Transportation Planning Meeting

Transportation Barriers of WIC Participants

1/18/17

Ithaca population is diverse in itself with many ethnicities, varied education and languages.

This is consistent also in the lives of WIC participants. We serve many graduate students and their families from out of the country where English is not their first language. In addition all of our families are of limited income and many of them are underserved by public transportation. Many families on our program rely on the TCAT bus and find it challenging for varied reasons.

Listed are some of the gaps and barriers that we experience with our participants in Tompkins County.

* Many people have multiple children. They have to push a stroller to get to a bus stop. The bus does not come close to their home requiring them to walk a great distance to reach an area where they can catch the bus.
* If families go to the store on the bus they may have to make multiple transfers and when returning home have to try to get their family plus groceries and stroller off the bus and then walk back to their house a great distance.
* Even working is prohibitive when trying to get to the store and get home sometimes after dark. Many families will have to cross busy highways when returning home with all of the things they get off the bus.
* Some families who have housing through Section 8 are often forced to live outside of Ithaca in the surrounding towns or villages. In these areas rent is less expensive but there are not grocery stores close by. This requires them to try to find a way to appointments or to use checks before they expire.
* Taking a cab is an option although the cost is prohibitive and most people cannot afford more than one cab ride a month.
* The state will no longer allow Medicaid to pay for a cab for WIC appointments.

As a result of these gaps and barriers:

* WIC appointments are missed.
* Participants are unable to cash all of their WIC checks before they expire.
* Un-cashed WIC checks results in a loss of revenue for the County.
* Most importantly families are missing out on valuable foods.