

Appendix E: Panhandle Transportation Coordination Survey

Panhandle Transportation Coordination Survey

The Panhandle Transportation Coordination Survey consisted of 42 questions divided into four parts. Part I provides contact information. Part II defines service characteristics. Part III details transportation issues. Part IV explores receptivity to coordination strategies. The survey was sent to 221 agencies and 52 agencies responded, yielding a 25 percent response rate. Given that, the results are statistically significant; however, it is cautioned that the results be conservatively extrapolated.

Part I consisted of Questions 1 through 11 and provided respondent contact information. For Panhandle Transit and Texas Workforce Commission, survey invitations were sent to and replies were received from multiple offices of these agencies in order to gain an understanding of local/county level concerns and perspectives. The results from these questions are not presented.

Part II consisted of Questions 12 through 17 and provided information about the responding organization - specifically type of organization, service area, type of client served and other agencies served.

- Most of the respondents identified themselves as representing agencies that are private, nonprofit transportation (15 percent) or federal or state human service agencies (21 percent). Organization types that had very low representation include for-profit transportation company (0 responses) and municipal and county governments (2 responses). Consequently, the survey will be highly reflective of only a segment of the target market. (Note: The lack of survey response by some groups led the consultant team to follow-up with phone calls to county judge and city manager offices. The result of this follow-up work is summarized in Appendix F: Elected Official Survey.)
- The survey reflects service areas that touch each of the Panhandle's 26 counties. This is due, in part, to response from Panhandle Transit, which serves the entire region and federal and state agencies which also have regional responsibilities. Counties that have minimal representation other than that provided by regional service providers (0 or 1 agency responding) include Armstrong, Brisco, Castro, Hemphill and Parmer counties.

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Of these, Brisco, Castro, and Parmer counties may have a higher potential transit needs as measured by the Transit Needs Index. (See Chapter 1: Background.) Future iterations of coordination planning may concentrate more on learning about transit needs in this region through more intensive outreach to these areas.

- Type of client that was most frequently served was elderly and/or disabled (40 percent). Fourteen respondents indicated that they serve other agencies and the one most frequently cited was the Health and Human Services Commission. Other agencies mentioned included Child Protective Services and law enforcement agencies.

Part III: Questions 18 through 34 provide transportation-related information: travel patterns, access to transportation services, trip needs, type of service provided. (Note: In the following detailed results, Questions 23: What Days is Service Impossible to Obtain and Question 24: What Days is Service Difficult to Obtain has been combined since the responses were virtually identical. Likewise, Question 25: What Time is Service Impossible to Obtain and Question 26: What Time is Service Difficult to Obtain have been combined. Lastly Question 30: In the next 1-5 years, is your agency planning a significant expansion of services and Question 31: In the next 1-5 years, is your agency planning to construct a new facility were eliminated as there were no significant responses to these questions.)

- Access to Transportation Services: Access to transportation is most difficult on weekends and between the hours of 5:00 pm and 12:00 midnight. Forty-one percent of respondents indicated that they could access transportation services seven days a week and a number indicated that they had no difficulty delivering trips, no matter what the time. These respondents were most frequently assisted living or nursing homes with access to their own transportation resources.
- Trip Needs: Sixty percent of respondents indicated transportation prevented their clients from receiving services, at least sometimes. Sources of the difficulty most commonly cited included the need for trips with less than 24-hours notification and for work trips located outside service areas. Of those agencies that responded to this question, most reported ten or fewer trips unmet. The agency reporting the highest level of unmet trips is

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the Panhandle Health and Human Services Commission (400 trips/month). Large transit providers indicated very few missed trips. The discrepancy between these two responses may reflect that missed trips are occurring outside of current operating hours. Conversely, they may also represent riders choosing to forego trips because they are unable to meet the 24-hour notification requirement.

- **Type of Transit Service Needed:** Most respondents indicated that they concentrate on serving the elderly and disabled population. Consequently, medical and shopping/personal trips rank high the types of trips needed. Work and education related trips were also frequently cited.
- **Type of Transit Service Provided:** Thirty-one percent of the respondents indicated that they do not provide transportation; many of these were small assisted living or nursing centers or social service agencies that serve the very-low income and homeless populations. However, the Department of State Health Services also responded that they do not provide or arrange for transportation. Many agencies indicated that they arrange for transportation. The largest of these were state agencies: the Health and Human Services Commission and the Department of Rehabilitative Services. Direct providers include Amarillo City Transit, Panhandle Community Service, Amarillo YMCA, and a number of assisted living and nursing center. Other providers noted include Greyhound, Volunteers (Moore County Senior Center and Harrington Cancer Center), and Medicaid.
- **Number of Trips Provided:** Almost 40 percent of the organizations provided less than 10 trips per month. These included the smaller social service agencies and some assisted living and nursing centers. Large transit-focused organizations deliver over 10,000 trips per month.

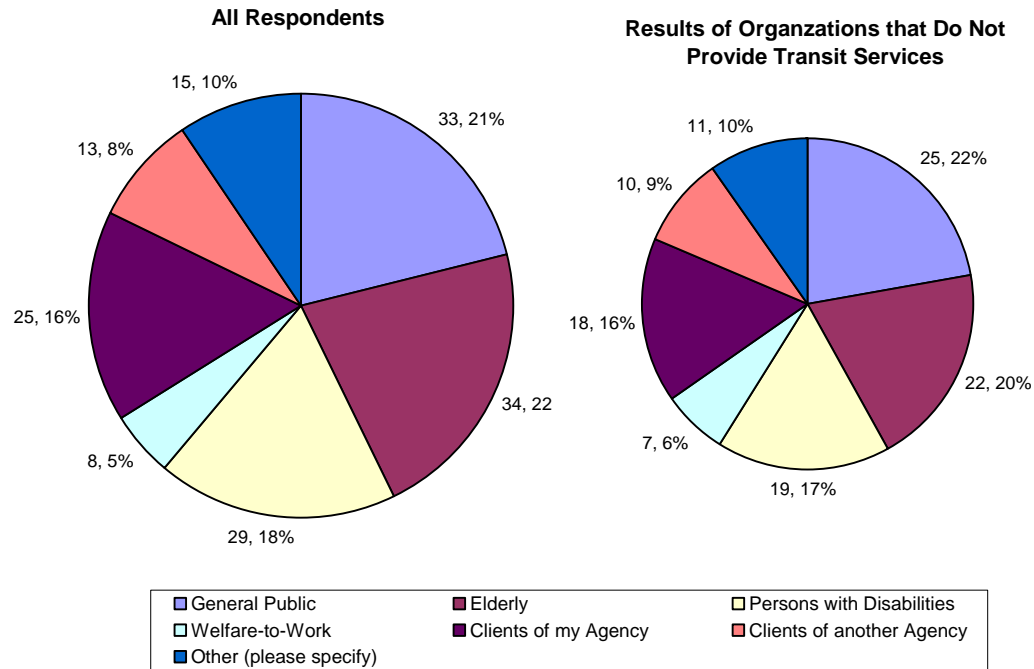
Part IV: Questions 35 through 42 were directed to organizations that directly provide or arrange for transit services and were focused on issues of transit coordination.

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Greatest Challenges to Providing Transportation: Lack of funding, rural service delivery area and a lack of awareness of transportation options were listed as the most significant challenges faced in providing service.

Interest in Coordination: Out of those organizations that do provide service, more organizations indicated that they were “Not Interested” in pursuing any coordination strategy. The strategy that solicited the most interest was “Modifying Fixed Routes” followed by “Working Together to Purchase Service.” Future coordination workshops may choose to address these issues with these organizations. Moreover, future coordination planning efforts may need to more fully explore the source of resistance to coordinating resources and to inform agencies about transit coordination.

