

VOLUNTEER SERVICE AMONG A MENU OF TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS

*Shiawassee Area Transportation Agency (SATA), Owosso,
Michigan*

SUMMARY OF THE STRATEGY:

Through its mobility management program, SATA offers a menu of transportation solutions including volunteer transportation and opportunities through coordination with other community service providers. SATA is able to use in-kind volunteer services as local match for its New Freedom Program.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION:

SATA launched its Mobility Management Program in 2008. The Transportation Solutions program provides the following services and initiatives for Shiawassee County residents:

- **Mobility management one-stop service:** individuals are matched with available transportation services, based on travel needs and eligibility for specific programs, including SATA's public transit services, human service agency transportation, as well as those described below.
- **Volunteer transportation:** SATA coordinates volunteer drivers who use their personal vehicles to transport seniors and people with disabilities whose travel needs cannot be met by the SATA demand response public transit system. This includes residents of townships that do not participate in funding SATA, people who need to travel outside of the county for medical reasons, and those needing to travel

AGENCY PROFILE

Organization Type: Public Transit Authority-organized under Michigan Public Act 7

Service Area: Shiawassee County is 541 square miles and had a 2010 population of 70,648. Public transit is available within Shiawassee County. Volunteer medical transportation (open to seniors and people with disabilities) goes out of county to medical facilities throughout the State of Michigan.

Resources:

- **Fleet size:** 17 vehicles
- **Staff size:** 35 plus 15 volunteers
- **Operating Budget:** \$1,059,838 in FY 2011

Service Summary:

- **Modes Operated:** demand response
- **Days and Hours of Service:** Mon-Fri 6:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. (until 10:00 pm in Caledonia Charter Township, Owosso and Corunna)
- **General Public Cash Fare:** varies by place of resident of rider: \$3.00 for persons residing in participating cities and townships; \$9.00 for other county residents; half-fares for youth, seniors, and people with disabilities.
- **Passenger Trips/Year:** 93,336 in FY 2011

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Mobility Manager
(989) 725-9303

during days and times when SATA doesn't operate. SATA recruits the volunteers including conducting background checks, provides supplemental liability insurance for

them, schedules rides, and reimburses volunteers for mileage. Volunteers are responsible for collecting transit fares from riders (same fares as SATA public transit within Shiawassee County).

- **Accessible “taxi”:** SATA uses an accessible van to supplement the volunteer transportation for those riders who use mobility devices. This enables SATA to meet out-of-county medical transportation needs for individuals with disabilities - service that would otherwise be unavailable since the regular SATA demand response public transit system does not cross county lines.
- **Community Coordination** - SATA’s Mobility Manager seeks opportunities to increase SATA’s offerings and improve service efficiencies by coordinating with other local organizations. Particularly noteworthy is that SATA has begun working with the faith community to organize use of church buses when not used for church purposes. SATA’s Mobility Manager was aware that churches are numerous and a largely untapped source of vehicle availability, with vehicles parked when not in use for services and programs (e.g., on Wednesdays and Sundays). Churches are also able to recruit volunteer drivers from their congregations, populated by individuals who want to be of service. SATA has begun working with several churches to meet occasional transportation needs (typically for one-time group trips). SATA coordinates the passenger needs and develops the schedule, and the church donates the use of the vehicle and a driver. SATA has had success in recruiting volunteer drivers by sending an email about the need for volunteers

to the church office, and the volunteer opportunity is shared with the congregation. SATA has also provided the conduit to match individuals needing transportation with a member of a church congregation who volunteers for that individual on an ongoing basis (beyond the SATA program). SATA is currently exploring the possibility of ridesharing and coordinated dispatching with the local hospital that operates a radiation shuttle.

In addition to volunteer drivers, SATA is also supported by volunteers in the office through three programs:

- **Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)** from the Michigan Department of Human Services. Those families receiving TANF must volunteer a certain number of hours a week through the Jobs, Education, and Training program (JET). The hours are based on the minimum wage rate and the family’s monthly cash assistance amount -- the family is essentially earning their TANF assistance through volunteer hours and SATA can leverage that dollar amount as New Freedom local match.
- **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)**, through AARP, is a training program for seniors (age 55+) in which the senior is placed at SATA by AARP and paid the senior minimum wage by AARP. Weekly hours vary depending on availability of funding; currently SATA has a SCSEP volunteer for 18 hours a week. The dollar amount this individual earns can be leveraged as New Freedom local match.

- **College interns and/or work/study students** (generally only available for 120-140 hours).

CONDITIONS THAT PROMPTED THE STRATEGY:

SATA was historically unable to provide transportation outside of the county, and people needing to access medical appointments at regional medical destinations outside of the county had few, if any, options. The availability of Job Access Reverse Commute funds enabled SATA to hire a Mobility Manager who could develop the volunteer program and other services funded by the New Freedom grant.

