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NATIONAL CONFERENCE of STATE LEGISLATURES

By Jaime Rall

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Getting to Work

Effective State Solutions to Help People with Transportation Challenges Access Jobs



Every day, millions of Americans go to work. Whether in a car or in a van, by bus or by train, on a bike or on foot, more travel occurs to get to work than for any other purpose: As of 2013, [nearly one of every five miles traveled in the United States was on a commute](#), not including other work-related trips such as making deliveries or going to meetings.

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For many Americans, however, getting to work isn't so easy. People with disabilities and low incomes, in particular, face commuting challenges that can make it much more difficult for them to find and keep good jobs that support them and their families. This report details state policies and programs that are helping people who have mobility challenges easily get to and from work, which not only improves their career options and quality of life, but also revitalizes the workforce.

What Are the Challenges?

At [nearly 20 percent of the population](#), people with disabilities are one of the nation's largest minority groups. They are also more likely to be unemployed. The most recent U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics numbers show that [only 18 percent of people with disabilities are working](#), compared to 64 percent of people without disabilities.

Transportation is certainly an issue. Although transportation accessibility has advanced in the last decade, [according to the National Council on Disability](#), problems persist. In 2012, people with disabilities who were not working [reported](#) lack of transportation as one of their biggest barriers to employment. Further, a [survey](#) of job searchers with disabilities in New Jersey found that a quarter of them had left a job, and almost half had refused a job offer, because of travel difficulties. People with disabilities who rely on public transit may find it especially challenging to navigate the distance from their homes and workplaces to transit stations and stops; where public transit isn't available, other accessible transportation options often are in short supply.

"Of course," [reports](#) the National Organization on Disability, "disability is not the only determining factor in whether transportation is a problem; income continues to play a large role." A [survey](#) the organization conducted with the Kessler Foundation in 2010 found that "inadequate transportation continues to be a greater problem for people with incomes of \$15,000 or less, among those both with and without disabilities." In that survey, 25 percent of non-disabled respondents who had annual household incomes at or below \$15,000 identified transportation as a problem, compared to just 13 percent of those who earned \$35,000 or more.

For low-income people, lack of reliable transportation is often a significant obstacle to finding work. They may live far from available jobs, struggle to afford transportation costs, or have inadequate access to public transit, especially in rural and suburban areas. For families that balance work, job training and child care, it can be even tougher to get where they need to be.

The challenge of connecting low-income people with work opportunities has worsened with the rapid rise of suburban poverty. From 2000 to 2012, according to the [Brookings Institution](#), poverty in U.S. suburbs grew by 65 percent, more than twice the urban growth rate. As a result, the suburbs are now home to more than a third of the nation's poor, compared to less than a quarter in 1970. At the same time, it has become harder for low-income suburban families to get to jobs. During the same 12-year period, high-poverty tracts in suburban areas saw the number of jobs within a typical commuting distance [drop by 17 percent](#), compared to declines of 7 percent for all suburban residents and just 3 percent for city dwellers.

As the U.S. labor force continues to age, the need for viable ways to get to work may become even more pressing. Increasing numbers of older adults—who are more likely to have disabilities—are [staying in or returning to the workforce](#). The [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) indicates that the share of the U.S. labor force made up of people age 55 and older nearly doubled from 1992 to 2012, from 11.8 percent to 20.9 percent. Add to this the aging of the baby-boom generation, and it is projected that by 2022, one in four workers will be an older adult. These older workers will need effective, convenient transportation options as well.

Governments Are Taking Action

Every level of government is taking steps to address these challenges, while recognizing there's much more to be done.

At the federal level, several programs—spanning various federal agencies and policy areas—help people with income- and disability-related travel challenges get to work. Under the U.S. Department of Transportation, formula grants for [urban](#) and [rural](#) areas can be used for transit services that are "designed to transport welfare recipients

and eligible low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment.” Previously, the department’s Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) grant program funded these kinds of projects, helping thousands of low-income families reach jobs and employment support services such as child care and job training. In 2012, recognizing the importance of job-access transportation, the Federal Transit Administration integrated this purpose into its largest funding streams. This change has given communities more flexibility, essentially removing the limits on how much they can invest in transportation activities that connect low-income people with jobs.

In addition, the department’s [Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities \(Section 5310\) grant program](#) supports transportation services that enhance mobility for older adults and people with disabilities, beyond traditional public transit and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit. Eligible activities include heavy-duty lifts for oversized wheelchairs, accessible “feeder” services that provide access to bus and rail stations, individualized travel training and trip planning, coordination programs among transportation providers (see pages 11-12), technology improvements, transit passes and vouchers, volunteer driver programs, vanpools and other innovative solutions that meet the travel needs of older adults and people with disabilities in their communities.

In 2014, the department also launched its new [Ladders of Opportunity Initiative](#), aimed at connecting more Americans with jobs—especially people with low incomes, older adults, veterans and other populations. The initiative of-

fered about \$100 million in competitive grants that could be used to improve and modernize bus and van services.

