**Transportation Talks Case Studies – Madison event 6/25/19**

Name of Program: Find-a-Ride Network

Contact name and email: Sarah Harvey, SarahH@eraswaukesha.org

Program basics:

As a response to growing needs, Find-a-Ride Network (FARN) of Waukesha County was developed through a collective community process including seniors, adults with disabilities, transportation providers, healthcare systems, nonprofit human service providers, business and representatives from county government. FARN determined that the growing and aging population of seniors and adults with disabilities would be best served through a One-Call One-Click system. Find-a-Ride Network looks to improve transportation access, provide support, and increase independence. While the overall vision of Find-a-Ride Network is to provide all residents of Waukesha County access to assets and resources necessary for meaningful lives, the first phase of the initiative is specific to access to healthcare in Menomonee Falls.

Funding Mechanism and Innovative Aspect:

Find-a-Ride Network is set to go live July 15, 2019. The research, design and implementation of Find-a-Ride Network is and has been supported by grants since its creation. In 2015, Eras Senior Network, a community-based non-profit and lead organization of FARN secured a National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) Healthcare Access Mobility Design Challenge Grant.

The Design Challenge Grant embraced human-centered design, an innovative process that enabled FARN to engage the community in the design of a transportation solution. Human-centered design is a shift from the norm that allows for deeper understanding, testing and refining, and implementing a solution that keeps the end-users at the center of your work.

By using human-centered design, your team gains empathy. This design thinking approach puts assumptions out in the community to confirm what you think you knew and to determine if a transportation solution is viable. The activities and tools used in design thinking are grounded in exploring a problem from the perspective of the end user. FARN was able to strengthen a transportation solution and in turn, create a business plan that provided a roadmap for outreach, marketing, operations and financial sustainability.

Knowledge Transfer to new programs contemplating similar programming:

Human-centered design may be an unusual approach especially for a nonprofit organization but it has been used for other initiatives and programs within our agency. We learned that this approach can be a slow process, pauses momentum of a project and can ultimately pose a higher risk of unhappy partners but it creates a solution that most importantly, places the end user at the center.

Real-life Story:

One of the individuals we interviewed, using human-centered design is Pat. Pat is a senior with macular degeneration and had to give up her driver’s license due to losing her eyesight. When she first moved to Waukesha, she did not know where to go or who to call for transportation and feared her independence would be lost. Pat had concerns just like her friend who told her that she would cancel her medical appointments and just would not go because she did not know how she would get there and back. Findings showed 1 in 2 seniors surveyed in Waukesha County reported difficulty when it came to getting transportation to healthcare appointments. Instead of creating a new transportation system, Find-a-Ride Network will continue to enhance the experience of the rider by building a communication system that will connect customers to resources already in place to get to their healthcare appointments. Find-a-Ride Network will provide individuals with a single point of contact to address and solve their transportation needs.

Name of Program: Mobility Management for Southwest WI Transit Team (SWTT)

Contact name and email: Kristina Tranel, k.tranel@swwrpc.org and Troy Maggied, t.maggied@swwrpc.org

Program basics: Mobility management for SWTT is focusing its first year on volunteer recruitment through new methods and collaboration. We are exploring new avenues to engage potential volunteers through Google Ads, considering a referral incentive program, while also enhancing more traditional methods such as print flyers for community bulletin boards, and Facebook posts.

What is your program – or one innovative aspect of your program? Using Google Ads helps us target our advertising, to help us understand what key words searchers are using. We can learn what attracts people to our program. Our goal is to gain a better understanding of who is interested in us and why, that way we can reach more people, with similar interests in volunteering. Allowing us to hopefully make better use of our time, working more strategically and efficiently.

Additional goals include coordinating efforts to strategically prepare for resource sharing, including aligning hiring policies, consistency in data collection, as well as looking into and rates and pricing.

Who operates the program? (direct management or under contract?)

The program is managed by Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWWRPC) through the collaborative efforts of our region’s transit providers.

How long has it been in operation? Did it change over the years? How long did the planning process take?

SWTT was formed in 2006, this is the first year with a specific recruitment and marketing focus tied directly to our collaborative mobility management efforts.

Funding mechanism:

Our program is funded through 5310 grant funds with a local match provided by the counties we serve. The 5310 grant was written as part of a mobility management plan for operational coordination. The goals of the program are to coordinate data collection, reach out to engage more volunteer drivers and new ridership, and provide training for new volunteers.

Marketing through Google Ads allows us to assign a monthly maximum, which is currently set at $165.00 per month, with an estimated average of $5.43 per day. However, we are only charged when someone clicks on our ad, our current average is $1.04 per day.

Knowledge Transfer to new programs contemplating similar programming:

Lessons learned/things you’d do again or do differently.

