

## **Welfare to Work:**

# **Transportation Issues and Opportunities in Miami-Dade County**

## **Final Report: Executive Summary**

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

A team of researchers led by Florida International University Institute of Government (IOG) conducted a study of transportation issues in Miami-Dade County related to welfare clients moving into the workforce. Funded by the Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), this study contains six reports covering topics of vital concern for policy-makers in this community who are grappling with difficult and complex welfare reform issues.

Many of these reports contain detailed explanations of the research, numerous data tables, fully discussed findings and recommendations, and, in several cases, appendices with more explanation, data tables and descriptions of methodologies used. Because of the volume of information contained in the entire study, we have chosen to provide a two-part Executive Summary. Part One simply reports our recommendations with some explanations, findings and implications through both numbered lists and bullet statements. All of this is done in about five pages. Part Two provides a summary of each chapter with key points and detailed or summary data tables included. This second part of the Executive Summary is approximately thirteen pages, and offers the reader short on time the opportunity to at least get some of the richness of the research and data reported in the overall study. Part Two can also help the reader to determine quickly which of the detailed chapters he or she might find most interesting for follow-up reading.

These reports and an executive summary are briefly described next in the order in which they appear in the study:

1. Executive summary with recommendations, findings and conclusions.
2. Demographic information about the welfare clients and the report study areas.
3. Employment patterns in Miami-Dade County, including the identification of the major employment centers in the county.
4. The Broward option as a source for jobs and new transportation alternatives for Miami-Dade's welfare clients along with transportation suggestions.
5. An assessment of the suitability of existing public transit to meet transportation needs of welfare clients as well as a test of alternatives.
6. A survey of "best practices" related to welfare to work programs around the country along with management and program advice.
7. A survey of existing services and job placement for 232 former welfare clients now working in jobs in Miami-Dade County.

Two notes of caution are in order before the reader continues with the Executive Summary or the full report. First, providing transportation to welfare clients is not a panacea for welfare reform. Many formidable non-transportation impediments must be overcome prior to the client being truly job ready. Probably the most notable is the absence of affordable, quality childcare. These and similar problems must be resolved for transportation alternatives to be successful and employer expectations met. Second, our research shows that the local economy is unlikely to create enough new jobs to meet the growing demands of welfare clients, other unemployed people, immigrants and a number of high school graduates entering the same job market. Again, efforts far beyond transportation will be needed to address the local economic situation.

## Executive Summary: Part One

The Executive Summary identifies three major policy recommendations, sixteen program recommendations, four “best practices,” and thirty-five findings and their implications that we have drawn from our research. The reader is encouraged to review the detailed reports for supporting information and more in depth discussion of issues addressed here and in the summaries of each of the study reports found at the end of this chapter.

### Three Major Policy Recommendations

The research team identified three major transportation policy recommendations that need to be addressed to help ensure the long-term self-sufficiency of welfare clients as they move into the work force.

- 1. PROVIDE A CONTINUUM OF TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS IN ORDER TO MEET WELFARE CLIENTS’ ROUTINES AND UNIQUE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS.**
- 2. PROVIDE SUBSIDIES IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF NEEDED TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR WELFARE CLIENTS.**
- 3. IDENTIFY AND ASSIGN ONE ORGANIZATION THE RESPONSIBILITY TO EDUCATE WAGES CLIENTS ABOUT ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF GETTING TO WORK ON TIME.**

Recommendation 1. Our research indicates that welfare clients face a number of impediments in getting to work and returning home. These include childcare, home-job location mismatch, varying work schedules and the absence of personal transportation. While a number of clients may have their work transportation problems solved by existing public transit, many others will require tailored solutions if long-term self-sufficiency is to be achieved. These solutions will no doubt change over time as well, which requires that program providers experiment with pilot projects and other delivery options to ensure flexibility as needs change. It should be noted that some of these options are currently being offered, but much more needs to be done.

The transportation options in this continuum include:

- Existing public transit, which must include an element of education and assistance in its use, especially through job placement programs.
- New bus routes where justified (for example, routes to emerging employment centers in west Miami-Dade).
- Park-and-Ride facilities in strategic locations.
- Extended bus routes, especially into Broward County.
- Contract mini-buses and vans.
- Targeted circulating buses/vans in major employment centers.
- Jitneys.
- Car- and vanpools.
- Dial-a-Ride.
- Short-term rentals.
- Taxis.
- Paratransit.
- Employer sponsored bus and vans, especially for clients with non-traditional work schedules.
- Bicycles.
- Personal transportation (e.g., “Charity Cars”)

Inevitably as former welfare clients achieve success in the work place, their transit patterns will begin to reflect those of other workers in this community, which means that most of them will also come to rely on a car for their transportation needs. For some welfare clients, the car may be the only way to meet their initial employment goal, which is why the last option is listed above.

Recommendation 2. Some of the options listed above have dedicated or predictable sources of funding for existing operations. However, for some services, such as current public transit, expanding existing routes or adding new routes would require additional funding. Other options have not been tried or have been offered only on a small scale, such as vanpools. These will need some form of subsidy, and the subsidies per client may vary from little or nothing to several thousand dollars per year. Subsidies will be needed, first, to ensure affordability for welfare clients; second, to provide an incentive for private providers to supply some of the options; third to expand existing services; and, fourth, to allow experimentation so that the right mix of solutions are offered over time to welfare clients. Furthermore, many of these options do not have to be limited to welfare clients; others may also use some of these services if they prove to be more convenient or cost-effective than current transit offerings.

Miami-Dade County should establish a discretionary grant program to fund some of these experiments. It could, for example, encourage community-based organizations (CBOs), individual employers and commercial and industrial tenant associations to be proactive in joining with the WAGES transportation unit in the development and operation of transportation alternatives for WAGES clients. Such a program could be modeled after the Homeless Trust, which has an advisory board to provide guidance for priority programs and for funding decisions.

Additional subsidies for welfare clients can be justified as a form of transit equity. Middle and upper class residents enjoy a number of subsidized transit conveniences in this community such as Metrorail, primarily used by middle class patrons, and drawbridges, a subsidy for wealthy boat owners.