Other relevant federal programs include [vocational rehabilitation grants](#) that help states provide services, including transportation subsidies and travel training, to people with disabilities who are interested in seeking work; [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families \(TANF\) block grants](#) that states can use to offer work supports, such as transportation assistance, to low-income families; [Social Security employment supports](#) that allow people who receive disability benefits to deduct some work-related transportation costs from their countable income; [federal tax benefits](#) that let commuters use tax-free dollars for transit, parking and bicycle costs through employer-sponsored programs; several programs for veterans (see page 4); and [at least 25 other federal funding sources](#) that help people access work-related transportation.

Within this context, and often in partnership with federal initiatives, states are also putting in place policies and programs that help get people to work. Some of these state approaches focus on transportation to work generally and, within that, can help older adults, people with disabilities and low-income people. Others aim to improve mobility across the board for these populations, and happen to also help get them to work. A few hone in on work-related transportation for one or more of these groups specifically (see Figure 1). This report offers a sampling from across the states of promising approaches in all these categories. Most of the programs explored here were enacted in law by state legislatures; the rest are state-level initiatives that may be of interest to state lawmakers and other policy stakeholders.



Look for the “State Snapshot” icon for more details about unique state approaches.

Special Section: Getting Veterans to Work

About 22 million Americans—9 percent of the population—are military veterans, and 2.8 million of these men and women served in Iraq or Afghanistan in the post-9/11 era. These returning veterans are now making the transition to civilian life, but they face challenges. First, troops are coming home with more disabilities than ever before: Because of higher survival rates from battlefield injuries, [29 percent of veterans who served after 2001 have a service-connected disability, compared with 16 percent of all veterans](#). These younger veterans also more often are unemployed than their non-veteran peers, especially if their disability rating is 60 percent or higher.

Returning veterans need reliable, affordable and accessible transportation choices to help them meet these challenges, including finding and keeping good jobs. Fortunately, public agencies at every level of government, private nonprofits, peer networks, families, volunteers and veterans service organizations are responding to the need. In particular, states have put together a variety of programs and policies that help veterans get where they need to go.

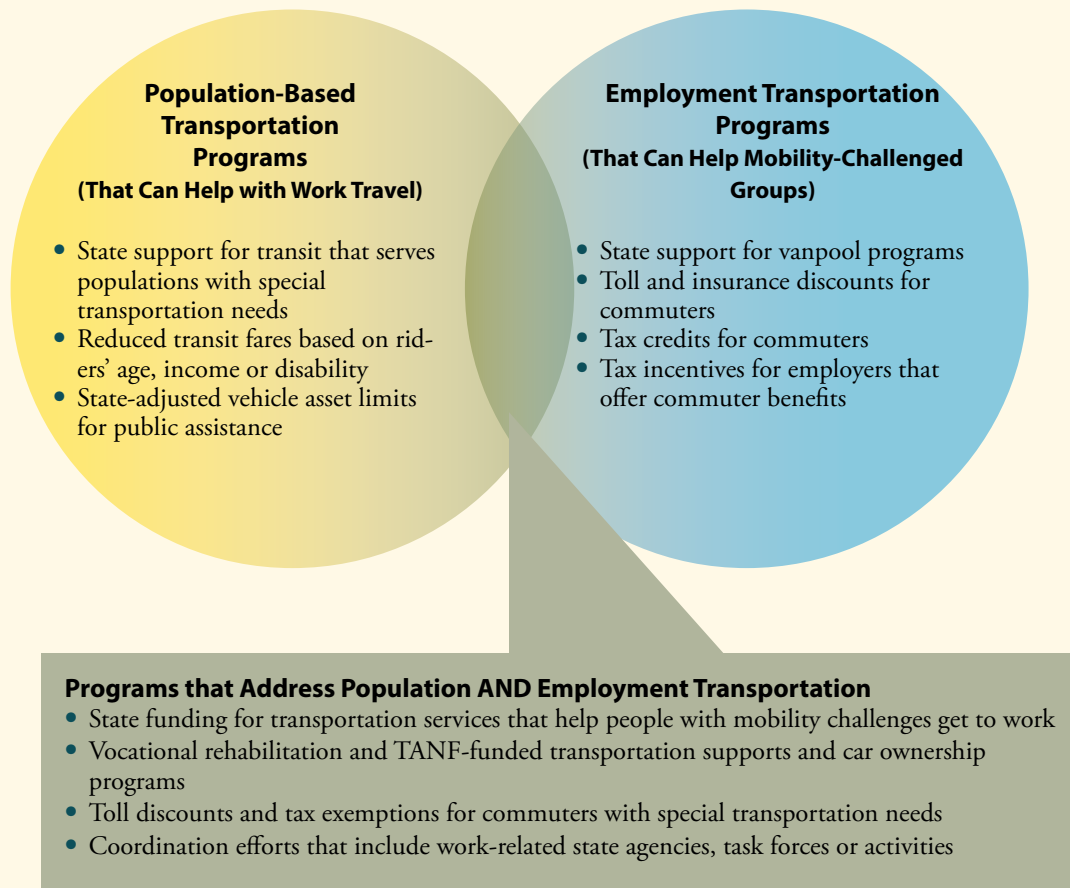
In 2013, [NCSL released a groundbreaking analysis of state efforts to improve mobility for veterans](#). The report revealed a stunning variety of approaches, many of which were put in place by legislatures. States have launched

high-level task forces; created special trust funds for veterans' services; involved veterans in transportation planning; given veterans a break on transit fares, tolls and DMV fees; and much more. Several states also have used federal [Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative grants](#) to create “one-call/one-click centers,” so any veteran in the state can locate all available transportation options using just one phone number or website.

