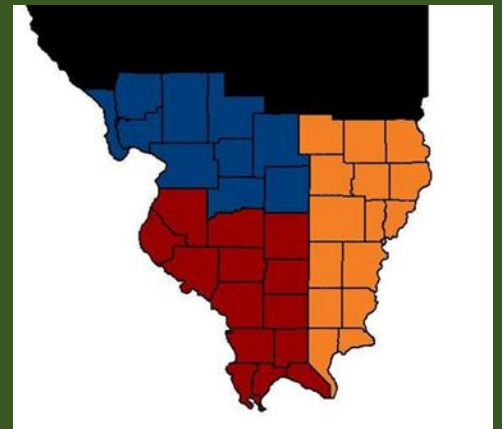


2025

Human Service Transportation Plan for Region 11



*IL. Department of Transportation/Office of
Intermodal Project Implementation and
South Central Illinois Regional Planning and
Development Commission*

1/1/2025

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Mission Statement

To coordinate the human service transportation efforts of public, private, and non-profit providers in an effort to maximize services for the populations served in HSTP Region 11 and to provide guidance concerning funding and available resources.

Introduction and Executive Summary

In 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law by President George W. Bush. It guaranteed funding for various transportation projects including highways, highway safety, public transportation, and human services transportation. Under SAFETEA-LU, all grantees receiving Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities, Section 5316: Job Access and Reverse Commute Program, Section 5317: New Freedom Program were required to participate in a locally developed coordinated public transit human service transportation plan (HSTP) to be eligible for transportation funding for federal fiscal year 2007 and beyond. Since then, the HSTP program has been continued by each transportation bill as a means of enhancing access and quality through coordination.

In 2012, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) was signed into law by President Obama replacing the SAFETEA-LU. MAP-21 is the first long-term highway authorization enacted since 2005 and authorized \$105 billion for fiscal years 2013 and 2014. MAP-21 provided funding highway infrastructure, public transportation projects, and reaffirmed the statute mandating local coordination of transportation services. Some of the SAFETEA-LU programs were repealed in MAP-21; JARC funding was absorbed into Section 5307: Urbanized Area Formula Grants and Section 5311: Formula Grants for Rural Areas. The New Freedom funding was rolled into Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities.

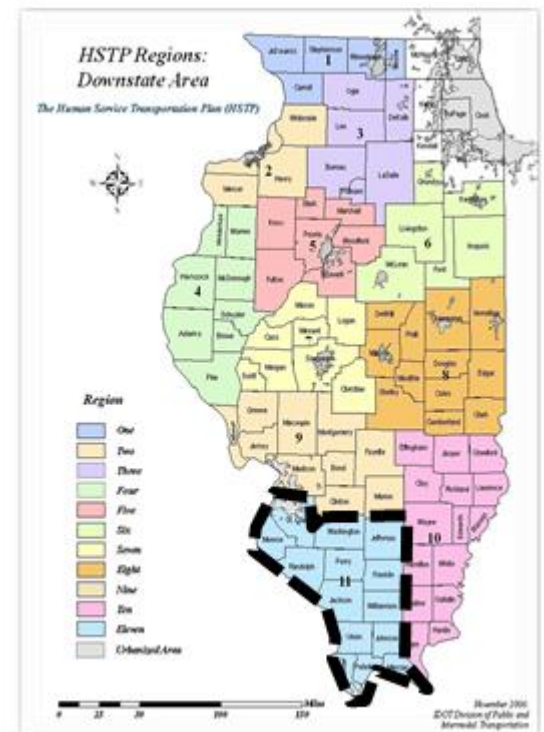
In 2015, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) was signed into law by President Obama replacing the MAP-21. The FAST Act authorized \$305 billion for highways, public transportation, rail, research, etc. for fiscal years 2016 through 2020. This is the first federal law in over a decade to provide long-term funding certainty for surface transportation programs. Replacing MAP-21, the FAST Act maintained focus on safety, maintained the established structure of the various highway-related programs, and continued efforts to streamline project delivery. It also revived Section 5339: Grants for Bus and Bus Facilities Program, which is available to Section 5307 and Section 5311 recipients.

In 2021, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was signed into law by President Biden replacing the FAST Act. The law authorized \$1.2 trillion for transportation and infrastructure for fiscal years 2021 through 2026. This is the largest federal investment in public transportation in

the nation's history. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) formula grant programs experienced a 30% increase in funding from fiscal years 2021 and 2022 and will continue increasing through 2026. Which means that “local match” funding required to leverage these funds will also need to grow 30%. If local match dollars are not met, leftover funds will be returned to the State. Service contracts with stakeholder agencies such as human service agencies, Medicaid brokers/MCO's, nursing homes, community colleges, etc. can be utilized as local match. The IJIA continues the requirement for the coordination of transportation services.

Purpose of the Human Service Transportation Plan

A coordinated plan maximizes the programs' collective coverage by minimizing duplication of services. Further, a coordinated plan is developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation, as well as human services providers and the public. A coordinated plan incorporates activities offered under other programs sponsored by federal, state, and local agencies to greatly strengthen its impact. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) also encourages participation in coordinated service delivery as long as the coordinated services will continue to meet the purpose of all programs.

