

Waupaca County's Workforce Transportation Solution

Lead Agency: Waupaca County Economic Development Corporation

Partners: Lutheran Social Services - Make the Ride Happen & Feonix - Mobility Rising

Overview

In Waupaca County, local community leadership has developed a forward-thinking and collaborative solution to address rural transportation barriers through a proven model of **Mobility as a Service (MaaS)** and **Mobility Management**—the **Transportation Assistance Hub (TAH)**. This innovative initiative streamlines the coordination of existing transportation resources while cultivating new ones to expand access, reduce inefficiencies, and lower costs. The TAH is designed to ensure that residents—particularly those experiencing economic hardship, returning to the workforce, or striving to maintain stable employment—have access to **affordable, reliable transportation** when and where they need it.

Through a partnership between **Make the Ride Happen** and **Feonix - Mobility Rising**, the TAH provides residents and employers with a **call center** and user-friendly **web/mobile apps** to schedule transportation. Services are available for employees, employers, and community members based on system capacity. A variety of transportation options are offered, including:

- **Feonix Micro-Transit** (5 vehicles, including one accessible minivan, operating 24/7)
- **Volunteer Driver Program**
- **Fox Valley Cab** services

Since the program's inception, nearly **20,000 rides** have been provided over 2.5 years, with the **average trip distance exceeding 15 miles** – underscoring the significant need and impact of the program.

Project Need

Transportation insecurity remains a substantial barrier to employment and economic mobility in Waupaca County and its surrounding rural communities. In New London and adjacent areas, **7.9% to 13.1%** of households have fewer vehicles than working adults. In the cities of Waupaca and Clintonville, the figure stands at just over **11%**. In contrast, neighboring rural counties like Winnebago and Outagamie—Waupaca's largest employment trade partners—report this issue at rates as low as **1.3%**.

The workforce implications are clear: **258 unique employers** actively recruit employees within Waupaca County, yet a lack of dependable transportation continues to limit access to jobs. Furthermore, **over 25%** of adults in the county live below **185% of the Federal Poverty Level**, making the cost of vehicle ownership and maintenance out of reach for many.

Community Partners

This initiative is powered by the collective effort of **more than 20 local organizations**, spanning public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Together, they have co-designed and guided the development and rollout of the TAH, ensuring it reflects the needs and values of the community. This broad coalition exemplifies the shared commitment to enhancing opportunity, supporting workforce stability, and improving quality of life for Waupaca County residents.

For More Information

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