We have really just begun learning, this is designed to be a dynamic process and our approach is to keep an open mind to learn from our mistakes as well as our successes, to see what works and keep improving that and rethink what isn’t working.

What data do you collect data? How do you measure success?

We are able to collect data from our online resources in Google Ads, Facebook and Google Analytics for our website. We are also able to count the number of tabs pulled from our print flyers. But the greatest success is in seeing a number of increased volunteer driver applications submitted and number of volunteer drivers hired.

 In Google Ads we can see the number of “impressions”, or each time our ad is shown to someone visiting a search results page or website on Google. “Clicks”, tells us the number of people who clicked on our ad, which takes users to our website to find out more information on the volunteer driver program. Clicks can indicate that someone is interested in finding out more about our volunteer opportunities or transit team. We can compare the number of impressions with the number of actions taken on the ad to understand how well the ad appeals to potential volunteers.

Facebook provide performance analytics such as reach, likes, comments, shares, post clicks, as well as negative feedback, should it occur.

Through Google Analytics we can see how much traffic is generated to our SWTT webpage.

These, as well as tallying the print flyers can give us data on how many people we have reached and how many have gone the next step to finding out more information. But the key metric is in keeping track of total volunteer driver inquiries, such as phone calls and applications submitted, and comparing that to previous years.

Share a story about riders on your systems (Remind us why we do what we do!) or provide other information you’d like your peers to know so they can replicate your program if they choose to do so.

The coordination of the program does not put SWWRPC in direct contact with riders on our systems, however I recently had the opportunity to meet with several volunteer drivers and was able to hear a few stories from them. Our volunteer drivers are drawn to the social nature and benefit of this type of volunteering. They love meeting new people, hearing their stories, learning from them, and seeing that they are making a difference in making someone’s day brighter. One driver mentioned he likes seeing people get good results from a doctor’s visit. Another driver likes to find out what someone likes, for example a carton of milk or a snack, and picks that up for riders just to make it a little extra special. This program fosters interaction, and more times than not, it is positive, and that is a really unique, special, and even essential part of our human nature and existence.

Name of Program: Human Services Transportation Needs Assessment

Contact name and email: Charlene Norberg, cnorberg@co.juneau.wi.us

Program basics:

The City of Mauston and the ADRC of Eagle Country Mauston Office received a §5304 grant to evaluate the Human Services Transportation needs in Juneau County. The City of Mauston, extending a maximum of 5 miles outside the city limits is served by a shared-ride taxi service. The remainder of Juneau County is able to be served through the ADRC volunteer Escort Driver program and the Accessible bus/van program. Each service is operating under capacity with ample room for growth. The Transportation Needs Assessment showed that a very minimal percent of the population is using transportation services, and 85% of respondents to the various methods of data gathering felt that a lack of transportation was of little concern. This study highlighted the importance of continued education and marketing to eligible riders. Of interest was the data showing the number of individuals who work outside of Juneau County, and the high number of veterans, persons with disabilities, and aging persons living in Juneau County. This assessment highlighted the importance of following up on designing and implanting increased regional transportation supports within the eight county Central Sands region of WI.

Who operates the program? The Human Services Transportation Needs Assessment was completed through a contract with North Central Regional Planning Commission. The study period ran from January 1, 2018 through May 31, 2019. Through the course of the study and FTA grant became available and was applied for in collaboration with Southwest WI Community Action Program for a full time Mobility Manager to serve Juneau and Adams Counties. The grant application was approved and this regional initiative will fit well with the recommendations from the study.

Funding mechanism:

The study was funded at 80% federal 5304 grant funds, 10% City of Mauston match, and 10% ADRC Transportation program funding match.

Knowledge Transfer to new programs contemplating similar programming:

Any study is a good opportunity for gathering information for use in planning. This study is no different. It was very difficult to garner wide spread involvement and effective feedback. A variety of methods were used, and a wide variety of agencies was requested to assist in information gathering. If this was to be completed again in the future, I would look for more innovative methods to reach out to individuals that are not openly accessible. I reached out to the units within Veteran’s Services, Human Services, Public Health, Workforce Development, and the ministerial association. While many individuals involved with these agencies do face transportation barriers, they are connected well enough to have their needs met. We find many areas that do not have adequate access to internet and cellular services, and individuals tend to be rather isolated. This study was not successful in reaching this population base to determine needs and challenges.

This report was able to easily corroborate other similar studies that have been completed in the Central Sands area of WI, including the Central WI health Partnership summit held in 2015, and the Veterans Needs study completed by ECWRPC in 2016.