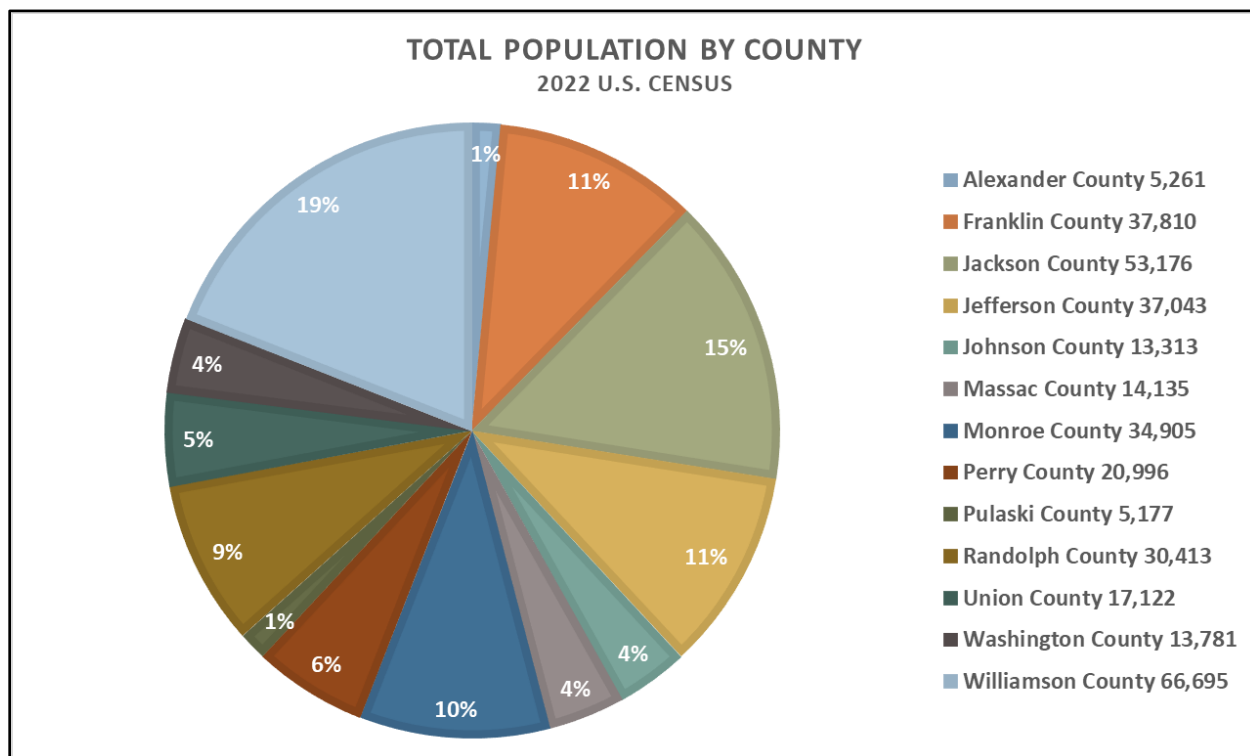


Regional Description

Region 11 is one of eleven downstate Human Services Transportation Planning Regions established by the State of Illinois through the Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation (DPIT), now known as the Office of Intermodal Project Implementation (OIPI). The region is comprised of fourteen counties located along the western half of Southern Illinois, stretching from the Mississippi River to the middle of the state. The region includes the counties immediately to the east and south of the Metropolitan St. Louis (or “Metro East” region). These counties are Alexander, Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Massac, Monroe, Perry, Pulaski, Randolph, St. Clair, Union, Washington, and Williamson. Of the estimated 606,618 residents of Region 11, 256,791 live in St. Clair County. Urbanized St. Clair County falls under the direction of East-West Gateway Council of Governments Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. Rural St. Clair County is covered by this plan.

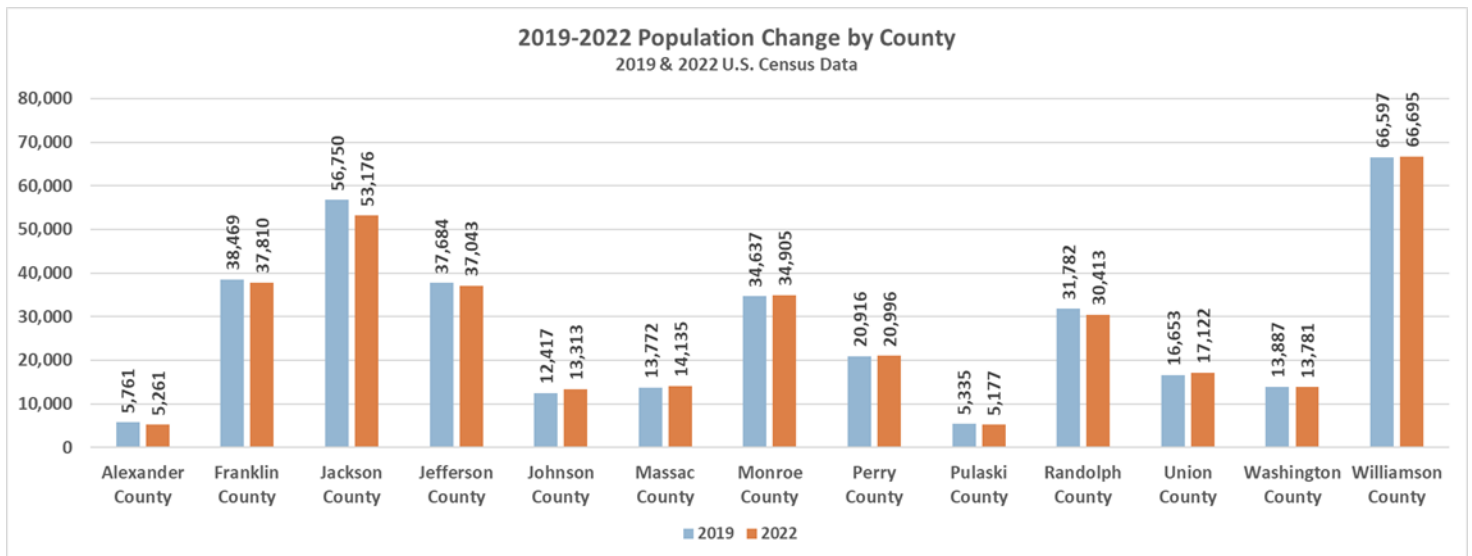
Every ten years the U.S. Census Bureau reviews and updates urban area boundaries. In December of 2022, the U.S. Census Bureau published its determinations of urban areas under the 2020 decennial census. It designated 27 new urban areas, none of which are located in Illinois. It also identified 15 urban areas that “disappeared” and are no longer classified as an urbanized area. Carbondale in Jackson County is one of those areas that no longer exists as an urbanized area. Region 11 is rural in character except for these urbanized areas, and thus is subject to rural transportation planning. The chart below shows the total population of the counties covered by Region 11, excluding St. Clair county.

Total Population by County:



U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.-a)

Total Population Change by County:



U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.-a) and U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.-b)