Q13: What Type of Clients Do You Serve?



Q13: What types of clients do you serve?

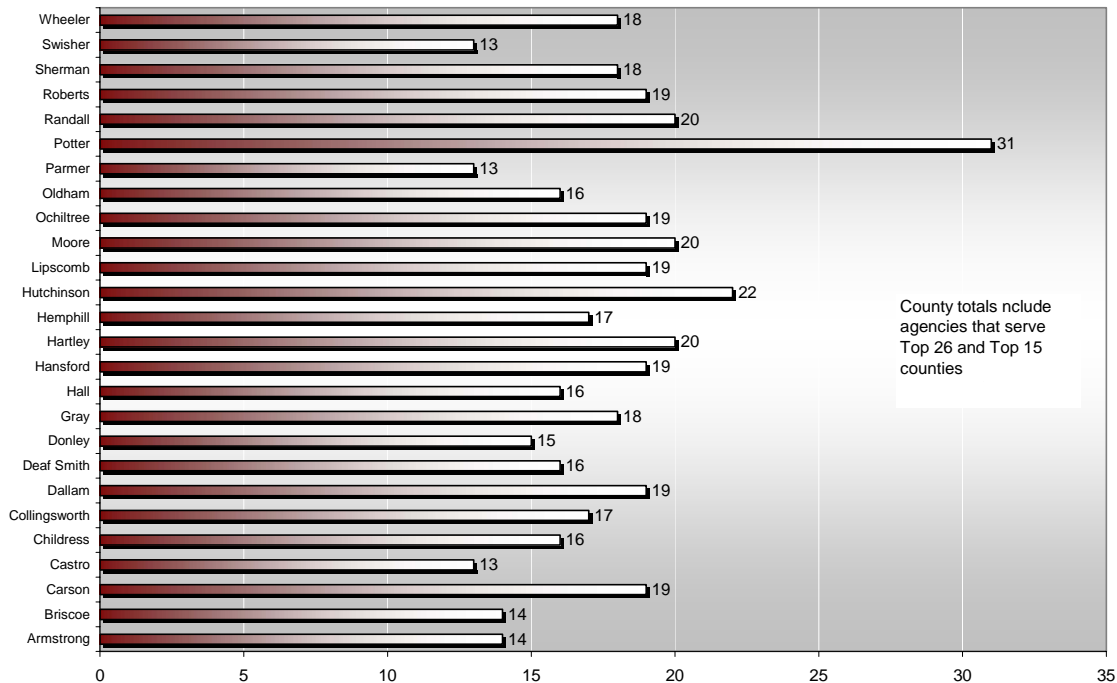
A13: General Public, Elderly, Persons with Disabilities, Welfare-to-Work, Clients of My Agency, Clients of another Agency, Other (Please specify.)

There were 54 respondents to this question. Nineteen organizations (or 35 percent) served a single client base. These organizations usually indicated service restriction to “Elderly” or “Clients of my Agency” and are predominantly nursing homes and assisted living centers. Nearly 50 percent (26 respondents) indicated both “Elderly” and “Persons with Disabilities” as the client based served. In total, organizations that serve the elderly or people with disabilities constituted nearly 70 percent of the respondents. On average, organizations usually served more than one type of client, averaging three types of client bases served. The most common type of client reported under the “Other” category is “children” and had five respondents.

Transit coordination in the Panhandle region is facilitated by the large number of organizations that serve multiple client bases. Since populations that are typically heavy transit users are receiving service from similar agencies, the potential to deliver coordinated service is enhanced. In fact, that is the experience currently in the Panhandle as transit agencies are already delivering trips to a large number of health and social service agencies that serve these populations.

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Q15: What Counties Do You Regularly Serve?



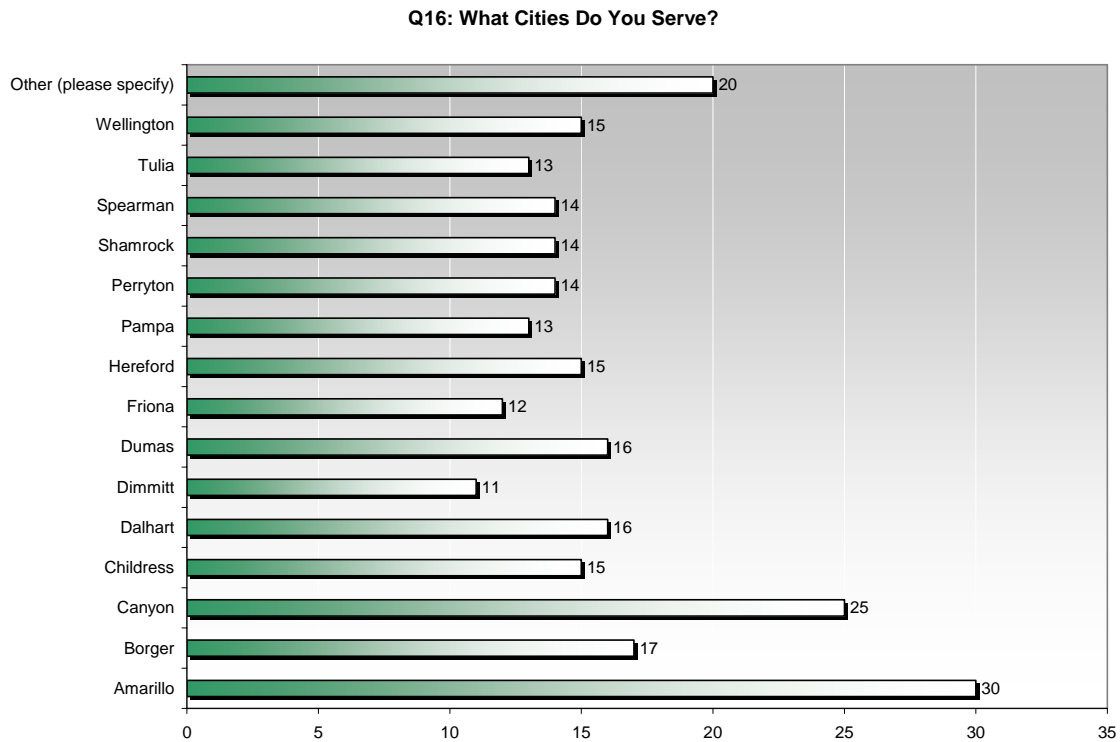
Q15: Which counties does your agency regularly serve? (Check all that apply.)

A15: Top 26 counties, Top 15 counties, Armstrong, Briscoe, Carson, Castro, Childress, Collingsworth, Dallam, Deaf Smith, Donley, Gray, Hall, Hansford, Hartley, Hemphill, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Ochiltree, Oldham, Parmer, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman, Swisher, and Wheeler¹

There were 50 respondents to this question. The survey was sent to agencies and organizations that are active throughout the region in order to try to obtain insights that would be representative of the entire region. Thirteen respondents served the top 26 counties and 3 respondents served the top 15 counties. Nine agencies serve only Potter and Randall counties. Counties with no respondents other than that given by agencies with a region wide service area include Castro and Parmer counties; Hemphill County had one respondent. The high response rate from region-wide agencies and/ Potter and Randall county agencies may skew the results to reflect more small-urban and region-wide issues rather than issues relative to the more rural counties. However, Panhandle Transit has been deeply involved in the study and has a strong presence throughout all the counties and its involvement will circumvent any inappropriate emphasis on one region or area.

¹ Top 26 counties include all the counties listed. Top 15 counties include all listed counties except for Deaf Smith, Randall, Armstrong, Donley, Collingsworth, Parmer, Castro, Swisher, Briscoe, Hall, and Childress.

