	Indian and Alaska Native communities, primarily for persons with low- and moderate-incomes	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
14.866	HOPE VI Revitalization	Housing Act of 1937	42 U.S.C. § 1437v(d)(1)(L), (i)(3)	Transportation services	To access employment, education, and other supportive services	Public housing residents	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency

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14.867	Indian Housing Block Grant	Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act of 1996	25 U.S.C. § 4132(3)	Information not collected	To access self-sufficiency services	Low- income Native Americans	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
14.889	Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants	Housing Act of 1937	42 U.S.C. § 1437v(d)(1)(L), (i)(3)	Transportation services	To access employment, education, and other supportive services	Public housing residents and HUD-assisted multifamily housing residents	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Department of the Interior							
15.043	Indian Child and Family Education	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001	25 U.S.C. § 2001(b)(8)(C)(v)	School bus, off-road, and other vehicle leases	To access school and educational activities	Preschool through adult students	\$373,368 (estimate)
15.044	Indian Schools - Student Transportation	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001	25 U.S.C. § 2001(b)(8)(C)(v)	School bus, off-road, and other vehicle leases; use of commercial vehicles	To access school, educational activities, and for use in emergency situations	Day and residential students	\$52,637,635 (obligated)
15.130	Indian Education Assistance to Schools	Johnson-O'Malley Act of April 16, 1934	25 U.S.C. ch. 14, subchapter II	Transporting students	Trips could be to and from the project site or an educational field trip	Eligible students are aged 3 through grade 12	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Department of Labor							
17.211	Job Corps	Workforce Investment Act of 1998	29 U.S.C. § 2864(d)(2)	Travel for program enrollees between the center and their home of record by bus, train, or plane	Enrollment and separation from the program	At-risk youth, ages 16-24, who meet low-income criteria	\$24,100,000 (estimate)
17.235	Senior Community Service Employment Program	Older Americans Act of 1965	42 U.S.C. § 3056(c)(6)(A) (iv)	Information not known	To access program services and jobs	Unemployed Americans 55 years of age or older, earning no more than 125% of the poverty level	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency

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17.245	Trade Adjustment Assistance - Workers	Trade Act of 1974	19 U.S.C. § 2296(b)	Information not known	To access job training programs, job searches outside the normal commuting area, and relocation expenses	Program participants and workers who seek employment outside the normal commuting area	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
17.258	Workforce Investment Act Adult Services Program	Workforce Investment Act of 1998	29 U.S.C. § 2864(d)(2)	Information not known	Supportive services to enable program participation	Adults, with priority to veterans and covered spouses, and individuals receiving public assistance	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
17.259	Workforce Investment Act Youth Activities	Workforce Investment Act of 1998	29 U.S.C. § 2854(a)(4)	Information not known	To access job training and related activities	Low income youth, ages 14-21 years old with barriers to employment	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
17.264	National Farmworker Jobs Program	Workforce Investment Act of 1998	29 U.S.C. § 774 (3)(A), 29 U.S.C. § 2912 (d)	Information not known	To access supportive services	Disadvantaged migrant and seasonal farm workers	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
17.265	Native American Employment and Training	Workforce Investment Act of 1998	29 U.S.C. § 2911(d)(2)	Bus passes, vehicle mileage, gas for program vehicles, and reasonable car repairs	To access employment activities	Indian tribes, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
17.274	Youthbuild	Workforce Investment Act of 1998	29 U.S.C. §§ 2801(46)	Information not known	To access program services	Youth, including those from low-income families or those with a disability	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
17.802	Veterans' Employment Program	Workforce Investment Act of 1998	29 U.S.C. § 2913	Transit tickets, bus fare, or cab fare	To access employment activities	Veterans	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency

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Providing Transportation Services to the
Transportation Disadvantaged**