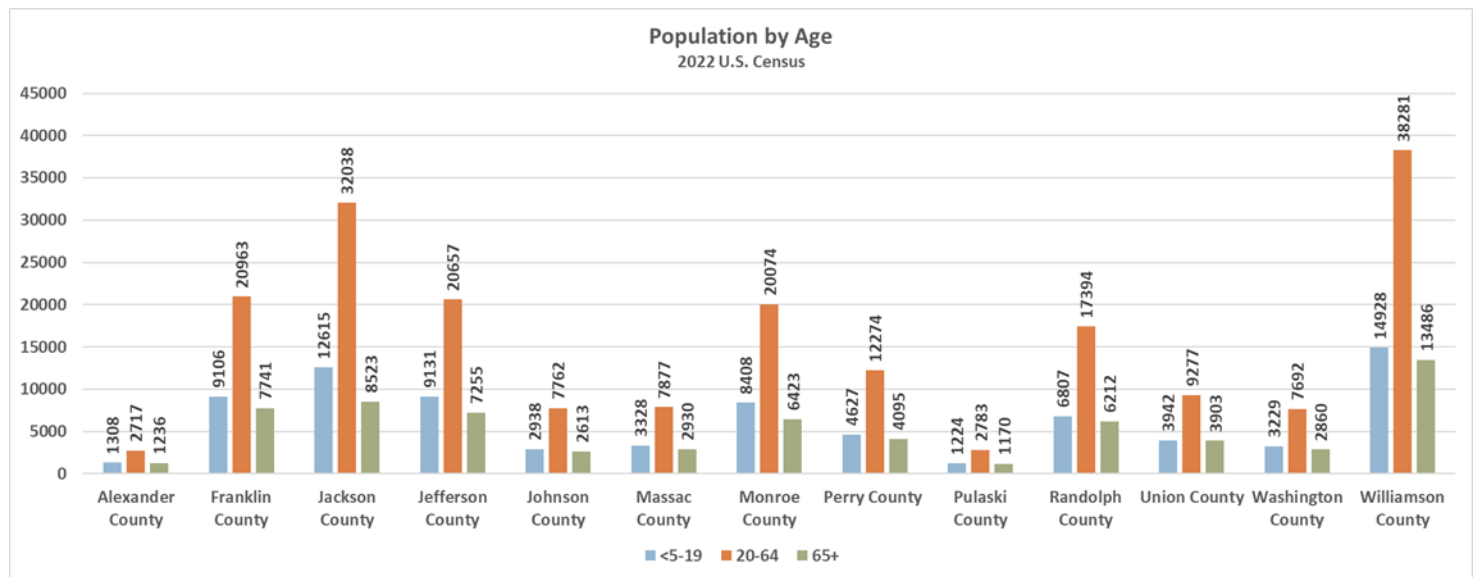
Regional Demographic Information

The populations of the fourteen counties in Region 11, not including St. Clair county, have not seen a huge increase or decrease in population from 2019 to 2022. Jackson County has seen the largest decrease of roughly 3,000 residents. The majority of the population in Region 11 is in the 20-64 age range.

As in a lot of rural areas of the state, the population is aging and/or experiencing poverty (the two are not necessarily related). Reliable personal transportation is not always an option and community members depend on their local transit agency to offer a reasonably priced fare option to meet transportation needs to connect them to employment, groceries, senior centers, healthcare, etc. Without public transportation much of the population would not have access to needed resources.

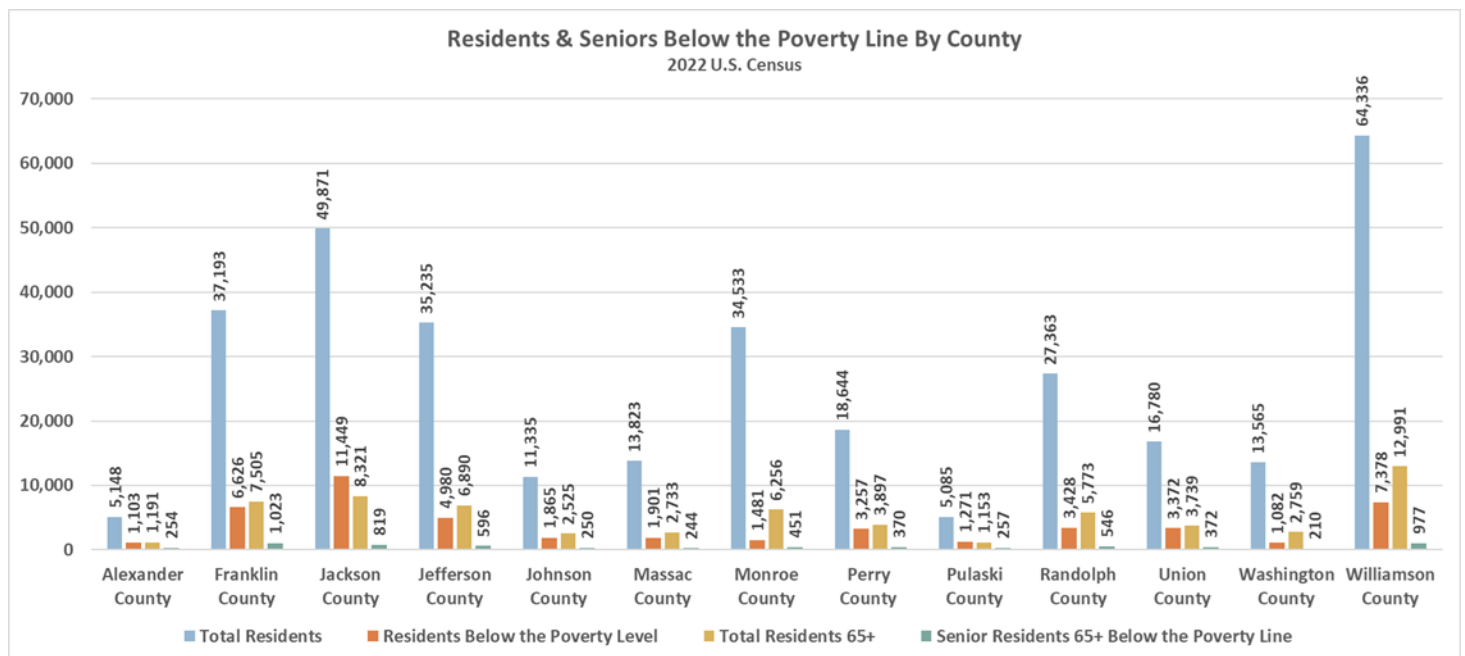
Disability rates are high in the region and the percentage of residents with a disability increases as the population ages. In each county, roughly 30% to 50% of individuals ages 65 and older have a disability. Accessible transportation is of the utmost importance in assisting riders with a disability to medical appointments, meeting daily needs, shopping, social/entertainment, etc. The charts below break down the diverse population of Region 11.

Total Population by Age:



U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.-a)

Population Above and Below the Poverty Line:



U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.-c) and U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.-d)

The poverty level is determined by a household's income. If a household's income is below the federal poverty threshold, then the household is considered low income. Rather than list every county in Region 11's poverty level for households of different sizes, averages have been calculated for all ten counties in the region and can be seen below.

