



White Paper: Key Steps in Developing Transportation Solutions for Washington State Family Treatment Courts

By Mark Smutny, Owner and Facilitator, Civic Reinventions, Inc.

Executive Summary

Title: Key Steps in Developing Transportation Solutions for Washington State Family Treatment Courts
Author: Mark Smutny, Civic Reinventions, Inc.

Purpose of the White Paper: This white paper addresses significant transportation barriers impacting parents involved in Washington State's Family Treatment Courts (FTC), particularly in rural regions like Yakima County. For these families, attending court-mandated appointments and services is essential for family reunification but is frequently hindered by limited transportation options. The paper documents a collaborative initiative, led by the Family & Youth Justice Programs (FYJP) and involving various stakeholders, to design and implement a sustainable, community-centered transportation model that may serve as a blueprint for similar counties across Washington as well as in other states in the United States.

Background and Key Challenges: Parents involved in FTCs often face obstacles such as long travel distances, limited public transit, financial constraints, and language barriers. In response, the FYJP's Transportation Work Group, including state agencies, transportation providers, and individuals with lived experience, developed a pilot program in Yakima County to address these needs through innovative transportation solutions.

Pilot Program in Yakima County: Yakima County was chosen for its geographical and demographic characteristics which present unique transportation challenges. The Transportation Work Group, facilitated by Mark Smutny, organized planning retreats, conducted primary research through focus groups, and implemented human-centered design principles to ensure transportation solutions were accessible, reliable, and culturally sensitive.

Key Steps and Proposed Solutions: The Transportation Work Group identified several key steps and potential solutions for overcoming transportation barriers, including:

1. **Mobile Urinalysis:** Providing remote drug and alcohol testing services to reduce travel requirements.
2. **On-Demand Services with a Mobility Manager:** Implementing a ride-scheduling program specifically designed for FTC families, managed by a dedicated mobility manager.
3. **Driver's License and Car Rehabilitation Programs:** Helping parents restore driving privileges and access affordable vehicle repairs.

Operational Strategy and Funding: The program's success depends on identifying a lead transportation provider, securing sustainable funding, and establishing a detailed operations plan. People for People has committed to leading this effort. People For People, established in 1965, is a nonprofit organization based in Yakima, Washington, dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for individuals and families across eastern Washington. Their mission is to strengthen communities by providing resources and opportunities that empower people to lead self-sufficient and enriched lives. They offer a variety of services including employment and training programs, non-emergency medical transportation services, Meals on Wheels, and services for older adults.

Multiple funding sources, including state, federal, and private grants, have been identified to support the program's continuity.

Learnings and Recommendations for Other Counties The white paper underscores the value of a human-centered approach, local collaboration, flexible transportation models, and culturally appropriate services. The Yakima pilot aims to launch in 2025, with the goal of expanding to additional counties after demonstrating success.

Conclusion This white paper serves as a guide for rural counties across Washington State, detailing how tailored transportation solutions can improve outcomes for families involved in Family Treatment Courts, fostering pathways to reunification and family stability.

White Paper: Key Steps in Developing Transportation Solutions for Washington State Family Treatment Courts

Introduction

Transportation barriers are a significant and persistent challenge for parents involved in Family Treatment Courts (FTC) in Washington State, especially in rural areas. These parents must attend court-ordered appointments, treatment sessions, counseling, family time, support groups and more to meet the conditions for family reunification. Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) helps with bus passes, gas money, and on occasion, ride shares or assistance with minor car repairs. However, these are not sufficient due to long distances, limited public transportation, and inconsistent uses of these resources across DCYF case workers and offices. Thus, the lack of transportation hinders a parent's ability to participate in the services considered necessary to retain or regain custody of their children.

In 2023, the Family & Youth Justice Programs (FYJP), part of the Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), initiated a Transportation Work Group to identify and seek funding for community-based, sustainable transportation solutions. This effort began with a pilot program in Yakima County, designed to serve as a model for other rural Washington counties interested in creating better options for parents and families involved in dependency court. This white paper summarizes the steps taken to develop these transportation solutions and highlights key learnings that can be applied to similar communities across Washington.

Key Challenges Facing Parents in Rural Counties

Washington State's rural counties, like Yakima, face unique transportation challenges that make it difficult for FTC-involved parents to meet their court obligations:

- **Long travel distances** due to vast geographic areas.
- **Lack of public transportation** in rural areas, forcing parents to rely on personal vehicles or rides from others.
- **Financial barriers** such as car maintenance costs, fines, and the inability to pay for fuel.
- **Language barriers** for non-English-speaking parents, complicating the use of available services.

Yakima County: A Case Study

Yakima County was selected for the pilot transportation program due to its large geographic area, diverse population, and rural setting. Key facts about Yakima County include:

- Population of 256,728 (2020 Census).
- 4,311 square miles, the second-largest county in Washington.
- 19% of households live below the poverty line.
- 36% of the population is Hispanic or Latino.
- The county is home to the Yakama Indian Tribe, with a population of 31,799.

