

# CSBG SPOTLIGHT: KI BOIS Community Action Foundation - Paving the Road to Work for Rural Oklahomans

by Jovita Tolbert

In 1999, the KI BOIS Community Action Foundation Inc. commenced *Road-to-Work Oklahoma*, a statewide program that provides low-income rural Oklahomans an avenue to access jobs. While the KI BOIS Community Action Foundation, a Community Action Agency (CAA) in Stigler, OK, is the grantee and lead agency of *Road-to-Work Oklahoma*, the program is a unique collaborative.

KI BOIS has worked with 19 public transit operators, of which 11 are CAAs, to develop over 115 job routes throughout the state. And, as a broker between the rural labor market and state-wide employers, *Road-to-Work Oklahoma* provides affordable transportation to and from work for more than 3,000 Oklahomans each day.

It also serves 700 employers in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas and Missouri. On average, *Road-to-Work Oklahoma* provides 30,265 trips for these employers each month which is an average of 204,943 miles traveled every month. Through partnerships with local and state government, the Department of Human Services, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Programs, Workforce Investment Boards, tribal governments, private employers, and other CAAs, *Road-to-Work Oklahoma* serves 75 rural counties. So, how exactly does *Road-to-Work Oklahoma* work?

**Who Can Ride:** The project is designed to meet the needs of low-income rural Oklahomans in securing a way to work; all routes are open to the general public.

**How it Works for the Employee:** The employee calls the local transit operator and request a ride to work; a schedule is developed to meet the rider's needs; the rider is then assigned a route.

**How it Works for the Employer:** The employer calls the local transit operator and provides information on their employee transportation needs; routes are then designed to meet the employer's needs and the routes begin.

**What it Costs to Ride:** Fares are determined by the local transit operator; fares are based on the length of the route and the time of the day and are usually no more than \$1.00.

Initially, the administration of this statewide program was accomplished through a grant of \$500,000 from the Federal Transit System and a local match of an equal amount. However, due to the support of Oklahoma's Congressional Delegation as well as the program's visible success and measurable growth, KI BOIS has currently secured \$4.9 million in federal funding for *Road-to-Work Oklahoma* which connects thousands of Oklahoma employees with job opportunities they wouldn't have otherwise had. KI BOIS Community Action Foundation, Inc. is only one of twenty Community Action Agencies receiving CSBG funds to serve the low-income population in all 77 counties of Oklahoma.

For more information on Road-to-Work Oklahoma, you may contact Roger Bartlett by email [rogerlb2001@yahoo.com](mailto:rogerlb2001@yahoo.com) or by phone (918)967-3325.