



*Federal Transit Administration (FTA)  
National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP)*

## **What's New:**

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**April 4, 2005**

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: Rural Directory & Status Report**

RFP ANNOUNCEMENT FOR: State RTAP Managers and Contractors, State Minority/Disadvantaged Business Directors, University Transit Institutes, Research Oriented Minority Businesses, LTAP Centers and other interested parties.

The National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) is seeking proposals for the design of an information-gathering tool, collecting the information, analyzing the findings, developing a web-based directory, a printable directory and a publication based on the analysis that includes tables and graphs and is delivered in a format that can be used by a professional printer.

[Download the proposal](#) (Word).

View all [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

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### **Public Comments Requested on Technical Assistance Needs**

The Technical Assistance Work Group of the Coordinating Council on Access & Mobility (CCAM) is requesting public comment on technical assistance needs in human service transportation. For more detail, read the [Federal Register Notice](#), published March 9, 2005. Individuals can submit comments in writing via email to [unitedweride@fta.dot.gov](mailto:unitedweride@fta.dot.gov) or fax at 202-366-3136. The workgroup is also interested in hosting listening sessions – please

contact [bryna.helfer@fta.dot.gov](mailto:bryna.helfer@fta.dot.gov) if you know of any opportunities in this area.

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### **FY06 Budget Increases Funding for Rural Transit**

The President's FY06 Budget proposes funding for Non-Urbanized Area (Rural) Transit at \$392.6 million, up \$141.7 million from FY05, an increase of 56.5%. These funds are apportioned by a formula grant to states based on their non-urban populations under 50,000.

The total includes \$7.9 million to the states for the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP), formerly funded from Transit Planning and Research Funds. The budget proposal does not include a line item for the National Rural Transit Assistance Program.

Moving the source of the state RTAP apportionment is part of a proposed overall shift of budgeting programs into two broad categories: Formula Grants and Research (State administered programs) and Major Capital Investment Grants.

The Formula Grants and Research category, if approved by Congress, would include the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) funded at \$163.9 million; the New Freedom Initiative at \$158.4 million; the University Transportation Research Centers at \$5.95 million; the Transit Cooperative Research Program at \$9 million and the National Transit Institute at \$4.4 million.

Funds for the Bus and Bus facilities program (\$669.6 million in FY 05) were not proposed and the dollars merged into other parts of the budget. A new performance incentive program focused on increasing transit ridership is funded at \$20 million for rural systems; \$180 million in urban.

[View the Transportation Budget \(PDF\)](#).

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### **Funding Opportunity for Child Nutrition & Transportation**

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) will award grants in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) for innovative approaches for overcoming limited transportation resources in rural areas. A maximum of \$2 million will be available for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006; a maximum of \$1 million will be available for each of FY2007 and FY2008.

State agencies are encouraged to apply for funding to improve program access in rural areas, where the lack of transportation resources can be a significant obstacle that prevents participation by organizations that could make nutritious SFSP meals available as part of constructive activities for children. For more information and application materials visit the [FNS website](#).

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### **FTA Releases Information on Public Transportation for Schools**

The Federal Transit Administration has released a Dear Colleague letter and brochure that covers Questions and Answers about appropriate use of public transportation buses for school transportation.

The link to the letter and brochure can be found under the [Dear Colleague Letters](#) in the "From the Administrator" section of the FTA website. For more information on this item in your state, please contact your FTA region office.

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### **New FAQs on Mobility Devices and Public Transportation**

The Federal Transit Administration has developed a new webpage with Frequently Asked Questions and Answers concerning personal mobility devices and public transportation vehicles in relation to the Adults with Disabilities Act (ADA). Visit the [FTA website](#) to see the new FAQs.

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### **New RTAP Resources Available**

National RTAP has just completed and distributed several new training and information resources. The new *Roles and Responsibilities of Transit Managers – Leading the Rural Transit Agency* Training Module is tailored to provide quick and easy-to-understand guidance for new transit managers, to refresh the knowledge of experienced managers and to provide greater understanding of management demands. The videos and lessons center

around advice and best practices provided by community transit leaders at the local and state level.