A number of state efforts have specifically targeted work-related transportation for veterans. For example, [grants from New Jersey's Department of Military and Veterans Affairs](#) support emergency relief for veterans, including vehicle repair or replacement for employment purposes. In Texas, the Transportation Support Services program offers veterans temporary transportation assistance, such as gas cards and bus vouchers, to help them get or keep work. Washington state's [Veterans Innovations Program](#) is designed to help veterans and their families who face financial hardships due to deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan; competitive grants under this program have paid for transportation assistance, including car repairs, to help veterans access sustainable, family-wage employment. These approaches not only help the military veterans they are meant to serve, but also offer even more thought-provoking examples of how states are helping people get to work.



Figure 1. State Programs That Support Work Travel for People with Mobility Challenges Using State Funds to Pay for Transportation Services



Using State Funds to Pay for Transportation Services

One of the most important and fundamental ways states help people get to work is by using state funding to support transportation services for people with mobility challenges. For example, substantial state funding goes to work-related transportation assistance through [vocational rehabilitation agencies](#) and [TANF programs](#). States also contribute to public transit programs that help people access jobs. More than \$14 billion in state money went toward transit in FY 2012 alone—about \$4 billion more than the federal contribution, according to the [2014 Survey of State Funding for Public Transportation](#). State-funded activities included formula grants and required matches for federal grants that support job access for low-income

workers, door-to-door paratransit, and other specialized transportation services for older adults and people with disabilities.

States also have created special programs that fund additional transportation services for the people who need them most. [Florida's Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund](#), for instance, was designed to fill the gaps in existing public funding streams for special needs transportation. [Paid for by motor vehicle registration fees and other sources](#) and administered by the [Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged](#), the fund—which totaled \$36.6 million in FY 2012—provides grants for local plan-

ning activities, transportation services and capital purchases that are not sponsored by any other government program.

In addition, [New Jersey's Senior Citizen and Disabled Resident Transportation Assistance Program](#), supported by 8.5 percent of the state's Casino Revenue Tax Fund, helps counties develop and provide accessible local transit service for older adults and people with disabilities; [Pennsylvania's Welfare to Work Transportation Program](#), funded from the state's [Public Transportation Trust Fund](#), sponsors local projects and services that assist low-income people with transportation to work and child care services; and every two years, [Washington's state-funded Paratransit/Special Needs Grant Program](#) awards \$5.5 million to nonprofits to improve transit services for people who can't provide their own transportation due to age, disability or income. The goals of Washington's program include enhanced access to jobs. Each of these programs was created and funded by a state legislature.

Several states also have expanded available transportation options by using state funds to support vanpool programs. [Vanpools](#)—groups of seven to 15 passengers, including a

volunteer driver, who commute together in a single vehicle and share travel costs—offer affordable, flexible alternatives for getting to work, especially in rural and suburban areas that lack public transit. Federal, state and local funds can be used to support vanpool programs, which can be run by public agencies, private vendors, employers or the commuters themselves.

[Washington](#) and [Wisconsin](#) have recently helped buy vehicles for vanpool programs with state funds. Washington's [vanpool grant program](#), established by the Legislature in 2003, has built the largest public vanpool fleet in North America: Every day, 2,850-plus vanpools serve more than 19,000 commuters statewide. Wisconsin owns and operates all the vans in its [program](#). The system is set up to serve state employees, but anyone can use it, as long as each vanpool group has at least one state employee on board. Wisconsin has also funded local vanpool and shuttle services through the [Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program \(WETAP\)](#), a coordinated grant program that supports employment-related transportation services for low-income workers.



STATE SNAPSHOT: Wisconsin's Integrated Grant Program

Wisconsin has long supported creative transportation solutions, in both urban and rural areas. Since 2000, one of the state's efforts has been a coordinated grant program that connects low-income workers with jobs through enhanced local transportation services.

Known as the [Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program \(WETAP\)](#), the program integrates federal, state and local funding into a single application and award process, jointly administered by the state departments of transportation and workforce development. Grants cover the start-up and development expenses for new transportation services that are designed to meet the needs of low-income workers.

In the [most recent grant cycle](#), WETAP awarded \$3.1 million in federal and state funds to projects all over Wisconsin, matched by an additional \$2.6 million in local funds. Grants went to car ownership programs, improved public transit, vanpool and shuttle services, driver's license recovery projects, and local mobility managers who coordinate transportation services for area workers and employers. [Five of these grantees were chosen](#) as recipients of the 15th Annual Governor's Excellence in Community Action Award for their innovative car loan and repair program. "This program and these organizations help make Wisconsin's workforce stronger by addressing the challenges that many families face," [said](#) Governor Scott Walker.

