

State Notes

TOPICS OF LEGISLATIVE INTEREST

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Overview of State Transportation Services for Low-Income, Elderly, and Disabled Populations **By Frances Carley, Fiscal Analyst**

Summary

Several State departments offer transportation services for low-income, elderly, and disabled adult populations. This article will provide an overview of the various programs that serve these populations at the State level, including annual expenditures.¹

These various services are provided by the following departments: Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Community Health (DCH), and Department of Corrections (DOC), as well as the Strategic Fund in the Department of Treasury.² The spending in these program areas totaled \$40.1 million Gross in fiscal year (FY) 2011-12, and \$38.3 million Gross in FY 2012-13.

The Senate Appropriations Committee's budget recommendation for the Department of Human Services would require a workgroup to explore consolidation of these programs.³ Although the programs serve similar populations, the authority to manage and oversee a Federal funding stream typically must remain with a given department. Services may overlap in terms of the population served, but also may vary in terms of the specific objective, eligibility criteria, location and availability, or other implementation issues. If the workgroup is established, its report could provide more information as to whether it is possible to combine services or combine funding through an interagency agreement, interdepartmental grant, or another mechanism when services overlap.

Overview of Spending by Department

Table 1 provides a list of the spending by department and by program area in FY 2011-12 and FY 2012-13. Brief descriptions of the program areas follow.

Michigan Department of Transportation

The Michigan Department of Transportation provides specialized transportation services for low-income, elderly, and disabled populations. The programs are funded through both State and Federal revenue sources.

The services that are offered for low-income individuals are aligned with transportation to work services. This program is intended to remove the lack of transportation as a barrier to employment. Services are planned and implemented at the local level in coordination with social service and employment service agencies to transport welfare recipients and low-income individuals to and from jobs, where traditional services are unavailable, inappropriate, or insufficient.

The Michigan Department of Transportation also has interagency agreements with the DHS and Treasury to provide transportation to work services in Genesee County.⁴ The Department of Human Services and

¹ Regional and local services are not included unless State or Federal funding for the programs is reflected in the State budget.

² The Michigan State Housing Development Authority does not provide these services. Additionally, the focus of this report is on services for special adult populations, and therefore, does not include Department of Education transportation services.

³ The workgroup language also is included in the Appropriations Committee recommendations for MDOT, Treasury, DCH, and DOC.

⁴ The match from Treasury formerly was provided by the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs.



Treasury each provide \$550,000 for this initiative, which is implemented by the transit provider in Genesee County, Mass Transportation Authority. The funds are used to transport Genesee County residents to jobs within Genesee County as well as neighboring Lapeer, Livingston, Oakland, Saginaw, and Washtenaw Counties.

Through the Federal Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program, MDOT provides public transportation services and alternatives for these populations.⁵ This Federal funding is provided to the states based on population size and also to large urban areas. Funding to serve disabled individuals primarily assists with transportation to and from jobs and other employment support services.

Department of Treasury, Strategic Fund

In addition to the \$550,000 match provided by the Department of Treasury for low-income transportation services in Genesee County (as described above), the Strategic Fund in the Department of Treasury provides funding for transportation services for other low-income employment programs, including welfare-to-work.

The Community Ventures program assists long-term unemployed people in Detroit, Flint, Pontiac, and Saginaw in removing barriers and obtaining employment. When this new program was launched, it received \$9.8 million in FY 2012-13. Transportation comprises a portion of the services, with approximately \$600,000 set aside for this purpose.

The Strategic Fund also supports Michigan Works! transportation services for individuals who are receiving cash assistance through the Family Independence Program (FIP) in the DHS. In order to be eligible for FIP, individuals must be employed or participate in job readiness activities. Michigan Works! has a contract with the DHS to provide FIP clients with assistance for job placement and other services to help them meet their work requirements and self-sufficiency plan.

Department of Human Services

In addition to providing a \$550,000 match for low-income transportation services in Genesee County (as described above), the DHS provides funding for low-income adults who are receiving various forms of public assistance, as well as disabled individuals.

Services for low-income adults are provided through the Employment and Training Support Services line item in the DHS budget. The services are intended to maintain or enhance employment and can be made available for a maximum of four consecutive months to families that are receiving the child care subsidy, food assistance, or Medicaid. These services are not available through the FIP work participation program.

Michigan Rehabilitative Services (MRS) provides a range of services for disabled individuals to support employment outcomes and independence. Transportation is one of the available support services. In order to draw down the Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration and Vocational Rehabilitation Title I grant, the State provides a match of 21.3%. Based on Federal eligibility requirements, individuals must: 1) have a physical or mental disability that constitutes or results in a substantial barrier to employment; 2) be able to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services; and 3) want to work.