Recommendation 3. From an organizational perspective, it is important that a single unit be created or given the authority and responsibility to assist WAGES clients in determining viable transportation alternatives to meet their transportation needs. Such a program could be modeled after the LYNX program in Orlando. This would include providing information about existing transit services, coordinating carpooling programs, developing other transit alternatives and recruiting transit providers. The organization should have no stake in any one method of transportation, but should instead look to find the best alternative that will enable the WAGES client to get and keep a job.

## **Other Recommendations**

The next part of the Executive Summary identifies a number of recommendations made by the research team. They are grouped in terms of Program Recommendations and Best Practices.

### **Program Recommendations**

Program recommendations reflect actions that can be taken by one or more of the agencies currently involved in the WAGES process.

1. Strengthen communication among WAGES administration, job trainers, job-placement staff, other social service agencies and transportation suppliers to better take advantage of existing transit resources.
2. Focus on the employment areas identified as best served by transit for job placement.
3. Provide WAGES clients with the same information about the areas of employment best served by transit.
4. Minimize transportation needs during job training by assigning WAGES clients to trainers based on client proximity to the job trainers' offices.

5. Give WAGES clients the flexibility of choosing an alternative job provider before the commencement of any job training.
6. Create guidelines to allow job trainers/providers to “trade” clients among themselves to help deal with home/work location and transportation issues.
7. Expand current bus and rail subsidies to WAGES clients to include their children.
8. Extend the length of time these subsidies are in place from the current six-month limit to nine months or one year after starting a job.
9. Expand bus routes to link the Airport, Airport West, Medley, Carol City, Opa-locka, Liberty City, Overtown and Kendall.
10. Develop shuttle services using vans or smaller buses to connect residential neighborhoods with the busway in South Dade.
11. Develop collection/distribution shuttle services connecting Metrorail stations to major employment centers west of state highway 826 (the Palmetto Expressway).
12. Develop a means of transportation (perhaps van service) to provide a daytime, evening, and weekend link between the downtown area and the port of Miami.
13. Extend bus late-evening service hours on selected routes.
14. Expand bus service into Broward County to areas with high entry-level job potential.
15. Add shuttle vans to fixed routes to and circulation vans inside of industrial areas and locations with large numbers of WAGES clients.
16. Add express vans between areas likely to have significant numbers of clients and employment centers.

### **Best Practices Recommendations**

In reviewing selected programs across the country, we identified “best practices” gleaned from a number of different studies and interviews with other program providers. Best practices are those business procedures and organizational arrangements that lead to high quality, successful programs. These are defined through the following framework:

1. **Program Goals:** The goal of a welfare-to-work transportation program is to increase access to jobs, it is not to build a transportation program per se. Transportation is one means to a larger end.
2. **Organizational Design:** A lead agency and clear lines of authority and responsibility are crucial to the success of a welfare-to-work program, including coordination of transportation solutions.
3. **Managerial Philosophy:** Transportation providers need to adopt an entrepreneurial attitude toward fulfilling their scope of work within the welfare-to-work partnership, with a multi-tiered, multi-modal approach to transportation services, a willingness to stay flexible, and an aggressive customer service orientation.
4. **Strategic Approach:** A multi-phase strategy would involve both maximizing the use of existing resources and developing new tools to assist job-seekers:
  - Phase 1:* Map the location of welfare to work clients, entry-level jobs, and existing transportation options.
  - Phase 2:* Assess the viability of creating new fixed route transit services between areas of high job growth and areas with many job seekers.

- Phase 3:* Create small-scale pilot programs using vanpools or subscription buses.
- Phase 4:* Expand point-to-point transit planning for all welfare clients.
- Phase 5:* Implement aggressive marketing efforts to create van pools among non-welfare workers so welfare clients can “piggy-back” on existing van pools.

## **Findings**

In conducting our research, we reaffirmed common knowledge and identified new information that helps illuminate the challenges of welfare reform and transportation solutions in Miami-Dade County. These findings are summarized with their implications in terms of three broad categories: Clients, Employment Patterns and Transportation Patterns. Greater detail can be found in the individual reports in this study.

### **WAGES/TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) Clients**

- A typical WAGES participant is a Black or Hispanic 34-year-old female with two children, (one under the age of five), without a high school diploma, who has not worked in the past two years.
- The majority of WAGES clients can be found in the corridor linking Little Havana to Carol City and the northeastern part of Hialeah (areas generally well-served by public transit), with a smaller concentration in South Dade, (an area not well served by public transit).
- Over the past year, Miami-Dade’s proportion of welfare clients in the state increased from one in four to one in three.
- Approximately 4,000 welfare clients in the county have stopped receiving benefits within the past two years, but the reasons why are not clear.
- A substantial number of individuals, children as well as adults, will be forced off the welfare rolls within three years. As of April 1998, the county had: 16,170 adult clients under a 24-month limit; 8,100 adult clients under a 36-month limit; and 4,320 clients, children and adults, who may be forced off the welfare roll in the last quarter of 1998 unless given a hardship exemption.
- A substantial number of target TANF adult recipients may be forced off assistance before they are fully prepared to join the labor market.
- In other parts of the country, program costs for welfare to work transportation ranged between \$5 and \$117 per passenger per day while annual cost per client ranged from \$720 to \$4,200.
- Over 50 percent of the jobs available to WAGES involve late afternoon (2 p.m. to 11 p.m.) and overnight shifts.
- Countywide, about 48 percent of recently employed clients live less than five miles from work, indicating that clients tend to stay in or near their neighborhoods.
- The majority of newly employed clients (68 percent) work within eight miles of their residence, while only 10 percent travel between eight to ten miles.
- Of the newly employed, 23 percent are commuting more than ten miles to work.
- Less than three percent are commuting to areas such as Broward or the Upper Keys where jobs are more plentiful.

### **Implications for Clients**

- The primary issue facing welfare reform in the county is the insufficient amount of entry-level jobs generated by our economy.
- In the short term, Miami-Dade needs to look to the more robust economy in Broward County for entry-level jobs for welfare to work clients.

- In the long term, providing more individualized transportation options for welfare-to-work clients may be the only way to get them to work and keep them working.