Another state approach is to help pay for ongoing vanpool expenses. [Massachusetts](#) and [New Jersey](#), for example, offer financial incentives to eligible vanpools (up to \$600 and \$175 per month, respectively). [Michigan](#) covers a portion of vendors' capital depreciation costs for their vehicles—a subsidy that is passed along to riders in the form of lower fares. The [Virginia Vanpool Assistance Program](#), sponsored by the state Department of Rail and Public Transportation, “provides temporary funding for vanpools having trouble filling all of their seats.”

Giving Workers a Break on Transportation Costs

Affordable commuting options are a key factor in economic mobility, [reports](#) the Brookings Institution, as burdensome transportation costs can put some opportunities out of reach for low-income job-seekers. In addition to subsidizing vanpool programs, states have pursued many other approaches that help make work travel more affordable for people with special transportation needs. By acting to lower these workers' commuting costs directly, these state programs help remove obstacles to employment.

Some states, for example, have worked to lower the costs of public transportation for people with mobility challenges. Public transit continues to be an essential, cost-effective way for people to get to jobs, and is [especially effective for within-city travel](#). To make it even more affordable, [federal law](#) requires all transit systems that receive federal funding

to offer half-rate fares to older adults and people with disabilities during off-peak hours.

Some states, though, have gone beyond these requirements. [Nebraska law](#), for instance, requires state-supported city bus systems to lower fares for low-income people, too, and the District of Columbia offers reduced transit fares to foster youth who are traveling for employment purposes. Another intriguing example, although one with no state-level involvement at present, is a [large-scale program](#) in King County, Wash., that offers reduced transit fares to people whose household income is no more than 200 percent of the federal poverty level. State transit agencies in [Maryland](#) and [New Jersey](#) allow older adults and people with disabilities to travel at reduced rates at any time, not just off-peak hours, and many of Maryland's discounted fares cost about a third of the full rate. By state law, public transit is completely free for low-income older adults and people with disabilities in [Chicago](#) and throughout [Rhode Island](#); in [Maryland](#), it's free for people with disabilities who are commuting to sheltered workshops and earn less than minimum wage, and in [Pennsylvania](#), for all adults age 65 or older. [New Jersey's “Get a Job, Get a Ride” program](#) combines several of these approaches to help unemployed residents return to the workforce. The program partners with employers to offer free one-month transit passes to new hires who make \$10 or less an hour and would otherwise be jobless, to help bridge the financial gap between their first pay periods.



STATE SNAPSHOT: Pennsylvania's Reduced Fares

Pennsylvania has one of the largest transit programs in the country, [investing more than \\$1 billion each year](#) in public transportation across the state. One of its unique and long-standing efforts is the [Senior Citizen Transportation Program](#), established in [state law](#), which supports transit use by older adults statewide.

Supported by state lottery proceeds and administered by the state Department of Transportation, the program allows any Pennsylvania resident age 65 or older to ride public transit completely free of charge, all day long. Older Pennsylvanians also can use on-demand, shared-ride services at reduced rates and take commuter rail for just \$1.

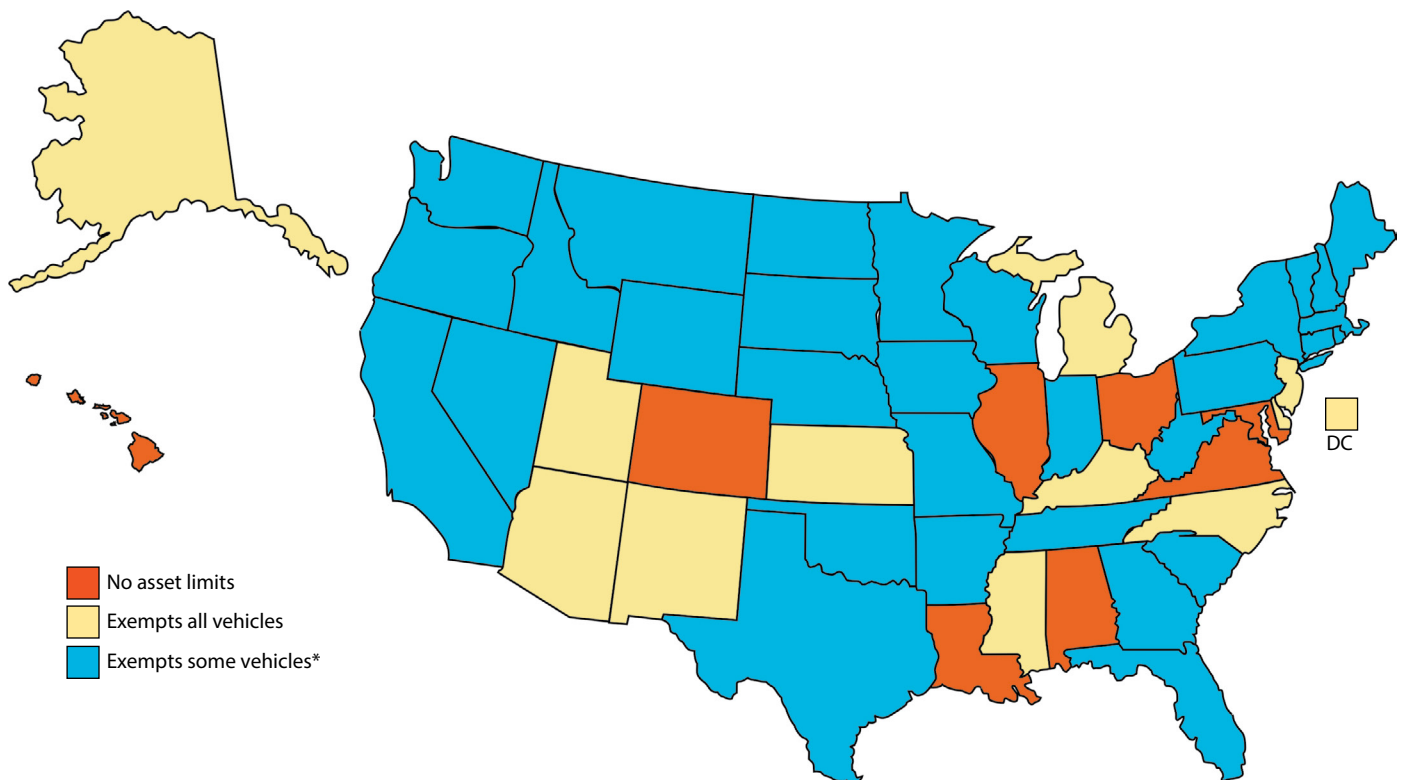
In 2013–14, more than \$162 million in state lottery funds [provided nearly 35 million free transit rides and nearly 4 million shared rides](#) to older adults across the state—more than 105,000 free and reduced-fare shared rides, every day.

