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### **A New Program for Workforce Transportation Comes to Anne Arundel County**

Transportation has long been a major employment barrier for many individuals in Anne Arundel County. Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC), through a Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) grant awarded by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), is working to reduce that barrier in northern Anne Arundel County. JARC is funding focused on addressing the unique transportation challenges faced by low-income individuals seeking to obtain and maintain employment. JARC funding will be matched through local sources.

AAWDC, in partnership with the BWI Business Partnership, Inc., plans to improve understanding of the current transportation system among transit-dependent individuals and will create a shuttle service to link job seekers to major employment centers in 2013. The targeted communities will include Glen Burnie, Pasadena, and Severn, which currently have the highest unemployment rates in the county. AAWDC will work with businesses surrounding the BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport, Fort Smallwood Road, and Arundel Mills to provide targeted transportation to these major employment centers in northern Anne Arundel County.

The project brings together the resources and expertise of fourteen employers, government agencies, and community organizations in the county. It has been endorsed by businesses in each sector, who have cited transportation as a hindrance to obtaining and retaining a quality workforce. Identified transportation gaps include early morning hours at the airport, late night hours with the incoming Maryland Live! facility, and shift hours off Fort Smallwood Road. Transportation alternatives will be coordinated with local transportation agencies and public and private transportation providers.

“It has traditionally been easier for Baltimore City residents to access employment opportunities in northern Anne Arundel County than it has been for our own county citizens,” states Kirkland J. Murray, President and CEO of AAWDC. “This grant provides the means to open previously inaccessible job opportunities to our citizens and ultimately get them back to work.”

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*AAWDC operates seven One-Stop Career Centers and specialized programs that offer services to businesses and job seekers. Services include recruitment, retention and training funds for business; and job search guidance, workshops and training assistance for job seekers.*