### **Employment Patterns**

- Rapid industrial and business development in west Dade and Hialeah support observations that emerging employment centers are too far from inner-city residents.
- While decentralized spatial patterns in the growth of employment opportunities are occurring in the county, analysis demonstrates a great deal of complexity in these patterns.
- Twelve employment centers were identified in the county; the largest four were the Downtown/Brickell, Airport West, Hialeah/Medley/Miami Lakes, and Coral Gables/Westchester areas.
- About 30 percent of employment in the county can be found within five miles of downtown.
- About 50 percent of employment in the county can be found within eight miles of downtown.
- Approximately 40 percent of all jobs in the county are within a four-mile radius of Liberty City, where many WAGES clients live.
- Downtown specializes as a financial and administrative center.
- Coral Gables acts as a second downtown, specializing in finance and administrative jobs with over 40 percent of its employment in these two sectors.
- Other employment centers are less specialized.
- The majority of Miami-Dade's non-professional services and retail employment is highly dispersed and scattered.
- Entry-level employment in the county totals 28 percent of all jobs.
- An estimated 5,000 entry-level jobs will be created in the county each year.
- More entry-level jobs are found in the Airport West, Kendall and Coral Gables areas than in Downtown Miami.
- In addition, in the future more entry level jobs will be created in the Coral Gables, Kendall, Airport West and Hialeah than in Downtown.
- Few entry-level jobs will be created in South Dade.

### **Employment Implications**

- The amount of growth in entry-level jobs is so small that their impact on trip generation is insignificant.
- South Dade is a special case with distances to major employment centers a true barrier.
- Skill mismatch, ethnic differences and language barriers may be working to the disadvantage of WAGES clients.
- There is no single geographic focal point for the creation of new entry-level jobs in the county.
- Most new entry-level jobs are being created in more affluent areas, not near the homes of WAGES clients.

### **Transportation Patterns**

- The airport and Biscayne Bay are major physical barriers between central city WAGES clients and jobs in west Miami-Dade County and on the beach, which limits existing fixed bus suitability for this area.
- On average in the five study areas, a greater percentage of individuals carpool than in the county as a whole (20 percent vs. 16 percent).

- Two areas, Liberty City/Overtown and Little Havana, reflect a higher level of transit use than the county as a whole (14 percent and 11 percent vs. 6 percent, respectively).
- South Dade has a higher percentage of workers carpooling (25 percent) than any other study area as well as a higher percentage than the county as a whole.
- The majority of county resident workers travel less than 30 minutes to work in all study areas as well as the county as a whole
- On average, only 15 percent of Miami-Dade workers travel more than 45 minutes to work in the county and only three percent travel more than one hour.
- An analysis of transit trips between the study areas and employment centers revealed only nine percent of all trips could be completed in less than 30 minutes.
- The average of all trips in the study areas and employment centers was 82 minutes from portal to portal for all schedules reviewed.

#### **Transportation Implications**

- Though in Miami transit service is bi-directional, it will be important to remember that transportation planning which caters to workers who reside in the suburban outskirts but work downtown needs to be adjusted.
- As the demand for individualized transportation increases, our fixed-route transit system will have an uphill battle to expand ridership.
- A travel time of more than one hour is likely to be an insurmountable barrier for prospective welfare-to-work clients.
- A trip analysis of the study areas and employment centers suggest if WAGES clients have other, more time efficient alternatives to mass transit, they are likely to take it.

## **Executive Summary: Part Two**

The remainder of the Executive Summary summarizes each of the research reports provided in Chapters 2 through 7. By design, summaries cannot cover the richness of detail, nuance and fullness of data found in the complete reports. Therefore, the reader is encouraged to read those reports in full that address her or his primary interests and concerns.

### **Chapter 2: General Information about WAGES Clients and the Study Areas**

In August 1996, President Clinton signed the "Personal Responsibility and Opportunity Reconciliation Act," which ended the federal guarantee of life-long welfare assistance to eligible recipients. New block grants were created for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), replacing the decade-old Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. The State of Florida created the Work and Gain Economic Self-Sufficiency (WAGES) program in 1996, which led to the creation of the Miami-Dade WAGES Coalition in February 1996. By November of that year, the WAGES Coalition hired Lockheed Martin IMS and 13 other providers to furnish case management, job placement screening and supportive services for WAGES participants. With several reorganizations and personnel changes behind it, by July 1998, the WAGES administration has solidified and is now completing its strategic plan.

A typical WAGES participant is a 34-year-old Black or Hispanic female with two children, one of whom is under five years old. She likely does not have a high school degree nor has she likely worked in the past two years. Thus, in general, the level of job readiness is low for WAGES clients. WAGES clients are clustered in certain geographic areas of the county, generally in the corridor linking Little Havana to Carol City with a smaller concentration in South Miami-Dade. This study focused on five areas: Carol City, Hialeah, Liberty City/Overtown, Little Havana and South Miami-Dade.

The commuting patterns of the residents of the study areas are not much different than the patterns of the population in the county as a whole. In general they commute to work by driving alone (68 percent versus the county average of 72 percent), carpooling (20 percent versus 16 percent), mass transit (7 percent versus 6 percent), and other (6 percent versus 6 percent). A majority of commuters in the study areas reach work in less than 30 minutes (63 percent as compared to the county average of 59 percent). Another 25 percent in the study areas commute between 30 to 44 minutes compared to the county average of 26 percent. Two percent commute more than 1 hour in the study area compared to the county average of 3 percent. Like residents in the county as a whole, about 71 percent of the commuters in the study area leave for work between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. Overall, about 25 percent of county workers, but only 21 percent in the study areas, leave for work between 9 p.m. and midnight.

### **Chapter 3: Employment Patterns in Miami-Dade County in Relation to Welfare to Work**

This chapter reports the location of general employment and entry-level jobs in Miami-Dade County by identifying (1) the employment centers, (2) the location of entry-level jobs, and (3) the number of new entry-level jobs created and their locations, as summarized in Table 1.1. Research indicates a decentralizing pattern in employment along with a great degree of complexity in the spatial patterns of employment and numbers and locations of jobs. The four largest centers (downtown, airport, Hialeah and Coral Gables areas) account for nearly half of the county's employment with downtown (including Brickell) still the largest employment center. Table 1.1

also identifies where entry-level jobs are located and the estimated annual growth in entry-level jobs by employment center.