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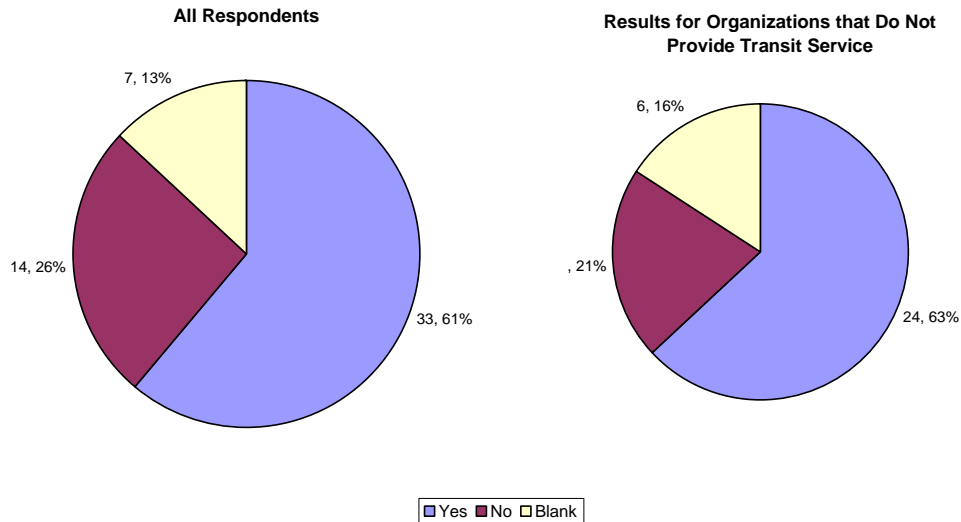
Q16: What cities does your agency regularly serve? (Check all that apply.)

A16: Amarillo, Borger, Canyon, Childress, Dalhart, Dimmitt, Dumas, Friona, Hereford, Pampa, Perryton, Shamrock, Spearman, Tulia, Wellington, Other (please specify).

There were 50 respondents to this question. Notable others mentioned include Fritch, Stinnett, Memphis, and Clarendon.

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Q17: Do You Serve All Municipalities in Your County?



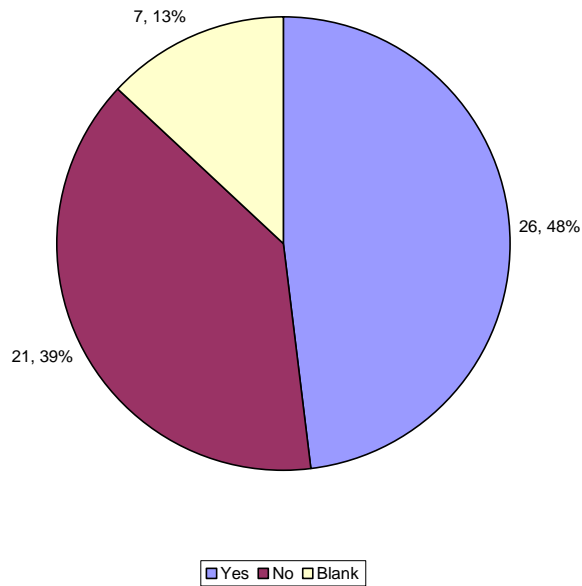
Q17: Do you serve all the municipalities within the counties you serve? (For example, does your agency work in Potter County but only serve residents of Amarillo?)

A17: Yes, No (Please describe limitations)

There were 47 respondents to this question. Sixty-one percent serve all the municipalities within counties served, with the exception of organizations that predominately serve the City of Amarillo such as City Transit, Jan Werner Adult Day Care, and Region 16 Education Service. Other respondents answered "No" and then clarified what type of client base they served.

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Q18: Does Your Agency or Clients Travel Outside Service Area for Special Destinations?

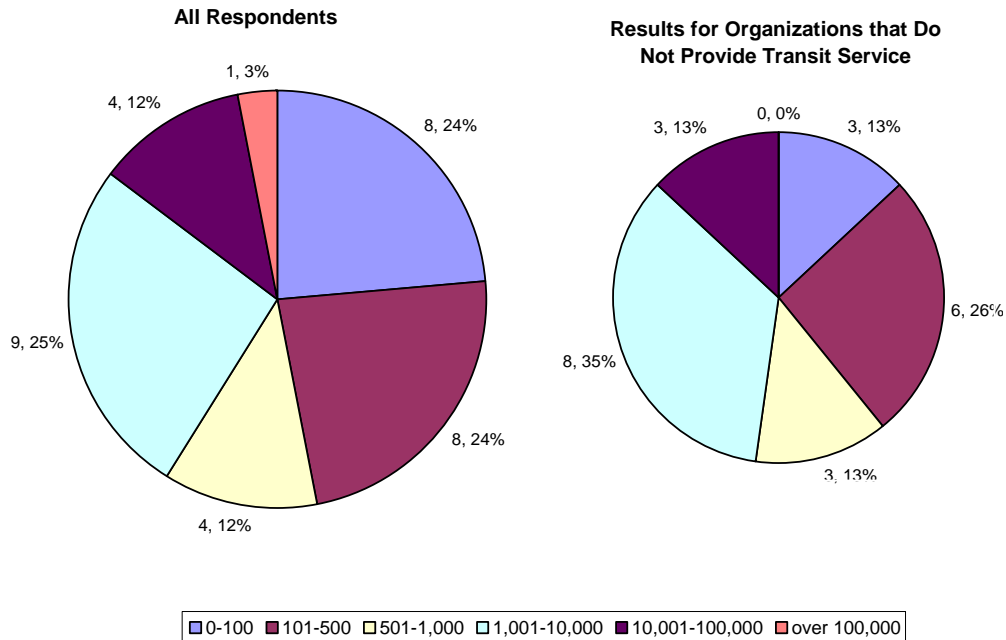


Q18: Does your agency or your clients travel outside these boundaries for special destinations, such as a regional hospital?

A18: No, Yes (Please list destination and address)

There were 47 respondents to this question. Destinations frequently cited included Lubbock (9 respondents); Amarillo (11 respondents); Plainview (3 respondents); Wichita Falls (3 respondents); Pampa (4 respondents); and Dallas (4 respondents).

Q19: How Many Unduplicated Clients Served in 2005?

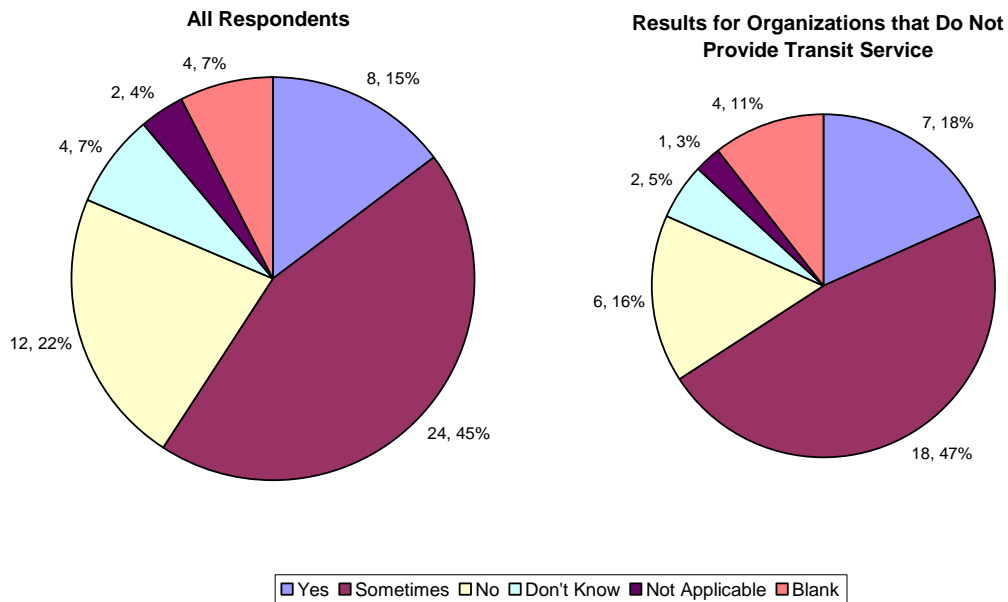


Q19: How many unduplicated clients did you serve in fiscal year 2005?

