2019 Aging in Texas Conference

Deep East Texas Council of Governments' (DETCOGs') Transportation Voucher Program

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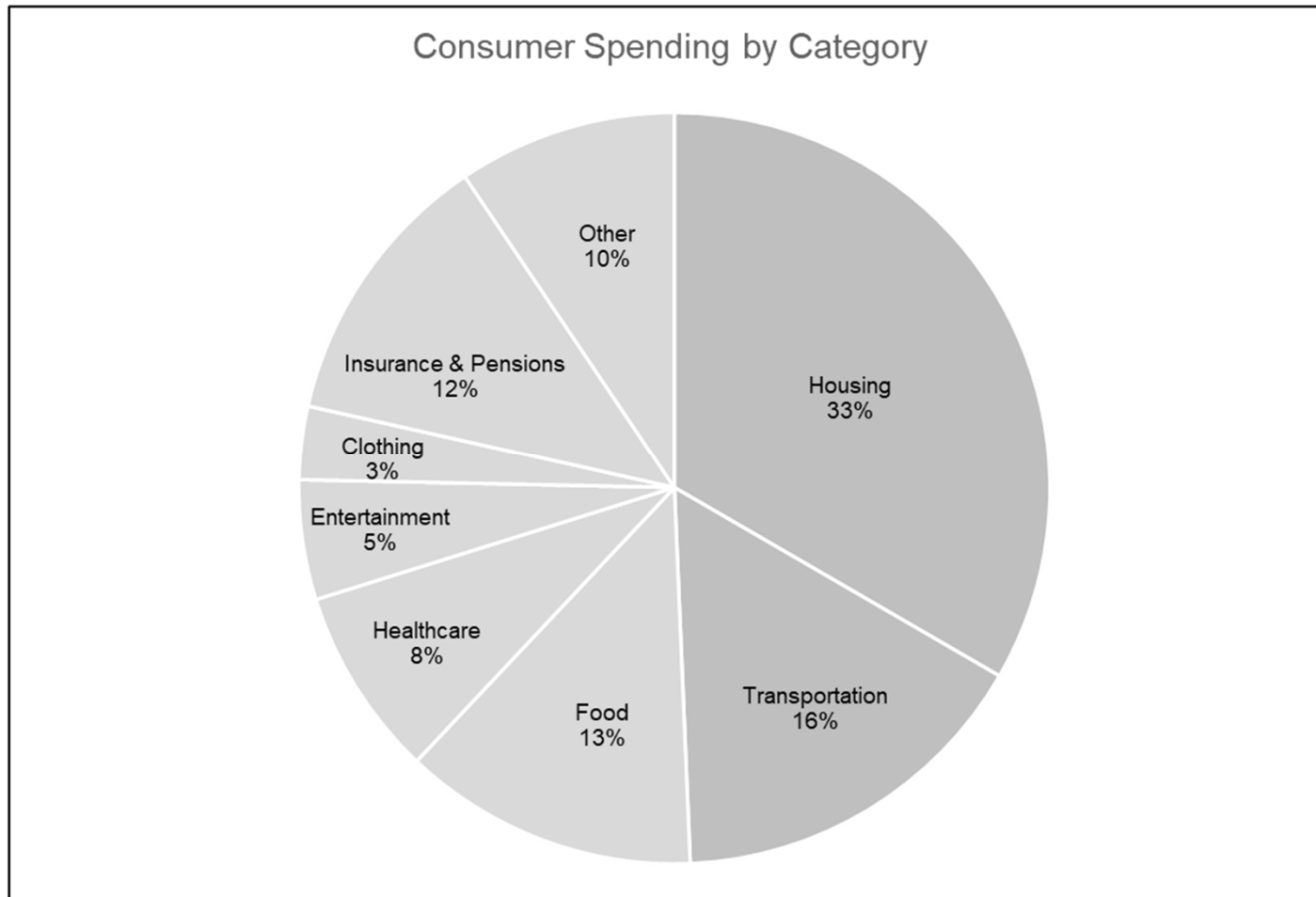
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Acknowledgements

