

ARKANSAS

STATEWIDE TRANSIT
COORDINATION PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The goal of the Arkansas Statewide Transit Coordination Plan is to improve the availability, quality, and efficiency of transportation services for seniors, persons with disabilities, those with low income, and others with limited mobility options. The plan achieves this goal by recommending transportation service coordination strategies and providing analysis findings that support more effective matching of limited transportation resources to transportation needs. ARDOT's updated plan is intended to satisfy the federal requirement, under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, that recipients of Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities - Section 5310 program funding develop a coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.

WHAT IS COORDINATION?

Transportation service coordination is the ongoing process of transportation providers and human services agencies communicating and working together to more efficiently manage limited transportation resources. Coordination is about building trust relationships among organizations and fostering a willingness to share power, responsibility, funding, and benefits in order to eliminate service duplication, deliver more cost-effective service, address service gaps, and improve the communication of information. Coordination happens at the federal, state, and local level, though most day-to-day coordination happens at the local level and can include activities such as:

- Cross training of staff;
- Workforce and equipment sharing;
- Centralized maintenance;
- Standard data collection and reporting;
- Joint marketing campaigns;
- Regional transit fare structures;
- One-call/one-click transportation service centers; and
- Group emergency planning.



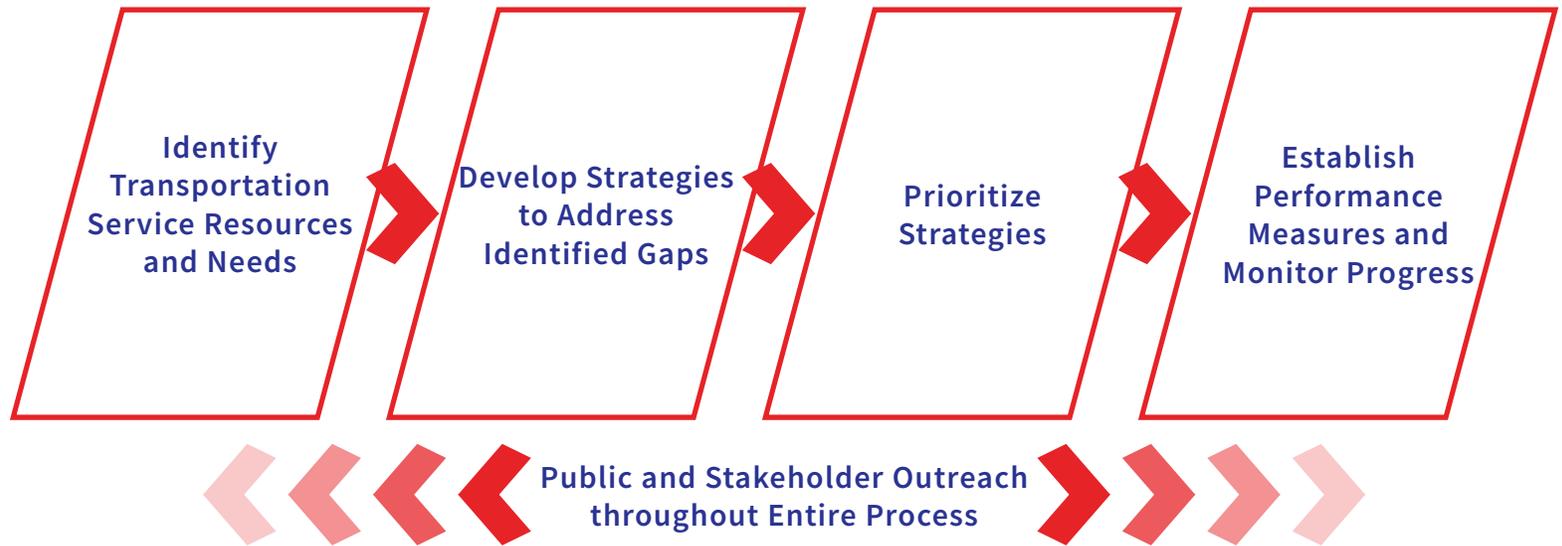
Federal Transit Administration's Required Elements for Coordinated Transportation Plans