A19: (Open ended response.)

There were 34 respondents to this question. Nearly 50 percent of the organizations serve between 0 - 500 clients. These organizations tended to be the nursing homes, senior centers (e.g., Amarillo Senior Center), and groups with a narrowly defined market (e.g., the High Plains Epilepsy Association). Other respondents represented agencies that serve the whole of the Panhandle. In these cases, the number of clients served was much higher. For example, Panhandle Workforce Development Centers served nearly 40,000 clients; Catholic Family Services has over 18,000 clients. Twenty-two respondents did not indicate how many unduplicated clients that are served.

Q20: Does the Lack of Transportation Keep People from Participating in Your Services?

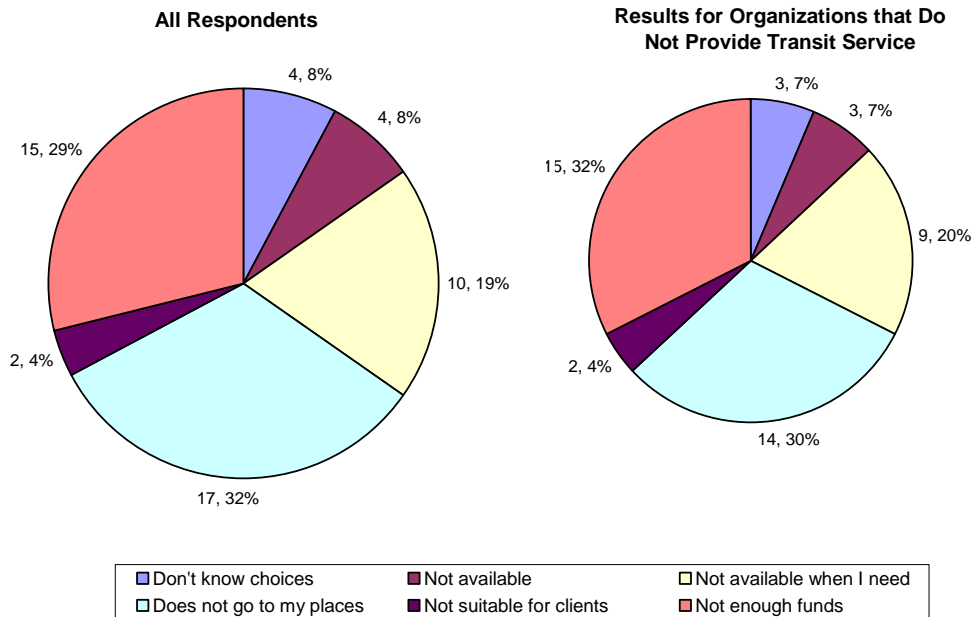


Q20: Does the lack of transportation keep people from participating in your agency's services?

A20: Yes, Sometimes, No, Don't Know, Not Applicable

There were 49 respondents to this question. Most people responded that they sometimes had trouble accessing transit services (24 out of 55 respondents or 44%). Comments included difficulty in accessing the International Airport, emergency transportation (transportation scheduled with less than 24 hours notice), and transportation to work-sites that are not located within Amarillo city limits. Agencies that did not directly provide transit services were 50 percent less likely to respond "No." This may indicate that those agencies are satisfied with the level of transit service they are receiving from other agencies.

Q21: Why is Transportation a Problem for Your Clients?



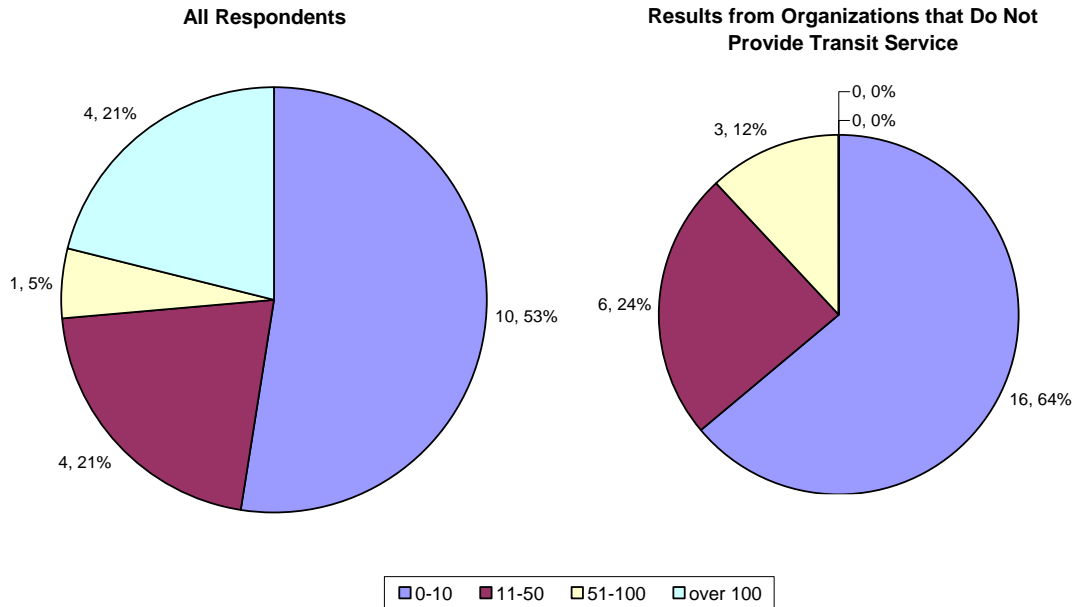
Q21: If yes or sometimes, why is transportation a problem? (Check all that apply.)

A21: I don't know what my transportation choices are available in my area; Transportation is not available to my area; Transportation is not available to my area during the times I need; Transportation does not take my clients where they need to go; Transportation vehicles are not suitable to serve my clients; There are not enough funds to provide transportation to our client.

There were 29 respondents to this question: 13 organizations named 1 problem, 7 organizations named 2 problems and 6 organizations named 3 problems. Taken together, "Not available when I need" or "Does not take my clients where they need to go" were 50 percent of the problems cited. The largest issue cited was "Transportation does not take my clients where they need to go" (17 out of 29 or 59% of respondents). Mentioned frequently was difficulty in accessing transportation to worksites located off the regular fixed bus route and to medical appointments. Rural area respondents also cited that they needed service after regular business hours (when Panhandle Transit stops providing service). Urban respondents cited the need for service after 7:00 (when Amarillo City Transit stops providing service).

These results indicate the potential need for future coordination efforts to focus on filling after-hours service gap and distant worksite trip gap.

Q22: How Many Trips per Month are Unmet?