Not all jobs can be reached by public transit, however. Even in America's cities, [research suggests](#), the typical job is accessible by transit to only about 27 percent of the workforce—let alone those in rural or suburban areas. Because car ownership can be an important, if costly, way to access more job opportunities, several states have created programs to help low-income people afford their own vehicle. [Kansas](#), [Michigan](#), [Nebraska](#) and [Pennsylvania](#), for example, give funds to eligible applicants for buying a vehicle, and New York's [Transportation Initiative](#) awards competitive grants to local social services agencies to help low-income workers meet their transportation needs, including through car donation and loan programs. Wisconsin offers no-interest, short-term [Job Access Loans](#) to low-income people for immediate job-related needs, including buying a car; loans can be repaid in cash or through a combination of cash and volunteer community service. These state

programs generally leverage federal TANF or related funding sources, which can be used for a variety of work-related transportation supports.

States also have made sure that, once a low-income job-seeker owns a car, it doesn't count against them as they transition from public assistance to the workplace. States have discretion in deciding the maximum value of assets that people can own and still continue to be eligible to receive TANF and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) benefits. For TANF, [every state](#) has either waived asset limits altogether or excluded vehicles from their eligibility calculations in some way (see Figure 2). Several states—including Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana and Ohio—enacted legislation to make the change. [Most states](#) have also have either eliminated asset rules for SNAP food assistance or allowed exceptions for vehicles (see Figure 3).

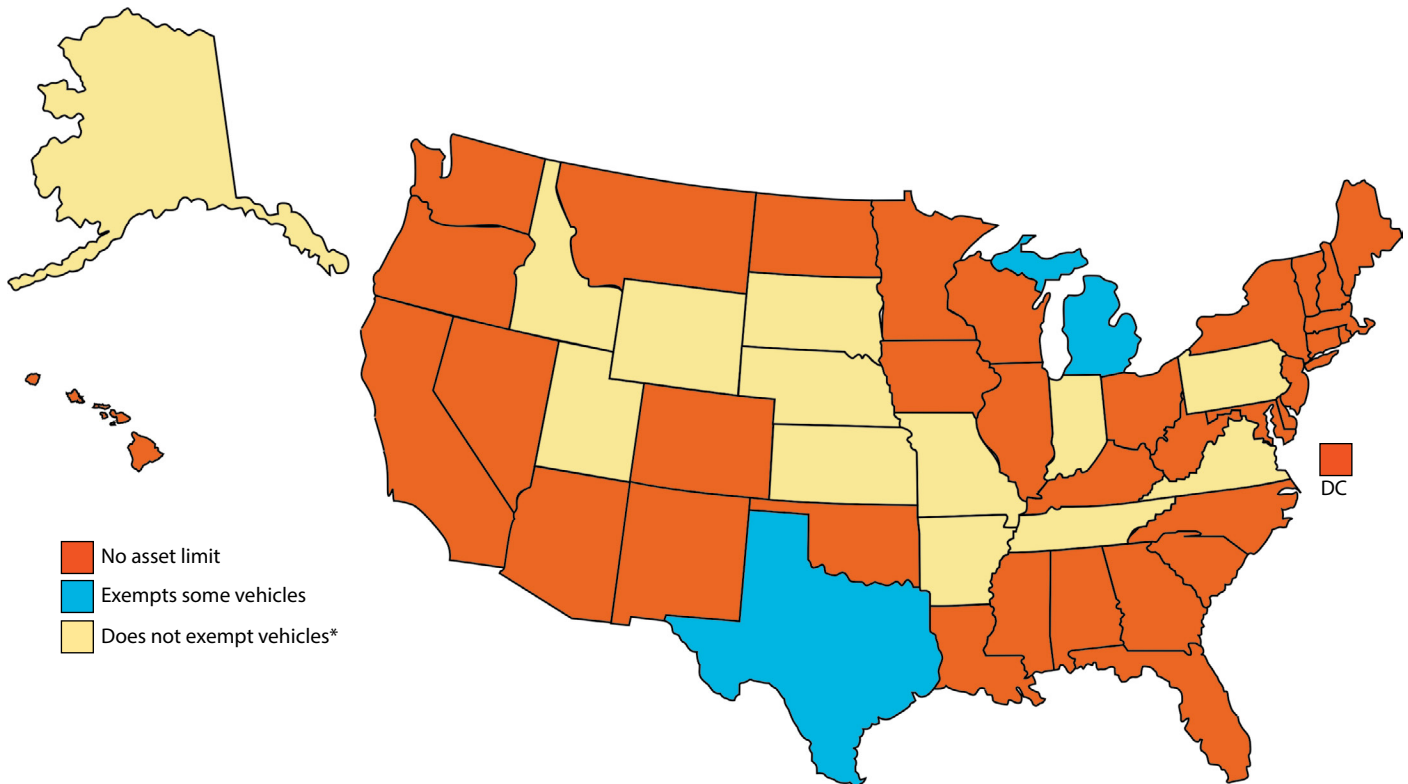
Figure 2. State Asset Limits For Temporary Assistance For Needy Families (TANF) Benefits



