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Upcoming Events:
October 31, 2012
Springfield Regional Maintenance Workshop

On-Site Driver Training and
Classroom Driver Training
(Call RTAC: 800.526.9943)
Public school districts statewide are scaling back bus service due to reduced state funding. Several 5311 grantees have asked us if they are able to provide transportation for students which formerly rode on the school bus. Indeed, boundary changes for school bus transportation provide an opportunity for rural transit providers to transport students. Several rural transit operators have long provided rides for students ineligible for school bus transportation, with some offering special student rates.

For some time a number of Section 5311 grantees have contracted with regional offices of education to provide rides for the safe schools program and the alternate school program for children who have been transferred for behavioral problems. Additionally, rural public transit has been utilized to transport truant students, to get students to jobs, and to provide a way for students to get to practice or other afterschool activities.

And there are other ways for us to collaborate with school systems, such as combined maintenance or fueling arrangements, which occurs in Macomb. I'm sure there are other partnering opportunities. If your agency has partnered in a fashion I haven't mentioned, please contact me.

As we approach the end of 2012, several counties are working through Phase Three of the Primer process. Some of those counties could see service by the end of 2012, and all of them will be up and running sometime in 2013. Those counties, in no particular order, are Menard, Sangamon, Christian, Effingham, Calhoun, Greene, and Jersey. Once that happens, the only county in the state without some type of Section 5311 service will be Henderson County. We've received an inquiry from them about starting the ICCT Coordination Primer process, met earlier this year with local representatives, but have heard nothing since.

The Section 5311 landscape in Illinois has changed significantly in the past five years, specifically the creation of grants in about thirty counties, but those new grants are not the end of the story. The second wave of work lies in building the capacity of those grants to provide optimal service.

**RTAC Notes**

**Rural Transit Assistance Center (RTAC) Staff**

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Hiring the right people and training them well are the two most important things an organization can do to ensure its success. Seems easy right? Well, it’s not really that simple at all. Hiring right and training well takes a lot of planning and preparation. There are several steps that organizations should follow to make certain they hire right the first time around, and that they properly train their employees to do the jobs they need them to do. Hiring the wrong employees can be expensive, time consuming and can have a major impact on your work environment. On the other hand, hiring the right employees can pay you back tenfold in staff productivity, morale and money saved.

The first step is developing specific guidelines for all hiring, orientation and training. As you develop your guidelines, keep in mind your agency’s mission, vision and strategic plan. Your hiring and training guidelines should match your organization’s philosophies. Developing and following hiring guidelines also helps to protect you from lawsuits, other accusations of discrimination, or other inequities by rejected candidates. Your guidelines should include things like general requirements for all employees you hire as well as criteria for specific positions. As part of your guidelines you should spend a great deal of time developing strong position descriptions. This is a vital part of ensuring that your applicant pool for a certain position is a strong pool of candidates with the right qualifications and the right expectations. This will likely require you to do an analysis of all the positions in your agency, collecting information on each position’s duties, responsibilities and necessary skills. Guidelines should also address things like the format of applications and interviews; who will conduct your interviews; how/where will you advertise or recruit for open positions; what process will you use to review applicants and narrow down your field of potential candidates; what types of background and reference check strategies will your agency employ; and how will you actually select successful candidates. It is a good idea to have an evaluation of your hiring process built into your guidelines as well. Make sure to take the time to evaluate what you can improve on and what is working well.

Once your guidelines for hiring are in place, it is important to focus on developing guidelines for training. Training can be separated into three categories, all of which are vital to a successful organization: orientation, which is to help employees new to the agency familiarize themselves with your organization and its mission, goals and policies; training, which is for anyone new to a certain position, and is meant to help that employee learn the specific duties and responsibilities that come along with that position; and professional development or continuing education, which is ongoing throughout a person’s career with your organization, and should help to give them refreshers and help them to improve upon what they do. Developing training guidelines will force you to answer questions like who will conduct the training, how often should staff have refresher courses, what methods of training will be employed, and how will the training be evaluated.

Orientation should include things like introducing employees to the appropriate staff, and helping them to learn about the structure of your organization. It should also include things like ethics, EEO and sexual harassment training, all of which are important in ensuring that your employees conduct themselves in such a way that you avoid future problems. Orientation is also the time for familiarizing new employees with agency policies and expectations. Every employee should know up front what is expected of them, and what is not tolerated.

Even if you have selected a candidate with all of the right qualifications for a certain position, they will undoubtedly need to learn skills specific to their new position. Each organization does things differently, and this is your opportunity to train your employee to do things the right way. Training guidelines should take into consideration what might be different about this position in your organization than similar positions in other organizations. This is also a good time to do some cross-training, so that you have employees prepared to cover for their co-workers during unplanned absences.