Specialization appears to be occurring within employment centers. The Downtown area stands out as a financial and administrative center including 60 percent of available jobs in the public sector, professional services and finance. The Coral Gables area functions as a second downtown; professional services and finance account for over 40 percent of its employment and the area has a broad based in retail and other types of services as well. The airport area has an advantage with its transportation facilities and proximity to the highway system to cater to wholesale, delivery, communication and utility activities. Hialeah is the manufacturing center for the county with one-third of the county's jobs in this sector.

These patterns suggest that there may be an element of skill mismatch. While the Downtown and Coral Gables areas are best served by public transit, these locations tend to have more specialized service jobs for which residents in the vicinity may not have sufficient skills. Manufacturing, delivery, and wholesale employment are likely to be found in the north and western part of the county and are not accessible to the majority of the WAGES clients who live in the east. The majority of Miami-Dade's non-professional services and retail employment is highly dispersed and scattered.

Table 1.1 Major Employment Centers in Miami-Dade (1997 estimations)

Employment Centers	Estimated Total Employment	Estimated Entry Level Jobs	Annual Net Growth in Entry Level Jobs: Two Estimation Methods	
			Method 1	Method 2
Downtown/Brickell Area	143,200	28,600	470	480
Airport West	121,700	30,300	570	480
Hialeah/Medley/Miami Lakes	107,200	28,400	480	420
Coral Gables/West Miami	103,500	29,000	650	540
Kendall/Westchester	98,100	30,200	570	520
Miami North/I-95 Corridor	85,900	20,000	370	350
N. Miami/Golden Glades/Aventura	68,500	23,400	440	390
Opa-locka/Carol City	45,400	12,100	200	170
Miami Beach/Bal Harbor	41,100	15,500	230	260
Little Havana/Allapattah	38,000	11,100	210	210
Perrine/Cutler Ridge/Goulds	24,300	9,700	140	120
Florida City/Homestead	13,700	5,600	70	50
Subtotal Major Employment Centers	890,600	243,900	4,400	3,990
Other Areas	88,100	27,100	460	450
Total	978,700	270,900	4,860	4,440

Note: See detailed tables in Chapter 3 for sources and other relevant information regarding this table.

Source: Metropolitan Center, Florida International University, evaluation of Florida Industry and Occupational Employment Projections (1995-2005), and 1995 Florida Department of Labor and Employment Security ES 202 data, 1998.

Finally, Table 1.2 summarizes industries with high percentages of entry-level jobs. A majority of these jobs are found in retail and non-professional service industries. Because of their overall size, health and educational services are big employers too. These industries are scattered around the county, and WAGES clients must travel multiple directions to work for such employers.

Table 1.2 Ten Leading Industries with High Percentage of Entry-level Jobs

Industry	Percent Share of Total Jobs	Number of Entry-Level Jobs	Total Employment
Food Stores	77%	22,350	29,110
Agriculture Production, Crops and Livestock	76%	5,450	7,150
Apparel and Accessories Stores	70%	10,080	14,450
General Merchandise Stores	68%	14,370	21,070
Eating and Drinking Places	68%	38,180	56,080
Agricultural Services	56%	7,190	12,900
Miscellaneous Retail Stores	53%	12,220	23,190
Hotel and other Lodging Places	52%	9,840	18,770
Building Materials and Garden Supplies	52%	3,490	6,660
Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores	52%	5,030	9,650
Total	64%	128,200	199,030

Note: See detailed tables in Chapter 3 for sources and other relevant information regarding this table.

Source: Metropolitan Center, Florida International University, evaluation of Florida Department of Labor and Employment Security data, 1998.

## Chapter 4: Facilitating Access to Employment Opportunities in Broward County for Former Welfare Clients

Miami-Dade County represents one of the few metropolitan areas in this country with only one contiguous suburb, Broward County. Major retailers and media view South Florida as one market. About 100,000 net daily commuters travel south to Miami-Dade County each day; Miami-Dade County serves as one of the largest single employment destinations for Broward residents, representing a significant part of the Broward economic base. This situation offers a special opportunity for inter-county cooperation that can facilitate practical transportation policy planning by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and local transportation agencies.

There are seven major north-south automobile routes from Broward to Miami-Dade County, but only a few public bus routes leave Broward for northern Dade and from northern Dade to southern Broward. For residents of Hialeah and northwest Dade, close to Broward in map distance, a trip to southern or western Broward by bus can be both circuitous and time consuming. This becomes an issue in light of Broward's more robust economy and lower unemployment rate. With the eastern service economy, large malls in the west and the largest private employers in Plantation (Motorola and American Express), Broward may be able to provide entry level opportunities for the most qualified, job ready welfare clients from Miami-

Dade County. With the short-term job market in Dade unlikely to change, it seems evident that a job placement system in Dade should include opportunities in Broward to reduce the already tough competition for jobs in Dade, particularly for those welfare clients who live in the northern part of the county.

A number of alternative transit options need to be tried to test their viability in providing Dade residents access to Broward jobs. Such options would require a subsidy of some kind to make them affordable for the welfare client. This is, however, not inconsistent with subsidies for middle and upper class transportation users who benefit from high speed rail (Metrorail), highway and other automobile commuting options, and sailboats and yachts that demand publicly funded drawbridges be available 24 hours per day. Such subsidies for welfare clients would fall under the auspices of transportation equity.

Looking northward makes sense for north Dade welfare clients from the perspective of travel time as well. Commuting to south Miami-Dade or to the western fringes where public transportation services are minimal would make the commuting time a major barrier for obtaining and keeping a job. It may be faster and cheaper, provided public transportation links are enhanced, for north Dade clients to look for and obtain jobs in southern or western Broward County.

## **Chapter 5: Public Transportation and Wages Clients**

The focus of this chapter is on the availability of suitable public transportation linkages between concentrations of WAGES clients and major employment centers with significant entry-level jobs. In addressing the public transit/client linkages, the research team answered three fundamental questions:

1. What are the transportation needs of WAGES clients?
2. How well are these needs being met by the existing public transit system?
3. What transportation alternatives should be considered?