- DETCOG Staff
- National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Research Foundation
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- University Transportation Center (UTC): Small Urban, Rural and Tribal Center on Mobility (SURTCOM), http://surtcom.org/

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Cost of Mobility

Consumer Spending by Category

- Other 10%
- Insurance & Pensions 12%
- Clothing 3%
- Entertainment 5%
- Healthcare 8%
- Food 13%
- Transportation 16%
- Housing 33%

Source: 2016 Consumer Expenditures. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

Note: In 1917 transportation was 2% of the budget, or the **6th** highest expense.

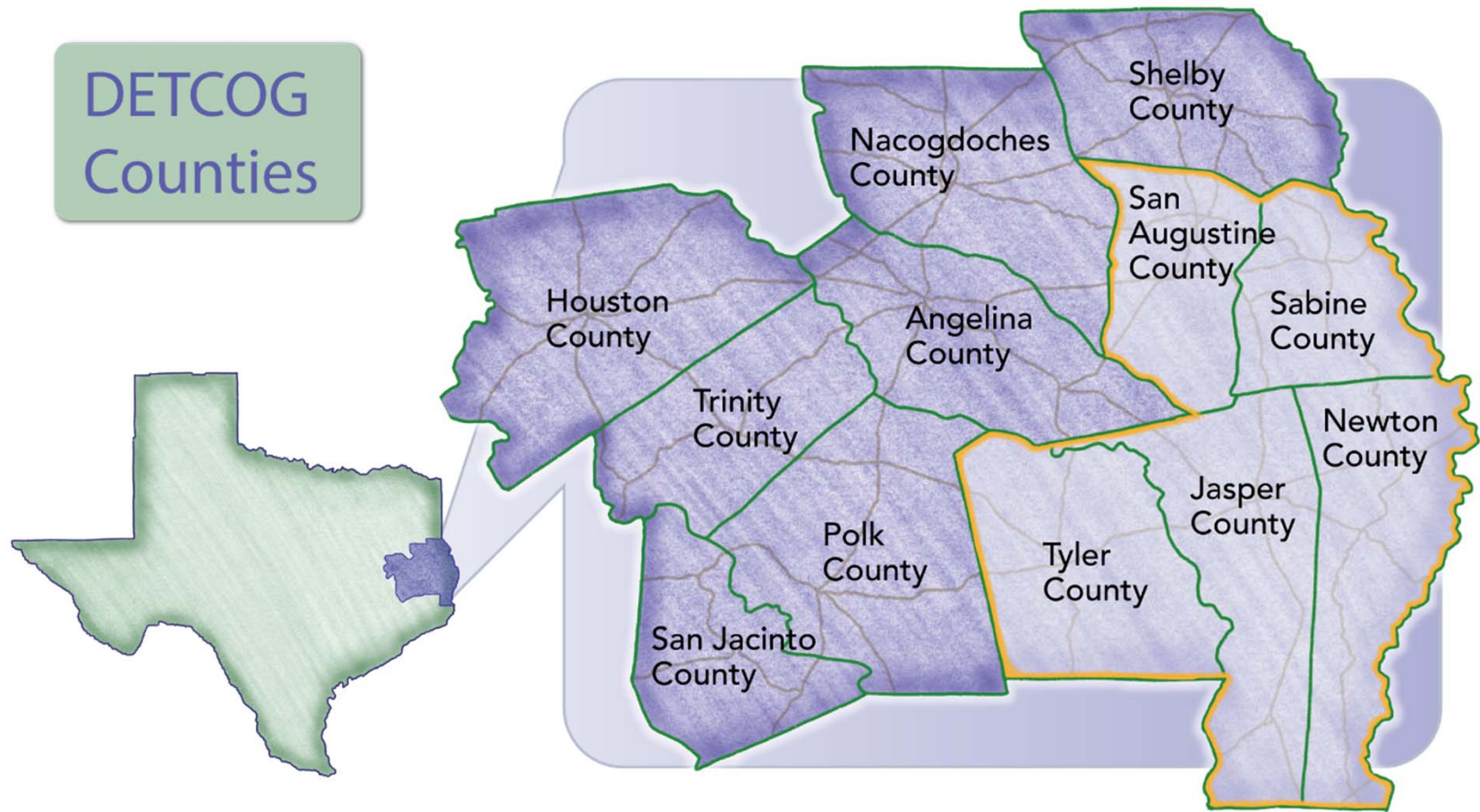MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY | College of ENGINEERING · Western Transportation Institute

