

March, 1988

Volume 2, Issue 1

## **DelliBovi Announces Distribution of First RTAP Training Materials to States**

UMTA Administrator Alfred A. DelliBovi announced early this month that UMTA has sent to the states the first training materials developed under the RTAP National Program. Mr. DelliBovi said the materials were designed to support state RTAP activities and were developed in cooperation with a 15-member RTAP Advisory Board of state transportation officials and rural operators.

The training materials sent include:

1. A training module for rural transit drivers and managers on substance abuse awareness. The module package contains a 20-minute videotape, a participant workbook, a manager's handbook, a test, and two audiotape cassettes.
2. A catalogue of existing rural transit training materials that contains standardized information on topics, material developers, contact persons, format, and cost. The catalogue will be updated on a periodic basis to incorporate new materials.

In transmitting the materials, Mr. DelliBovi said, "I am pleased to be able to provide training materials for rural drivers and managers on substance abuse awareness. It is my hope this first training module for rural transit will help increase safety and improve rural services."

Mr. DelliBovi also announced that UMTA will be sponsoring a series of workshops around the country in the spring "to introduce the new training materials to RTAP state program administrators and others who will be using them in training courses." More details about the workshops will be made available soon.

*For more information on the "Substance Abuse Awareness in Rural Transit" module and the catalogue of existing materials, contact International Support Services at (703) 761-3030.*

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## **National Program Update**

In its first eight months of operation, the National Program has concentrated on developing training materials, setting up an RTAP National Resource Center, establishing a peer-to-peer technical assistance network, and facilitating communication among the states and their local operators.

By the end of February 1988, the National Program has:

- ▶ Developed the first module towards a National Driver Training Program on substance abuse awareness in rural transit. And started two additional ones: one on understanding the capabilities and needs of special passengers, and another on emergency procedures for the rural transit driver. These materials are being designed to be used in either a self-study or instructor-led format.
- ▶ Established an RTAP National Resource Center with a hot line—800-527-8279—that is providing information and assistance to hundreds of rural transit professionals each month. The hot line has revealed the need for a collection of sample forms used by rural transit systems. An "operations sampler" currently is being designed for publication by the Resource Center.
- ▶ Published a materials catalogue describing existing training programs and resources pertinent to state transportation officials and transit operators.
- ▶ Almost finalized a report on rural transit training needs, including a review of earlier needs assessments and findings from telephone interviews with state RTAP program administrators.
- ▶ Received over 75 nominations for individuals to be part of a "best practice" peer network. All individuals will go through a simple screening process before being entered in a "peer matching bank" to respond to technical assistance requests.

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## **National Program Update** *(continued)*

- ▶ Held three meetings of the RTAP Advisory Board. The Board has provided substantial guidance to the National project team, especially in the area of training material development. It has reviewed draft training materials and identified resources. It has been an important stimulus for project action and provided significant leadership in coordinating the national and state programs.

- ▶ Established ties to the individual state RTAP programs through UMTA's RTAP State Program and AASHTO. To date, the National project team has met with two groups of states; it expects to meet with an additional five in the spring when it introduces the National Program's first training materials to the states. These meetings provide a forum for the national and state programs to exchange information on their respective activities and help shape the direction and emphasis of national efforts.

- ▶ Kept abreast of other ongoing technical assistance and training material development efforts to avoid duplication. A future *RTAP Bulletin* will describe the most important of these efforts.

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## **RTAP State Program News**

UMTA's RTAP State Program is off to a good start. As of late February, thirty states and two territories have approved RTAP projects. These include:

Alabama	Indiana	Missouri	South Dakota
Arizona	Kansas	Montana	Texas
Arkansas	Kentucky	Nebraska	Utah
California	Louisiana	North Carolina	Vermont
Colorado	Maine	North Dakota	Washington
Delaware	Massachusetts	Ohio	West Virginia
Florida	Minnesota	Puerto Rico	Virginia
Guam	Mississippi	South Carolina	Wyoming

An analysis of the first seventeen approved states indicated that 52 percent of the obligated funds have been designated for training, 29 percent for technical assistance, 12 percent for transit research, and 7 percent for related support services.

### **Program Variety**

UMTA has given the states maximum flexibility in the design and implementation of their programs. This allows each state to tailor its program to meet the specific needs of its rural transit operators. At the November RTAP Advisory Board meeting, the National project team heard reports on the RTAP activities from 14 different states. These reports showed a great deal of variety in program development. Specifically, these reports revealed that:

- ▶ States are at different points in the application process for state RTAP funds: some have been funded, some have submitted applications to their UMTA regional offices, and some are still developing their applications. A number of those that applied early are rethinking parts of their program of projects as they learn more about the National Program, what other states are doing, and how their operators feel.

- ▶ States are involving local operators in the development of their program of projects (through surveys, informal working groups of operators, the establishment of advisory boards, and meetings with state associations). Some are involving Section 16(b)(2) operators as well as Section 18 operators.

- ▶ States are looking at a number of ways to carry out all or parts of their program of projects. The types of organizations being considered for contracts are FHWA Technology Transfer Centers, state transit associations, and private consultants.

- ▶ States are considering a wide range of activities for their program of projects, including delivering training, putting on technical assistance workshops, preparing training materials, establishing electronic bulletin boards, undertaking system performance evaluations, establishing statewide insurance pools, setting up state agency coordinating councils, and setting up information hot lines.

- ▶ States are placing greatest emphasis on delivering training in their program of projects. A number of different techniques will be used to deliver training. In some cases, the preferred technique will be on-site, perhaps using circuit riders. In others, it will be workshops put on by consultants who specialize in training or operator scholarships to attend training seminars out of state.

- ▶ States are meeting at the regional level to exchange information and to look for opportunities to coordinate resources.

- ▶ States are looking to the National Program to prepare training materials, assist with information exchange, and to conduct research.

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**RTAP State  
Program News**

(continued)

**Regional Coordination**

Where appropriate, UMTA is encouraging the "pooling" of RTAP funds among states, or on a regional basis, to support activities or projects that would be more effectively carried out on a larger scale. AASHTO's Task Force on Rural and Specialized Transportation recently reinforced this concept by resolving to encourage states to meet regionally to share experiences and approaches to implementing RTAP. And in fact, several groups of states have met on a regional basis. These include the New England states, the Rocky Mountain states, and the Southwest states. The Mid-Atlantic states are scheduled to meet for the first time in early May.

The RTAP program managers from the six Rocky Mountain states met for the first time in October and have agreed to continue to periodically meet for the purposes "of gaining a good understanding of what each state is doing and to prevent duplication of work." They have discussed ways to share their progress and the final products from the RTAP program. They have agreed that some monies should be kept in reserve so that a multi-state program can be initiated. Among the areas they are considering for a multi-state project are an insurance cost reduction study. To make sure that the National Program does not lose sight of the sparsely populated rural states who operate many one and two bus systems, the group prepared a joint letter to the National Program with recommendations for the first national training module.

The six New England states have formed a regional RTAP Working Group. It has been meeting approximately every two months since July. Currently, it is exploring ways to coordinate state training efforts. Plans include taking the needs of neighboring states into account in developing training programs and publicizing scheduled programs regionwide.

Future *RTAP Bulletins* will continue to provide information on regional efforts.

**RTAP State Contacts**

AASHTO has developed and made available to the National Resource Center a complete list of state RTAP contacts. Call the toll-free hot line at 800-527-8279 for a copy of this list.

**UMTA RTAP Guidance and Application Instructions**

UMTA's circular, called "Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) Guidance and Application Instructions" was issued in its final form on February 8. States will be receiving a copy shortly.

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