Limited national and local information is available on the transportation needs of former welfare recipients. The following basic conditions are reported in special studies and the U.S. Census:

- Few welfare recipients own automobiles.
- Many welfare recipients will need to make multiple trips.
- Most welfare recipients will need to make long trips.
- All welfare recipients will not be able to spend much money on transportation.

To assess the public transit system's ability to meet the needs of WAGES clients, we identified the following six characteristics that influence transportation and, ultimately, work choices.

**(1) Coverage.** The traveler must be within a reasonable walking distance of the transit line on both the home and employment ends of the trip. Weather conditions and personal security dictate that these distances cannot be too long.

**(2) Continuity.** The rider should not be required to make excessive transfers over the course of the trip. Such vehicle changes can subject the traveler to significant delays due to extensive waits and the potential for missed connections.

**(3) Wait Time, and (4) Arrival Time (Frequency/Span).** The rider's ability to arrive promptly at the place of employment is enhanced by service that stops frequently and available over the span of the workday. Long intervals between transit vehicles require the employee to have extended transfer wait times and arrival times well in advance of beginning of the work day to avoid job tardiness—a primary concern of all employers.

**(5) Duration.** The total duration of the rider's home-to-work trip should not be excessive, especially in the case of single parents who may have need to link with child care and shopping trips.

**(6) Cost.** A fundamental requirement is that the cost of the trip be within the limited financial resources of the WAGES participant, unless some public/private subsidy is provided. The indirect cost of the trip, in the form of extended day care expenses, is also a consideration.

After analyzing various trip scenarios, we drew conclusions in two ways: (1) using all the above components and (2) using only two of the primary components (total trip duration and wait-time interval between the last possible arrival at the job location ahead of the beginning of the work day). The study area/employment center (SA/EC) trips ranking highest in each of the service characteristics analyzed more thoroughly in the chapter are show on Table 1.3.

Table 1.3 Suitability Ranking of Weekday 8:00 AM Trips by Highest Rankings in All (6) Characteristics (Number of Components Shown in Paratheses)

	Carol City/ Opa-locka	Hialeah	Liberty City/ Overtown	Little Havana	Homestead/ Florida City
<i>Ranked highest on three or more components.</i>	Opa-locka/ Carol City (5)	Miami North/ I-95 (5)	Downtown/ Brickell (4)	Downtown/ Brickell (5)	Perrine/Cutler R./Goulds (6)
	Downtown/ Brickell (4)	Airport W. (4)	Little Havana/ Allapattah (4)	Airport W. (4)- Opa-Locka/	Kendall/ Westchester (5)
	Miami North/ I-95 (4)	Hialeah/ /M. Lakes (4)	Opa-locka/ Carol City (3)	Carol City (4)	Florida City/ Homestead (5)
	N. Miami/GG/ Aventura (4)	Opa-locka/ Carol City (4)		Miami North/ I-95 (3)	
	Hialeah/M. Lakes (3)	Downtown/ Brickell (3)			
	Little Havana/ Allapattah (3)				

Source: Metropolitan Center, Florida International University, 1998.

Trips from the study area to the surrounding or adjacent employment centers ranked most suitable for all study areas. This is hardly surprising because four of the rated characteristics either measured distance directly (duration) or indirectly (continuity, frequency/span-wait time, and cost). The Little Havana study area to Little Havana/Allapattah employment center trip was so short that MDTA considers it to a walking (or bicycle) trip rather than transit ride. Travel to Coral Gables/West Miami and Miami Beach/Bal Harbor overall was found to be the least suitable for transit trips due to the barriers, like the Airport, that force transit to take a circuitous route. It is worth noting that the Hialeah/Medley/Miami Lakes employment centers were not rated at the top from the Hialeah study areas or adjacent Carol City/Opa-Locka study areas, as were other similar pairs.

Table 1.4 reflects the research using only the two primary components. Table 1.4 reveals that those trips between study areas and employment centers (SA/EC) that have the least total times are not always those that are physically closest. Biscayne Bay, the Miami River and the Airport are barriers to roadway, and therefore transit linkages, between several areas. On the other hand, Metrorail, which operates above ground away from traffic congestion on local streets and has a

high service frequency and span, is an important transit connection for other areas. The Central Business District orientation of Metrorail and Metrobus gives Downtown/Brickell employment centers trips high rankings from all study areas except Homestead/Florida City.

The average time-related characteristics (duration and early arrival) suggest that if WAGES clients have another, more effective or efficient transportation means available to them initially or over the course of their economic betterment, they will opt for it. Private autos and car- and vanpooling are means that offer improvements in several home-to-work trip components. These two alternatives also require higher levels of financial resources and, in the case of car- and vanpooling, rider coordination. Unless resources are used for acquiring vehicles and providing rider coordination to make these travel options available, the public transit system will continue to be the primary means of transportation for new WAGES participants. Table 1.4 shows the most suitable transit trips as identified using the two time-based criteria, using 70 minutes for the standard.

Although the geographic separation of WAGES participants and potential employment is not as large in Miami-Dade as in many metropolitan areas, the local pattern is one of broad dispersal with somewhat different transportation needs. Rather than a few high-capacity connections between concentrations of participants and employment, a network of many low-capacity linkages is required.

Table 1.4 Primary Component Transit Suitability Ranking of Weekday 8:00 AM Trips by Travel Time and Ahead of Schedule Time (Minutes of Trip in Parenthesis)

	Carol City/ Opa-locka	Hialeah	Liberty City/Overtown	Little Havana	Homestead/ Florida City
(Best times considered to be 70 min. or less)	Opa-locka/ Carol City (56)	Hialeah/M. Lakes (45)	Miami North/ I-95 (28)	Downtown/ Brickell (31)	Florida City/ Homestd (24)
	N. Miami/GG/ Aventura (57)	Airport W.(47)	Downtown/ Brickell (34)	Coral Gables/ W. Miami (65)	Kendall/ Westchester (36)
	Miami North/ I-95 (67)	Miami North/ I-95 (47)	Opa-locka/ Carol City (44)	Airport W.(69)	Perrine/Cutler R./Goulds (38)
	Downtown/ Brickell (68)	Downtown/ Brickell (48)	Little Havana/ Allapattah (58)		
			Coral Gables/ W. Miami (60)		

Includes only trips for which an itinerary was available that permitted arrival on or ahead of scheduled job start time.