This diversity, combined with significant rural areas and the distance between services, made Yakima an ideal location to pilot transportation solutions aimed at FTC-involved families.

Key Steps in Developing Transportation Solutions

1. Formation of the Transportation Work Group

In the spring of 2023, FYJP formed a Transportation Work Group comprising representatives from:

- Judges, parent attorneys, Office of Public Defense social workers and court personnel involved in Family Treatment Courts.

- The Director of Yakama Nation’s transportation provider, Pahto Public Passage, and Yakama Tribe child welfare staff.
- People with lived experience who were compensated at \$35/hour for their participation if they were not a fulltime employee of an agency, such as Amara and the Office of Public Defense. Amara is a nonprofit organization based in Seattle and Tacoma dedicated to supporting children and families impacted by foster care and adoption. They have clients in the Yakima Valley.
- The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). In Yakima, this included the Deputy Regional Administrator, Region Administrator, FTC Unit Supervisor, and Region 2 Transportation Lead.
- Public and nonprofit transportation providers and non-emergency medical transportation agencies. In the Yakima Valley, this included City of Selah (Public Works Director), MedStar Transportation, People for People (Executive Director and Transportation Director), and Yakima Valley County of Governments (Regional Transportation Manager and Senior Planner).

See Appendix A for a roster of Transportation Work Group participants.

In other counties and regions, these planning partners may include:

- Public transit authorities, including local and regional bus services, light rail, and subway systems.
- Specialized paratransit services, designed for individuals who have disabilities or face transportation challenges.
- Ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft although affordability is often an impediment.
- Non-profit transportation providers that offer transportation specifically for vulnerable populations, including those involved in child welfare, substance use recovery, and other court-related programs.
- Medical and Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) – For individuals with healthcare-related needs or disabilities, NEMT providers transport clients to and from medical appointments, which can also be coordinated with dependency court requirements.
- Volunteer driver programs – These are often run by community organizations and can provide transportation for low-income individuals and families involved in dependency courts, particularly in rural or underserved areas.
- Taxi Services – Traditional taxi services may still play a role in areas where other forms of transportation are limited.
- Faith-Based and Community-Based Organizations – Some congregations and community centers offer or subsidize transportation for individuals navigating dependency courts and related appointments.

The Work Group's goal was to identify barriers to transportation and craft solutions that could be implemented in Yakima County, with potential for expansion statewide. Mark Smutny prepared the agendas and facilitated workgroup meetings. AOC staff scheduled meetings, took and distributed notes, and reached out to members to encourage attendance and participation.

2. Planning Retreat and Collaborative Engagement

The Transportation Work Group held a planning retreat in February 2024 at the Yakama Cultural Center. Facilitated by Mark Smutny, a professional facilitator and transportation planner, the retreat brought together key stakeholders, including representatives from the Yakama Nation, Yakima County nonprofits, transportation planners, transportation providers, representatives from DCYF and other agencies.

The retreat's goals were to:

- **Build relationships** among stakeholders.
- **Listen to parents** with firsthand experience of transportation barriers.
- **Identify key service gaps** and possible solutions.
- **Establish a research framework** based on human-centered design principles to guide the development of transportation solutions.

This collaborative approach ensured that the solutions would be responsive to the unique needs of the Yakima County community, particularly its Hispanic and Yakama Nation populations.

See Appendix B for the Planning Retreat agenda.

3. Human-Centered Design and Primary Research

Central to developing workable transportation solutions for families involved in the dependency court system is a commitment to human-centered design (HCD) principles and practices. HCD is an approach that focuses on creating transportation options that directly address the unique challenges faced by parents. It begins with understanding their specific needs, such as navigating court appointments, treatment programs, and family reunification services, while considering barriers such as lack of access to reliable transportation, financial constraints, loss of driving privileges (e.g., due to DUI convictions), and living in areas with limited public transit options. This approach involves engaging parents, social workers, court officials, and service providers in the design process to co-create solutions that are accessible, reliable, and sensitive to their circumstances.

Driven by a commitment to HCD, the Work Group conducted extensive **primary research** which included:

- **Focus groups** with parents involved in FTC and DCYF staff working directly with them.
- **Individual interviews** with parents, facilitated by local organizations such as People for People, OPD attorneys and social workers, Yakama Nation Behavioral Health, and Nuestra Casa.
- **See Appendix C** for a list of focus group and interview questions.

The focus groups highlighted the most pressing transportation challenges, including:

- **Long Travel Distances** Courts in rural areas are often located far from where people live, requiring extensive travel time, which can be challenging without personal transportation.
- **Limited Public Transportation Options:** Public transportation is often sparse or non-existent in rural areas, leaving few affordable or reliable options to get to court.
- **Limited Access for Immigrant Populations:** Immigrants may face unique challenges in accessing transportation, such as a lack of familiarity with local systems, fewer personal connections to arrange rides, and potential licensing or documentation restrictions.
- **Language Barriers:** Non-English speakers may struggle to navigate transportation options due to limited signage, schedules, and assistance in languages other than English.
- **Adverse Winter Weather:** Heavy snow, ice, and extreme cold can complicate travel for those without sturdy, winter-ready vehicles.
- **Unplowed and Muddy Roads:** Many rural roads, especially those on tribal lands, may not be maintained consistently. Mud, flooding, and unplowed snow can make roads impassable, particularly in harsh weather conditions.
- **Poor Condition of Rural Infrastructure:** Many rural roads may be narrow, poorly lit, or unmarked, making travel difficult, especially for those unfamiliar with the area.

