

A P P E N D I X C
T A N F T R A N S P O R T A T I O N
S U R V E Y M E T H O D O L O G Y

TANF Transportation Survey Methodology

The ATR Institute developed a written survey instrument to collect detailed information on TANF recipients' travel patterns, transportation resources and needs.¹ The survey was designed to measure TANF clients' privately-owned transportation resources such as a vehicle, the value of those vehicles, the number of days it was unavailable for use. The impact of lack of transportation on finding and keeping a job, the type of transportation assistance clients most want, the need for childcare transportation, and other factors were also surveyed. The survey was voluntary, anonymous, and self-administered. A client's benefits were not affected in any way by the decision to complete or to refuse to complete the survey. The thirty-question survey was available in English and Spanish versions.

Originally, the Human Services Department's Income Support Division (ISD) agreed to have their staff handout the surveys in the 33 County ISD offices. Surveys were to be placed near the receptionist who would invite all clients signing-in to complete one. To preserve anonymity the survey was not to be given out by a caseworker or anyone who had personal information about a client. The ATRI requested that surveys be offered to anyone who was applying for or receiving any type of public assistance; hence no one would be singled out publicly as a TANF recipient. This meant many more surveys would be collected than could be used for the research project. Surveys from Other Benefit Group clients who receive other forms of public assistance are available for comparative analysis.

Surveys were to be collected for four weeks beginning in June 1999. Thus, surveys would be gathered simultaneously in all Counties, minimizing differences due to economic changes over the research period. At the end of that period, surveys were to be sent back to the ATRI for data entry. Through this method, the ATRI expected to get a systematic, though not a truly random, sample of TANF recipients responding from each County. Data was to be collected, analyzed, and reported back to ISD by County.

After a meeting with the ATRI staff in late May 1999, the ISD decided that due to their staff's heavy workload, distribution by a receptionist in the lobby was not feasible. Consequently, the ATRI employed a combination of alternate distribution and collection

¹ The survey was approved by the University of New Mexico, Internal Review Board, Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research in Spring, 1999.

methods that made the sample less systematic and the results less representative of the TANF population as a whole. The ATRI attempted to get surveys from at least every quadrant of the state. Surveys were gathered over various time periods from June through September 1999. Finally, since surveys were not gathered in each County, results could be neither reported nor compared by County.

Recognizing the importance of the TANF transportation survey information, six ISD Directors volunteered along with San Juan Community College, to distribute the surveys in their offices by the method outlined above. Most of these directors wanted the information so badly, they did not mind taking on the extra work involved. 234 TANF and 255 Other Benefit Group surveys were collected in this manner from San Juan, Quay, De Baca/Guadalupe, Colfax, Socorro, and Sierra Counties.

In addition, the ATRI used several other methods to collect surveys: The ATRI staff collected 75 TANF surveys in person at the ISD County offices in Taos, Rio Arriba, and Santa Fe Counties and the NM Works programs at Rio Arriba Works also collected surveys in its life skills classes. Twenty-six surveys in life skills or orientation classes were collected at UNM Works (Bernalillo) and Su Parte, a TANF sub-contractor at UNM-Valencia County. Finally, instructors of life skills classes and orientation at New Mexico Highlands University, Western New Mexico University, and Eastern New Mexico University collected 253 client surveys. In total, 440 TANF and 403 Other Benefit Group useable (complete) surveys were collected.

TANF surveys were screened for completeness. Data was not entered for incomplete surveys (some respondents failed to fill out the entire backside). The ATRI's goal was to collect transportation surveys from 400 TANF clients in various regions of the State. While not a statistically random or stratified sample, the sample used provides valuable information to describe quantitatively the transportation needs and resources of a portion of the TANF adult population and the Other Benefit Group.

Statistical analysis of the surveys was conducted with oversight from a University of New Mexico Senior Statistician. Range, median, mode, mean, distributions, and cross tabulations were used. Final charts were prepared by transferring data from statistical software to Microsoft Excel.