—IPTA Notes continued on page 12
Since its inception, the National Resource Center for Human Services Transportation Coordination has included, as a key component in its technical assistance efforts, 10 regional coordination ambassadors charged with advancing cooperative, collaborative mobility strategies at the regional, state and local level. These individuals—each with unique, advanced expertise and experience in the mobility field—have facilitated numerous mobility solutions.

1) Based on your experience, what types of partnerships are the most essential/conducive to coordination?

Ambassador Margi Ness: If state agencies don’t buy into coordination, it is very hard to get local coordination started and maintained.

Ambassador James McLary: The partnerships that are most effective are those that coordinate services and vehicles.

Ambassador Roland Mross: The key ingredients remain strong leadership, respect among the partners and commitment to making things work, hopefully through innovation and creativity.

Ambassador Barbara Singleton: Coordination works best when all partners stay focused on improving the service for the customers. All focus should remain on increasing the availability and effectiveness of the transportation to consumers.

2) Describe the key elements most common in successful coordination models.

Ambassador Erickson: Start with congenial and engaged partners who trust each other if at all possible. Begin by looking for the points of agreement rather than those which separate the group members. No hidden agendas. Bring out the issues once a level of comfort is established. Make sure the right people are there from the beginning. Who are the right people? Those who are needed to make good decisions is a good definition.

Ambassador Jo Ann Hutchinson: • Local leadership • Willingness to set aside one’s own interest to share resources and think outside the bus

Ambassador McLary: Trust and openness.

Ambassador Mross: The key elements are leadership, trust among partners... and a clear focus on serving customers.

Ambassador Ness: • Willingness to try something new • Trust level high • Effective communication methods established • Stakeholders willing to share resources

Ambassador Singleton: All partners being honest and willing to compromise for the good of the effort, and all are willing to sacrifice control in order to improve services for those that need a ride.

3) What challenges are most prevalent for people attempting to improve coordination?

Ambassador Dirks: There are too many examples — continued on next page
of great coordination efforts failing after the person(s) leading the effort move to a new job or challenge. You have to have a champion at the staff level and at the policy level for coordination to succeed initially. However, that support needs to broaden among each participating agency that will benefit. There needs to be a key staff and policy makers sold on the coordination efforts from every partner and willing to dedicate the necessary time.

**Ambassador McLary:** Turfism and the excuse that we tried that and it didn’t work.

**Ambassador Mross:** I find it more productive to focus on what fits the local history, culture, political process and other possible examples where other local partnering produced successful results.

**Ambassador Ness:** The we’ve always done it like this attitude

**Ambassador Singleton:** Control issues are still the biggest challenge.

**Ambassador Beverly Ward:** Lack of trust often gets in the way, usually represented by the argument that they don’t understand our clients. Also, fear of losing scarce resources.

5) What Does Mobility Management Mean to You?

**Ambassador Erickson:** Coordination of services is much easier with a mobility manager in the mix. Having that person with the big picture in mind moves things along far more quickly.

**Ambassador Hutchinson:** Mobility management is the key to successful coordination. It creates the opportunity to design customer-driven and desired modes for the delivery of coordinated transportation.

**Ambassador McLary:** The coordination piece allows the sharing of trips and vehicles.

**Ambassador Mross:** It is very important that the mobility manager or mobility management process be removed from the provider’s responsibility to focus on customer needs.

**Ambassador Ness:** (M)obility management focuses on rider needs.

**Ambassador Ward:** Collaboration and mobility management best intersect when organizations and individuals constantly seek to expand their portfolios. This isn’t just about expanding the fleet, but expanding mobility options.

6) How can policy-makers better support collaborative, innovative mobility partnerships?

**Ambassador Erickson:** Participate in the local or state coordination council to some degree. Take a look at the work that has already been done in your community before deciding to start all over again. We don’t need more studies.

**Ambassador Hutchinson:** Technical assistance needs to be available to reinforce innovation strategies for coordination and mobility management.

**Ambassador Knowlton:** all agencies that touch transportation as part of any federal funding need to come together to find common ground on mobility partnerships.

**Ambassador McLary:** In order for coordination to work, all agencies need buy-in to support regional and local programs.