4. Secondary Research and Site Visits

The Work Group also compiled **secondary research** on transportation needs and available services.

A site visit to the Yakama Nation offered Julie Summers and Mark Smutny a deeper understanding of the transportation challenges faced by families in remote areas, where access to essential services is significantly restricted. Led by Janna Lewis-Clark, Manager of Pahto Public Passage, a Yakama Nation transportation provider, the visit extended across the expansive Yakama Tribal lands. Key insights included the pivotal role that general stores and gas stations play as community gathering points, the isolation experienced by residents in distant villages and farmhouses outside public and nonprofit transportation routes, the vast size of the Yakama lands, and the limited or absent road maintenance, including plowing, during winter months.

Other Yakama Nation departments and their staff, particularly from Yakama Nation Behavioral Health Services, Yakama Nation Tribal Health Services, and Yakama Nation Family Services, provided valuable insights into the transportation challenges faced by people living in remote areas.

6. Developing Transportation Solutions at a Second Transportation Retreat

Following the research and site visits, the Work Group held a second on-site retreat on May 3, 2024, with the primary purpose of brainstorming potential transportation solutions and selecting those most likely to meet the needs of families involved in Family Treatment Courts (FTCs). The agenda was designed to help participants focus on identifying transportation solutions that the primary and secondary research suggested would be the most suitable and effective. **See Appendix D for the retreat agenda.**

During the retreat, the Transportation Work Group identified three key transportation solutions tailored to Yakima County's needs:

1. **Mobile UA Van:** A van equipped to provide drug and alcohol testing services in remote areas, reducing the need for parents to travel long distances for mandatory tests.
2. **On-Demand Transportation Services and Transportation Mobility Manager:** A flexible, ride-scheduling program designed to meet the specific needs of parents who must attend court-ordered appointments, treatment sessions, and other services. A key element of this solution is to employ a transportation mobility manager whose sole focus is serving parents and families involved in the dependency court system.
3. **Driver's License Relicensing and Car Rehabilitation Program:** A program to help parents restore their driver's licenses and access affordable vehicle repairs, allowing them to travel independently.

7. Identifying a Lead Transportation Provider

To successfully launch transportation solutions for parents involved in the dependency court system, identifying a lead nonprofit agency with expertise in both specialized transportation and human services is essential. Such an agency can effectively address the unique challenges faced by parents in the child welfare system, offering accessible and sensitive transportation options that align with case management and court requirements. Their expertise ensures that services are well-coordinated, helping to remove barriers—such as loss of driving privileges—and improving parents' engagement in court-mandated programs.

The following is a list of key responsibilities for a lead transportation provider developing transportation solutions for households involved in Family Treatment Courts in Yakima County, Washington, and on Yakama Nation tribal lands:

- **Community Needs Assessment**
 - Conduct regular assessments to identify the specific transportation needs of families involved in Family Treatment Courts with a focus on rural accessibility, tribal jurisdiction considerations, and barriers to consistent attendance.
 - Engage families, court officials, and local stakeholders to gather input on scheduling, route efficiency, and safety requirements.
- **Coordination with Family Treatment Courts and Tribal Authorities**

- Collaborate closely with Family Treatment Court administrators and Yakama Nation authorities to align transportation solutions with court schedules, treatment timelines, and jurisdictional requirements.
- Facilitate ongoing communication with case managers and treatment providers to adapt to changes in family needs and court mandates.
- **Service Design and Route Planning**
 - Develop and optimize routes to reach remote locations within Yakima County and Yakama Nation tribal lands, considering the rural layout and limited road access in some areas.
 - Design flexible schedules that accommodate court appearances, treatment sessions, counseling, and other essential appointments.
- **Culturally Sensitive and Trauma-Informed Service Provision**
 - Train transportation staff in cultural sensitivity and trauma-informed practices, especially when working with Indigenous families and individuals impacted by substance use disorder.
 - Ensure that transportation services respect cultural norms and values, including considerations for family dynamics and any tribal-specific protocols.
- **Driver Training and Safety Protocols**
 - Provide specialized training for drivers on working with vulnerable populations, including trauma awareness, de-escalation techniques, and emergency response specific to rural and tribal areas.
 - Establish safety protocols to protect passengers and drivers, especially in instances of adverse weather conditions common in rural Washington.
- **Partnerships with Local Agencies and Tribal Entities**
 - Partner with local social services, tribal health departments, and substance use treatment providers to facilitate access to comprehensive support services.
 - Collaborate with tribal transportation departments to ensure that routes comply with tribal regulations and take advantage of existing infrastructure and resources.
- **Data Collection and Outcome Tracking**
 - Collect data on usage, punctuality, and family engagement in court-mandated activities to track service efficacy and identify areas for improvement.
 - Share relevant data with court officials and stakeholders, maintaining compliance with privacy and data protection standards.
- **Sustainable Funding and Resource Allocation**