- An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and nonprofit)
- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and seniors
- Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery
- Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies

BENEFITS OF COORDINATION

There are many coordination benefits, both for providers and users of transportation services. For providers, benefits can include access to a wider range of funding, staff, and resources; increased productivity; reduced operating costs; and more streamlined processes for reporting, funding application, and data collection. For users of the various transportation services, benefits may include expanded service areas and hours of operation; increased number of options; smoother connections; information that is easier to understand; and more affordable service. Most importantly, **transportation service coordination improves access to goods, services, and job sites for the target populations that rely on these services.**

ARKANSAS COORDINATION PLANNING PROCESS



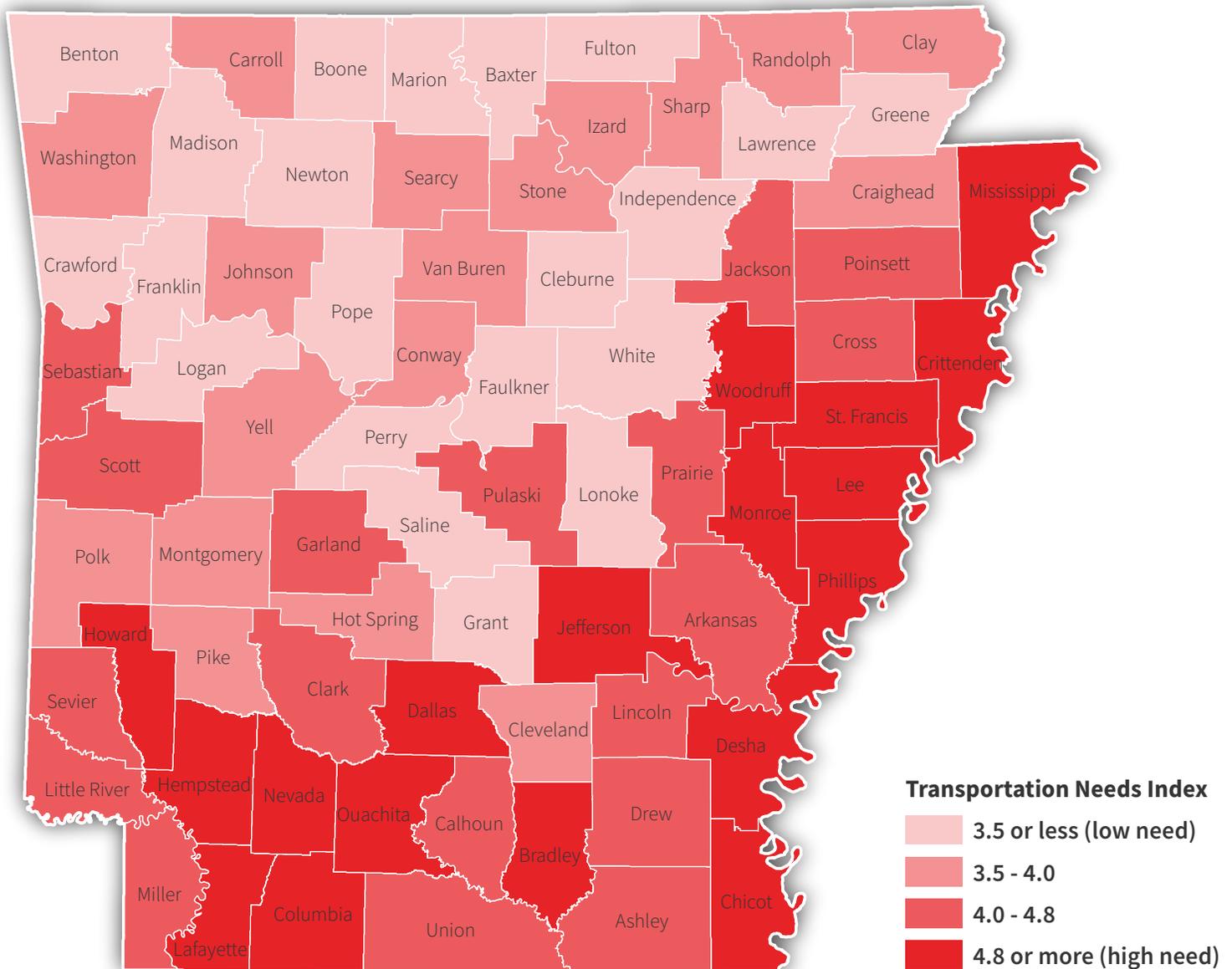
One of the most important components of the transportation service coordination planning process is engaging the public and stakeholders. Engaging these groups provides invaluable knowledge that ensures outcomes cater to the unique needs and challenges of those who are most impacted by the results of the process. The process of updating this Transit Coordination Plan consisted of two major outreach efforts: coordination workshop meetings and surveys. 115 participants attended the eight coordination meetings, including representatives of MPOs, transportation service providers, workforce development agencies, and various human services agencies. Feedback from the public was collected through a survey that was distributed online and through in-person outreach by human services agencies. The survey received 1,025 responses, with a large percentage being from targeted populations (i.e. seniors, persons with disabilities, and those with low income).