**Ambassador Mross:** Where possible, we need to support more regionalization of mobility networks.

**Ambassador Ness:**

- Alleviate regulatory barriers
Logan Mason Public Transportation
By Angie Jenkins, Public Transportation Director

As of August 1, 2012, residents of Logan and Mason counties are being served by a Section 5311 rural public transportation operating assistance grant. The grant has chosen the Community Action Partnership of Central Illinois (CAPCIL) to fulfill the administrative and provider functions function for Logan Mason Public Transportation (LMPT).

LMPT provides demand response, curb to curb and door to door service to individuals of all ages throughout Logan and Mason Counties. We anticipate providing 35,000 rides during the first year of operation while covering nearly 75,000 miles.

LMPT operates Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. One-way fares range from $1.50 to $15.00 per person within a 75 mile radius. A suggested donation is requested for individuals 60 years of age or older.

We currently have a fleet of 6 wheelchair accessible vans and 1 sedan. We anticipate the addition of several medium duty vehicles through the Illinois Department of Transportation’s Consolidated Vehicle Procurement Program.

The daily operations staff consists of a program assistant, 1 dispatcher, 3 full time drivers and 6 on call drivers. All dispatching and vehicles are located at the central CAPCIL office in Logan County. We anticipate designating a driver and van in Mason County to better meet that county’s demands.

Regarding CAPCIL’s prior experience before taking on the LMPT role, our transportation program originally began in 1976, providing rides through the Title III B program. Until the formation of LMPT, the transportation program was exclusively for the use of seniors in Logan and Mason Counties.
"We are very excited to provide a new opportunity for Logan and Mason Counties. The staff at Community Action Partnership of Central Illinois have worked hard throughout the Transit Partnership Group primer process to make this program happen and we know it will be a great success!" Jenkins stated.

More information about LMPT services accessible is available at www.capcil.org/transportation or you can call 866-930-8212.
Paula Ferguson has been appointed as the Department of Human Services representative to the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) Advisory Council, replacing Connie Darnell who recently retired.

Paula is the public service administrator for the Jacksonville Division of Rehabilitation Services. She began her state employment in 1978 as a rehabilitation counselor. For 25 years she worked as a placement counselor and a vocational rehabilitation counselor before assuming the supervisory duties in July 2002. Throughout her career she has served on many committees within the agency and as a representative for the agency. Paula was also a member of the Illinois Air National Guard in Springfield for 22 years before retiring in 2003.

Paula graduated from Illinois College in Jacksonville with a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology, and from the University of Illinois–Springfield with a Master of Arts degree in Psychology. She has been a life-long resident of Greene County.

The Jacksonville office serves nine very rural counties where transportation for persons with disabilities is often an issue. Paula says, “I’m very excited to be selected to participate on the committee and hope to learn many new things to benefit our customers.”

Mark Graue is the new public transportation assistant director for Logan Mason Public Transportation (LMPT), which is located at the Community Action Partnership of Central Illinois (CAPCIL), Lincoln. He supervises and trains drivers and dispatchers; oversees maintenance, vehicle fleet records, and receipts and expenses; handles all LMPT marketing efforts; and participates in fundraising and grant writing. Mark reports to and assists the public transit director, Angie Jenkins.

Mark’s background is in management, training, administration and financing in the automobile business, and also includes ownership and operation of a small business. He has served on the board of directors at Abraham Lincoln Memorial Hospital and Memorial Health System. Mark received his Bachelor’s Degree in business administration and an Associate Degree in marketing from Northwood University in Midland, Michigan.

Mark has been married for 21 years and they have two sons. His personal interests and hobbies are cooking—especially BBQ, fitness, landscape gardening, and paintball.
Edward Anthony Gullo became the new operations manager/driver for Piattran Public Transportation, Monticello on September 22, 2011. His prior work experience includes three years as the parts manager/sales for Twin City BMW Motorcycles in Savoy, three years as an assistant manager for Prairie Gardens in Champaign, and eighteen years as a supervisor for RR Donnelley & Sons (which is the world’s premier full-service provider of print and related solutions) in Pontiac and Senatobia, Mississippi.

Edward graduated from Pontiac Township High School and has taken many management, supervisory, and communication classes. He is also a University of Illinois-certified master gardener.

Edward is married to Martha, and they have one 26 year old son, Anthony. They live on 3 acres in the country just north of Monticello. Edward says, “We have too many dogs that have all been rescued from shelters. There are also a few cats that have wanted to live with us.” He is into organic gardening and grows many vegetables. When he gets the chance, he loves to work with wood. Ed also rides a BMW motorcycle, attending an international rally every year in July in a different part of the country. He just got back from Copper Mountain, Colorado.

John Corey, Illinois’ newest Community Transportation Association of America’s (CTAA) Certified Community Transit Manager (CCTM) is from Bloomington. He has worked at State Farm for the past 15 years. Prior to this, John served in technical positions with AT&T and the Air National Guard.