Name of Program:

SMRT Bus

Contact name and email:

Peter Fletcher peter@mrrpc.com

***What is your program – or one innovative aspect of your program?***

The SMRT Bus is a daily (Monday-Friday) fixed route commuter bus service that serves 15 communities in a four-county area in western Wisconsin. What makes the SMRT Bus unique is that it provides daily transportation for workers, students, elderly and disabled individuals in a primarily rural area connecting 15 communities and four counties. The bus service’s primary goal is to provide worker transportation by operating thirteen daily round trip routes from 5:50 a.m to 6:30 pm. The individual buses are equipped with bike racks and have free Wi-Fi for riders. Funding for the service is also unique, as it is comprised of numerous sources ranging from Section 5311 WIDOT grant funding to contributions from multiple local units of government and private businesses.

***Who operates the program?*** The bus services is contracted out to a service provider (Running Inc.) by the local unit of government sponsor (La Crosse County).

***How long has it been in operation? Did it change over the years? How long did the planning process take?***

The SMRT Bus has been in operation for over 6 years. Routes have been modified over the years, but the general service has remained the same. In 2017, SMRT expanded service to add an additional county (Monroe) to the service area and provide connections to four additional cities and villages. The planning process for the SMRT Bus took about two years to complete (2010-2012).

***How is it funded? (grants, levy, other)*** The SMRT Bus is funded by a WISDOT Section 5311 Grant, fare box revenue, contributions from local units of governments and private businesses.

***Lessons learned/things you’d do again or do differently***

Starting a rural public transportation service is challenging and maintaining the service is challenging as well. What makes SMRT unique is the wide variety of partners that have collaborated and supported the project. Support and funding from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation has been critical to the success of the SMRT Bus. WISDOT has provided cost share funding assistance for bus service feasibility studies, operational costs, and capital purchases. Other vital partnerships have been established with county agencies (ADRC’s, Human/Senior Services, Planning, Economic Development departments), cities/villages, non-profits and local businesses. The partnerships have brought awareness to the bus service and have assisted in marketing as well as gaining/maintaining political support.

**Steps and some advice for establishing a rural bus service:**

●Find a committed local unit of government sponsor (county, city, village)

●Conduct a Feasibility Study

*If feasible:*

●Establish varied and committed partners (for political support, marketing and financial assistance)

●Provide a good “customer friendly” service - it will sell itself and the riders will become your best advocates

●Be flexible, Be innovative, Be persistent

***What data do you collect data? How do you measure success?***

Ridership data is collected daily. We annually conduct ridership surveys to gain feedback. Success is measured by ridership and customer satisfaction.

***Share a story about riders on your systems (Remind us why we do what we do!) or provide other information you’d like your peers to know so they can replicate your program if they choose to do so.***

We annually survey our riders and they provide us with comments. So, in “their own words” here is a sample of what SMRT means to them:

As a 19 year old college student living with my parents in Coon Valley, the bus has become something of a life saver. We only own two cars in our house, and there are three people living here. Everything I do--school, work, theatre--is all in La Crosse. Without the bus we would either have had to buy another car, or completely redo our schedules. The drivers are always friendly and I enjoy riding the bus. When I heard there was a bus that ran from Coon Valley to Viroqua, I was surprised and most of all relieved. It has really, really helped our family.

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Hey! I am a rider of the SMRT bus. I was diagnosed November 2015 with lung cancer. I do not own a car or drive. The SMRT bus is the only transportation I have to Gundersen from Westby for treatment. The people who ride are wonderful and professional people who work at Gundersen. The drivers I have encountered are courteous and professional in what they do. My experience, besides my condition, have been made that more wonderful due to all these factors. Thank you for the SMRT bus for all it entails.

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The SMRT Bus System is absolutely vital to my work-life balance! It provides convenient and comfortable daily transportation from my home in La Crosse to my workplace in La Farge. Without it, I could not manage this commute.

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I have nothing but wonderful things to say in support of the SMRT Bus System currently in place in our region and am fully in support of its continuation.  Prior to the SMRT Bus system, I had been driving approximately 50 miles a day to and from work, either alone or by ride-sharing - - - for over 30 years.  That’s a lot of miles.  I began riding the SMRT bus since January, 2013, shortly after it began its first run.  WOW – I was not at all prepared for the wonderful service and safe transportation I was about to encounter.

**Dane County:**  Jane Betzig, Certified Mobility Manager

 Dane County Transportation Manager

 Betzig.jane@countyofdane.com 608-242-6486

**Name of Program:** Dane County Transportation Call Center and Travel Training Program.

**Funding:** Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Senior and Individuals with Disabilities.

* Governor appointed Direct Recipient is the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board
* 2019 Mobility Management Project: Dane County Call Center and Travel Training Program.
* 20% match required. Combination of in-kind and cash.

Dane County Department of Human Services (DCDHS) provides transportation resources and services that enable seniors, persons with disabilities, Veterans, workers, refuges, low income families and others to access their communities and needed services. Over eighteen diversified DCDHS transportation programs help Dane County residents get to where they need to go.