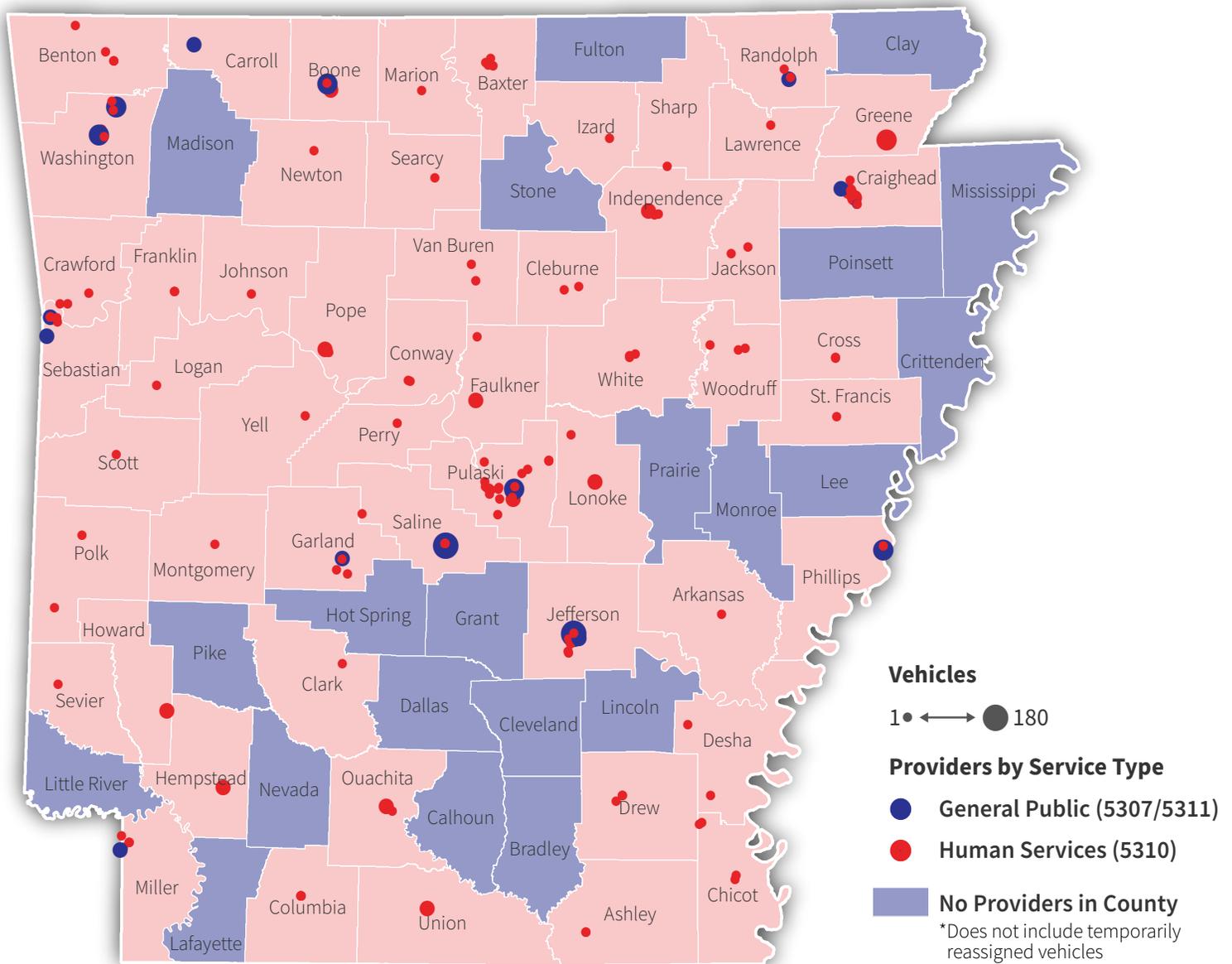
TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

