

vi. DETERMINE THE RIGHT FIT

Guide To Beginning ONE CALL–ONE CLICK Transportation Services

After having coalesced around a shared vision and goals for transportation access, and having determined that a one call–one click strategy can help you achieve those goals, your partnership is ready to begin to create a picture of what that strategy will look like, by

- Identifying factors that will affect the scope of your project,
- Deciding which services to include in the one call–one click project, and
- Selecting a lead agency and organizational “home” for the new service.

We call this “determining the right fit” for your project. You will refine the decisions as you obtain more information, so keep in mind that getting to a final decision will require revisions and updates.

SCOPE OF THE ONE CALL–ONE CLICK PROJECT

The scope of your one call–one click project will be framed by what your partnership wishes to accomplish and what resources you have. The factors listed below will feed into your decision; many of these you discussed in Chapters IV and V:

- Where your community is now on transportation access issues
- Identified priority areas the partnership has chosen to address
- Characteristics of your service area (city, county, multi-county, region, etc.)

- Number and type of transportation providers in the community
- The level to which existing transportation providers are already coordinating services
- Available resources (e.g., services, funding, in-kind resources, political and community support)

As a recap of what you learned in Chapters IV and V, list the challenges you wish to solve:

Define the geographic area for your project; will it be based in your town, city, or county? throughout a multi-county region? another defined region?

vi. DETERMINE THE RIGHT FIT

Guide To Beginning ONE CALL–ONE CLICK Transportation Services

Looking at your identified priorities, what markets do you wish to serve with a one call–one click service (e.g., public transit, specialized transportation, employment transportation, rideshare services, etc.)?

In Chapter IV, you created a list of agencies providing transportation information and/or actual services. How well do those agencies coordinate information and/or services now? Is this an area that will require significant attention before moving forward on a one call–one click service?

What is your available budget for the one call–one click ? Your budget will need to indicate what you currently have to spend, as well as funding opportunities you wish to pursue. Most importantly, your investment in one call–one click services will need to reflect the value you expect to obtain from your investment in staff time and capital funding.

Now take a look at your resources for the “back-office” operations. How much staff time is available for establishing the functionality, including decision-making, protocol development, and the time to install and test a one call–one click system?

Refer to Chapter VIII for more information on technology that may be necessary to support the various functions you are considering for your one-call service.

SERVICES OFFERED THROUGH THE ONE CALL–ONE CLICK PROJECT

The factors identified above are the context in which you will develop your one call–one click project. The central will be what type of services you wish to offer. Table VI-1, below, describes a menu of services that can be provided through a one call–one click project, their characteristics, and their benefit to your community; you may have other services you would like to add. Review this table to help you identify specific services that will respond to your priority areas.

vi. DETERMINE THE RIGHT FIT

Guide To Beginning ONE CALL–ONE CLICK Transportation Services

TABLE VI-1: SERVICES OFFERED THROUGH ONE CALL—ONE CLICK PROJECTS

FUNCTION	CHARACTERISTICS AND OPTIONS	BENEFITS
Information & Referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give customers one or more numbers to call. • Provide counseling to determine the services that are the best fit. • Provide general information on services and eligibility. • Transfer calls to a service provider. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides the foundation for more coordination. • Makes it easier for customers and staff to identify services.
Eligibility Determinations for Multiple Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff has forms for all programs and completes them at one time. • A single process (or limited number of processes) for determining eligibility for multiple programs. • Share data on eligibility with multiple providers. • Maintain a common database used by several providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the customer, the process for obtaining eligibility for a range of transportation services is simplified. • Provides an opportunity for stakeholders to practice working together.
Ombudsperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be the responsibility of a mobility manager or case manager. • Becomes especially important when eligibility is determined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps customers navigate the system and go on trips. • Promotes coordination. • Helps agencies understand places where the systems are not working as intended. • Identifies gaps or problems that need to be addressed.
Travel Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps paratransit riders learn to use fixed-route services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfers eligible riders with disabilities to fixed-route services, freeing up capacity on specialized transportation. • Encourages use of conditional eligibility for ADA paratransit services.