Source: Metropolitan Center, Florida International University, 1998.

Miami-Dade Transit is not able to fully provide the needed transportation network. We found that only 22 percent of the trips examined can provide a suitable transit link between the study areas and employment centers. Few of these provided access to the largest employment centers. The Bay, the river and two airports prevent the development of an effective transit grid in key locations, including the employment centers surrounding these areas. The short peak demands are difficult to serve efficiently, requiring significant off-peak service cutbacks. The equally low transit ridership by workers both in the study area and the county reflects the limitations of a time-inefficient system. Limited resources and competing priorities will not facilitate changes to the public transit system driven by welfare reform.

Coordination with the informal carpooling that is fairly prevalent in the study areas may be one suitable option available to WAGES clients, but informed, selective and effective use of the transit system will most likely be the primary means of travel. Improved information systems regarding the availability and utilization of these two alternatives need to be provided.

The development of additional private and public van and mini-bus systems would greatly improve the transportation opportunities of WAGES participants. Shuttle vehicles have potential application in meeting the multi-trip needs within study areas and replacing the long walks required in many employment centers. Express vehicles are possibilities on a number of trips for which transit is unavailable or duration and wait times are excessive. County policies and regulations with respect to these alternative means of transportation may need to change. Also, private and public subsidies of various forms may be required to initiate these changes, and may be necessary to maintain their operation.

## **Chapter 6: Transportation Aspects of Welfare to Work: A Selective Survey of Current Programs**

This chapter presents an assessment of several of the leading transportation programs designed to assist welfare clients in the transition from welfare to work. It also offers a synopsis of the major questions and problem areas that arise in the process of creating such transportation projects.

The 23 programs surveyed here are heterogeneous in goals and approaches, small scale, and tentative. Program target populations range from everyone without a job regardless of skills, education, or physical handicap (Michigan's Project Zero), to JOBS clients, to under- or unemployed people with transportation problems. Programs use a variety of transportation approaches, from volunteer car pools to school buses to Red Cross vans to fixed route express buses. The largest JOBLINKS programs reach perhaps as many as 600 people and as few as 27. The Bridges-to-Work program in Chicago may serve as many as a thousand clients of the estimated 155,000 welfare-to-work clients in the city. Most of the programs can be considered to be pilot or demonstration programs at best. Primarily, they serve to illustrate the possible problems confronting larger programs and to suggest some possible avenues for addressing our local problem.

The successful employment transportation programs in this survey share three crucial characteristics:

- Excellent working relationships among transit providers, human service organizations, employers and other participating agencies.
- Available jobs suited to the skills of welfare-to-work clients, as well as clients who are job-ready.
- Targeted transportation services that link specific job seekers with specific jobs.

For Miami-Dade County the implications of this survey means implementing the "best practices" learned from this research. These "best practices" were highlighted in a previous section.

This chapter also profiles ten of the surveyed programs that seem to offer innovative (or at least illustrative) solutions to employment transportation problems that might be encountered in this county. A number of key policy issues and management challenges that emerge from the survey are discussed and possible solutions are offered. Examples of issues and responses include the following:

*Transportation projects will not work if there are not a sufficient number of available jobs.*

*Possible Solutions:*

- Establish routes to known employment areas, such as industrial or business parks.
- Create a metropolitan-wide job placement mechanism.
- Link job placement and transit planning.
- Create vanpools that make point-to-point trips for clusters of job seekers.

*Different client populations have different transportation needs and will encounter different problems using transportation facilities.*

*Possible Solutions:*

- Coordinate transportation with other human service agencies.
- When using demand responsive transportation projects (such as radio-dispatched vans), clearly communicate rules regarding no-shows and cancellations to clients.
- Consider including rides to childcare facilities as part of transportation routes.
- Make emergency ride service available.
- Establish a certification process whereby clients are not referred to transportation providers until they are certified job-ready by a social service organization charged with preparing clients for work.

*Welfare clients cannot always be reached through conventional marketing mechanisms. Employers may not be accustomed to reaching out to hire welfare clients, nor do they usually have to think in terms of meeting the needs of first-time employees with transportation and other difficulties.*

*Possible Solutions:*

- Aggressive, sustained, multi-media campaigns may be required to bridge the gap between welfare clients and potential employers, or to attract interested volunteers to staff a transit program.
- Transportation providers may need to have staff dedicated to marketing their programs to employers, social service agencies and prospective clients.

*Clients making the transition from welfare to work may have many personal and family challenges, and, because they are often embarking on careers for the first time, may not be accustomed to abiding by rules and expectations that accompany on-demand or tightly-scheduled transit services. This creates the potential for conflicts in the field and wasted transportation resources.*

*Possible Solutions:*

- The AMPG JOBLINKS study concluded that it was necessary ‘to clearly communicate expectations regarding timeliness, cancellations, and no-show policies to members of [welfare-to-work clients].’
- Consider providing rides to childcare facilities in addition to rides to work.
- Coordinate transit projects with other services to insure that all client needs are met.

*Even well designed programs encounter a multitude of unexpected problems.*

*Possible Solutions:*

- Make sure that demonstration projects connect job-ready workers with steady, reliable employment.
- Be prepared for multiple route revisions and cancellations, especially in the face of changes in the economy.
- Recognize that administering an employment transportation project involves both employment and transportation problems.
- Staff projects with managers who are flexible and willing to experiment.

*Defining services too narrowly may mean that an employment transportation program does not serve the needs of its intended clients, while defining services too broadly will stretch the resources and minimize the effectiveness of the transportation component of a program.*

*Possible Solution:*

- It is essential to free transportation providers to address transportation issues effectively through (1) close coordination between transportation and other service providers, and (2) widely understood assignment of responsibilities among participating agencies and clients.

*Avoid devoting scarce resources to novel transportation experiments in the hope of finding a cheaper, less cumbersome solution to the transit problems of new job seekers.*

*Possible Solutions:*

- Use tried-and-true strategies first to make headway against the welfare-to-work problem.
- Conduct pilot programs to assess the viability of other novel strategies.
- Be prepared to adopt several approaches while carefully avoiding squandering resources on too many approaches.