- 1 person: \$43,726

- 2 people: \$49,989
- 3 people: \$52,019
- 4 people: \$62,446

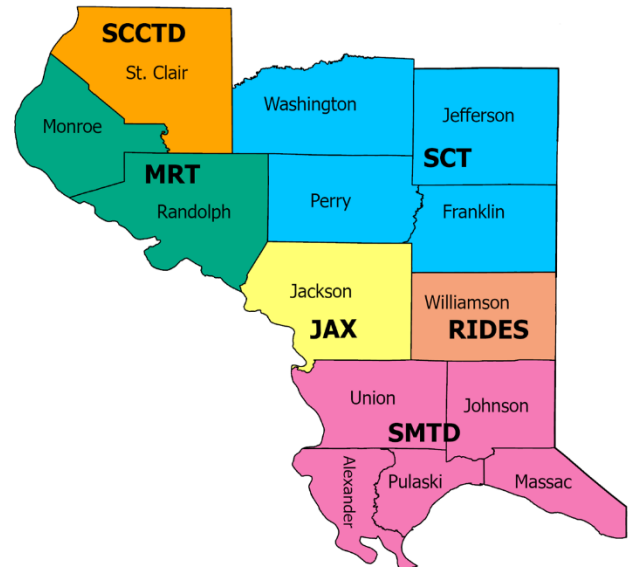
Disability Population:

	>5-17 years		18-64 years		65+ years	
U.S. Census 2021	Total Population	Residents with a Disability	Total Population	Residents with a Disability	Total Population	Residents with a Disability
Alexander	1,156	72 (6%)	2,817	615 (22%)	1,191	547 (46%)
Franklin	8,345	415 (5%)	21,492	4,004 (19%)	7,505	3,044 (41%)
Jackson	9,814	580 (6%)	34,551	4,817 (14%)	8,321	3,240 (39%)
Jefferson	8,242	709 (9%)	20,338	3,236 (16%)	6,890	2,772 (40%)
Johnson	2,703	58 (2%)	6,199	873 (14%)	2,525	985 (39%)
Massac	3,053	33 (1%)	8,138	1,768 (22%)	2,733	1,075 (39%)
Monroe	7,713	318 (4%)	20,641	1,631 (8%)	6,256	1,909 (31%)
Perry	4,049	379 (9%)	10,788	2,169 (20%)	3,897	1,480 (38%)
Pulaski	1,061	61 (6%)	2,895	602 (21%)	1,153	595 (52%)
Randolph	6,122	520 (9%)	15,531	2,650 (17%)	5,773	2,289 (40%)
Union	3,565	177 (5%)	9,541	1,753 (18%)	3,739	1,478 (40%)
Washington	2,879	94 (3%)	7,965	995 (13%)	2,759	789 (29%)
Williamson	13,922	1,323 (10%)	37,529	5,609 (15%)	12,991	5,191 (40%)
Region Total	72,624	4,739 (7%)	222,734	30,722 (14%)	65,733	25,394 (39%)

U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.-e)

Regional Transportation Committee (RTC) Make-Up

The primary purpose of the RTC is to discuss mobility management and coordination issues of the region. These issues can come from needs assessment results, progress updates from the Regional Plan that addresses service gaps, HSTP Coordinators directing assistance to ride-seekers, etc. Committee members and other attendees are encouraged to bring any transportation service gaps and needs that they have identified. The committee is also tasked with reviewing and recommending applications for funding for Section 5310 Consolidated Vehicle Procurement (CVP) program, as well as discussion of the program and vehicle issues. The RTC role is vital to ensure that the planning process is reflective of the needs of local transit operators and the



general public in Region 11 and the surrounding area. Meetings are held quarterly throughout the region and hosted by committee members on a voluntary basis.

Levels of Participation

As part of any application endorsement process, agencies applying for various IDOT funds must participate in the Regional Committee meetings as a coordinating entity throughout the year. There are various levels of participation that an agency can achieve. This level system will be used by the HSTP Coordinator(s) when evaluating and scoring any agency applying for vehicle funds (5310 Consolidated Vehicle Procurement). Agencies designated as Inactive will be removed from consideration for funding.

Leadership Participant: An agency representative that routinely volunteers' leadership, data, and resources to coordination planning and service provision and attends all quarterly HSTP Committee meetings.

Active Participant: An agency representative that routinely meets committee requests with data, information and resources in the development of strategic planning and attends all quarterly HSTP Committee meetings.

Participant: An agency representative that regularly attends planning meetings only.

Inactive: An agency representative that does not currently participate in meetings, planning, or service provision.

Public Transportation Providers:

- Jax Mass Transit (formerly Jackson County Mass Transit District)
 - Service Area: **Jackson** County
- Monroe-Randolph Transit
 - Service Area: **Monroe** and **Randolph** County
- Rides Mass Transit District
 - Service Area: Clark, Crawford, Cumberland, Edgar, Edwards, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jasper, Lawrence, Pope, Richland, Saline, Wabash, Wayne, White, and **Williamson** County
- Shawnee Mass Transit District
 - Service Area: **Alexander, Johnson, Massac, Pulaski, and Union** County
- South Central Transit
 - Service Area: Clinton, **Franklin, Jefferson, Marion, Perry, and Washington** Counties

- St. Clair County Transit District and Alternative Transportation Services
 - Service Area: Urbanized **St. Clair** County

Human Service and 5310 Transportation Providers:

- Arrowleaf
 - Located In: Vienna (Johnson Co.)
- Caritas Family Solutions
 - Located In: Belleville (St. Clair Co.)
- Challenge Unlimited
 - Located In: Alton (Madison Co.) and Swansea (St. Clair Co.)
- Comprehensive Connections
 - Located In: Mt. Vernon (Jefferson Co.)
- ComWell
 - Located In: RedBud (Randolph Co.)
- Epilepsy Foundation of Greater Southern Illinois
 - Located In: Belleville (St. Clair Co.)
- Five Star Industries
 - Located In: DuQuoin (Perry Co.)
- Gold Plate Senior Program
 - Located in DuQuoin (Perry Co.)
- Human Support Services
 - Located In: Waterloo (Monroe Co.)
- Illinois Center for Autism
 - Located In: Fairview Heights (St. Clair Co.)
- JTC Academy (formerly Adolescent Adjustment Center)
 - Located In: Centreville (St. Clair Co.)
- Millstadt Township Senior Services
 - Located In: Millstadt (St. Clair Co.)
- Spero Family Services
 - Located In: Mt. Vernon (Jefferson Co.)
- St. Clair Vocational Enterprises
 - Located In: Belleville (St. Clair Co.)
- Touchette Regional Hospital
 - Located In: Centreville (St. Clair Co.)
- Trinity Services
 - Located In: Mascoutah

Other:

- Abbott Ambulance
 - Located In: Marion (Williamson Co.), Benton (Franklin Co.), and Belleville (St. Clair Co.)
- Alexander Co. Ambulance
 - Located In: Olive Branch (Alexander Co.)
- All American Transportation
 - Located In: Fairview Heights (St. Clair Co.)
- Amtrak
 - Located In: Du Quoin (Perry Co.) and Carbondale (Jackson Co.)
- A-1 Transportation & Taxi Service
 - Located In: East St. Louis/Cahokia Heights (St. Clair Co.)
- Faith In Action
 - Located In: Collinsville (St. Clair Co.)
- Gateway Paralyzed Veterans of America
 - Located In: St. Louis (St. Clair Co.)
- Greyhound
 - Locations In: Carbondale (Jackson Co.), Vienna (Johnson Co.), Mt. Vernon (Jefferson Co.)
- Harvest Transportation
 - Located In: Belleville (St. Clair County)
- Helping Hands, Inc.
 - Located In: Belleville (St. Clair Co.)
- Jackson Co. Ambulance Service
 - Located In: Murphysboro (Jackson Co.)
- JewelRide
 - Located In: Edwardsville (Madison Co.)
- Johnson Co. Ambulance
 - Located In: Vienna (Johnson Co.)
- Monroe Co. EMS
 - Located In: Waterloo (Monroe Co.)
- Need-A-Ride Car Services
 - Located In: Mt. Vernon (Jefferson Co.)
- Phillips Transportation Service
 - Located In: Belleville (St. Clair Co.)
- Pulaski Co. EMS
 - Located In: Mounds (Pulaski Co.)