Seek funding through state, federal, and tribal grants to sustain the transportation program, covering operational costs and potential vehicle maintenance. Grant sources include the following:

- **Tribal Transit Mobility Grant Program:** Administered by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), this program addresses the transportation needs of tribal communities. It funds operating assistance, mobility management, and small construction projects. Notably, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation received funding in the 2023-2025 biennium for extended weekend fare-free service and the purchase of ADA-equipped vehicles for rural services.
 - **WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program:** Also managed by WSDOT, this program supports public transportation within and between rural communities, including services for the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and low-income populations. Eligible applicants include public transit agencies, non-profit organizations, tribal governments, and local governments.
 - **Tribal Transportation Program (TTP):** Overseen by the Federal Highway Administration's Office of Tribal Transportation, TTP provides funding to address the transportation needs of tribal governments. It supports the construction and maintenance of roads and transit facilities on tribal lands, aiming to enhance economic development and self-determination.
 - **Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program:** This U.S. Department of Transportation initiative offers financial, technical, and legal assistance to rural and tribal communities. The program helps increase organizational capacity to develop projects eligible for federal funding and financing programs.
 - **Public Transportation on Indian Reservations Program (Tribal Transit Program):** Administered by the Federal Transit Administration, this program provides direct funding to federally recognized tribes to support public transportation services on tribal lands. It includes both formula and competitive grant components.
 - **Tribal Grant Opportunities:** The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services offers various grant opportunities for tribal communities, which may include funding for transportation services. Tribes are encouraged to review current notices of funding availability and eligibility criteria.
- **Ongoing Evaluation and Adaptation**
 - Conduct regular evaluations of the transportation service's impact on court attendance and family engagement in treatment programs.
 - Adjust routes, schedules, and protocols as needed based on feedback from families, Family Treatment Court staff, and Yakama Nation representatives.

The Transportation Work Group has designated People for People, a prominent human services nonprofit serving the Yakima Valley, as the lead agency. Madelyn Carlson, CEO of People for People, has committed her grant-writing and transportation teams to lead the development of detailed operational plans and to seek grant opportunities, collaborating closely with Janna Lewis-Clark, Transportation Manager of Pahto Public Passage and other transportation providers serving the Yakima Valley.

9. Operations Planning

People for People, with the assistance of The Transportation Work Group, has begun developing a **detailed operations plan** that includes:

- **Budgets** for each transportation solution, including vehicle acquisition, maintenance, and staffing costs.
- **Staffing requirements**, including drivers and support personnel.
- **Call center operations** for scheduling rides and providing support to parents.
- **Insurance and licensing** requirements for vehicles and drivers.

A detailed operations plan for providing transportation solutions for households involved in Family Treatment Courts (FTCs) is critical for several key goals:

1. Enhanced Grant Application Success

- **Clear Objectives and Scope:** Lenders and grant funders look for a comprehensive plan that outlines specific goals, metrics, and how transportation solutions will support FTCs' overall mission of helping families overcome challenges like substance use and mental health issues.
- **Defined Budget and Resources:** A detailed operations plan clarifies the necessary budget, staffing, and other resources required, which increases credibility and helps funders assess feasibility and impact.
- **Measurable Outcomes:** Grantors value measurable, data-backed outcomes. A well-outlined operations plan enables establishment of benchmarks (e.g., reduced missed court appointments, improved treatment compliance) that align with funders' evaluation criteria.

2. Strategic Collaboration with Other Transportation Providers

- **Defined Roles and Responsibilities:** When working with other transportation providers, a clear operations plan defines each organization's role, avoiding duplication and ensuring resources are used effectively.
- **Optimized Routing and Coverage:** By collaborating strategically, your operations plan can help optimize routes and ensure that households in rural or underserved areas have access to transportation, helping address the "last-mile" challenge often faced in rural areas with limited public transit. A "last-mile" challenge in transportation services refers to the difficulty of efficiently and effectively connecting individuals from a transportation hub, such as a bus stop, train station,

or parking lot, to their final destination. The term "last mile" highlights the gap between where larger-scale transportation systems end and where people need to go, which could include homes, workplaces, or other specific locations.

- **Efficiency in Service Delivery:** Coordinating with transportation providers such as local transit agencies, ride-sharing companies, or social service providers can increase efficiency, lower costs, and expand service capacity by pooling resources.

3. Support from Community Stakeholders

- **Building Buy-in:** A detailed operations plan demonstrates a structured approach, reassuring community stakeholders—such as social service agencies, child welfare organizations, and local governments—that your team is equipped to manage the transportation needs effectively.
- **Clear Communication:** A plan provides a concrete document to communicate goals, logistics, and expected outcomes, making it easier to solicit feedback, foster trust, and build partnerships.