* Exempts one vehicle only, one vehicle per driver or per adult, or vehicles up to a certain value.

Source: Corporation for Enterprise Development, 2014.

Figure 3. State Asset Limits For Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefits



* These states either use the federal asset limit (\$2,000, or \$3,250 if the household includes older adults or people with disabilities) or have a higher asset limit that does not exempt any vehicles.

Source: Corporation for Enterprise Development, 2014.

States have also have offered toll discounts that help commuters save money. State-level entities in at least 10 states—[Delaware](#), [Maine](#), [Maryland](#), [Massachusetts](#), [New Hampshire](#), [New Jersey](#), [New York](#), [Rhode Island](#), [Virginia](#) and [West Virginia](#)—offer discount packages for frequent commuters or local residents. The [Delaware River Port Authority](#) and [New Jersey Turnpike Authority](#) offer toll discounts for drivers age 65 and older. By [California state law](#), the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority now has become the first toll operation to offer a [discount plan](#) to low-income commuters. The plan gives qualifying county residents a one-time \$25 credit toward their travel on tolled express lanes and waives their monthly account maintenance fee.

Assorted other state laws are further reducing work-related travel costs. Arizona, for example, [does not apply its car rental surcharge](#) to vehicles that are used in commuter vanpools with volunteer drivers. In Delaware, workers who participate in their employers' [state-approved commuter benefits programs](#) (see page 10) are eligible for a [5 percent discount](#) on automobile collision insurance. [Massachusetts law](#) allows employees to [deduct](#) some commuter expenses, including electronic toll payments and transit passes, from their personal income taxes. In Washington, under the state's [Commute Trip Reduction program](#) (see page 11), passenger vehicles used mainly for carpools or vanpools for people with special transportation needs (for at least three straight years after purchase) are [not subject to the motor vehicle excise tax](#).

Offering Tax Incentives to Employers for Commuter Benefits

Much of the traffic congestion, fuel consumption and air pollution in America's cities result from commuting. Although transit use is growing, as of 2013, [about 77 percent of commuters nationwide were driving to work alone](#). Under [federal tax law](#), employers can encourage their employees to try alternatives by offering them tax-free transit, vanpool, parking or bicycle commuting benefits, up to certain limits. These benefits are designed to ease rush hour on the roadways, but by offering more ways for employees to save money on commuting costs and taxes—and also expanding travel options—they also can help improve job access.

At the state level, legislatures in at least eight states have also enacted tax incentives for employers that provide commuter benefits (see Table). [California](#) and [Colorado](#) allow deductions from employers' taxable income for subsidizing ridesharing and transit passes. [Connecticut](#), [Delaware](#), [Georgia](#), [Maryland](#), [Minnesota](#) and [Washington](#) offer tax credits that directly reduce employers' tax liability for a portion of the amount they spend on such benefits. Delaware's [law](#) acknowledges low-income workers; there, employer travel assistance programs must focus on reducing commuter trips during peak travel periods, unless they target welfare-to-work employees.