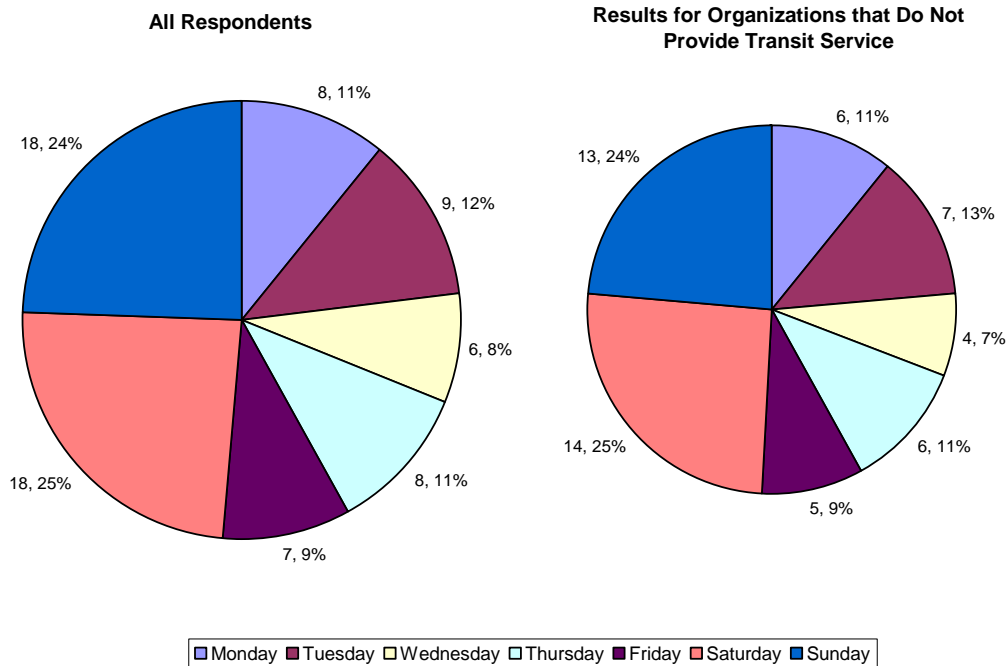
Q22: In your best opinion, approximately how many trips per month are unmet?

A22: (Open-ended response.)

There were 25 respondents to this question. Of those responding, over half miss less than 10 trips per month. The largest provider of trips, Panhandle Transit, indicates between 0 missed trips (as reported from the headquarters) to a number of missed trips (as reported by a local office). The difference in responses would indicate that, on a local level, schedulers may be aware of missed trips that are not reported to the headquarters or, simply, a discrepancy in reporting. Respondents that indicated a high number of unmet agency-related trips include the Health and Human Services Commission (estimate of 300 missed trips); Amarillo Area YMCA (estimate of 150 missed trips); Amarillo Senior Citizen Association (estimate of 75 missed trips); and Panhandle Workforce Development Centers (estimate of 30 missed trips). Respondents that do not directly provide transit or health and human services included a local citizen representing the public transportation community in Amarillo (estimate of 200 missed trips); the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (estimate of 300 missed trips). Over half of the respondents left this question blank or responded “unsure.” This result would support the finding that many health and social service providers do not track their transportation services and needs like transit-focused agencies. One of the barriers that may be encountered in developing a coordinated system will be the difficulty in moving toward a more standardized approach to reporting transit service delivery.

Future coordination efforts may focus agencies with high unmet trip needs (HHSC, Panhandle Workforce Development Centers, Amarillo Senior Citizen Center, and Amarillo Area YMCA).

Q23: Days on Which Service is Impossible to Obtain



Q23: Days on which service is needed but difficult or impossible to obtain

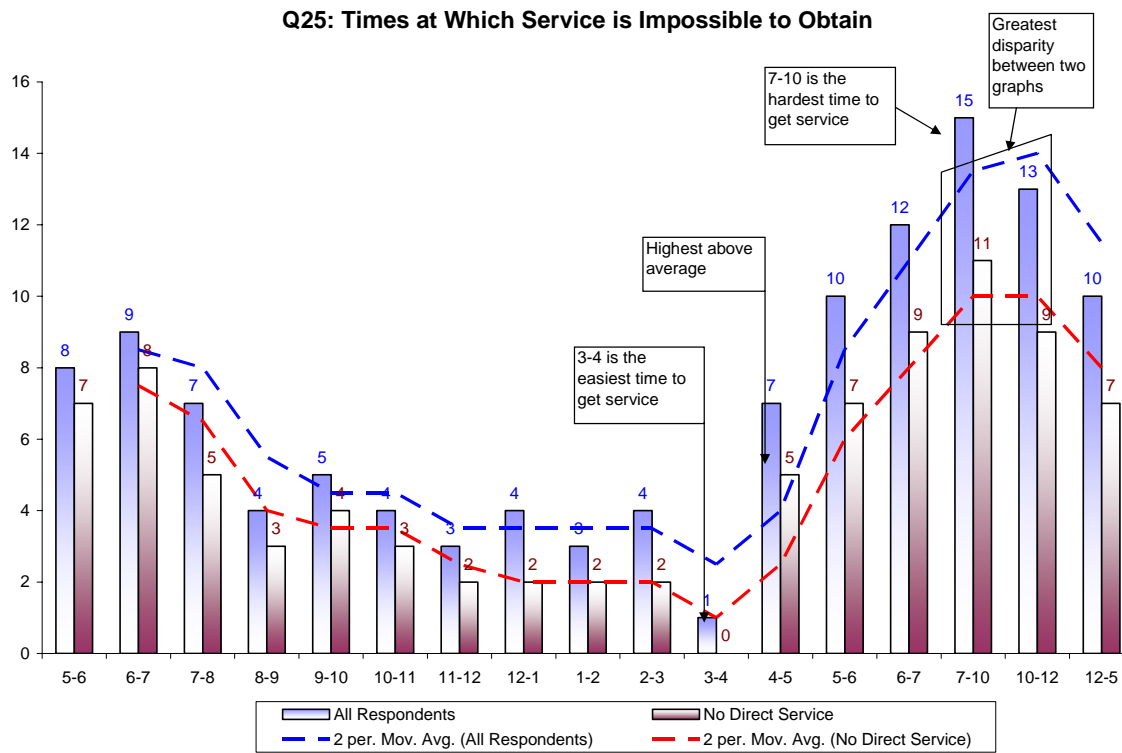
A23: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

There were 52 respondents to this question. Out of 52 responses, 31 respondents (or 41%) said that they could access transportation services every day of the week. For those that indicated that transit was difficult or impossible to access at least some of the time, Saturdays and Sundays were the most frequently mentioned (36 out of 74 or 49%). The responses of all the agencies and only those agencies that do not provide transit are nearly identical. This may indicate that there is no discrepancy of information regarding days of services between providers and consumers of transit.

Respondents indicated equal difficulty in obtaining service Monday through Friday. Four organizations responded that service was impossible to obtain every day; these included Salvation Army, Amarillo Senior Citizen Center, Amarillo YMCA, and one office of the Panhandle Workforce Development Centers. Five organizations responded that service was difficult to obtain every week day; these included Donley County Ministerial Alliance, Canyons Retirement Community, Health and Human Service Commission, Department of State Health Services, and one Panhandle Workforce Development Center.

Because Panhandle Transit does not provide service on weekends and Amarillo City Transit does not provide service on Sundays, a transit gap is created that the RTAG may choose to focus on as a coordination priority.