*Welfare-to-work clients, already challenged with significant personal and family difficulties, may not be able to travel long to distant pick-up points for fixed route services; on the other hand, door-to-door services may be too expensive for transportation providers.*

*Possible Solutions:*

- Use GIS data to group job sites and client residences.
- Use other technologies to identify strategic locations for targeted commutes.

*Clients sometimes have difficulty abiding by fee-for-service arrangements, resulting in fare collection difficulties for drivers and administrators.*

*Possible Solutions:*

- Use cashless systems, such as passes, coupons or direct contracts between human service agencies and transportation providers, instead of cash payments to clients.
- Schedule cash payments on a regular basis to avoid possible problems with transportation subsidies.

*Without coordination among all agencies involved in the welfare-to-work process, transportation providers alone cannot effectively address the employment transportation problem, due primarily to the number and variety of problems confronting welfare clients.*

*Possible Solutions:*

- Establish one agency to lead the welfare-to-work effort and provide coordination among transportation providers, human service agencies, and employers.
- Have that lead agency build relationships with and among participating groups early and assiduously.

*Employment transportation programs will need to be subsidized in their initial stages and probably in their mature stages.*

*Possible Solutions:*

- Apply to the Federal Transit Administration for funding under TEA-21 provisions.
- Apply for Department of Labor grants.
- Pool resources from a variety of agencies wherever possible.
- Push state legislators to fund pilot programs in employment transportation.

*Federal programs inevitably involve paperwork that takes longer to complete than anticipated.*

*Possible Solution:*

- Obtain technical assistance from CTAA or other consultants and begin the certification process early.

*Initiating new services, especially those that involve complex marketing and administrative arrangements, can be extremely costly. Resources for existing programs are often inadequate, and few administrators are willing to devote their limited funds to experimental programs, particularly those that may be lost causes or political fads.*

*Possible Solutions:*

- Make the best use of existing resources and programs before embarking on new programs.
- Experiment with small, pilot programs to establish the appropriate operating costs for vans, buses, shuttles, and other transportation options in Miami-Dade County.
- Establish close linkages between job placement efforts and transportation planning to insure that van pools or express buses will have sufficient ridership.

## Chapter 7: Existing Transportation Support Services and the Needs of WAGES Clients

This chapter presents the results of our research on existing arrangements of transportation support services in the welfare-to-work process in Miami-Dade County. It identifies a number of areas that require improvements relating to the current transportation services for WAGES clients.

Throughout the establishment and implementation of the county's welfare-to-work effort, deliberate attempts were made to decentralize the centers of operations to facilitate the WAGES clientele. Evidence of this was the "One-Stop" centers scattered throughout the county and, later, the various site offices established by the Miami-Dade Public School system and Miami-Dade Community College. This rational commitment towards convenience appears to have been abandoned when trainers and job providers were sent WAGES clients from all parts of the county and with no regard to proximity or transit inconvenience.

Returning to the original principles of decentralization, proximity, and convenience will reduce transportation problems for WAGES clients at the job training stage. Also, it will reduce the unnecessary cost that many providers have had to incur by creating satellite offices outside their catchment areas to accommodate clusters of clients who live in areas far away (in some cases, across the county) from the main provider location.

The job placement and initial employment stage addresses transportation needs that go far beyond the present abilities of the existing WAGES transportation support system. Though most of the clients have expressed an indication to commute up to an hour each way, many have not been able to accept employment because of transportation considerations. One job provider estimated that 70 percent of his placement failure rate was due to unavailable transportation. This problem has also prevented many clients from attending job interviews. As a result, job providers are often felt compelled to drive the clients to interviews.

Over 50 percent of the jobs available to WAGES involve late afternoon (2 to 11 p.m.) and overnight shifts. Because of the reduction in the mass transit system during those hours, many of these jobs cannot be obtained. The airport is a major job-generating center. However, the last bus from this location leaves at 11:30 p.m. The port of Miami provides another example. No transit runs over the bridge from the downtown to the seaport during either the day or evening. Walking across the bridge at night becomes so perilous that few clients would wish to undertake such an endeavor. Because of these limitations, job developers make a conscious effort to first find employment for clients in their respective neighborhoods. Unfortunately some of these neighborhoods are the ones with the fewest available jobs.

Table 1.5 is a sample of 232 WAGES cases classified as "Profile A" (i.e. those deemed to be the most job-ready). This sample represented approximately 10 percent of all the WAGES clients placed in a job by all providers from January 1<sup>st</sup> to September 11<sup>th</sup> of this year and closely represented the geographical breakdown of the entire county WAGES population.

Table 1.6 presents an aggregate picture of their travel distance to work, broadly classified into five categories:

- Immediate Neighborhood (roughly within 2.5 miles),
- Surrounding Neighborhoods (between 2.6 and 4.9 miles),
- Moderate Commute (between 5 and 7.9 miles),
- Longer Commute (between 8 and 10 miles), and
- Long-Distance Commute (beyond 10 miles).

Table 1.5 Percent Distribution Travel Distance to Work of WAGES Clients

Study Areas	Immediate Neighborhood	Surrounding Neighborhoods	Moderate Commute	Longer Commute	Long-Distance Commute	Total Percent	Number of Jobs
Carol City/Opa-locka	0.0	50.0	0.0	22.2	27.8	100	(18)
Hialeah	14.3	38.1	28.6	4.8	14.3	100	(21)
Liberty City/Overtown	6.4	31.9	34.0	12.8	14.9	100	(47)
Little Havana	5.9	70.6	17.6	0.0	5.9	100	(17)
South Dade	28.6	33.3	4.8	4.8	28.6	100	(21)
All Study Areas	10.5	41.1	21.0	9.7	17.7	100	(124)
Other Areas	15.7	27.8	19.4	8.3	28.7	100	(108)
Total	12.9	34.9	20.3	9.1	22.8	100	(232)

Notes: Except the "jobs" column on the far right, all figures are by percentage. The distance is one-way commute.  
 Source: Metropolitan Center, Florida International University, analysis of Employment placement analysis of WAGES clients based on Lockheed Martin IMS records, 1998.