In this Transit Coordination Plan, transportation need is expressed as an indicator of potential demand for public transit or human services transportation. This indication is based on the assumption that certain population groups (e.g. seniors, persons with disabilities, and those with low income) have limited mobility options, resulting in some level of unmet travel demand, and require transportation services to travel day-to-day. Transportation needs index (shown in the map below) was calculated to indicate which counties throughout Arkansas have higher concentrations of transportation-disadvantaged population groups and, as a result, potentially higher needs for public transit and human services transportation. Higher needs index values indicate more potential need for public transit and human services transportation.



TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES

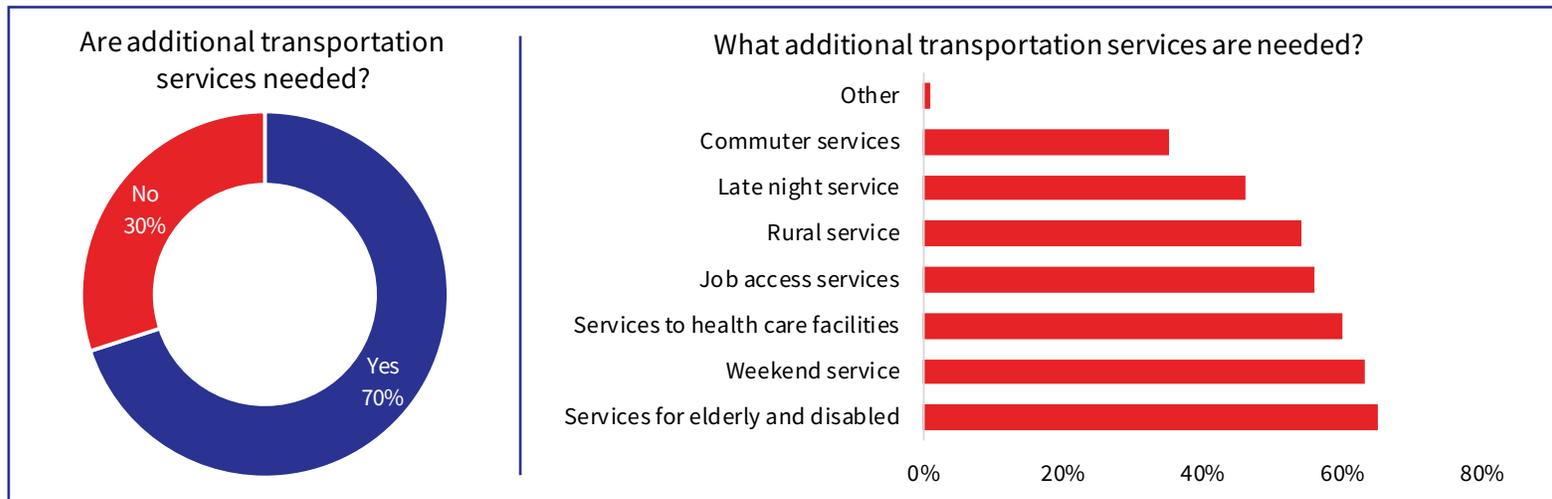
This plan identifies public transit and human services transportation resources by observing how transportation providers are distributed throughout Arkansas and assessing their vehicle assets and where they provide service. Additional information is used to determine performance or quality of service. The map below shows the location of all 171 active FTA-funded public transit and human service transportation providers in Arkansas. It is also important to consider the many other public, private, and nonprofit transportation providers and human services agencies operating in Arkansas (e.g. churches, non-emergency medical transportation providers, veterans affairs organizations, nursing homes, and workforce development boards), as they are crucial partners for transportation service coordination.