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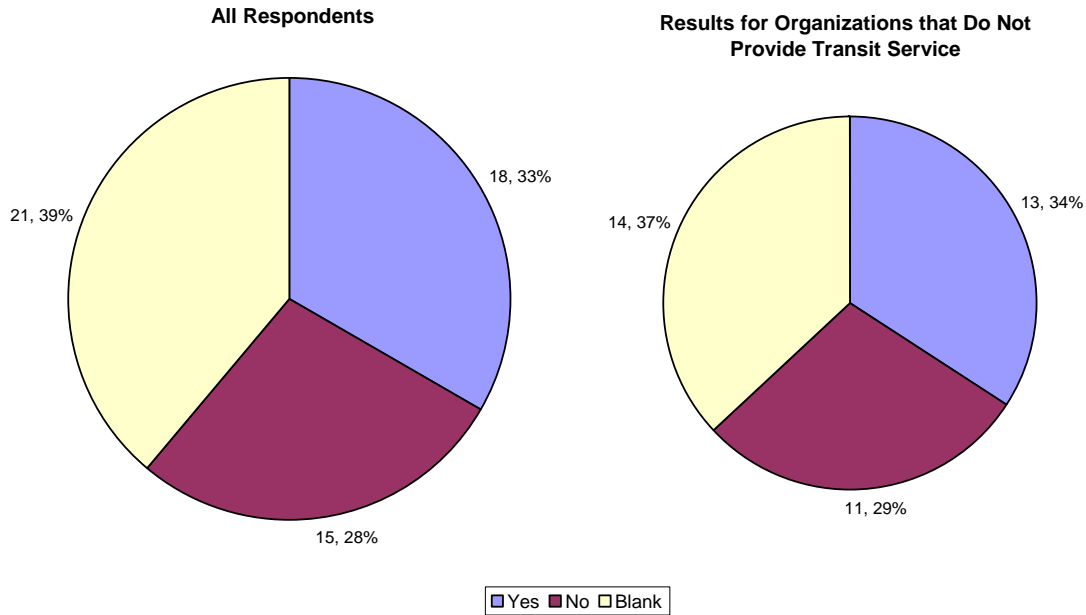
Q25: Times at which service is needed but difficult or impossible to obtain

A25: (Time range begins at 5:00 am and extends to 5:00 am next day.)

There were 21 respondents to this question. (In the graph above, all respondents are represented by the blue bar. Respondents that do not provide transit services are represented by the red bar. A moving average for each respondent class is indicated by a blue or red dashed line.) Times in which it is more difficult to obtain a trip include morning hours (9 to 10 am) and after-work hours (4 to 6 pm). Interestingly, demand is relatively low from 3 to 4 pm. There is a jump in demand at 4:00 pm, coinciding with transit providers difficulties in meeting trip demand (e.g. two Panhandle Transit offices indicate difficulty in meeting trips during this time period).

Out of 21 responses, more than half (54%) indicated that there is a need for transportation after 5:00 pm. In particular, there is a need for transit services for people who are reliant on public transportation and have work hours that extend in the evening, after public transit is no longer available. This need has been reinforced during one-on-one meetings with the Panhandle Mental Health and Mental Retardation office and Workforce Development Centers and in public meetings. Targets for coordination may include identifying providers or resources that are flexible and can be brought on to serve during high-demand periods. Another coordination strategy may be focused more on the supply side and exploring whether there are high users of transit services with flexibility in scheduling. However, at this time, the nature of the unmet trips and the degrees of trip schedule flexibility during periods of heavy use is unknown.

Q27: Does Transportation Take Your Clients Where They Need to Go?



Q27: Does transportation take your clients where they need to go?

A27: Yes, No (Where do you need to go?)

There were 33 respondents to this question. For those that responded “No,” destinations where transportation was lacking includes: food/grocery (3); daycare (2); job or job-training (5); medical appointments/pharmacy (8); Lubbock (3); airport (1); and emergency (1).

Difficulty in filling all medical-trip and job-related trip needs were reinforced during public meetings and again in one-on-one meetings with providers. Additionally, the finding that the capacity to provide more long-distant trips is needed is reinforced by the responses cited to Survey Question 21: Why is Transportation a Problem?

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Q28: Are there other transportation issues that have not been covered?

A28: (Open-ended response.)

There were 12 respondents to this question. The comments are noted below:

“For some reason the topic of transportation in the Panhandle is always limited to medical/welfare needs. People who have disabilities, those without the financial resources etc must have transit or a means of getting to the nearest Amtrac station to Amarillo, to the airport, to and from Canyon, Texas, Plainview and other locations. Perhaps it is because most of the persons working on the transit issue are not limited by lack of a car or several cars, lack of ability to drive, or who are left with only the Greyhound or TMN bus system in the area. The bus depot downtown is a ghetto and no one will address the issue because allegedly it is a private business. But it affects our whole city. People from other states and towns come here and are appalled at the horrid, slum like conditions of this bus depot on Tyler, the smell, the lack of cleanliness, the lack of ventilation, the lack of food or water and the people who staff it. The toxic fumes are so bad under the staging port where you board the bus in early A.M. that people using inhalers are often at risk. It is a horrid situation and it leaves people here without any alternative. This aspect of transit in Amarillo has simply got to be addressed and integrated into the agency related medical travel issues. Our population is aging and many of the people driving in Amarillo right now should not be doing so. They put us all at risk because they are far too old. Yet because there is NO alternative to get out of Amarillo either by decent bus terminal, getting to airport, to grocery stores in a timely manner, it forces people who should not be on the road to be there. In the coming years more people will age. We must do something about the lack of an integrated transit solution which is not just focused on medical needs or welfare related needs. We all have to live and without transit solutions we cannot. The net result is that our city is going to feel the economic impact as many of the people who have money to spend simply cannot get places to spend it.”

“Retail stores”

“We need assistance during the summer months for our temporary clients that we service only during these months in the out lying towns, such as Fritch, Stinnett, and Panhandle.”

“People that are not Medicaid eligible but are still low income are very reluctant to go to appts because they cannot pay the fee (\$30) to be taken out of town to appts. There needs to be some type of income sensitive program for non-Medicaid clients.”

“Those from out of town are sometimes just walking or hitch hiking through and need a ride to the next town.”

“Transients needing gas money to leave town- when not broken down/ or robbed; Transportation options for those afraid/ unhappy with the bus system”

“I feel like we are a burden when we call to schedule transportation for our childcare”

“We have those who say they can't attend classes unless they have transportation”

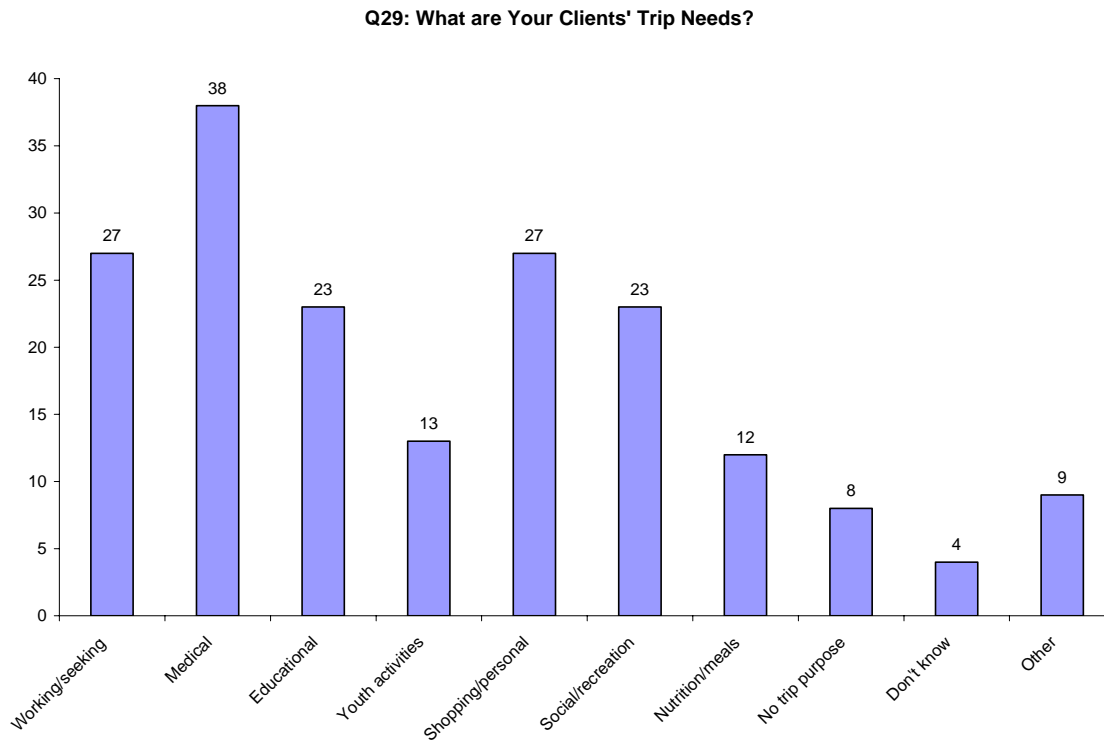
“People need daily transportation to work.”