- Mr. Fetchit's Ride & Delivery
 - Located In: Marion (Williamson Co.)
- Riverbend Taxi Airport & Medical Transportation
 - Located In: Collinsville (St. Clair Co.)
- Southern Illinois Transportation
 - Located In: Anna (Union Co.)
- Union Co. Ambulance
 - Located In: Jonesboro (Union Co.)
- United Medical Response
 - Located In: Mt. Vernon (Jefferson Co.), Marion (Williamson Co.), Centralia (Jefferson and Washington Co.), Herrin (Williamson Co.)
- VisitSI
 - Located In: Marion (Williamson Co.)
- Williamson Co. Ambulance
 - Locations In: Marion & Herrin (Williamson Co.)
- 618 Taxicab Service
 - Located In: East St. Louis (St. Clair Co.)

Coordination Efforts and Successes from Previous Plan

Coordination of transportation efforts in most rural areas of Illinois, including Region 11, has been, at best limited and only on a local scale. The HSTP process represents the first real effort to coordinate transportation services on a regional scale. Prior to the beginning of the HSTP planning process, any coordination was done informally between service providers or agencies who require transportation for their clients. The Regional Plan was developed to promote a more managed effort for all providers of transportation to coordinate trips, services, funding, etc.

Regional Coordination Success

Gap #1 – Staff Shortages and Increasing Cost of Doing Business

- **Goal** – Hire and retain drivers. Improve day-to-day operating issues.
- **Strategies:**
 1. Keeping wages and benefits at a competitive rate.
 2. Recruitment – advertising and community involvement.
 3. Improving work environment.
- **Accomplishments:**

- ✓ RTAC has created a webpage with an interactive map that takes users to transit jobs available within the county. They have also developed a QR code that can be put on buses to advertise employment opportunities available. Alternative Transportation Services has developed driver t-shirts with the QR code on it.
- ✓ All providers have been offering incentives to potential new employees and raised wages as much as their budget allowed.

Gap #2 – Improve Efficiency with Current Staff and Vehicle Availability

- **Goal** – To get riders to their destinations in a timely, cost efficient, and seamless manner.
- **Strategies:**
 1. Adjust routes to be as conducive to the needs of the riders as possible while being cost effective for all providers.
 2. Providers will work closely with contractual agencies to continue to service client needs.
 3. Offer semi-deviated routes with paratransit to less populated areas.
 4. St. Clair County offers “flex riding” which is mobility on demand through VIA and the Flyer service. These options can be more costly to start but have long-term benefits if used efficiently. Other transit systems should look into this type of service.
- **Accomplishments:**
 - ✓ All providers have worked on assessing the routes and changing them as needed. Monroe-Randolph Transit is working towards developing intra-city routes. Monroe-Randolph Transit in the process of a route study to better meet riders’ needs in the counties they serve.
Shawnee Mass Transit announced route changes going into effect on January 1st, 2025. The route changes have led to improved efficiency, more NEMT service, reaching dessert areas, and has freed up drivers to expand service availability. Jax Mass Transit has expanded rural coverage as well as introducing new routes to all major towns in the county. The agency also has plans to work on a Comprehensive Transportation Study in 2026. The agency recently rebranded from Jackson County Transit District to Jax Mass Transit.
Rides Mass Transit has expanded fixed routes in Williamson County and will be expanding in-town fixed routes during the fall of 2025.
 - ✓ Jax Mass Transit has taken over the Saluki Express from Rides Mass Transit. The Saluki Express provides students, faculty, and staff of Southern Illinois University-Carbondale transportation within Jackson County.
 - ✓ St. Clair County has approved for Monroe-Randolph Transit to have a deviated route from Monroe and Randolph County into St. Clair County to transport

passengers in the rural portion of the county to Southwestern Illinois College and the medical hubs in the urbanized (Fairview Heights) area.

- ✓ Resource information has been given to the providers at the HSTP meetings about microtransit and the flex riding business.

Gap #3 – Need to effectively inform riders of delays, cancellations, route updates in a timely manner to improve relationship between transportation providers and riders

- **Goal** – Improve communication between the transportation providers and the community.
- **Strategies:**
 1. Providers will use a call system.
 2. Facebook or other social media format with pertinent information.
 3. If funding allows, introducing an app that informs riders of scheduling situations.
- **Accomplishments:**
 - ✓ All providers use their Facebook pages to relay upcoming service updates.
 - ✓ Monroe-Randolph Transit has created a new user-friendly website: gomrtd.com to keep riders informed of service changes and updates.
 - ✓ Since Jax Mass Transit has rebranded, they have a new website available: ridejax.com. It has a map of all the new routes (hours of service, fare cost, days of operation, etc) available to the riders.

Gap #4 – Surveys Reflect a Community Need for Better Awareness of Transit Services Available

- **Goal** – Improve community knowledge of transit services available and how to utilize it.
- **Strategies:**
 1. Attending local events (senior fairs, festivals, farmers markets, etc. where people congregate) with brochures and helpful staff to answer questions.
 2. Presentations to staff and others at travel hub locations (hospitals, medical facilities, grocery, retail stores, etc.).
 3. Offer a step-by-step brochure that potential riders can use if considering a transit ride.
 4. Widely offer mobility management training to those that may need more intense service training.
- **Accomplishments:**
 - ✓ Monroe-Randolph Transit and Shawnee Mass Transit reported that they have sought out decisionmakers at various agencies, schools, etc. to educate them about transit services.