In addition, National RTAP has completed a CD-ROM version of the online [National RTAP Training Resources Catalog](#) to provide State RTAP Managers with both a great training resource as well as an outreach and promotional tool. The CD-ROMs contain the same database of training resources found on the National RTAP website, that can be loaded onto your computer and provide you with a private resource that you can update at will.

Finally, National RTAP has sent to the State RTAP Managers, the TCRP Annual Report. This is another important resource that will provide managers with information on the activities of TCRP and can act both as a resource to inform local activities as well as giving a clear picture of the work areas and priorities occurring on a national level.

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### **New Additions to Bus Transit Safety Resource Guide Website**

Several new documents were recently added to the Bus Transit Safety Resource Guide Web Site. See below for links to the new resources and visit [www.cutr.usf.edu/bussafety](http://www.cutr.usf.edu/bussafety) to see all the resources available.

*State Policies and Plans - [Indiana Comprehensive Safety Response Plan](#) - Indiana Comprehensive Safety Response Plan is a compilation of sample policies, procedures and forms, to help Community Transportation Systems to construct a System Safety Program Plan (SSPP) to meet its unique safety needs.*

*Best Practices - [Minnesota – Transit System Safety/Security Workbook](#)*

*Safety Data Acquisition and Analysis - [Texas - Safety Data Acquisition and Analysis Guide](#)*

*Driver/Employee Training - [PennSCORE- Operator Training Manual](#)*

*Security - [Immediate Actions for Transit Agencies for Potential and Actual Life-Threatening Incidents](#) - (FTA Guidance Document)*

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## **NEW! National RTAP Training Resource Catalog NEW!**

The National RTAP Program is proud to unveil the National RTAP Training Resource Catalog. You can access the catalog by using the link on the left side of this page or go to:

<http://www.nationalrtap.org/ResourceCatalog/>

The catalog is an excellent resource when you're looking for the latest training available. The catalog provides you with the ability to search more than 650 training resources. You can search by resource name, type, subject, author, agency, or keyword. The output of your search will tell you about each resource (i.e. how to access the resources, how much it might cost etc). You also have the option to update the materials in the catalog. So be sure to search through the catalog and find your own resources that might be available and make sure all the information is correct.

In order to keep the catalog up to date and relevant we vitally need your help. You have the capability to add new resources to the catalog. We hope you will take the time to add any resources that you might have available. The intent of this catalog is to keep it as a living document - ever growing in size and relevance. So be sure to come back often as new resources will be added.

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### **FTA Emphasizes *United We Ride***

*United We Ride* -- a new five-part initiative-- to break down the barriers between programs and set the stage for local partnerships that generate common sense solutions and deliver A-plus performance for everyone who needs transportation.

The *United We Ride* initiative includes:

- *A Framework for Action*. Created by a panel of experts from around the country that convened in August 2003, this publication is a self-assessment tool that States and communities can use to identify areas of

success and highlight the actions still needed to improve the coordination of human service transportation.

- ***State Leadership Awards.*** These initial awards have recognized a select number of States that have accomplished significant progress in human service transportation coordination.
- ***National Leadership Forum on Human Service Transportation Coordination.*** This conference, held in late February 2004, brought together Governor appointed senior leadership teams seeking to raise the visibility of the issue among State leaders and secure commitments to action. The forum was used to provide technical assistance, as well as to recognize those States that have already taken significant steps to improve human service transportation services.
- ***State Coordination Grants.*** States participating in the United We Ride National Leadership Forum will be eligible to submit an application for State Coordination Grants, to address gaps and needs related to human service transportation in their geographic regions.
- ***Help Along the Way.*** This ongoing technical assistance program will build on the work of the Community Transportation Assistance Program (CTAP), the Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP), Easter Seals Project ACTION and other stakeholders to provide hands-on assistance to States and communities in the development and delivery of coordinated human service transportation programs.