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“At times, appointments have to be changed due to other conflicting appointments”

“What about the needs of homeless to look for employment w/o any source of income to pay for city transit?”

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Q29: What are your clients' trip needs? (Check all that apply.)

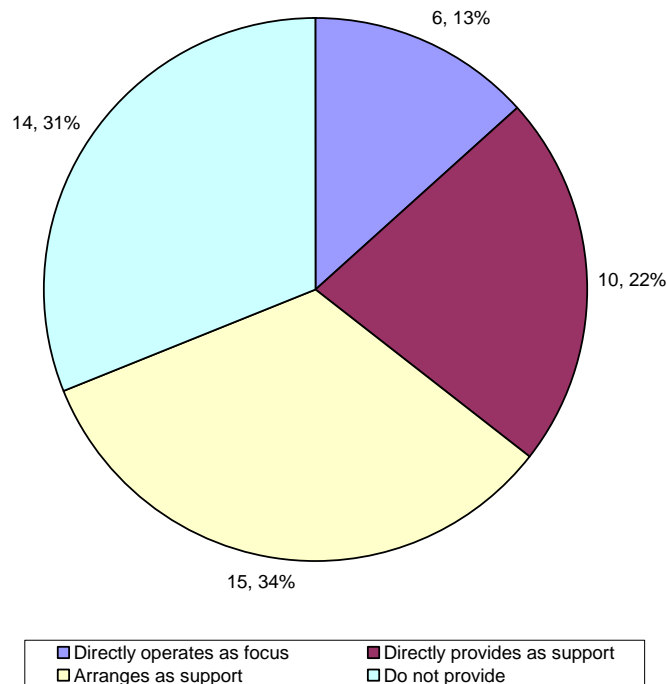
A29: Working/seeking employment; Medical, Educational, Youth activities; Shopping/personal business; Social/recreation; Nutrition/congregate meals; No trip purpose exclusion; Don't Know; Other (Please specify.)

There were 46 respondents to this question. Medical trips, work/seeking employment, shopping, and educational trips were cited most frequently. These responses reinforce the finding that one of the most notable gaps in service relates to medical and work-related trips.

Respondents that cited nutrition/congregate meal trips include four senior citizen centers and agencies that serve the very low-income and homeless. Respondents that cited youth activities include area YMCAs, United Way, and Girl Scout Council. Other destinations that were noted included adult day care, airport, counseling services, immigration services, and train stations.

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Q32: Organization Provides Transportation in Following Manner



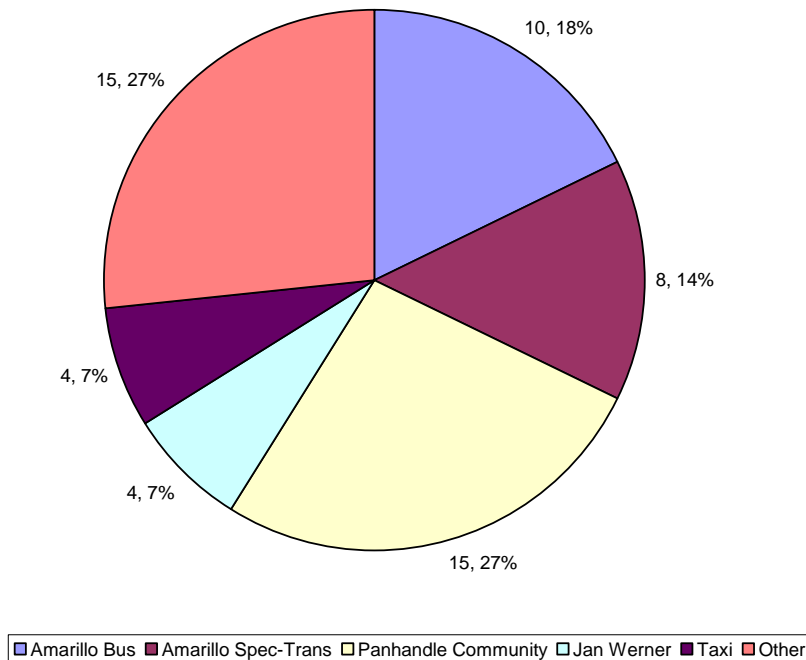
Q32: Your organization provides transportation to your clients in which of the following manner (Check one.)

A32: Directly operates transportation services as your primary focus; Directly provides transportation services as part of your support provided to clients; Arranges for passenger transportation services as part of your support provided to clients; We do not provide or use transportation in our delivery of services to clients

There were 45 respondents to this question. Respondents that indicated that they directly operate transit served between 10 and 210,000 unduplicated clients. Of the 10 organizations that directly provide transit service as part of the agency's support, 1 agency was interested in providing services for other agencies, 4 agencies were possibly interested, and 5 agencies were not interested. Fourteen organizations indicated that they that do not provide transit services.

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Q33: Who Provides Transportation Services?



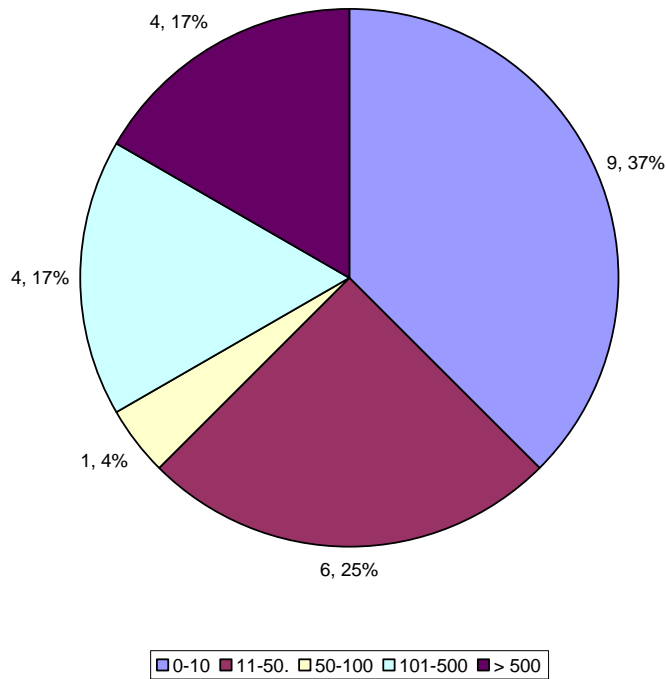
Q33: Who provides your passenger transportation services? (Check all that apply.)

A33: Amarillo City Fixed Route Bus; Amarillo Spec-Trans; Panhandle Transit; Jan Werner Transportation; Taxi; Other (Please specify)

There were 25 respondents to this question. Panhandle Transit provides transportation to all of the counties in the Panhandle and is the primary source of transportation for areas outside of the City of Amarillo. In Amarillo, there is a wider range of transportation options including Amarillo City Transit fixed route service, Amarillo City Transit Spec-Trans, Jan Werner Transportation, and private taxis. Users of private taxi included High Plains Epilepsy Center, United Way, and Harrington Cancer Center. Notable others that were mentioned include: Medicaid transportation, volunteers, Childress Ambulance Service, Panhandle Crisis Center, and Greyhound.