- ✓ South Central Transit and the AgeSmart Community Resources grant for Washington County includes taking seniors to the Nashville farmers market during the market season.
- ✓ Shawnee Mass Transit has complimentary ride cards for hospital discharge patients.
- ✓ Shawnee Mass Transit reported that after giving a presentation at a local community college, they increased ridership at that location from five to twenty-three.
- ✓ A representative of Rural Health was invited to attend an HSTP meeting to discuss issues with Non-Emergency Medical Transportation at their five locations. Primarily, they have had issues with transportation in Anna and Metropolis. Shawnee Mass Transit was able to have a discussion with the representative about the transportation options available and issues with Medicaid transportation.
- ✓ Shawnee Mass Transit has new rider information brochure to better assist drivers and riders with transit knowledge and better interactions.
- ✓ Shawnee Mass Transit has a new rider information brochure to better assist drivers and riders with transit knowledge and better interactions.
- ✓ South Central Transit is working with potential senior riders on how to maneuver the transit system.
- ✓ South Central Transit is an active agency with the Kaskaskia Special Ed. Districts Transition Planning Committee. (The Kaskaskia TPC is committed to forming meaningful partnerships to educate local families and students with disabilities as they transition high school into adulthood and to maximize their quality of life).

Gap #5 – Improve Coordination between Transportation Providers

- **Goal** – Improve coordination and communication between the transportation providers.
- **Strategies:** All providers should be advocating for-
 1. A means to get riders from a county/service area through another county/service area.
 2. Technology that would allow route sharing.
 3. Communication to better coordinate trips.
 4. Cost efficiency in planning coordinated trips.
- **Accomplishments:**
 - ✓ Monroe-Randolph Transit and St. Clair County Transit District are working together to transport riders from Monroe and Randolph and rural St. Clair County into the medical hubs around O’Fallon, Belleville, and Shiloh areas.

Monroe-Randolph Transit has three routes traveling from Chester, Steeleville, and Waterloo to medical hubs in the St. Clair County area and SWIC Community College in Belleville.

- ✓ The Monroe-Randolph area introduced a new program, “Go Local,” that encourages municipalities to invest in transit. This funding allows riders to travel at half price in Steeleville, Sparta, Chester, and Red Bud.
- ✓ Illinois was awarded \$1.8 million from the Federal Transit Administration to launch a pilot program in Southern Illinois. The grant will support efforts to integrate trip scheduling and fare collection across 20 counties served by Shawnee Mass Transit District, Rides Mass Transit District, South Central Mass Transit, and Monroe-Randolph Transit District. The initial goal is to create better links among the four transit providers’ schedules and transfer locations to make it easier for riders to travel beyond the limits of their transit districts. The larger mission is to eventually integrate fare collection and improve the coordination of public funding for transit throughout the region, relieving riders of the burden of arranging fares and payments. ***This accomplishment is an ongoing effort and updates will be reflected in this plan within the Gaps and Needs.***
- ✓ In Region 11, the HSTP Coordinators have held several meetings with transit agencies in an effort to work on this gap. There was a discussion at the first two meetings with the transportation providers regarding the possibility of re-establishing the One-Call Center. The transportation providers are tracking trip requests that cross county lines and are working with schedulers on changing the mindset of refusing a trip.

At the second meeting, the providers decided that it would be most beneficial to have the scheduling/dispatch team leaders meet to discuss issues that each may face and be able to bounce ideas around to find solutions. Training for these team leaders will also be held to work on a different way to consider customer satisfaction and thinking beyond their own service area.

In continuing the coordination momentum, HSTP Coordinators planned and hosted three Schedulers Trainings discussing reasonable modifications, the new Medicaid non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) guidance, microtransit, and customer service. ***This accomplishment is an ongoing effort as the transportation providers are interested in continuing trainings with the schedulers and/or meetings with the providers to discuss transportation concerns. It will be reflected in this plan within the Gaps and Needs.***

Needs Assessment

The identification of the gaps and needs is paramount to the transportation plan as well as the ongoing effort to improve the system for the community, riders, and the transportation providers. The following is not an exhaustive list but represents conclusions drawn based on survey results and conversations during HSTP meetings. Surveys were regionally disseminated by the HSTP Coordinators and the Region 11 HSTP committee members in the summer of 2024. The list seeks to provide direction for funding and efforts to improve the current transportation system. Any agency providing or purchasing transportation for clients should consider this plan and its objectives when making decisions affecting transportation services.

Each identified gap represents an area for improvement within the existing transportation system. All organizations which provide transportation are urged to use the strategies listed to work towards meeting the gaps and needs. Any agency that plans on requesting grant money to provide transportation or agencies that may request grant money in the future should take into account strategies and methods of coordination (which involve communication, service, and possible resources). Requests for federal funding from Sections 5310, 5311, or other governmental funds which meet the needs outlined below will receive a more favorable score than projects which do not address an identified gap in service. With each gap, there is a goal, then a strategy or strategies to mitigate and/or close the gap.

- **Community:** The community survey results reflect a diverse group of individuals. Community members ages 20-80+ responded to the survey. 66% of those surveyed have a disability that impacts their ability to drive. Overall, 65% of those surveyed report that there are places they cannot go due to lack of transportation. 56% of those surveyed currently use public transportation. 92% of those surveyed would use public transportation if it was available to them. The results show that there is strong need for transportation to medical appointments, shopping, work, social/entertainment, visiting family and friends, senior nutrition, etc. The hours of service needed are Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. Survey results show that 44% prefer door-to-door demand response service and 37% prefer curb-to-curb demand response service and 19% prefer catching a bus stop. Locations that community members would like to go in Illinois are Fairview Heights, St. Louis, O'Fallon, Carbondale, Metropolis, Marion, Millstadt, Anna, etc. In Missouri, Cape Girardeau. In Kentucky, Paducah. There is a strong desire for public transportation to get community members to appointments, work, shopping, etc. on a weekly, daily, and monthly basis.
- **Riders:** The rider survey reflect a similar demographic to the community surveys. People ages 18-60+ responded to the survey. 41% of those surveyed have a physical disability.

The survey results show there is a need for transportation to medical, shopping, work, and social/recreation locations on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. To riders, the greatest barriers to transportation are lack of information about transportation options, hours of operation, advance notice needed to request a ride, and lack of information about how to use the available service. On a positive note, 87% of those surveyed are very satisfied/satisfied with their service and 74% are able to travel everywhere they would like to go within the community. Riders report that the drivers are friendly and dependable, dispatchers and schedulers are nice and helpful, overall, a good service to the community.

- **Agency:** The agency survey results came from agencies that provide services for seniors, low-income persons, persons with disabilities, general public, etc. The agencies surveyed provide transportation to their clients using staff/volunteers, operate transportation vehicles directly, by contracting with transportation providers or by purchasing passes or subsidizing fares for clients with local transportation providers. The agency surveys reflect a need for expanded hours of operation, expanded services outside of town, accessibility of service, affordability of service, and better coordination between service providers. 95% of the agencies surveyed say there are unmet needs in their community. Results also show there is a need for transportation to medical appointments inside and outside of their county, shopping, social services appointments, employment, entertainment, and religion. Times of service most needed are Monday through Friday 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. Locations that agencies reported their clients would most like to go within the region are St. Clair, Monroe, Jackson, Jefferson, Marion, and Union counties. 79% of agencies need medical transportation outside of the county. Locations listed for medical transportation in Illinois (outside Region 11) is Mt. Vernon and Marion. In Kentucky, Paducah and Cape Girardeau. In Missouri, St. Louis. If the agencies could change one thing about public transportation for their clients it would be improved/expanded transportation access in rural areas of the region.