4. Continuous Improvement and Accountability

- **Operational Tracking:** A detailed plan allows for tracking performance and identifying bottlenecks, enabling adjustments as the program develops. For example, if specific regions are underserved, the plan helps reallocate resources or adjust routes accordingly.
- **Documenting Impact for Future Funding:** A plan becomes a resource for compiling metrics and reporting successes and challenges when seeking renewed funding, further grants, or additional public support.

Additional Uses

- **Resource and Staff Training:** An operations plan is a useful tool for training drivers, support staff, and volunteers, ensuring all team members understand policies, emergency procedures, and service expectations.
- **Crisis Management Preparedness:** In cases of unforeseen issues (like vehicle breakdowns or winter storms), a detailed plan allows for quick decision-making through established contingencies.
- **Program Scaling and Replication:** Should your organization wish to expand or replicate the program in new regions, a documented operations plan serves as a foundational blueprint, easing the onboarding and implementation process for new teams.

10. Securing Funding

Mark Smutny, the transportation planner and facilitator for the Transportation Work Group, along with Madelyn Carlson, CEO of People for People, identified multiple funding sources to support the pilot program, including:

- **Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) [Consolidated Grant Program](#).**

- **National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM)** [Ready-to-Launch Pilot Program](#).
- [Tribal Transit Funds](#).
- [Yakima Valley Community Foundation](#).

These diverse funding sources not only ensure that the transportation solutions will be sustainable over the long term but also make each grant source more likely to approve funding. When multiple layers of funding are in place, grant providers are reassured of the project's stability and viability, knowing that it is not solely dependent on a single source. This approach reduces risk for funders and signals broad support and credibility, increasing the likelihood of approval from each grant source.

Learnings for Other Rural Counties

The Yakima County pilot offers several important learnings that can be applied to other rural counties in Washington:

1. **Human-Centered Design:** Solutions must be tailored to the specific needs of the local population. Engaging parents, community members, and local organizations in the planning process ensures that transportation services are relevant and effective.
2. **Collaboration with Local Agencies:** Partnering with local transportation providers and nonprofits, as was done with People for People and Pahto Public Passage, is essential for leveraging existing resources and expertise.

For a court to find out what local transportation agencies exist, one or more of the following sources will prove helpful: Family Treatment Courts (FTCs) can connect with local transportation agencies in several ways to better understand and access transportation resources. Here are some practical steps they can take:

- **Reach Out to Local Government Departments:** FTCs can contact city or county transportation departments which often oversee transit planning and have lists of public transit providers, schedules, and service areas. Some counties even have designated contacts for human services or court-related transportation needs.
- **Leverage State and County Transportation Resources:** Many state and county websites offer directories of transportation services. FTCs can find lists of public transportation agencies, demand-response transit (e.g., dial-a-ride services), and specialized transportation options for people facing economic hardship.
- **Contact Metropolitan and Regional Planning Organizations (MPOs):** MPOs are regional bodies that coordinate transportation planning across multiple jurisdictions. They often work closely with transit agencies and may provide insights into local options, including any initiatives aimed at assisting families involved in the court system. In Washington State there are eighteen regional transportation planning agencies. **See Appendix E.**

- **Collaborate with Social Service Agencies:** Many social service agencies maintain partnerships with local transit authorities or have insights into non-profits and private companies providing transportation assistance. These agencies may include child welfare departments, housing support organizations, or mental health service providers.
 - **Explore Partnerships with Non-Profit Transportation Programs:** Organizations such as the United Way and local non-profits often provide or know about volunteer driver programs and low-cost transportation options. These programs are especially relevant in rural areas with limited transit options.
 - **Tap Into Transportation Voucher Programs:** Some transit authorities or social service agencies have voucher or fare assistance programs for clients who need help covering transit costs. By connecting with these agencies, FTCs can provide families with subsidized or free rides.
 - **Network with Legal Aid and Court-Related Transportation Resources:** Legal aid organizations, often familiar with transportation barriers, may know of low-cost or pro bono transportation services. Court systems in larger areas may even have transportation services for clients facing economic challenges.
 - **Utilize Public Resource Directories:** Many cities and counties have online directories or "2-1-1" hotlines where FTC staff can search for transportation resources by service type, region, and eligibility criteria.
3. **Flexible Transportation Options:** On-demand transportation services offer the flexibility needed in rural areas where fixed-route public transportation is often unavailable or impractical.
 4. **Addressing Language and Cultural Barriers:** Language support and culturally sensitive services are critical in counties with diverse populations, such as Yakima. Providing translated materials and hiring bilingual staff can make transportation services more accessible to immigrant communities.
 5. **Sustainable Funding:** A "lasagna" of funding sources, including state, federal, and private grants, ensures that transportation solutions can be sustained over time. For information about transportation grants, the following agencies provide useful information:
 - **State and Local Departments of Transportation (DOT)**
 Most states have funding programs that support specialized transportation services, especially for populations such as low-income families or those with court-mandated obligations. These may include grant programs under the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities).
 - **Local Transportation Agencies:** City or county transportation departments may offer grants or partnerships to help serve specialized transportation needs. Some programs are

explicitly designed to support transit-dependent individuals, low-income residents, or those with court-related obligations.

