

## Why GAO Did This Study

Established in 1998, the Job Access and Reverse Commute program (JARC)—administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)—awards formula based grants to states and localities to provide transportation to help low-income individuals access jobs. In 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) reauthorized this program and made changes, such as allocating funds by formula to subrecipients in three areas—large urban, small urban, and rural—through designated recipients (usually transit agencies and states).

SAFETEA-LU required GAO to periodically review JARC. This third report under the mandate examines (1) the progress FTA and recipients have made in reducing the instances and amounts of funds they allowed to lapse without using them; (2) the challenges recipients have faced in implementing JARC; and (3) the tradeoffs, according to stakeholders, of proposals to revise JARC during the next surface reauthorization process. For this work, GAO reviewed FTA grant data; interviewed officials from FTA, 9 designated recipients, 10 subrecipients, and industry associations; and reviewed recent proposals to revise JARC.

GAO is not making recommendations in this report. DOT officials reviewed a draft of this report and provided technical corrections, which were incorporated as appropriate.

View [GAO-11-518](#) or key components. For more information, contact David J. Wise at (202) 512-2834 or [wised@gao.gov](mailto:wised@gao.gov).

# JOB ACCESS AND REVERSE COMMUTE PROGRAM

## Progress Made in Using Funds and Stakeholder Views on Proposed Program Changes

### What GAO Found

Since GAO's last report on JARC in 2009, the instances of recipients letting their funds lapse—allowing the funds to be reapportioned to all recipients—have decreased. Recipients have 3 years from the time of apportionment to use the funding before it is reapportioned. In fiscal year 2008, 29 designated recipients, or 11.2 percent, let their entire fiscal year 2006 apportioned funds lapse. In fiscal year 2010, 11 designated recipients, or 4.3 percent, let their entire fiscal year 2008 apportioned funds lapse. In addition, the amount of funds lapsing has decreased. In fiscal year 2008, \$16.7 million (12 percent) of apportioned funds lapsed, and fiscal year 2010, \$10.2 million (6.5 percent) of apportioned funds lapsed. A few recipients have allowed a large amount of funds to lapse; however, others have made progress in using JARC funds, in part due to FTA's efforts.

The designated recipients GAO interviewed reported that they have overcome many of the challenges identified in our 2009 report. This improvement was due in part to actions taken by FTA, such as issuing guidance on project eligibility and providing workshops to help officials in areas where a large portion of JARC funds had lapsed. However, three challenges remain. First, some JARC funds have been allowed to lapse because subrecipients have difficulty providing the local funding required to receive JARC funding. Second, three recipients we interviewed faced challenges coordinating with human service organizations, as required. Finally, officials from three of the five states we interviewed said that the funding classifications they receive either do not align with local demands for JARC services or create confusion among local area recipients.

Stakeholders have proposed changing JARC. Officials GAO interviewed cited various tradeoffs to these proposals. Some proposals would combine JARC with other transit programs designed to help people who are elderly and/or have disabilities. Proponents of these proposals cited potential benefits such as increased flexibility to use funding to meet specific needs, while critics of these proposals were concerned that targeted populations will no longer receive the same amount of funding unless they are protected.

Number and Amount of Lapsed JARC Apportionments, Fiscal Year 2008 to Fiscal Year 2010		
Fiscal year	Number of recipients that allowed their entire funds to lapse	Amount of funds allowed to lapse
2008	29	\$16,672,359
2009	16	\$12,708,611
2010	11	\$10,154,772

Source: GAO analysis of FTA data.