Why a Transportation Voucher Program for DETCOG?

- Medicaid transportation does not provide for access to **groceries**

- Social **isolation** can lead to depression

- Lack of **healthy food** choices can contribute to obesity and other illnesses

Pilot Focus

DETCOG Counties

Shelby County
Nacogdoches County
San Augustine County
Houston County
Angelina County
Sabine County
Trinity County
Newton County
Polk County
Jasper County
Tyler County
San Jacinto County

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Why These 5 Counties?

- **Target populations** have significant representation (Veterans, older Americans, people with disabilities)

- **Smallest** county populations

- 6% of DETCOG households do **not** have access to a **vehicle** (Jasper = 7.3%)

- Largest percentages of populations of people with **disabilities** (San Augustine = 20.4%)

- Average household **income,** 25% below state average

- **No** existing **public transportation** options

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Transportation Voucher Program Details

- 60 years or older
- Maximum of $150/month ($1800/yr)
- Targeted 40 participants
- 5 county focus (Jasper, Newton, San Augustine, Sabine, Tyler)
- Trips can be used for:
  - Medical appointments, grocery stores, personal care appointments, bank, post office

DETCOG Travel Voucher Program

Check No. **1001**

Rider's Name (Print):_____   Date:_____

Pay to the
Order of_____ $ [   ]

Number of one-way rides:_____   Number of miles traveled:_____

For (circle all that apply): WORK   MEDICAL   SOCIAL/RELIGIOUS   SCHOOL   SHOPPING

Submit for payment within **15** days.   _____
                                           Rider's Signature

DETCOG Travel Voucher Program

Check No. _____

Rider's Name (*print*): _____ Date: _____

Pay to the
order of: _____ $ _____

Trip Start Time: _____ Trip End Time: _____ Total Travel Time: _____

Number of One-Way Rides: _____ Odometer Start: _____ Odometer End: _____

Reason for Trip:

_____ MEDICAL–Doctor/Pharmacy Visit _____ SCHOOL/WORK CHURCH/RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

_____ SHOPPING _____ Brookshire Bros _____ Walmart _____ Other _____

_____ OTHER (Beauty/Barber Shop. Personal Business, Post Office, etc.)

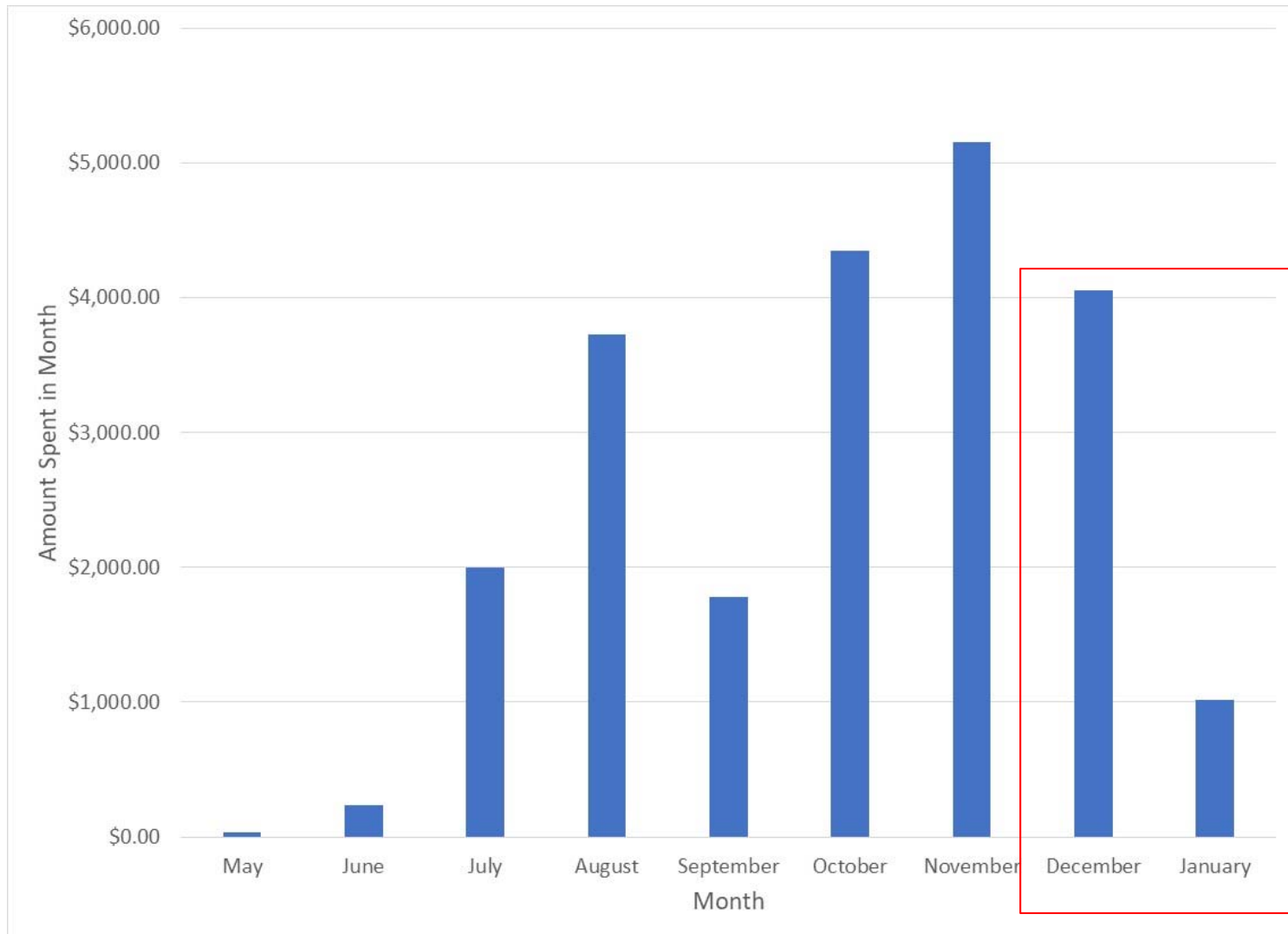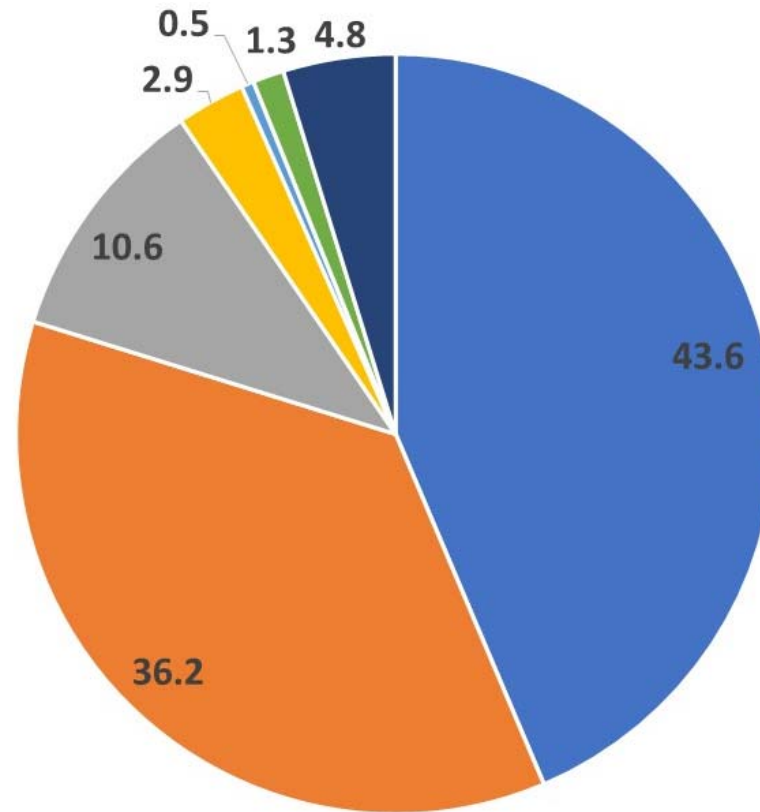PLEASE SIGN AND GIVE TO DRIVER: _____