- **Regional and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)**

MPOs play a critical role in regional transportation planning and often administer funding for public and specialized transit projects through FTA and other federal sources. Many MPOs also allocate Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds, which can support innovative mobility solutions.

Examples include the **Puget Sound Regional Council**, the **Yakima Valley Council of Governments**, the **Spokane Regional Transportation Council**, and the **Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization**. MPOs can offer insights on accessing funds through regional or federal grants and partnerships. Washington State has eighteen regional transportation planning agencies. **See Appendix E for a complete list.**

- **Local and Regional Mobility Managers**

Mobility managers work within transit agencies, councils of governments, or nonprofit transportation coalitions and often have a comprehensive knowledge of available public, nonprofit, and private funding sources. They can assist in identifying potential funders and structuring programs that meet the FTC's needs.

- **The National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM)** maintains a database of mobility managers and may offer training on how to leverage multiple funding streams.

- **Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Programs**

FTA offers numerous grant programs that support specialized transportation for underserved populations, such as **Section 5310** and **Section 5311** (Formula Grants for Rural Areas). Additionally, the **Access and Mobility Partnership Grants** support innovative approaches to coordinated transportation.

- **National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP)**: This program offers a directory of grants for rural areas which can be valuable for rural FTCs seeking transportation solutions.

- [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and the [FTA's Grant Finder Tool](#) offer searchable databases where FTCs can locate relevant transportation-related grants at the federal and local levels.

6. Next Steps

The Yakima County pilot is anticipated to launch in 2025, with ongoing evaluation to ensure its effectiveness. Key benchmarks for success include:

- Securing sustainable and consistent funding for a full-time mobility manager with expertise in both the child welfare system and specialized transportation management.

- Hiring the mobility manager through People for People, followed by the commencement of their work.
- Ensuring that the Yakima Transportation Work Group continues to provide guidance and support to the mobility manager, receiving regular updates and monthly progress reports. Through the insights gained in 2025, the mobility manager, in concert with the Yakima Transportation Work Group, will plan, seek funding for, and implement additional transportation solutions in the Yakima Valley identified during the one-year pilot phase.

7. Evaluation and Guidance

To effectively support and evaluate a full-time mobility manager for Family Treatment Court transportation solutions, the Yakima Transportation Work Group in collaboration with the CEO of People of People should consider these steps:

- 1) **Set Clear Objectives and Metrics:**
Define measurable goals for the mobility manager, focusing on improved access, successful referrals, and barrier reduction. Develop key performance indicators (KPIs) like service utilization and client satisfaction.
- 2) **Regular Performance Reviews:**
Conduct monthly or quarterly reviews to assess key performance indicator (KPI) progress, provide feedback, and address challenges. Focus on client engagement and effective coordination with transportation providers.
- 3) **Mentorship and Support:**
Assign a mentor or small team for ongoing guidance, best practices, and support. Regular check-ins will facilitate idea-sharing and problem-solving.
- 4) **Access to Resources and Training:**
Provide training on transportation, trauma-informed care, and cultural competency. Ensure access to local resources, funding insights, and relevant tools.
- 5) **Feedback Loop with Family Treatment Courts:**
Establish a communication channel for real-time feedback on transportation impact. Use insights to refine strategies and ensure alignment with court and family needs.
- 6) **Stakeholder Meetings:**
Hold periodic meetings with Family Treatment Court representatives, transportation providers, and community groups to discuss progress, challenges, and improvements.
- 7) **Documentation and Sharing:**
Keep records of efforts, successes, and improvements, and share learnings to raise awareness and inspire similar initiatives.

8) **Continuous Improvement:**

Encourage goal-setting based on feedback, updating objectives to align with evolving participant needs and resource changes.

These steps will help the Yakima Valley Transportation Work Group support the mobility manager's success, align their efforts with community goals, and sustain impactful transportation solutions for families.

8. Lessons for Additional Washington Counties and Regions

Once these benchmarks are achieved and the pilot is fully operational, lessons learned in the Yakima Valley can be applied to other rural counties across Washington, adapting the model as needed to address each county's unique transportation challenges.

Conclusion

By developing flexible, culturally appropriate, and sustainable solutions, the Family & Youth Justice Programs' Transportation Work Group aims to improve outcomes for families involved in Family Treatment Courts, helping parents reunite with their children and rebuild their lives.

The Yakima County transportation pilot, grounded in human-centered design and collaboration with local stakeholders, provides a scalable model for addressing transportation barriers in rural counties across Washington State.

