

# Western Community Action, Minnesota: Perfect Balance Between Customer Service and Productivity with Demand Response Software



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“ TripSpark has increased our reporting capabilities and the ability to serve our communities. ”

*Western Community Action*

## Background

The Community Transit Program of Western Community Action provides public transportation services for residents of Lincoln, Lyon, Redwood, Cottonwood and Jackson Counties. This service has expanded over the past 28 years to include centralized dispatching in Marshall and Jackson Dispatch Offices. Each ride request can be efficiently coordinated and scheduled on a Community Transit bus or with volunteer drivers who utilize their own personal vehicles.

Western Community Action Community Transit is a shared ride program which means all trips are coordinated with as many passengers as possible depending on their pick-up and drop-off locations. A total of 20 lift accessible buses operate within the City of Marshall and throughout Lyon, Redwood and Jackson counties. In addition nearly 100 volunteer drivers are available in all five counties to provide rides locally, when transit buses are not available, and to out of area locations. When individuals, family members, or service providers need transportation, every effort is made by staff to schedule the ride or find other transportation options.

## Challenges

The Community Transit Program takes pride in celebrating many successful projects that have improved transportation services for people and communities throughout their project area. In addition to increasing the number of rides from previous years, the dial-a-ride services were operating at capacity. The Community Transit Program and several community partners needed to work together to create a flexible fixed route bus service in the City of Marshall to offset the maxed out dial-a-ride system. In order to live up to their commitment of “Connecting People and Communities” and to be available for all people who want or need a ride, changes had to be made.

## Solution

The Community Transit Program of Western Community Action implemented TripSpark’s paratransit scheduling and dispatching software. From call taking to dispatching, the browser-based dispatch software is an easy-to-use application for many aspects of Western Community Action’s demand response operations. With TripSpark, they are now armed with the tools they need for their dial-a-ride, community transportation and coordinated service to communicate more efficiently, productively, cost-effectively and securely from any location to any operator on route.

## Result

Using the browser-based connectivity has helped Western Community Action keep in constant contact with their remote site in Jackson. Custom reports can now be developed and imported for use by all employees. As a result of their diverse ridership, Western Community Action has a complex faring system. TripSpark has been able to manage this aspect of their operations with ease. Dispatchers are excited to use the map and street management solutions that allows them to schedule around construction zones as well as closures or slowdowns. Knowing this information in advance keeps drivers on schedule, and riders are not left waiting.