Rider's Signature

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Participants
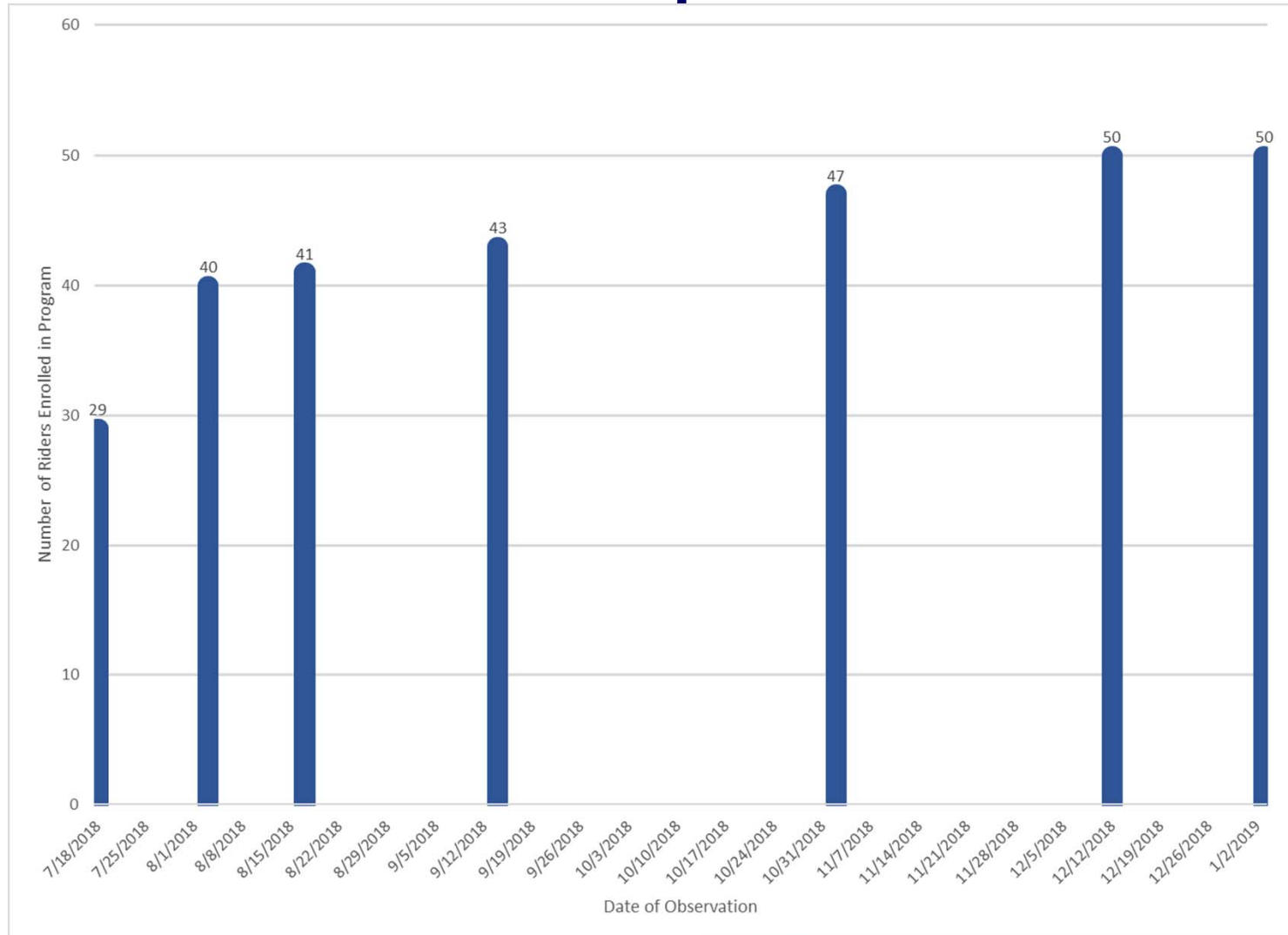
Cost by Month