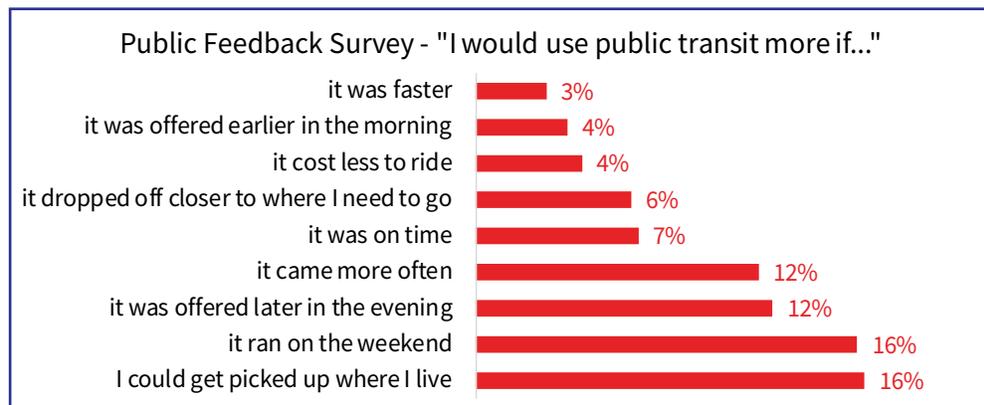
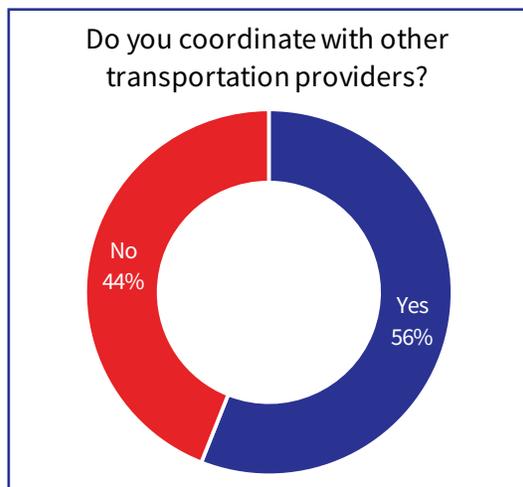


STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC FEEDBACK - SURVEY RESPONSES

Additional feedback regarding transportation needs was collected through the public feedback survey, as well as a survey distributed to transportation service providers. Both surveys provided information about the quality of transportation services being offered and ongoing coordination efforts. Regarding transportation needs, 70% of the 105 transportation providers who responded indicated that additional transportation services were needed within the counties they serve.