Greater participation in service coordination by private taxi service and Greyhound (and other over-the-road coaches) may prove to be one resource to overcome some of the service gaps for after-hours service and long-distance service.

Q34: Average Trips/month



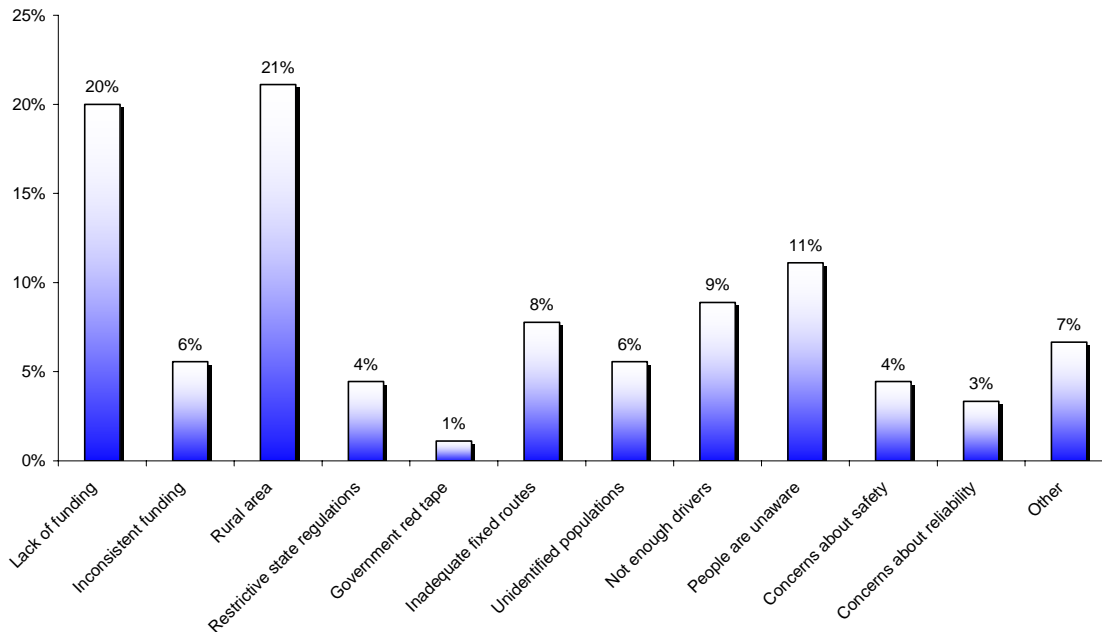
Q34: On average, how many trips do you provide in a month's time?

A34: (Open-ended response.)

There were 24 respondents to this question. Almost 40 percent of the organizations that responded deliver, on average, less than 10 trips per month. These organizations were typically senior living centers and small social service organizations. The respondents that deliver the highest number of trips included transit service providers, Amarillo City Transit and Panhandle Transit.

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Q35: What are Agencies' Greatest Challenges when Providing Transportation?



Q35: What are the greatest challenges to providing transportation to your clients? (Check all that apply.)

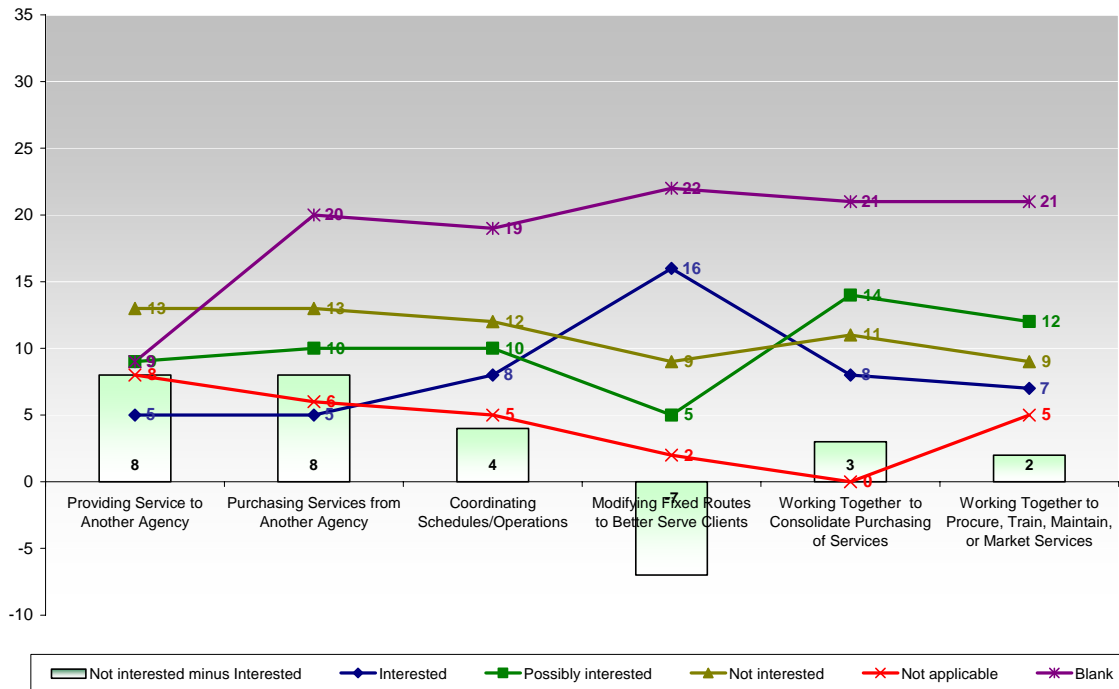
A35: Lack of adequate funding to serve need; Inconsistent or fluctuating fund amounts; rural and large geographical area; State or other regulations are too restrictive regarding criteria for who is eligible for our transportation services; Inadequate existing fixed routes; Hidden populations needing transportation are not being identified; Not enough qualified drivers to staff the need; People are unaware of the transportation services that are available to them; Concerns about passenger safety; Concerns regarding reliability of transportation provider; Other (please specify)

There were 25 respondents to this question. Respondents indicated that rural areas represented the greatest challenge to delivering service (20%) followed closely by lack of funding (19%). Interestingly, a lack of awareness of transportation options available was listed as third highest challenge to delivery service to clients.

Lack of funding has been cited by Amarillo City Transit as a particular concern to the continuing viability of the system. The City of Amarillo is approaching the 200,000 population mark. Once the city surpasses this, the Amarillo City Transit may lose their federal funding support. Moreover, there are anticipated decreases in the state-supplied funding. In 2005, Amarillo City Transit was allocated \$626,489. By 2010, this will decrease by \$482,602.

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Q36-41: Interest for Coordination/Collaboration Strategies



Q36-41: What is your interest in the following coordination strategies: Providing transportation services or more transportation services under contract to another agency; Purchasing transportation services from another organization assuming price and quality meets your needs; Coordinating schedules and vehicle operations so riders can transfer from one service to another; Modifying fixed routes to better serve your clients; Working together to consolidate the purchase (or contracting) of transportation services; Working together to coordinate procurement, training, maintenance, or marketing activities.

A36-41: Interested; Possibly interested; Not interested; Not applicable

Twelve out of 20 organizations left this question blank because they do not use transportation services for their clients. Out of those that do provide service, most organizations indicated that they were “Not interested” in pursuing any coordination strategy. The strategy that solicited the most interest was “Modifying fixed routes.” Some of the organizations that indicated this as an interest include: Amarillo YMCA, Texas Panhandle MHMR Early Childhood Intervention, High Plains Epilepsy Association, Panhandle Worksource, Panhandle Crisis Center, and United Way of Amarillo. Another strategy that had higher interest was “Working Together to Purchase Service.” Some of the organizations that indicated this as an interest include: Health and Human Services Commission, Panhandle Independent Living Center, Amarillo YMCA and a number senior citizen centers and senior living centers.