Table. State Tax Incentives For Employers That Offer Commuter Benefits

State	Law	Tax Credit	Tax Deduction	Share of Employers' Direct Costs	Limit Per Employee	Total Limit Per Year	Eligible Commuter Benefits
California	Cal. Revenue and Taxation Code §24343.5		X				Carpool, vanpool, subscription taxipool, private commuter buses, public transit; facility improvements that encourage walking, bicycling, or any of the other options listed above
Colorado	Colo. Rev. Stat. §39-22-509		X				Carpool, vanpool, public transit
Connecticut	Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. §12-217s; Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. §13b-38p	X		50%	\$250/year	\$1.5 million	State-approved traffic reduction programs and services, for businesses with at least 100 employees
Delaware	Del. Code Ann. tit. 30, §§2030 et seq.	X		10% or a measure of commute trip reduction		\$100,000	State-approved programs that focus on peak travel periods, unless targeted to welfare-to-work employees
Georgia	Ga. Code Ann. §48-7-29.3	X			\$25/year (flat rate)		Federally qualified transportation fringe benefits
Maryland	Md. Environment Code Ann. §2-901; Md. Tax. Code §10-715	X		50%	\$50/month		Vanpool, public transit, guaranteed ride home
Minnesota	Minn. Stat. Ann. §290.06[28]	X		30%			Private van or bus for hire, public transit
Washington	Wash. Rev. Code Ann. §§82.70.010 et seq.	X		50%	\$60/year		Carpool, vanpool, public transit, membership-based car-sharing programs, walking, bicycling



STATE SNAPSHOT: Washington's Commute Trip Reduction Program

For nearly 25 years, Washington has run the nation's most comprehensive program to reduce the number of cars on the road during rush hour—saving workers money and expanding their travel options in the process.

Under the state's [Commute Trip Reduction \(CTR\) program](#), created by the Legislature in 1991, local governments in the state's most traffic-congested areas work with large employers to reduce drive-alone commutes. The program gives businesses the flexibility to design the plans that make the most sense for them and their workers. In response, employers have offered everything from transit pass programs and carpool incentives to compressed work weeks and [even mortgage discounts](#) that help employees move closer to the office.

Representative Judy Clibborn, chair of Washington's House Transportation Committee, thinks the program works “because it uses the partnership with the private sector and user to meet the needs of individual businesses and regions. It is not a one-size-fits-all.”

The program costs the state about \$6 million every two years, which goes mainly to local organizations, plus up to \$1.5 million per year in [tax credits](#) for participating companies. In addition, one of the program's major successes has been to leverage private investment: For every \$1 the state spends, employers contribute \$18. As a result, between 2007 and 2012, [employees at nearly 1,100 participating worksites left 12,000 cars at home every day](#)—and saved nearly \$7 million in fuel costs each year—as they traveled to work by bus, train, vanpool, walking, biking and other alternatives.

