

*THE CALIFORNIA STP CLEARINGHOUSE
A PROJECT REPORT*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*PREPARED BY
THE BEVERLY FOUNDATION
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA*

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DEFINITION

STP stands for Supplemental Transportation Program for seniors, and often is defined as a transportation program or service that supplements or complements traditional public transportation services. Organizations responding to the California STP Clearinghouse survey included a host of non-governmental and human service transportation programs organized by hospitals, adult day services, senior centers, volunteer organizations, interfaith groups and church sponsored organizations. At the same time, many government sponsored ADA paratransit and other transit services located within government agencies also responded to the survey. Thus, the Clearinghouse Project supports the belief that, while STPs often are thought of as small, non-profit transportation programs, in California, the definition of an STP is very much in the eye of the beholder.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Information in this report was prepared by the staff of the Beverly Foundation of Pasadena, California. Its contents include data from the Beverly Foundation's previous STAR Search efforts and from 80 respondents to the Foundation's 2006 STAR Search effort in California. The project team included Helen Kerschner as the principal author of the report, Marie-Helene Rousseau as researcher, and Baxter Churchville as the website developer. Richard Smith and Cheryl Svensson, Beverly Foundation senior advisors, provided assistance in survey distribution and in the selection of winners of STAR Awards for Excellence and Special Recognition.

Special thanks go to the California Highway Patrol for its efforts in moving this project forward. Additionally, the Older Californian Traffic Safety Task Force (OCTS) and its Senior Mobility Work Group committed themselves to undertaking the California STP Clearinghouse initiative. Both groups are involved in efforts to promote coordination of senior transportation services in California, and viewed the identification of senior transportation services as an important step in bringing human service transit to the coordination table. A list of members of these groups is included in Attachment 1.

Although the California Department of Aging was not an official co-sponsor of the survey, the involvement of its leadership and staff in distributing the survey and providing that special "nudge" that is sometimes needed to encourage a timely response was a key factor in the success of the project.

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THE PROJECT In the spring of 2006, the Beverly Foundation was invited by the Older Californian Traffic Safety Task Force (OCTS) and its Senior Mobility Work Group to create a clearinghouse of STPs in California. The Foundation responded with a willingness to focus its annual STAR Search survey and STAR Awards program on California.

The Beverly Foundation's STAR Search survey was first undertaken in 2000 and has continued annually since that time. The purpose of the Beverly Foundation's STAR Search program is to demonstrate to policy makers and service providers the importance of supplemental transportation programs for seniors. The surveys gather information about STPs that include both paid and volunteer driver programs that provide transportation services to seniors. In conjunction with the survey, STAR Awards for Excellence are given to programs that meet specific criteria. Prior to 2006, 492 STPs and 728 volunteer drivers were identified and 24 STAR Awards for Excellence were conveyed. Several California STPs had been identified in the earlier STAR Search surveys and three had received STAR Awards.

The STP Clearinghouse Project was co-sponsored by the Older Californian Traffic Safety Task Force and its Senior Mobility Work Group. The Beverly Foundation acted as the lead organization and incurred all costs related to the project survey and data analysis, STAR Awards for Excellence, Special Recognition Awards, production of this report, and preparation of a *"How To" Guide for Developing an STP Clearinghouse*.

OBJECTIVES AND TIME FRAME The Clearinghouse project included the following objectives:

- to gather information about STPs in California;
- to create a database and clearinghouse of vital information about STPs that enable seniors, their families, and their service providers to access transportation services;
- to develop a model for other states to use in gathering information about STPs and creating their own clearinghouse of STP information and ideas.

The project was undertaken in mid-2006 and completed in early 2007.

AN STP SURVEY The Beverly Foundation organized its annual STAR Search survey to gather information about STPs in California. It was expected that the results would generate information for the planned database and clearinghouse. The survey targeted services and programs that provided transportation to seniors. Distribution of the survey was organized through multiple networks in the transportation and human service sectors and organized through the networks of

the work group members. 80 California based transportation services responded to the survey. Key findings regarding the 2006 survey of STPs in California are summarized below.