vi. DETERMINE THE RIGHT FIT

Guide To Beginning ONE CALL-ONE CLICK Transportation Services

FUNCTION	CHARACTERISTICS AND OPTIONS	BENEFITS
Travel Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Bus Buddies” (experienced riders) or other community members (e.g., transportation coordinators, mobility managers, social services agency staff) who can show new riders how to use the fixed-route or other services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps riders learn about and feel comfortable using fixed-route and other travel modes.
Travel Hosts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist passengers in finding their transfer connections at busy transfer centers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables more passengers to use fixed-route services, freeing up capacity on specialized transportation services.
Shared Reservations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can use a software application that runs on a closed network or is web-based. • Read-only: call-taker can see where space is available, but cannot actually schedule trips. • Read/Write: call-taker can see what is available and can schedule trips. • Dispatching is through a single provider. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves customers’ experiences and operational efficiencies. • Enables callers to know whether they have a trip scheduled.
Joint Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people in a vehicle. • Uses multiple providers. • Once trip is dispatched, the rider’s contact is with the provider. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves productivity. • Increases mobility.
Joint Dispatching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puts more vehicles under a single dispatcher to minimize customer inconvenience due to traffic delays and vehicle breakdowns. • Joint dispatcher acts as the point of contact for the whole trip. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximizes vehicle productivity. • Operational efficiencies through real-time trip-management information.

vi. DETERMINE THE RIGHT FIT

Guide To Beginning ONE CALL–ONE CLICK Transportation Services

LEAD AGENCY

Selecting a lead agency is an important step. The lead agency must have earned the partners' trust as a credible resource, and must be able to take on the one call–one click service within its organizational mission. Sometimes there is a clear choice for lead agency, but in many instances the role is one the partners would prefer to delegate to another agency.

Sit down with the other agencies that provide one-call services, including any 2-1-1 providers, the public transit provider, ridesharing agencies, a Medicaid transportation broker, the ADRC, aging services programs, or long-term care services programs. Discuss how you can work together. Discussions should include:

- What services they provide, what is missing, and options for filling these gaps;
- Alternate ways of meeting needs; and
- What each party might be willing to take on, what resources each has, the challenges each faces, and how your groups can work together as partners to help each other.

As you discuss which agency would be the most appropriate for your project, you will need to be able to explain your plan—first to staff, and then to the boards of potential lead agencies. The lead agency will want to understand:

- The scope of its responsibilities including service, staff, and space requirements,
- How the services will be funded, and
- The roles and relationships of the lead agency and its partners.

Other considerations include:

- What activities can be completed by staff from partner agencies?
- Is there a mobility manager or someone in a similar position who can take the lead in carrying out the action plan?
- Will professional consulting support be required?

TYPES OF LEAD AGENCIES

Among the surveyed one call–one click service operators (see **Survey Findings**), various entities were the lead agency; no one institutional home or organizational model was identified as being required to achieve success. Examples of each of the following organizational arrangements were found among transportation one call–one click services:

- Non-profit agency: either as a program or function within a multipurpose not-for-profit agency or as a stand-alone non-profit agency,
- Public transit agency,
- Local or county government, and
- Regional planning agency, such as a rural council of governments (COG) or metropolitan planning organiza-

In Manitowoc, Wis., the city and county agreed to share the cost of a mobility manager with the county providing office space and serving as the employer of record.

In Steuben County, N.Y., the 2-1-1 agency agreed to add transportation to its one-call center and provide technical support.

Lane Transit District, Ore., is a public transit agency that provides one-call services.

Lower Savannah Council of Governments provides transportation one-call services and serves as an Aging and Disability Resource Center.

vi. DETERMINE THE RIGHT FIT

Guide To Beginning ONE CALL–ONE CLICK Transportation Services

tion (MPO).

Several one-call transportation services are part of an agency that also serves as a 2-1-1 service. Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC) were also active partners, and some took responsibility for a one-call transportation service. The Lower Savannah Council of Governments (S.C.) is an example of a regional planning agency that serves as both a one-call transportation center and an ADRC.

Is there a consolidated transportation provider in your area?

Yes, Name(s):

No

Is a 2-1-1 or ADRC call center already established?

Yes No

How will the lead agency be compensated for both direct and indirect expenses?

MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The availability and willingness of a competent organization to assume a major role in starting and managing a transportation one-call

service are fundamental requirements for success. Lead agencies may be motivated to step forward for a variety of reasons.

Consolidated transportation providers are those that serve as the primary sources of transit and specialized transportation in their communities. It may be logical for such an entity to be the one-call transportation service provider, as well. The provider may need to expand its mission and promote a range of transportation options – not just the service it provides directly.

In communities where there are multiple transit and specialized transportation service providers, it is beneficial for the one-call service provider to be an “honest broker” or “neutral convener” in the coordination process. If a 2-1-1 or ADRC call center already is established, it may be a relatively simple exercise to add transportation programs and services to the information database.

CONCLUSION

As your group works through this chapter, you and your partners should be able to clarify what you want to achieve, what is reasonable to accomplish, and which agencies offer the greatest potential to move the one-call concept forward – to champion it and provide it a home.

The next section will help you refine your choices by developing an action plan, budget, and timeline to continue your efforts.

vi. DETERMINE THE RIGHT FIT

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