RESULTS OF THE STRATEGY:

SATA can now offer people with disabilities and seniors access to out-of-county medical destinations as well as provide transportation services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year through the Mobility Management programs (contingent upon availability of a volunteer or SATA driver).

METHODS USED TO DOCUMENT RESULTS:

- The full impact of SATA's mobility management programs isn't meaningfully captured by hard data. This is particularly true when individuals are matched with a service provider that provides the service outside of the context of SATA (e.g., a volunteer from a church who continues to drive the individual without scheduling through SATA).

- Data that are tracked include number of rides provided through the one-stop (4,150 in 2011), number of volunteer miles reimbursed (103,500 in 2011), number of volunteer driver hours donated in providing transportation services (4,021 in 2011) and the value of the in-kind match (approx. \$72,758 in 2011 for the full program).

KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESS:

- SATA's Mobility Manager has a community service background and came to the job with an awareness of community transportation needs through her previous community work.
- The local community has been very open to collaboration and coordination, including Health & Human Services programs and the local hospital.

CHALLENGES:

- Volunteer driver recruitment is an ongoing challenge. One specific concern raised by several potential volunteers is liability for using their personal vehicles. SATA found an insurance broker that offers additional liability for volunteers at only \$6.00 per volunteer per year.
 - SATA is currently seeking ways to meet out-of-county employment transportation needs, such as carpool coordination.
 - After-hours hospital discharges are another transportation need that SATA is still working to address.
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IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

RECOMMENDED FOR:

- Communities with a need for out-of-county medical trips
- Transit agencies with a high demand for special transportation services
- Organizations with staff availability and expertise to manage a team of volunteers

RECOMMENDED ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS:

- A program leader with a community service background and a positive problem-solving approach
- Volunteer training and insurance
- Starting slowly and growing the service at a manageable level
- Collaborating with local human service agencies

METHODS FOR DOCUMENTING RESULTS:

- Track:
 - Number of rides provided
 - Number of volunteer miles reimbursed
 - Number of volunteer driver hours donated in providing transportation services
 - Value of the in-kind match

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS:

- SATA Mobility Management brochure

989-729-2687
1-877-667-7100 (toll free)

Hours of Operation

Monday—Friday

No regularly scheduled

service on

Saturday, Sunday

or Holidays

(Call for contracted service information)

Owosso/Corunna
Caledonia Charter
Township Area
6:00am-10:00pm

All other areas of
Shiawassee County
6:00am-6:00pm

Call **SATA**
for work or play!



Do you need to get
your kids to their
sports
practice?



Maybe you need to
go to the store?



Do you know someone
who needs a ride to a medical
appointment?



Shiawassee
SATA →
Area Transportation Agency

FOR TRANSPORTATION NEEDS
BEYOND THE SCOPE OF
SATA DIAL-A-RIDE CALL
TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS

(A DIVISION OF SATA) 989-725-9303

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Shiawassee
SATA →
Area Transportation Agency

180 N. Delaney Rd.
Owosso, MI 48867

Dial-A-Ride
for work or play

Office Hours
8:00am-6:00pm



989-729-2687
1-877-667-7100 (toll free)

Fare Policy

All fares are calculated only by your place of residence, not by your origin or destination as long as both are within Shiawassee County.

Regular Fare

- \$9.00 per one-way trip
- \$4.50 per one-way trip for passengers 18 or younger, 60 or older and those with ADA-defined disabilities.

Discounted Fares :

Residents of the “Participating” cities of Corunna, Durand, Owosso, Perry, Laingsburg & the “Participating” townships of Bennington, Caledonia, Venice, Vernon:

- \$3.00 per one-way trip
- \$1.50 per one-way trip for passengers 18 or younger, 60 or older and those with ADA-defined disabilities.

Reservation Policy

- Routes determined daily by caller requests.
No fixed routes.
- Priority will be given to callers on a “first-call, first-serve” basis, however we recommend that you schedule your rides as soon as you know that you will need them.
- Residents of Non-participating municipalities may only schedule rides on the day before or the day of the requested trip reservation.

Service Information

- All SATA Vehicles are accessible for those who have physical limitations.
- SATA drivers may provide assistance in getting on & off the vehicle.
- SATA drivers may not be qualified or required to give any medical assistance.

Service Information

- Limited carry-on items allowed (some restrictions apply, call for details).
- SATA will not tolerate misconduct on board its vehicles, whether verbal or physical.
- Children age 16 & under must be properly protected by a safety belt as required by Michigan law.
- SATA does not operate any fixed-route service but rather a scheduled dial-a-ride service. Unlike a taxi service, dial-a-ride service focuses on group-riding rides within the same area utilizing one vehicle.

The purpose of SATA is:
to provide, safe, fast, affordable
and friendly transportation for Shiawassee
County residents of all ages.