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance no.	Program name	Popular title or original source of program legislation	U.S. Code or other provision cited as authorizing transportation	Typical use of transportation funds as reported by program officials	Purpose of trips as reported by program officials	Target population as defined by program officials	Fiscal year 2010 federal spending on transportation ^a
17.805	Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Project	Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act of 2001	38 USCA §§ 2011, 2021	Transit tickets, bus fare, or cab fare	To access employment activities	Homeless veterans	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency
Department of Transportation							
20.500	Capital Investment Grants	Mass Transportation Act of 1964	49 U.S.C. § 5309	Funding for bus and bus facilities, new fixed guideway and modernization, and other capital expenses	General transportation	General public	\$3,566,689,946 ⁱ (obligated)
20.507	Urbanized Area Formula Program	Mass Transportation Act of 1964	49 U.S.C. § 5307	Funding for transportation service for transportation projects in cities	Support transit service in cities over 50,000 population	General public in urbanized areas	\$4,849,410,834 (obligated)
20.509	Nonurbanized Area Formula Program	Federal Public Transportation Act of 1978	49 U.S.C. § 5311	Funding for transportation service for public transit and intercity bus transportation projects in nonurbanized areas	To increase and enhance public transportation service in nonurbanized areas and for tribes	General public and federally recognized tribes	\$624,837,418 ^k (obligated)
20.513	Capital Assistance Program for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities	Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1970	49 U.S.C. § 5310	Purchase of capital expenses to support transportation services	General transportation services	Elderly individuals and persons with disabilities	\$176,237,261 (obligated)
20.516	Job Access and Reverse Commute	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users	49 U.S.C. § 5316	Purchase of small buses and vans	To access employment and related services	Low-income individuals and reverse commuters	\$163,976,876 (obligated)

**Appendix II: Inventory of Federal Programs
Providing Transportation Services to the
Transportation Disadvantaged**

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance no.	Program name	Popular title or original source of program legislation	U.S. Code or other provision cited as authorizing transportation	Typical use of transportation funds as reported by program officials	Purpose of trips as reported by program officials	Target population as defined by program officials	Fiscal year 2010 federal spending on transportation ^a
20.518	Capital and Training Assistance Program for Over-the-Road Bus Accessibility	Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1970	49 U.S.C. § 5310	Purchase of capital expenses that will result in vehicles being accessible	Intercity fixed-route, charter, commuter, and tour bus transportation	General public and individuals with disabilities	\$544,261 (obligated)
20.521	New Freedom Program	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users	49 U.S.C § 5317	Provide expanded service in both geographic coverage and hours or days of service	To enhance transportation systems and access to those systems	Individuals with disabilities	\$90,140,813 (obligated)
Department of Veterans Affairs^l							
64.009	Veterans Medical Care Benefits	Veterans Benefits Act of 1957	38 U.S.C. § 111	Mileage reimbursement; special mode (ambulance, wheelchair van); common carrier (air, bus, train, boat, taxi)	To access VA or VA-authorized non-VA health care	Low-income and special-group veterans	\$745,315,000 ^m (obligated)
64.024	VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program	Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Service Programs Act of 1992	38 U.S.C. §§ 2011(b)(1)(B), 7721 Note	Purchase vans	Outreach to and transportation of homeless veterans by community-based providers	Homeless veterans	\$720,167 ⁿ (obligated)
64.026	Veterans State Adult Day Health Care	Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act	38 U.S.C. § 1720; 38 U.S.C. § 111	Any expenses for transportation	Adult day health care	Veterans	No actual data or estimate available from the federal agency

Source: GAO analysis of information from the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Labor, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs; the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, the U.S. Code; and the Code of Federal Regulations.

^aSpending was reported by program officials, and we did not verify the information. Amounts obligated or expended on transportation are given, depending upon the information available. When actual information was not available, agency officials provided estimates.

^bAccording to program officials, figure is expenditure data reported by state vocational rehabilitation agencies to the Department of Education on the Annual Vocational Rehabilitation Program Cost Report (RSA-2) form.

**Appendix II: Inventory of Federal Programs
Providing Transportation Services to the
Transportation Disadvantaged**

^cAccording to program officials, figure includes \$69,133,539 for transportation and \$4,452,178 for assisted transportation (assistance and transportation for a person who has difficulties using regular transportation).

^dHealth center grantees reported spending \$26.3 million on transportation services in calendar year 2010, according to program officials.