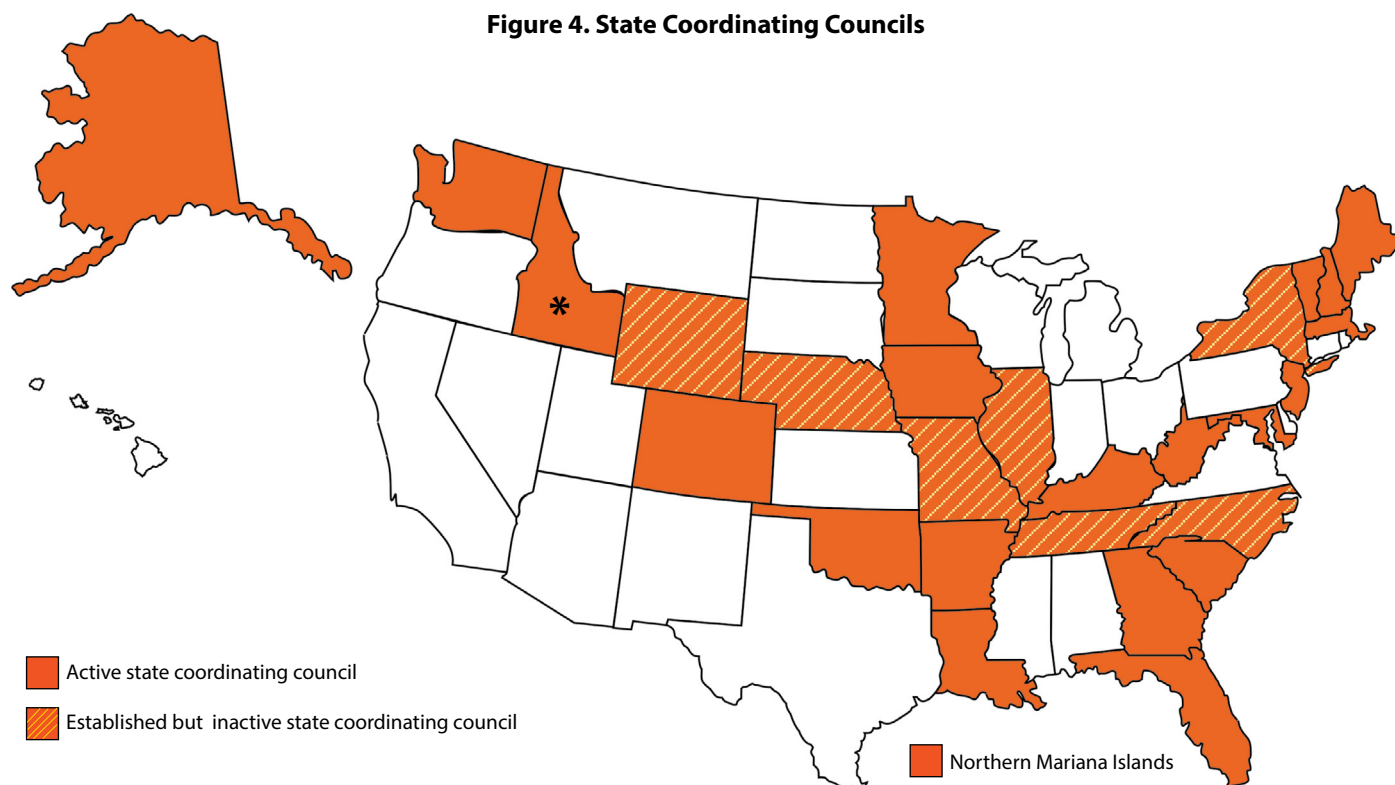
Coordinating Transportation Programs

By one estimate, tens of thousands of government agencies, nonprofits and private companies provide or pay for transportation services in the United States. With so many players in the mix, however, the system has become complicated, fragmented, and difficult to understand and navigate. Transportation options may overlap in some places and be missing in others. Some vehicles may be filled to overflowing, while others are underused.

“Since the 1970s, transportation experts have recognized the problems created by this complex web, and federal agencies and many state governments have attempted to coordinate services to improve transportation for target population groups,” [reports AARP](#). Today, at least 20 states

and the Northern Mariana Islands have active [coordinating councils](#)—most of them established in state law—where various state agencies, transportation providers and other stakeholders work together to make the whole network more effective and easier to use for people with mobility challenges (see Figure 4). A [comprehensive 2015 NCSL study of these councils](#), which vary widely across the states, revealed striking successes: By facilitating good communication among their members, councils were able to identify transportation service gaps and develop strategies to solve them, ultimately making the system better at getting people where they want to go.

Figure 4. State Coordinating Councils



Source: NCSL, 2015.

Although the aim of these councils is typically to improve transportation across the board, most work to include job-related travel within their scope. Of the 20 states with active councils, for example, 16 have among their members representatives from state labor, workforce development, economic security or vocational rehabilitation agencies, ensuring these issues are part of the conversation. State coordinating councils also have undertaken specific projects to improve job access for people with mobility challenges. Colorado's council, for example, now has a task force on workforce development; New Jersey's has undertaken a pilot program to leverage existing community transit services for vocational rehabilitation transportation. The South Carolina council is spearheading a review of the state's transportation system, with work-related transportation and the mobility needs of older adults and people with disabilities among its focus areas.

Councils have the benefit of offering a formal venue for coordination efforts, but meaningful coordination activities also are occurring in states that have no council. For example, although Delaware has no council per se, a "TANF

team"—composed of the directors of the Delaware Transit Corporation and the state Division of Social Services, Department of Labor and Economic Development Office—is working to set up long-term solutions to the transportation barriers that confront low-income job-seekers.

States Can Continue to Lead the Way

Whether it's providing critical state funding for transportation services, easing commuting costs, encouraging businesses to offer their employees affordable travel alternatives, or coordinating services across agencies and providers, states are offering a diverse range of policies and programs that are making it easier for people with special mobility needs to access jobs. At the same time, dramatic demographic shifts—including returning veterans, the rise of suburban poverty and the graying of the labor force—are adding new complexities to long-standing, thorny transportation challenges. In this context, state policy makers will no doubt continue to lead the way with innovative, effective strategies that help people to get to work.



STATE SNAPSHOT: Massachusetts' Coordinated Transportation Network

Massachusetts is coordinating and supporting creative transportation solutions at all levels of government. The state's coordinated network includes a state-level coordinating council, statewide initiatives and regional bodies, all working together to get people where they want to go—with encouraging results.

Formed in 2013, [Massachusetts' Statewide Coordinating Council on Community Transportation \(SCCCT\)](#)—co-chaired by the state departments of transportation and health and human services—works closely with the [Massachusetts Mobility Management Center](#) and [MassMobility](#), a statewide initiative that aims to enhance mobility for older adults, people with disabilities, veterans and others, by raising awareness of existing services, helping programs collaborate and sharing best practices.

One of the council's first actions, in partnership with MassMobility and the Department of Transportation, was to put together [regional coordinating councils](#) to improve transportation services at the local level. The regional council in central Massachusetts, for example, has helped promote a creative travel solution in the region. Called [READYBUS](#), the new service gives local commuters door-to-door, on-demand rides to work, at just \$1.25 per ride. READYBUS began because the director of [a local transportation service](#) for older adults and people with disabilities saw the need for employment transportation in the region. He realized he had vehicles with empty seats that could be used to get people to work for almost no extra cost.

Now, the regional council helps advertise READYBUS and is looking to expand it to other towns. Meanwhile, other regions that have heard about the service through the coordinated network are figuring out how to do something similar—another example of how coordinating transportation programs, across regions and levels of government, can help good ideas spread.

Acknowledgments

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