1. Many transit services (ADA paratransit, paratransit, senior transit, and other human transit providers) consider themselves to be STPs.
2. Government sponsored STPs tend to provide only transportation, while the non-governmental STPs tend to offer it within a menu of services.
3. While a fairly even distribution of STPs serve urban, suburban, or rural areas, the greatest percent serve a mix of urban, suburban, and rural areas.
4. Many STPs provide transportation to seniors only, however, a substantially larger percent provide transportation to seniors and people with disabilities.
5. STPs with paid drivers and volunteer drivers differ considerably in the type of assistance they provide to their passengers.
6. A very high percentage of STPs, including programs with volunteer drivers, own at least some of their vehicles.
7. Although the top destination of STP passengers is non-emergency medical, many programs also offer a variety of quality of life rides.
8. Budgets of STPs vary widely from a low of \$500 to a high of \$31,000,000.
9. A much higher percent of government sponsored STPs charge fees and a much lower percent receive grants than do non-governmental STPs.
10. STPs appear to have qualities that make them sustainable as indicated by their average of 14 years of operation.

Part 1 includes information about the survey process, a data profile of the 80 respondents, and charts and graphs that present the results of responses to questions on key issues related to senior transportation and on what was learned about STPs in California.

STAR AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE As part of its commitment to the Clearinghouse, the Foundation allocated funds for making three STAR Awards for Excellence of \$5,000 each to the “best of the best” in California. Applicants for the awards were required to: (1) be located in California; (2) provide transportation to seniors; (3) be in existence for 1 year or more; (4) supplement or complement transportation services in the community; and (5) complete and submit a California Clearinghouse Survey. It was expected that the California STP Clearinghouse would result in the identification of a large number of STPs that provide transportation to older adults throughout the state. Each respondent had an opportunity to be selected for one of the three 2006 STAR Awards for Excellence. The three winners received a \$5,000 cash contribution. Ten additional STPs received Special Recognition Awards of \$500.

Part 2 provides information about the selection process, a descriptive profile of the three winners of STAR Awards for Excellence, and a brief sketch of the ten recipients of the Special Recognition Awards.

A WEB-BASED CLEARINGHOUSE The web-based California STP Clearinghouse was developed for policy makers, providers, and consumers. It is expected to serve as a critical step in identifying the characteristics and location of STPs, and in assisting in coordinating STPs with traditional public and paratransit services. It includes data on STPs, an interactive STP locating map; profiles of survey respondents; research reports related to STPs, and web links with transportation and aging and human services that provide transportation to older adults.

Part 3 includes a summary description of the California STP Clearinghouse.

DESCRIPTION OF A "HOW TO" GUIDE FOR DEVELOPING AN STP CLEARINGHOUSE The project is expected to serve as a model for other states interested in undertaking similar efforts. The guidelines booklet provides a step-by-step description of the activities that were undertaken for the clearinghouse project. It is organized with general information followed by "How California Did It..." The information provided includes a definition of STPs and "how to": (1) determine objectives; (2) decide on sponsors; (3) select a lead organization; (4) undertake the survey; (5) analyze and report the results; and (6) create a web-based clearinghouse.

Part 4 includes a summary description of the "How To" guide. The 10-page booklet, entitled *A "How To" Guide for Developing an STP Clearinghouse*, is available under separate cover, and will be distributed to appropriate agencies in all 50 states.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT STEPS IN CALIFORNIA The identification of 80 STPs in California is only a first step. Undoubtedly, there are and will be many more. Next steps might include actions such as:

- continuation of a modified survey process on an annual basis;
- expansion of the STP Clearinghouse to include an interactive survey, additional technical information, an awards program, a bulletin board, and research reports;
- initiation of research related to STP operations and coordination with other transportation and human service systems.

As the lead organization, the Beverly Foundation was pleased to undertake the start up efforts for developing the STP Clearinghouse. However it did not anticipate continuing the survey on an annual basis or permanently locating the Clearinghouse in its website. Thus, it is expected that the Older Californian Traffic Safety Task Force (OCTS) and its Senior Mobility Work Group will identify an appropriate organization in California to serve as the permanent home for the STP Clearinghouse project.

Part 5 includes a number of recommendations related to the survey and next steps.