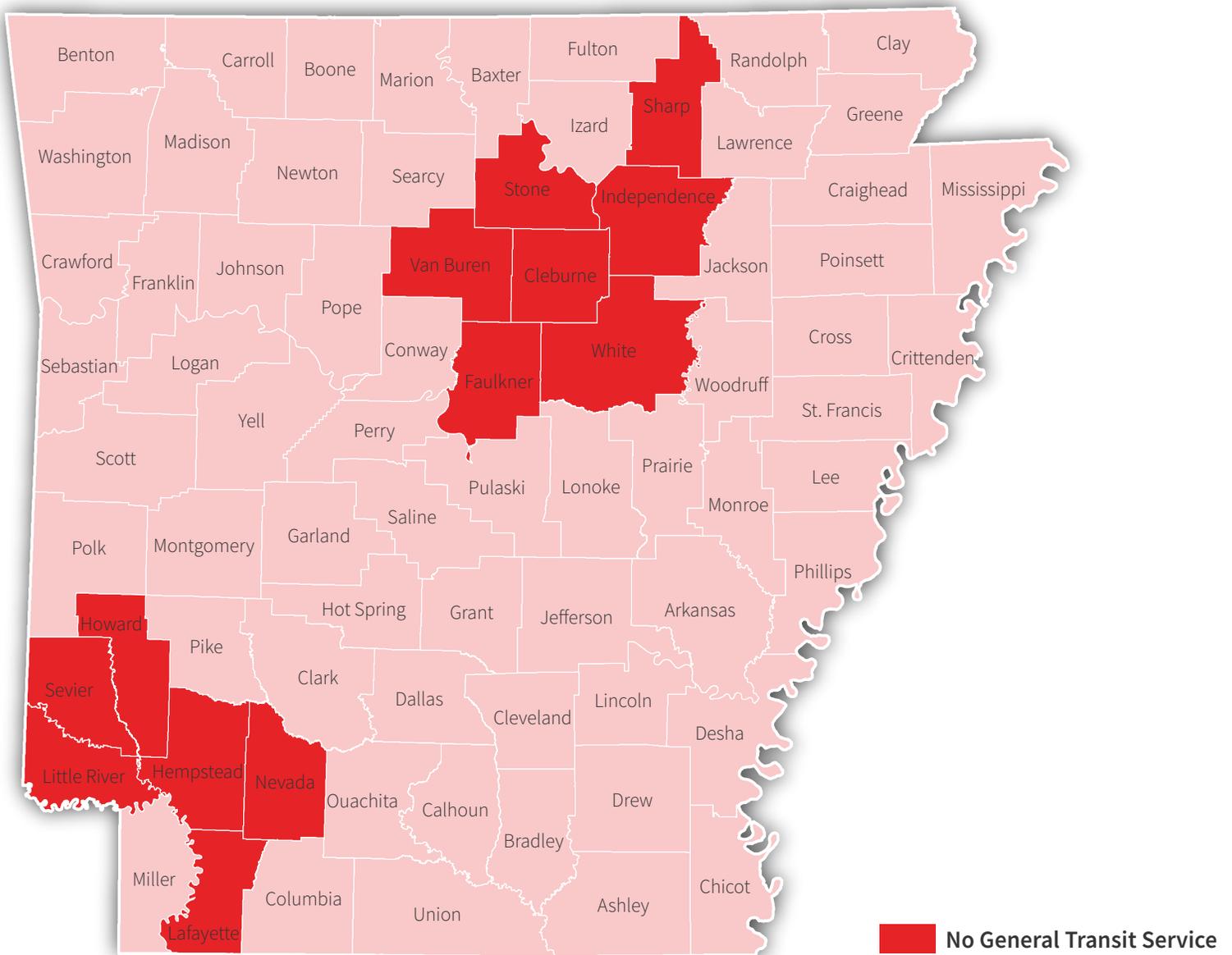


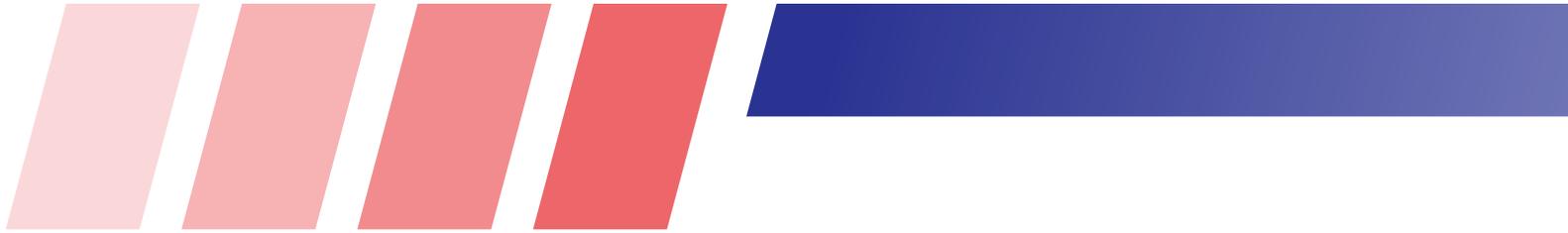
In both surveys, weekend services were identified as one of the most important transportation needs. Transportation providers also responded that additional services for the elderly or disabled were needed. When asked what would make them more likely to use transit, the top answer from the public was service that picked passengers up closer to where they live. When asked how satisfied they were with public transportation services, 63% of respondents indicated that they were at least “somewhat satisfied” with the services in their community. 32% of public feedback survey respondents noted they were unable to reach destinations at least once a week due to the lack of public transportation services. In the transportation provider survey, only 56% of transportation service providers claimed that they coordinated with other providers, revealing a lack of coordination throughout Arkansas and an opportunity to potentially improve services.



TRANSPORTATION SERVICE GAPS

Gap analysis is the process of comparing transportation needs and available resources to determine where transportation service gaps exist. This analysis reveals where there are not enough (or too many) resources to satisfy demand for transportation. The gap analysis results of this plan reveal that every county in Arkansas is served by a provider offering services to seniors or persons with disabilities (i.e. 5310 providers). However, there are 13 counties that are not served by general public transit (i.e. 5307 urban or 5311 rural providers), which is available to everyone. In general, transportation service gaps exist in counties bordering the Mississippi River in eastern Arkansas. These counties have high transportation needs index values but are often only served by small transportation providers covering large, multi-county areas.





PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures for the Arkansas Statewide Transit Coordination Plan are meant to help evaluate and monitor how well Arkansas public transit and human services transportation providers are meeting the demands of their communities and how well they are coordinating amongst one another. Performance measures established for this plan include:

- **Ridership**
- **Community Satisfaction**
- **Vehicles per 10,000 Persons**