Appendix A – Transportation Work Group Members

Mark Smutny	Facilitator and Transportation Consultant, Civic Reinventions, Inc.
Julie Summers	Co-Facilitator, Administrative Office of the Courts (retired)
Alan Adolf	Yakima Valley Council of Governments (YVCOG)
Cassey Aranda	Yakama Nation Nak Nu We Sha, Program Director
Ashley Arriaga	People for People, Transportation Director
Justin Bergener	MedStar Transportation

Crystal Bumpas	People for People, Career Development Counselor
Claudia Campos	Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF)
Madelyn Carlson	People for People, CEO
Sonia Cole	DCYF, Transportation Lead, Region 2
Lisa Davisson	Yakama Nation Behavioral Health Services (YNBHS)
Nachya George	YNBHS
Francesca Guzman	DCYF, Director of Tribal Relations
Ahlisha Johnson	MedStar Transportation
Jenna Kiser	DCYF, Regional Administrator, Region 2
April Kraft-Duley	Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)
Janna Lewis-Clark	Pahto Public Passage, Yakama Nation Transportation
Rachel Munoz-McCormick	AOC
Berta Norton	Yakima DCYF
Robert Porter	Commissioner Yakima County Superior Court
Katherine Saluskin	YNBHS
Tamara Saluskin	Yakama Nation Justice Services
Geoff Wagner	YVCOG
Rocky Wallace	City of Selah

Appendix B – Primary Research Questions for Individual Interviews and Focus Groups

1. Where do you regularly need to go, and how do you get there? (such as court, outpatient treatment, counseling, UAs, family time, store, support groups)

2. Which specific places are the hardest to get to?
3. What part of traveling do you find most difficult?
4. Is there somewhere you want to go, but can't? Why are you unable to?
5. What challenges do you face with transportation, or getting where you need to go? For instance, too far from bus stop, bus doesn't run early/late enough, etc.
6. What do you need help with to use transportation? (Like help booking a ride, mobility devices, language, someone to help carry things, etc.)
7. What's the best timeframe for you from the time you book a ride to when the trip actually happens? (For example, booking a ride that takes place within an hour, day, week, month?)
8. How do you prefer to book transportation? For example, over the phone, online, email, phone app, or with someone's help?
9. What days and times do you usually need transportation?
10. Now, you've identified several areas where transportation can be difficult. If you were going to design the ideal solution to overcome those difficulties, what would it look like?

Appendix C – Agenda of February 2, 2024 Retreat

Yakima County Transportation Work Group

Yakama Nation Cultural Center

February 2, 2024

11:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

AGENDA

10:50 Complete Charts as You Arrive

On 2' x 3" flip chart paper, write your answers to the following:

Name:

Meaning of Name:

Organization and Role:

Where you were born:

One value from previous generations you would like to pass on:

One value you would not like to pass on:

What big challenge do you bring to this group?

What hope do you bring to this group?

11:00 Welcome by Yakama Nation Cultural Center

11:05 Welcome and Purpose of Retreat – Kelly Warner-King, Manager, Family & Youth Justice Programs

11:10 Welcome by Mark Smutny, Retreat Facilitator, Civic Reinventions, Inc.

11:15 Introductions using Gracious Invitation and Sharing Individual Flip Charts

Share using Gracious Invitation:

➤ **Share, pass, or pass for now, then invite.**

➤ **Repeat until all have been invited.**

11:55 Retreat Design and Outcomes – Mark Smutny

- A. The goal for our retreat, and in the months that follow, is to prepare a successful proposal for a Ready-to-Launch Pilot grant administered by the National Center for Mobility Management. (See RFP in Packet).
- B. The plans and research that emerge for the Ready-to-Launch Pilot Grant will position us to apply for other sustainable funding streams.
- C. Essential to our planning is a commitment to human-centered design, an approach to problem-solving and service development that prioritizes the needs, preferences, and behaviors of the end-users.

D. Learnings from a successful pilot will inform other counties and regions of Washington State to find transportation solutions for people adjudicated in the Dependency Court system.

Review Yakima County Map

Celebrity Interviews – End Users, Transportation Providers, and FYJP Staff

Finalize Focus Statement

Outline Primary Research

Focus Groups

Individuals

Outline Secondary Research

Outline Next Steps

12:05 Review Map

12:15 Envisioning Exercise – Mark Smutny and Group

12:20 NCMM Ready to Launch Grants, Key Elements – Amy Conrick

See RFP – 2024 Ready-to-Launch Grants

12:30 Lunch Break and NCMM Video [Webinars - National Center for Mobility Management](#)

1:20 Celebrity Interviews – Mark Smutny, Facilitator, and Questions from Whole Group

Madelyn Carlson, People for People

Janna Lewis-Clark, Program Manager, Pahto Public Passage Tribal Transportation

1:50 Focus Question – Whole Group

Draft: Our team will address community members who face transportation barriers to accessing Dependency Court obligations in order to restore families to health and wholeness.

See [Social Determinants of Health - Healthy People 2030 | health.gov](#)

1:55 Brainstorm Primary Research – Whole Group Using 1-2-4-All. – 15 min total

Purpose: Engage everyone simultaneously in generating questions, ideas, and suggestions.

What focus groups and individuals should be interviewed for our primary research?

Silent self-reflection, write down ideas – 1 min.

Generate ideas in pairs, building on ideas from self-reflection- 2 min.

Share and develop ideas from your pair in foursomes – 4 min.

Each group shares one important idea with all – 5 min.