Identification of Service Gaps and Needs/Strategies and Actions

Gap #1 – Extended hours of service and weekend hours. People need transportation for medical, shopping, work, and social/recreation on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. For riders, limited hours of service and advance notice, currently required to request a ride, are obstacles impacting their ability to get where they need to go, when they need to go.

- **Goal** – To expand hours and days of operation as is fiscally reasonable for the public transit providers.
- **Strategies:**

1. Extend hours of service. There is a need for transportation Monday through Sunday from 6 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.
 2. Coordinate transportation between transportation providers, plus the human service agencies to make out-of-county, in-county, and outside of the transportation provider's service area trip happen. All 5310 vehicle recipients should work together regarding this strategy.
 3. Apply for vehicles in the upcoming 2025 CVP application process and future years if application is available. The lack of buses may be impacting the ability of a public transportation agency to travel outside of their service area and connect the rider to the service area of another transportation provider.
- **Updates:**
 1. **November of 2025: Jax Mass Transit has an app called 'Jax Go' where you can schedule your ride and has real time tracking available.**
Rides Mass Transit District has a new app called 'Rides MTD Go' where you can request a ride.
 2. **February of 2026: Rides Mass Transit District has a new virtual agent phone system in place. It has helped with rider cancellations after dispatch/scheduling hours. Riders can also talk to the virtual agent about their reservation time and confirm pickup and drop off. This has eased the number of voicemails left after hours.**
Shawnee Mass Transit District has implemented Saturday in-town service and extended service hours in Anna/Jonesboro and Metropolis beginning March 2nd. Every Thursday, a route will run from Vienna to Anna for Vienna residents.

Gap #2 – For riders the greatest barriers to transportation are lack of information about transportation options, advance notice required to request a ride, and lack of information about how to use the available service.

- **Goal** – To improve communication between provider and rider.
- **Strategies:**
 1. Provide riders resource information such as; Rules of the Ride, being ready for bus pick-up, how to schedule a trip, schedules of city/county routes, how to file a complaint, fare costs, and availability of service.
 2. Increase outreach to riders through better use of media outlets. Offer materials on buses, at hospitals, local shopping centers, etc. that describe services available. Attend local events with brochures and staff to answer transportation questions.

3. Customer Service training for Schedulers, Dispatchers, and Bus Drivers. Any employees that interact with riders should be able to effectively communicate the transportation services available to riders.
- **Updates:**
 1. **August of 2025: The 4th meeting for schedulers/dispatchers took place August 13th in Anna. Most of the transportation providers in Region 11 sent staff. Region 9's schedulers/dispatchers were invited. One agency sent staff. At this meeting, there was a discussion on Mobility Management. Most, if not all, transportation providers have a designated staff member who is in charge of handling difficult trips, non-emergency medical transportation trips, and getting the rider where they need to go. The schedulers were able to make contacts with one another and discuss various issues. These meetings will continue on an annual/bi-annual basis as needed.**
ComWell on October 20th has a 'Voices for Community Change' event to garner feedback about services. Transportation can be arranged.
 2. **November of 2025: South Central Transit has launched a new website (<https://southcentraltransit.org/>) with route/service information and interactive maps.**

Gap #3 – Riders have difficulties accessing transportation within their county, outside their county, and outside of the service area of their transportation provider. There is limited service and availability in the most rural areas and small towns in the region.

- **Goal** – To get the rider where they need to go within their counties, outside of their counties, and connect them to other transportation agencies when transportation is needed to get them outside of the service area that the transportation provider covers. With an emphasis on the following towns and counties; in Illinois: Metropolis, Fairview Heights, Shiloh, Jefferson County, O'Fallon, Sparta, Franklin County, Red Bud, Carbondale, Belleville, Monroe County, Anna, Millstadt, rural St. Clair County, Marion, and Herrin. In Kentucky: Paducah. In Missouri, Cape Girardeau and St. Louis.
- **Strategies:**
 1. A mobility pilot program is being funded by the FTA and IDOT that will test software that will assist transit providers in coordinating trips through counties and service areas. Transit providers currently signed on to the project are; South Central Transit, Shawnee Mass Transit, Rides, and Monroe-Randolph Transit. Jax Mass Transit and St. Clair County Transit District have also been invited to participate.
 2. As stated in the strategies of Gap #1: "Coordinate transportation between transportation providers, plus the human service agencies to make out-of-county,

in-county, and outside of transportation provider's service area trips happen. All 5310 vehicle recipients should work together regarding this strategy." To add to this, transportation providers could work with human service agencies with 5310 vehicles that may be sitting during the day, evening, or weekend, to meet some of these transportation gaps. This goes both ways with the agencies. An agency with 5310 vehicles could provide a trip for a rider that cannot be provided by the public transportation agency if they have the staff and vehicle availability to make it happen.

- Service contracts could be altered/written in a way that allows for an understanding between two agencies to work together to transport riders.
- 3. As stated in the strategies of Gap #1: "Apply for vehicles in the 2025 CVP application process and future years if application is available. The lack of buses may be impacting the ability of a public transportation agency to travel outside of their service area and connect the rider to the service area of another transportation provider."
- **Updates:**
 1. **November of 2025: St. Clair Co. Transit District has introduced microtransit in St. Clair Co. and is in preliminary discussions to expand transportation services into rural areas within the county – including Freeburg, Millstadt, Marissa, and Smithton.**

Gap #4 – Changes to routes negatively impacts some riders, as they may no longer be able to conveniently get where needed i.e.; work, appointments, etc. The surveys also indicated that there is a high cost to riders, in some counties, especially for short in—town trips.

- **Goal** – To improve rider access to transportation to get where they need to go at an affordable and reasonable rate.
- **Strategies:**
 1. Sharable bus pass that can be used by multiple transit providers that is easily accessible and available to riders.
 2. Assess with riders the changes to routes and how it could affect them.
 3. Assess with riders the cost of an in-town trip and how it negatively impacts the rider's ability to go to the store, to work, etc.
- **Updates:**
 1. **August of 2025: South Central Transit is offering free trips on Fridays during the month of August. Riders can hop on any public shuttle on Fridays for free. This excludes deviations.**

Jax Mass Transit has updated their route schedule/service hours adjustment based on rider use and community need to be more conducive to the riders' need. This update meets needs in Gap #1.

