

On behalf of the Federal Transit Administration, the Community Transportation Association of America prepares briefs on Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) projects to facilitate a learning network among grantees and others interested in employment transportation. For more information on the JARC program, visit: [www.ctaa.org/ntrc/atj/jarc.asp](http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/atj/jarc.asp)

Brief No. 9, December 2002

## Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority

The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) is the seventh largest transit system in the country, providing transportation services for more than thirty years to the City of Atlanta and the Atlanta region's two largest counties – Fulton and DeKalb. While MARTA was operating 21 hours a day and serving approximately 77 million people annually, there remained gaps in MARTA's transportation services, which became more conspicuous with the onset of welfare reform.

Mirroring the spatial mismatch scenarios of much of the country, studies from the late 1990s showed that two-thirds of new jobs in Atlanta were located in the suburbs, while three-quarters of welfare recipients lived in outlying rural communities or central cities. (Fulton and DeKalb counties alone accounted for 70 percent of the welfare participants in the region, 34,000 employment locations, and 474,000 jobs.) In addition, less than half of the region's jobs were accessible by transit, not only because bus and rail often did not fully connect origins with destinations, but also because individuals worked non-traditional work hours and required transportation to interim destinations, such as childcare.

With a majority of welfare recipients without access to reliable cars, and thus dependent on other mobility alternatives, the compelling evidence for expanded transportation services in the region was established.

### Expanding Job Access Transportation

The Atlanta Regional Commission, the metropolitan planning organization for a ten-county area, and its partners in the Job Access Coalition seized on the funding opportunity provided by the Federal Transit Administration's Job Access and Reverse Commute grant program and were awarded funds in fiscal years 1999, 2000 and 2002. MARTA was a subrecipient of a portion of those funds and instituted a number of bus route expansions, marketing campaigns and new service partnerships. The Georgia Department of Human Resources has been the primary source of matching funds for MARTA's Job Access program.

*John is a regular rider of the Route 30 bus, a line that he takes to get to his job in Southern Cobb County. Before the Job Access-funded partnership between MARTA and Cobb County Transit, John had no way to get from the city out to the suburbs to his job. Now he can transfer from one service to the other, and without paying an extra fair.*

*"I love that you (Cobb County Transit) partnered with MARTA," John praises. "Without your service today, most of us riders would not have jobs."*

## Profiles of Success

---

With the infusion of Job Access and state funds into the Atlanta region, MARTA was able to realize the following service expansions:

- Expanded services on more than eight bus routes that improved access to jobs, training and childcare for families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds, and for other low-income people. After the success of the initial three routes, MARTA made improvements to additional routes, including the rerouting of one bus line to a One-Stop Center that provides job training, jobs, and childcare to its participants. This small change alone has resulted in transporting one million people per quarter since implementation.
- One route which has increased employment opportunities in job-rich southern Cobb County is Route 30. MARTA's partnership with Cobb County Transit enables low-income individuals and others a free transfer between MARTA and Cobb County Transit (CCT) buses. According to CCT's Planning and Programming Administrator Laraine Vance, Route 30, which serves 40,000 individuals per month, is the second highest performing route in the CCT system.
- MARTA has also partnered with the Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR) to help meet the transportation needs of individuals who have non-traditional work hours. Job Access funds enable the DHR to offer its demand-response transportation services between a low-income person's home to employment centers, with stops at childcare sites. The services operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

There is no fare for eligible Job Access riders.

Leigh Ann Trainer, of the Georgia Department of Human Resources, understands the need for this door-to-door service: "Entry level jobs do not always fall in the normal working hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Clients working second- and third-shift jobs need this program to get to their jobs when area trains and buses cannot meet their needs. Access to a specialized shuttle service helps keep job retention and motivation levels high."

Improved transit options provide low-income and welfare-to-work recipients access to approximately 1,700 new employment sites in areas with more than 1,500 business locations and 50,000 potential jobs.

### **The Marketing Campaign**

MARTA's transportation services have reached many low-income individuals due in large part to a dynamic marketing campaign designed and implemented with Job Access funds. MARTA circulated new employer and employee brochures in several languages, including English, Spanish and Korean. The transit agency also distributed fliers listing job fairs, employment opportunities, and companies accessible via targeted bus routes.

"Breakfast on the Go" brochures were also given to local businesses that serve the targeted markets. MARTA conducted its marketing campaign in concert with local Department of Labor offices, churches, social services agencies, housing authorities, Workforce Development Agencies and One-Stop centers. Cobb County Transit's ridership on Route 30 benefited from this outreach with an increase from 4,000 to 9,000 rides per month.

## Profiles of Success

---

### Strengthening Partnerships

MARTA's local partners, along with the Federal Transit Administration Job Access funds, helped MARTA expand affordable transportation options for welfare recipients and other low-income individuals so that they can reach their jobs in high employment corridors. MARTA's partners include: Cobb County Transit and other transportation providers, employers, workforce development organizations, the Georgia Department of Human Resources, advocacy groups and the neighborhoods served.

### Next Steps

MARTA and its current partners will continue to provide these newly expanded transit services designed to increase access to jobs and job-related destination for TANF recipients and other low-income people. Key to sustaining these services is developing additional funding and implementation partnerships. MARTA is also researching the idea of coordinating with other regional bus services to provide links between MARTA's routes and those of other county systems.

### Job Access and Reverse Commute Funding

FY 1999 — \$908,000  
FY 2000 — \$1,000,000  
FY 2001 — N/A  
FY 2002 — \$1,000,000

### Contact Information

Carolyn White  
Atlanta Regional Commission  
Phone: 404.463.3329  
cwhite@alantaregional.com

Laraine Vance  
Cobb County Transit  
Phone: 770.528.1650  
laraine.vance@cobbcounty.org

Leigh Ann Trainer  
Georgia Department of Human Resources  
Phone: 404.463.6090  
latrainer@dhr.state.ga.us