**Programs:** Two DCDHS Transportation Programs Highlighted.

1. Dane County Transportation Call Center (Call Centre). Numerous transportation options are available in Dane County but accessing and learning about them can be overwhelming. The One-Stop Shop Call Transportation Information Line provides a single point-of entry for detailed transportation information in Dane County. Information on all available transportation options is provided including public transit (bus/shared-ride taxi, train, plane), human services programs, vehicle acquisition and repair loans, ride-and car-sharing, van pools and other programs. The Call Center helps riders easily connect with the correct transportation services. A Mobility Manager staffs the Call Center; a Transportation Manager supervises and manages the Call Center and other DCDHS programs. In 2018 the Call Center handled 6,419 calls and authorized 48,034 one-way rides.
2. Key Activities
3. Determine transportation options available to caller based on location, level of need, income and other criteria
4. Provides options counseling and selection optimization, including assessing level of independence, information of fare media, donation policies and fare assistance programs; assessing most appropriate level of service; other choice points.
5. Provide assistance in identifying and accessing necessary resources, such as paratransit applications; trip planning services, etc.
6. Refer caller to appropriate programs and or provide direct assessment, eligibility determination and ride authorization for specialized transportation and related programs.
7. Enroll eligible callers in Travel Training programs.
8. Provide on-going monitoring and reauthorization of services, as well as follow-up assistance in maintaining mobility.
9. Unique Factors
10. The Call Center acts as a Transportation needs assessment tool. The numerous Call Center contacts help identify transportation gaps in the community. Gaps recently identified include access to sedated rides, trips to food pantries, transportation to job search, etc. Transportation programs are developed based on these gaps.
11. The Call Center provides an individualized transportation assessment and plan for each caller. By the end of the call the person will be familiar with all their transportation options and receive assistance connecting to the services.
12. Bus Buddy Program. The Bus Buddy Program provides route familiarization and other support for individuals or groups, while learning to use Metro (Madison) Transit fixed-route, shared-ride transit programs or county-funded group ride programs. Individuals are assigned a Volunteer Bus Buddy and receive one-on-one training. The service is contracted with the Retired Senior and Volunteer Program. Paratransit graduates of the program who migrate a sufficient number of trips from paratransit to fixed-route services will receive a free commuter bus pass from Metro Transit. Service is coordinated through the Call Center. In 2018 the Bus Buddy program received 102 referrals and 97 individuals were successfully trained.
13. Key Activities
14. Receive referrals from Metro Transit’s In-Person Assessment program, community organizations, schools and residents.
15. Review entire route for proposed training trip, noting barriers, supports needed, etc.
16. Prepare training plan, including frequency, duration, number of routes covered, etc.
17. Accompany trainee on entire trip, instructing trainee; on subsequent trips, systematically transfer navigation responsibility to trainee, until trainee is able to perform all tasks independently.
18. Refer graduates to Metro Transit’s Paratransit fare reduction program.
19. Unique Factors
20. Participation in the Bus Buddy program thrives due to the popularity of Group Trip Excursions. The excursions provide fixed bus route training to groups of seniors and persons with disabilities while participating in a fun community outing.
21. Individuals not successful with Bus Buddy training are referred to a Mobility Training Program. The program is contracted with Mobility Training Independent Living Program, Inc. This program hires Occupational Therapy Aids to train individuals with greater challenges to ride mainline bus.
22. Paratransit graduates from travel training receive a free commuter bus pass and continue to receive the pass if they continue to decrease Paratransit use.

**Data Collection:** A Software program tailored to Dane County transportation services is used to collect detailed Call Center and Travel Training data. Codeversant.

1. Client Data: Name, address, telephone, date of birth, ethnicity, mobility devices, mobility status (s85.21: Senior Ambulatory, Senior Non-Ambulatory, Disabled/Non–senior Ambulatory and Disabled/Non-senior Non-Ambulatory), medical assistance status, veteran status, income, personal care attendant status.
2. One-way Ride Data: Number, cost, funding source, purpose (s85.21 medical, employment, nutrition, education/training, social/recreational and personal business), cancelled, completed, no loads, transportation provider, standard information to dispatch a ride (date, pickup time/address, drop off location).
3. Call Log: number of in-coming and out- going calls, emails and faxes with, date, time, client, type, provider, and notations.
4. Travel Training Data: program type, routes learned, hours trained, referral sources, training outcomes.

**Coordination and Collaboration**

Dane County and Metro (Madison) Transit are interlocking services designed to increase transportation resources and enhance access to transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities. Dane County coordinates with Metro Transit to ensure that limited transportation funding resources are used to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of transportation services. Metro Paratransit utilizes the service of the Dane County Call Center to increase awareness and access to additional transportation options and refers individuals to the Dane County Travel Training programs to train paratransit riders to use fixed-route service. In doing so, the costly resource of paratransit rides are preserved for those whose only transportation is ADA paratransit service.

**Trends**