2:10 Recruitment of Research Facilitators, Translators, and Interviewers

2:15 Outline of Next Steps for NCMM Ready-to-Launch Grant Application

Advisory Council Formed – Meets Monthly

Conduct primary research.

Compile secondary research.

Identify a Lead Transportation Agency (public or nonprofit)

Develop a detailed operations plan.

Contract with Administrative Office of the Court

Assemble and apply for a sustainable set of funding streams.

Submit an NCMM Ready to Launch application.

Launch pilot.

2:25 Questions?

2:30 Final Remarks and Commitment to Serve on Advisory Council

2:35 Wrap-up and Evaluation

Appendix D – Agenda for the May 3, 2024 Transportation Work Group Retreat

Yakima County Transportation Work Group

Yakama Nation Cultural Center

May 3, 2024

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1:00 Welcome and Outline of Meeting

1:05 Review of NCMM Ready-to-Launch Pilot RFP

RFP Review

Focus Question:

Our team will address community members who face transportation barriers to accessing Dependency Court obligations in order to restore families to health and wholeness.

Transportation Co-Leads: People for People and Pahto Public Passage

People to People to serve as fiscal agent and grant applicant

Partners

1:15 Impromptu Networking – 20 min

Tell a story about a time when you worked on a challenge with others and you are proud of what you accomplished. What is the story and what made success possible?

As individuals: write story and list success factors – 5 min

In pairs, share stories – 5 min

Change partners, same again – 5 min

Again – 5 min

Whole group: What factors make success possible?

1:35 Review of Primary Research Report

Review written report. Hear from interviewers – 10 min.

1-2-4-All – 20 min

Based on the primary research, what key factors do we need to consider as we invent transportation solutions?

As individuals, write list of key factors – 5 min

Share in pairs – 5 min

Share in foursomes, Notice common themes – 5 min

Whole Group – 5 min

2:05 Generating Transportation Solutions

As individuals: on large sticky notes, generate as many transportation solutions as possible. One idea per sticky note. Do not censor your ideas. All ideas are good! 5 min

In foursomes: share ideas, notice similarities and differences. 10 min

Continue in foursomes: distill from ideas, four key transportation solutions to propose to the whole group; write each solution on a large sticky note – 5 min

Whole Group Report-out and Discussion – 10 min

2:35 Next Steps for Ready-to-Launch Pilot Grant Application

2:45 Additional Funding Opportunities and Timeline

2:55 Next Meeting

3:00 Adjournment

Appendix E – Regional Transportation Planning Agencies in Washington State

Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCOG)

587 Stevens Drive, Richland, WA 99352

509-943-9185

www.bfcog.us

Chelan-Douglas Transportation Council (CDTC)

37 S. Wenatchee Avenue, Suite C, Wenatchee, WA 98801

509-663-9059

www.chelan-douglas.org

Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (IRTPO)

P.O. Box 5000, Coupeville, WA 98239

360-678-7959

www.islandcountywa.gov/488/Island-Regional-Transportation-Planning/

Northeast Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization (NEW RTPO)

986 S. Main Street, Suite A, Colville, WA 99114

509-684-4571

<https://tricityeddd.com/new-rtpo/>

Okanogan Council of Governments (OCOG)

1234A 2nd Avenue South, Okanogan, WA 98840

www.ocog.org

Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization (PRTPO)

845 Port Way, Clarkston, WA 99403

509-339-7100

www.palousertpo.org

Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization (PRTPO)

60 Washington Avenue, Suite 200, Bremerton, WA 98337

360-479-6962

www.prtpo.org

Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)

1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500, Seattle, WA 98104-1035

206-464-7090

www.psrc.org

Quad-County Regional Transportation Planning Organization (QUADCO)

411 N Ruby Street, Suite 1, Ellensburg, WA 98926

509-962-7523

San Juan County

350 Court Street No. 1, Friday Harbor, WA 98250

www.sanjuanco.com

Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG)

315 S 3rd Street, Suite 100, Mount Vernon, WA 98273-3843

360-416-6678

www.scog.net

Southwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SWRTPO)

207 4th Avenue N, Administration Annex, Kelso, WA 98626-4195

360-577-3041

<https://www.rtc.wa.gov/agency/>

Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (SW RTC)

1300 Franklin Street, Floor 1, Vancouver, WA 98660

564-397-6067

www.rtc.wa.gov

Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC)

421 W. Riverside Avenue, Suite 500, Spokane, WA 99201-3645

509-343-6370

www.srtc.org

Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC)

2411 Chandler Court SW, Olympia, WA 98502

360-956-7575

www.trpc.org

Walla Walla Sub-Regional Transportation Planning Organization (WWSRTPO)

107 South Third Avenue, Walla Walla, WA 99362

509-876-8001

www.wvmpo.org

Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG)

314 East Champion Street, Bellingham, WA 98225-4502

360-676-6974

www.wcog.org

Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG)

311 North 4th Street, Suite 204, Yakima, WA 98901

509-574-1550

www.yvcog.org



Dr. Mark Smutny, Owner and Consultant, Civic Reinventions, Inc.

626-676-0287 – mark.smutny@civicreinventions.com

<https://civicreinventions.com>