Jax Mass Transit also has new bus stop signs with QR codes to scan for real-time updates on the bus location. This update also meets needs listed in Gap #2.

Monroe-Randolph Transit District is marketing their Route to Better Transit survey in-person at various community places, online, and through flyers at grocery stores, gyms, medical offices, buses, schools, etc. The survey will be open until September 9th.

St. Clair Co. Transit District has a promotional for 'No Red Day' where riders can receive free transit day passes to help reduce pollution.

2. November of 2025: Monroe-Randolph Transit District has concluded their Route to Better Transit study. The agency will be working on introducing fixed routes and microtransit in 2026.
 3. May of 2026: St. Clair Co. Transit District is in the process of surveying St. Clair Co. to assess what is working well, where improvements are needed, and how routes, schedules, and services can better meet the needs of the community.
- Shawnee Mass Transit District, as of January 5th, has free in-town service rides within the city limits of Vienna.

Gap #5 – Higher costs of doing business/limited funding and aging vehicles is negatively impacting the ability of transportation providers to provide transportation to their clients/service area and to other transportation provider's service areas.

- Goal – To replace aging vehicles and improve coordination.
- Strategies:
 1. As stated in the strategies of Gap #1: "Apply for vehicles in the upcoming 2025 CVP application process and future years if application is available. The lack of buses may be impacting the ability of a public transportation agency to travel outside of their service area and connect the rider to the service area of another transportation provider."
 2. Coordination scoring could impact whether the agency is awarded 5310 vehicles from IDOT in the CVP application process. It is encouraged that agencies coordinate/work together to positively impact their being awarded. This would also positively impact ridership. Agencies should consider working together because of limited funding to help provide the trips that are needed.
 - Agencies will report to their HSTP coordinator any and all coordination efforts with human service agencies and public transportation agencies.

3. Preventative maintenance is vital to keeping aging vehicles on the road. Due to gaps in CVP funding at times, it is of the utmost importance to stay on top of maintenance of vehicles.
 4. All 5310 transportation providers can continue to do outreach for hiring by advertising and being involved with the community, keeping wages at a competitive rate, and implementing strategies to retain current staff.
- **Updates:**
 1. **May of 2025: IDOT CVP vehicles that were awarded in the 2022 grant cycle have been delivered/picked up by the agencies. These vehicles will be replacing the aging fleet.**
Rides MTD has received 5339 funding that will allow for an extra 13-16 new vehicles to replace aging vehicles in their fleet.
These updates also meet needs listed in Gap #1 and #3.
 2. **June of 2025: The HSTP Coordinators coordinated two meetings for the human service agencies with 5310 vehicles in HSTP Regions 9, 10, and 11. The first meeting was hosted by Challenge Unlimited in Alton. The second was hosted by Clay County Rehab in Flora. The agencies have expressed interest in continuing these '5310 Meetings' on an annual basis. These meetings have yielded positive results and allowed the agencies to speak about a slew of transportation concerns and coordination efforts.**
 3. **February of 2026: Shawnee Mass Transit applied for a Community Rides Grant and were awarded \$100,000 to expand routes and extend paratransit service hours.**

Gap #6 – Need for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) across Region 11 and into other HSTP regions. The results suggest that patients/riders are missing their medical appointments due to lack of accessible transportation.

- **Goal** – To advocate for the transportation providers and riders regarding NEMT concerns and issues, specifically with the MCO's and the Department of Health and Family Services (HFS).
- **Strategies:**
 1. Communicate with medical offices regarding transportation that is available. Better their understanding of when transportation runs to improve on-time performance for pick-up and drop-off. When communicating with the medical offices, the public transportation provider can discuss scheduling issues that is impeding the ability to provide the trip to the patient/rider. It is understood that staff turnover at medical offices is an obstacle to ongoing communication with the medical provider.

2. Educate riders and medical offices/providers on the difference between MCO trips and public transportation trips.
3. Public transportation providers will continue to advocate on their own behalf with the MCO's to achieve financially appropriate outcomes that will not be detrimental to the agency. It is understood that it is difficult to negotiate trips with the MCO. The new Medicaid guidance allows the transportation provider to negotiate deadhead miles, no shows, etc. in the rate of the trip provided. It is important to keep this in mind when conversing with your MCO about the cost of the trip. It is important for everyone involved in Non-Emergency Medical Transportation to use your advocacy skills to inform MCO's of the problems transportation providers and riders are experiencing regarding NEMT.
 - **Problem Area: The public transportation providers are still having issues with negotiating deadhead miles, no shows, etc. in the rate of the trip provided with the MCO's. Some MCO's are open to discuss reimbursement rates that are proportionate to the cost incurred and some are not.**
4. HSTP Coordinators will continue to advocate for the transportation providers and the riders regarding Non-Emergency Medical Transportation, as well as providing resources regarding MCO's and NEMT at the quarterly region meetings.
 - **November of 2025: The HSTP Coordinator's attended the Annual Transportation Meeting that is hosted every year by the Statewide Independent Living Council in Springfield. The Center's for Independent Living, HSTP Coordinators, IDOT, Dept. of Human Services, Healthcare and Family Services, and transportation providers were all in attendance. The HSTP Coordinators advocated for the transportation providers and riders regarding issues with Medicaid/MCOs and NEMT.**
 - **After the Annual Transportation Meeting, Ryan Croke from the Governor's office reached out to the HSTP Coordinators and have put us in contact with Jill Hayden from the Illinois Association of Medicaid Health Plans (IAMHP). Since then, the HSTP Coordinators have had several meetings with both parties to discuss issues with Medicaid/MCO's and NEMT. They have collected stories from human service agencies and public transit agencies in HSTP Regions 9, 10, and 11 and shared them with the group. This group is growing. Updates will be noted as things move forward.**
 - **May of 2026: The HSTP Coordinators have made a contact with a representative of the Illinois Dept. of Healthcare and Family Services. She has been included in the NEMT discussions. She shared information on how a Medicaid recipient can make a Medicaid transportation complaint. The HSTP Coordinators have put the information in a flyer**

and are disseminating the flyer to interested parties. They may use this information to contact HFS directly with their Medicaid Transportation complaint. This may include issues such as difficulty scheduling their trip, challenges securing transportation to and from a doctor's appointment, transportation not showing up to pick up the client, or a non-accessible vehicle arriving for pickup.

Mobility Management

Mobility Management is a service provided to assist local agencies and individuals to gain better access to transportation. The HSTP Coordinators, along with most if not all public transportation agencies, are working to advance the coordination within their regions and the State of Illinois. Given the right Mobility Management tools, citizens should be able to find the rides that they need, as well as empower those citizens on how to access and use the services offered in their communities.

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