- **Percent of Transit Demand Met**
- **Average Cost per Trip**
- **Productivity**
- **Percent of Key Destinations Served**
- **Coordination Workshop Attendees**
- **Percent of Providers Coordinating**

COORDINATION STRATEGIES

The overall objective of the Arkansas Statewide Transit Coordination Plan is to determine where there are gaps in public transit and human services transportation service in Arkansas and develop coordination strategies and identify projects to address identified gaps. The transportation service coordination strategies recommended in this plan are based on gap analysis findings, previous coordination strategies, and information garnered from public and stakeholder feedback. The coordination strategies were prioritized by ARDOT and the Arkansas Public Transportation Coordination Council through a scoring process based on how well each strategy satisfied certain criteria. Through implementation of the coordination strategies listed below (in order of priority), Arkansas will make progress toward providing more accessible, higher quality transportation services for those who are transportation-disadvantaged.

Coordination Strategy	Prioritization Score
Identify and contact agencies that could provide transportation in areas where transportation service gaps exist and provide support to secure funding and establish service.	11.0
Develop informational materials to provide coordination examples and best practices to transportation providers.	10.8
Develop an online directory of services (e.g. maintenance) and trainings offered by transportation providers to other providers.	10.4
Develop an online map version of the public transportation directory.	10.4
Coordinate development of model contracts or agreements for sharing resources.	10.0
Identify and appoint statewide and/or regional mobility managers.	9.6
Establish regional coordination districts to lead local coordination efforts.	8.6
Organize reoccurring coordination work sessions that providers are required to attend.	8.6
Coordinate partnerships between providers to offer free/reduced transfers between services.	8.4
Establish a one-call/one-click transportation service center.	8.0
Establish a centralized volunteer driver program.	7.8
Establish a qualified driver application and job opening directory.	7.6



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