^eFiscal year 2010 data was not yet available, and fiscal year 2009 spending (\$22,863,512) can be used as an estimate, according to program officials.

^fAccording to program officials, \$3,681,903 is the federal share for states that recorded transportation expenses under Line 23 - Medical Transportation on the CMS 21. There is no dedicated line item for Administrative Transportation expenses. If there are any Transportation Administration expenditures, they may be reported in the Other line item category, however there is no separation to break it out.

^gAccording to program officials, \$786,966,682 is the federal share for states that recorded transportation expenses under Line 29 - Nonemergency Transportation Services on the CMS 64. This information does not include expenditures for nonemergency medical transportation claimed as an Administrative Transportation expense, as there is no dedicated line item for such expenses.

^hAccording to program officials, 2010 Part A and Part B expenditures for transportation are not available. As an estimate, officials used 2009 Part A - \$10,750,025 and Part B expenditures - \$5,598,234 from the Ryan White 2009 Part B Expenditure Report.

ⁱIn fiscal year 2009, \$4.0 million was expended nationally among all CDBG grantees for transportation services, according to program officials.

^jAccording to program officials, figure includes: 5309 Bus and Bus Facilities \$516,224,661; 5309 Fixed Guideway Modernization \$1,383,358,415; and 5309 New Starts \$1,667,106,870.

^kFigure does not include Tribal Transit, according to program officials.

^lAccording to program officials, Pub. L. No. 111-163, § 307, 124 Stat. 1154 (38 U.S.C. § 1710 Note) will provide grants for transportation of veterans in highly rural areas, however the program has not yet become operational and funds had not been spent as of January 2012.

^mFigure includes Special Mode/Common Carrier (\$313,797,000) and Mileage (\$431,518,000), according to program officials.

ⁿFigure was amount obligated in fiscal year 2010 for 32 van grants, and grantees have 5 years to spend these funds, according to program officials.

Appendix III: Comments from the Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATING SERVICES

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

MAY 31 2012

Mr. David Wise
Director
Physical Infrastructure Issues
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Wise:

I am writing to provide the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) with comments from the U.S. Department of Education (Department) on the draft report, "TRANSPORTATION-DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS -- Federal Coordination Efforts Could be Further Strengthened" (GAO-12-647). The Department appreciates the work that went into this study. The draft report contains the following two recommendations.

Recommendations for Executive Action

To promote and enhance federal, state and local coordination activities, we recommend that the Secretary of Transportation, as the chair of the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility, and the Secretaries of the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Labor, and Veterans Affairs, as member agencies of the Coordinating Council, should meet and take the following actions:

- Complete and publish a strategic plan for the Coordinating Council, which should, among other things, clearly outline agency roles and responsibilities and articulate a strategy to help strengthen interagency collaboration and communication.
- Report on the progress of Coordinating Council recommendations made as part of its 2005 Report to the President on Implementation of Executive Order 13330 and develop a plan to address any outstanding recommendations, including the development of a cost-sharing policy endorsed by the Coordinating Council and the actions taken by member agencies to increase federal program grantee participation in locally-developed, coordinated planning processes.

The Department would be pleased to participate in the strategic planning and progress reporting activities described in GAO's recommendations, if the Secretary of Transportation reconvenes the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility. The Department's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services has participated in previous Council activities under the general rubric "United We Ride." Transportation planning activities have continued among multiple agencies at the staff level, even though the Coordinating Council has not met recently.

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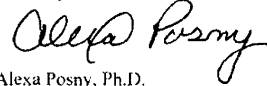
The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

Mr. David Wise -- Page 2

Several working groups have been active and the Department has participated in some of their activities, including work on a draft strategic plan. We look forward to continued engagement on this issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft report. We also are including technical comments with this response.

Sincerely,



Alexa Posny, Ph.D.

Appendix IV: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

David J. Wise, (202) 512-2834, wised@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the individual named above, other key contributors to this report were Heather MacLeod, Assistant Director; Rebekah Boone; Brian Chung; Jennifer Clayborne; Jean Cook; Bert Japikse; Delwen Jones; and Sara Ann Moessbauer.

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