Trip Purpose

- ■ Medical
- ■ Shopping
- ■ Social
- ■ Religious
- ■ School
- ■ Other (personal, bank)
- ■ No Information

Values shown: 0.5, 1.3, 4.8, 2.9, 10.6, 43.6, 36.2

Anecdotal Benefits

- Allows DETCOG to identify **other** applicable **programs** for participants (e.g. SNAP)

- Allows participants to **access** and use other programs more easily (e.g. use vouchers to go buy groceries with their new SNAP benefits)

Some Challenges

- One transportation provider may be unaware of riders using another transportation provider, thereby resulting in an over-expenditure

- Reaching potential riders by phone – concerns with **fraudulent calls**

2019
Excellence in Regional Transportation Awards

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The Future

- Other counties within DETCOG, beyond the pilot counties, are expressing interest

- Existing Program
  - Ensure sustainability
    - Diversify funding sources

- Expand to Address Needs for Younger than 60 years of Age

DETCOG Counties
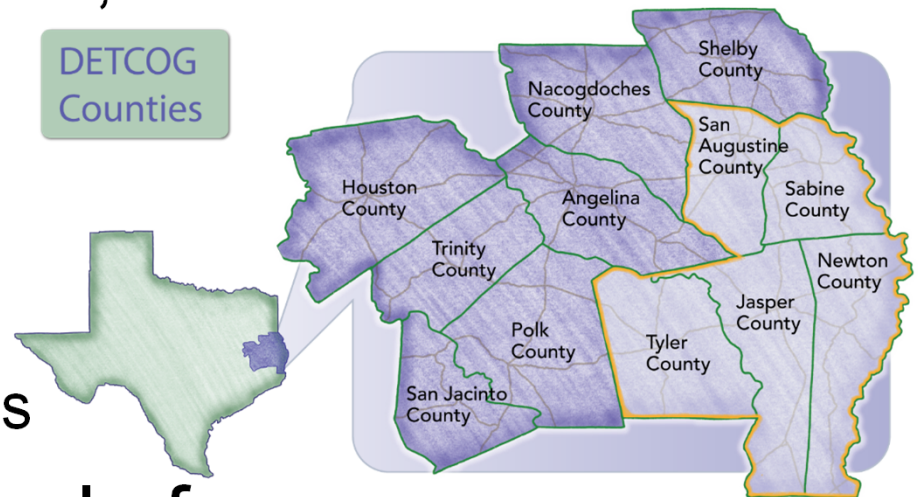
Discussion

Final Report:

https://westerntransportationinstitute.org/research_projects/nado-usda-deep-east-texas-voucher-system/