⁵ Prior to FY 2012-13, funding for these services was provided under both the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities program and the New Freedom program.



Department of Community Health

The Department of Community Health provides transportation for low-income populations for various medical needs, including chronic health problems, prenatal care, and cancer screenings.

Medicaid recipients throughout the State are eligible to receive Non-Emergency Medical Transportation program transportation through public and private providers. Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne Counties have a contract with LogistiCare to provide the services.

Children and some adults with chronic health care needs and their families can qualify for nonemergency medical transportation through the Children's Special Health Care Services. This program covers more than 2,700 diagnoses, including cancer, cerebral palsy, liver disease, certain vision disorders, sickle cell anemia, and epilepsy. Individuals who are 21 years old and older can qualify for services if they have cystic fibrosis or certain blood coagulation disorders. This program provides a variety of family- and community-based support services, with transportation being just one item in the spectrum.

The Maternal Infant Health Program serves high-risk pregnant women who are enrolled in Medicaid. Local health departments, private health agencies, and outpatient hospital clinics certified by the DCH participate in the program. These service providers refer clients to the program if there are any conditions that could have an adverse effect on the pregnancy outcome, such as nutritional problems, cognitive, emotional or mental impairments in the mother, drug, alcohol or tobacco abuse, or the need for transportation to keep medical appointments.

The Breast and Cervical Cancer Program is a national program, authorized by Federal legislation and funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to provide screening services and diagnostic testing for breast and cervical cancer. In Michigan, services are available statewide and more than 29,000 uninsured or underinsured women are screened for these cancers each year. Some of the funding is made available for transportation to appointments.

Department of Corrections

As part of the assistance that is available for prisoner re-entry, transportation is included in the range of support services that are intended to help ex-offenders meet the conditions of their parole, items that could include meetings with a parole officer or job readiness or other employment goals. Private transportation is also an allowable service under certain circumstances and may include fuel cards, bicycles, mileage reimbursements, or private services. Public transportation was made available to 5,600 cases and private transportation was made available to 1,600 cases in FY 2011-12. In FY 2012-13, 4,762 cases received public transportation services and 859 cases received one of the private services.

Conclusion

This article identifies transportation services for low-income, elderly, and disabled populations and where, potentially, there are overlapping services among the various State departments. There are similar employment services for low-income individuals within MDOT, Treasury, the DHS, and the DOC. Various programs for disabled individuals are in place in MDOT, the DHS, and, to some extent, the DCH. These are examples of potential connections that are visible on the surface. The Senate Subcommittee's budget recommendation for the DHS included a workgroup to explore consolidation of these various programs in order to improve efficiency, delivery of service, and communication among the departments.



Table 1

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR LOW-INCOME, DISABLED, AND SENIOR POPULATIONS		
Program and Department	FY 2011-12 Actual	FY 2012-13 Actual
Department of Transportation		
Low-Income Transportation to Work Assistance.....	\$4,700,000	\$4,700,000
Elderly/Disabled Transportation Assistance.....	<u>10,652,800</u>	<u>3,203,500</u>
Subtotal	\$15,352,800	\$7,903,500
Department of Human Services¹⁾		
Low-Income Transportation to Work Assistance.....	\$550,000	\$550,000
Employment and Training line item	261,200	168,900
Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)	<u>0</u>	<u>588,600</u>
Subtotal	\$811,200	\$1,307,500
Department of Treasury – Strategic Fund²⁾		
PATH and Michigan Works! for FIP clients	\$3,800,000	\$6,654,500
Low-Income Transportation to Work Assistance.....	550,000	550,000
Community Ventures	<u>N/A</u>	<u>600,000</u>
Subtotal	\$4,350,000	\$7,804,500
Department of Community Health (Nonemergency Medical Transportation)		
Medicaid	\$15,150,500	\$18,494,300
Children's Special Health Care Services.....	2,458,500	1,626,400
Maternal Infant Health Program	1,446,700	749,600
Breast and Cervical Cancer Program.....	<u>18,200</u>	<u>13,700</u>
Subtotal	\$19,073,900	\$20,884,000
Department of Corrections		
Prisoner Re-entry - Public Transportation	\$362,700	\$294,100
Prisoner Re-entry - Private Transportation	<u>165,600</u>	<u>76,000</u>
Subtotal	\$528,300	\$370,100
Total	\$40,116,200	\$38,269,600
<p>1) The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) previously managed MRS. The Employment and Training and MRS data are estimates based on vendor information found in the Michigan Administrative Information Network (MAIN). The estimates do not include items that are flagged as vehicle repairs or purchases.</p> <p>2) Previously, LARA managed the work program for Family Independence Program (FIP) clients, and the program is now managed by the Strategic Fund in Treasury. The Community Ventures program was launched in FY 2012-13.</p>		