Table 1.6 Employment Locations of Newly-Hired WAGES Clients

Employment Centers	Placed Jobs	Percent
Miami North/I-95 Corridor	37	15.9%
Hialeah/Medley/Miami Lakes	28	12.1%
Airport West	26	11.2%
NorthMiami/Golden Glades/Aventura	24	10.3%
Kendall/Westchester	23	9.9%
Downtown/Brickell Area/Coconut Grove	23	9.9%
Opa-locka/Carol City	23	9.9%
Little Havana/Allapattah	11	4.7%
Florida City/Homestead	9	3.9%
Coral Gables/West Miami	7	3.0%
Perrine/Cutler Ridge/Goulds	4	1.7%
Miami Beach/Bal Harbor	2	0.9%
Subtotal of Major Employment Centers	217	93.5%
Other Areas in Miami-Dade	10	4.3%
Outside Miami-Dade	5	2.2%
Total	232	100.0%

Source: Metropolitan Center, Florida International University, analysis of Employment placement analysis of WAGES clients based on Lockheed Martin IMS records, 1998.

The analysis of the placement data also helps us to identify transportation barriers. Table 1.7 presents a matrix that relates employment centers to the residential locations of WAGES clients. When interpreting this table, emphasis should be on the shaded "zero" cells which indicate that no placement has been worked out in matching the residential location with the employment location. For example, none of the WAGES clients living in South Dade has been placed in job locations north of Kendall. Conversely, none of the WAGES clients living in Carol City/Opa-Locka work in South Dade. These shaded cells represent the current transportation gaps among residential area and workplace. Alternative transportation solutions should be developed to address these gaps.

The data clearly indicate that the existing transportation system is incapable of moving all the WAGES clients to where jobs are available. The solutions to this problem are beyond the capacity of the existing transit system and, therefore, must be met by alternative solutions.

Table 1.7 Transportation Gaps Among Employment Centers and Residential Locations

Employment Centers	WAGES Client Residence Location						Total
	Carol City	Hialeah	Liberty City	Little Havana	South Dade	Other	
Broward	1	0	0	0	0	2	3
Opa-locka/Carol City	6	0	9	0	0	8	23
North Miami/Golden Glades/Aventura	3	0	6	0	0	15	24
Airport West	0	8	1	1	0	16	26
Hialeah/Medley/Miami Lakes	3	9	2	2	0	12	28
Miami North/I-95 Corridor	1	2	15	5	0	14	37
Little Havana/Allapattah	1	0	2	3	0	5	11
Miami Beach/Bal Harbor	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Downtown/Brickell/Coconut Grove	0	0	9	5	0	9	23
Gables/West Miami	0	1	0	0	0	6	7
Kendall/Westchester	2	1	3	0	4	13	23
Perrine/Cutler Ridge/Goulds	0	0	0	0	1	3	4
Florida City/Homestead	0	0	0	0	7	2	9
Other Miami Dade	1	0	0	0	7	2	10
The Keys	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>232</b>

Source: Metropolitan Center, Florida International University, analysis of Employment placement analysis of WAGES clients based on Lockheed Martin IMS records, 1998.

## Appendix to the Executive Summary

*This Appendix contains information regarding the activities currently being undertaken by the MDTA in an effort to improve access to jobs. A number of these activities are related to recommendations we have made in this report.*

### WELFARE TO WORK

#### MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES FOR ACCESS TO JOBS

The following are transportation programs and products that have been designed and implemented to improve and/or provide "Access to Jobs" in Miami-Dade County.

- o Maximizing the use of the existing transit system through the sale of Metropasses at a reduced rate of \$30 per month (normally \$60). During the month of October, 1998, 4,843 Welfare to Work clients were transported on the conventional transit system with Metropasses purchased by the WAGES Coalition.
- o Implementation of the first demonstration project. It is a Miami-Dade County/Monroe County Metrobus express route. A major employer of Welfare to Work clients was identified in the Upper Keys. This employer was anxious to hire staff from the large population of WAGES clients in South Dade County. However, the lack of reliable transportation created a major barrier to employment. MDTA staff worked closely with both the employer and the staff from the Department of Labor and Employment Security (DOLES), to design and implement this service. The first trip in this demonstration project is scheduled for December 1, 1998.

To off-set part of the cost of this project, the employer has agreed to purchase a minimum of 100 Metropasses a month, at a cost of \$52.00 a pass. The balance of the cost is being funded by MDTA for the first 3 months of the demonstration project. The transit agency is seeking Reverse Commute, and Access to Jobs grant funds to continue operation of this route.

To encourage employees to use the new service, the employer is subsidizing the cost of each Metropass, so that employees pay \$32 a month, for a \$60 All Transit Metropass. The additional benefit of the Metropass is that it can be used by the employee or his/her family, on all modes of transit in Miami-Dade County, when the employee is not at work.

- o Implementation of two "Reverse Commute" peak hour demonstration routes are scheduled for implementation Monday, December 14, 1998. MDTA staff is working closely with the Human Resource Director of these agencies to provide a Transit Awareness and Training segment on the day the agency conducts their employee orientation program. Transit information kiosks will be set up in the lobby of each job site.

- o Provide travel training and trip planning are services offered by MDTA to both the WAGES caseworkers, and their clients.
- o Created A WAGES Transit Guide that clearly illustrates all the bus routes that intersect or cross the Miami-Dade/Broward County line. The Transit Guide also includes the location of all the "Career Service Centers"; the fare structure, and information numbers for Miami Dade County, in Creole, Spanish, and English; the address of the Career Service Center for jobs at Miami International Airport; the phone numbers for Tri-Rail, and Broward County transit information; and an insert of the map of Monroe County.
- o Designed a Miami International Airport (MIA) Transit Map for display and distribution at the Airport Career Service Center. It clearly illustrates all the service, both Tri-Rail, and Metrobus routes that serve MIA.
- o Installed a Transit Information Kiosk, and information "Hot Line" telephone that connects directly with the MDTA Transit Information section, has been installed at the MIA Career Service Center.
- o Provide technical assistance to the staff of the WAGES Coalition in the design and implementation of a "Demand Response" pilot project with the private transportation sector.
- o Provide technical assistance to the transit research staff from Florida International University, who are currently conducting a study on WAGES transportation in Miami-Dade County.