Although the majority of John’s professional background is in Telecom/IT, he has long been supportive of public transportation, and enjoys doing transit research and communications. His involvement includes serving as member of the Illinois Department of Transportation Department of Public and Intermodal Transportation Intercity Bus Committee, part time volunteering on the Region 6 TAC (Transit Advisory Committee) and operating the non-profit website www.IllinoisTransit.com which freely assists users of all types of Illinois public transportation.

John is very enthusiastic about passing the CCTM examination, and is looking forward to where that and his passion for transit may lead on a professional level.

John enjoys spending time with his family, biking, swimming, gardening and other outdoor activities.
Valerie Nickerson is the lead dispatcher for the Grundy Transit System (GTS). She will soon transition into the operations trainer position for Kendall Area Transit (KAT). Valerie has been in the transportation industry for 15 years. Twelve of those years she drove a school bus for special needs, regular routes and charters. Prior to her promotion to dispatcher in March 2012, Valerie was a driver for GTS since April 2009.

Valerie enjoys working out, volleyball, biking and summer festivals. From car repairs to home improvement, she enjoys being the fix-it mom at home. She has two sons ages 19 and 14, which keep her busy.

Valerie looks forward to expanding her knowledge and skills with further education in transportation.

Jerris Cross has been the Director of Transportation for the Illinois River Valley Public Transportation (IRVPT) since June 2012. IRVPT serves Cass and Schuyler Counties. Jerris formerly taught high school English for four years, and served six years in the United States Navy as a Cryptologic Technician Interpretive (Arabic Translator). She graduated from University of North Florida in 2007.

She and her husband of five years, Tom, currently reside in Beardstown. Jerris enjoys fishing, gardening, reading, watching British television shows, visiting museums, traveling (she’s lived in New York, California, Texas, Georgia, and Florida), cooking, and volunteering. Jerris is a member of Exchange Club.

Open House/Ribbon Cutting for Rides Mass Transit District Maintenance and Operations Center

Rides Mass Transit District is pleased to announce that our new Maintenance and Operations Center in Marion, Illinois is completed. Rides began operating out of the facility in early May. Rides hosted an Open House/Ribbon cutting on Wednesday, June 27 in the REDCO Industrial Park at 9250 Aisin Drive. The Open House was from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. with a Ribbon Cutting ceremony at 11:00 a.m. Everyone was invited to come tour the facility, meet staff and enjoy some light refreshments. The new Operations Center provides office space, a drivers’ area, and maintenance support for Williamson County. The Operations Center is home to 25 drivers, five dispatchers, two mechanics and two administrative staff. In fiscal year 2011-2012 passenger trips in Williamson County totaled 111,291.

Rides Mass Transit District is the public transportation provider for the sixteen-southernmost counties of Williamson, Pope, Hardin, Gallatin, Saline, White, Hamilton, Wayne, Edwards, Wabash, Richland, Jasper, Crawford, Lawrence, Cumberland and Effingham counties. Rides Mass Transit District’s service area is a total of 6,434 square miles and has a combined population of 274,847.
On June 26-28, 2012, West Central Mass Transit District hosted a two and one-half day workshop at Lincoln Land Community College’s Jacksonville site. Seventeen people from across central Illinois were trained and tested by instructors Ken Woodall and Ron Woods from the University of Wisconsin’s Center for Transportation Education. Each participant earned a three year certification as Passenger Assistance trainers.

Jacqueline Waters, Rural Transit Assistance Center (RTAC), had the opportunity to participate in the hands-on train the trainer workshop. Seeing the theory and principles of passenger assistance in action, especially with some of the veteran drivers who shared their expertise, brought greater understanding and appreciation for the men and women who daily transport his or her passengers safely, and with understanding and empathy to all the passengers’ individual needs.

If you’re interested in your agency hosting a train-the-trainer workshop, please contact:
Ken Woodall
University of Wisconsin Milwaukee
School of Continuing Education
161 West Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53203
Phone: 414.227.3332
Fax: 414.227.3142
woodall@uwm.edu

Although RTAC does not offer train-the-trainer classes, three excellent hands-on trainings are available: defensive driving, emergency procedures, and passenger assistance. Our trainers, Resha Oylear and Rudy Muzzarelli will provide these trainings at your rural agency free of charge. To schedule, please call 800.526.9943.
It has been proven that the most effective organizations place a lot of emphasis on continuing education. The more your staff can learn throughout their career with your agency, the more productive and competent they will become. This is not only about learning new skills, but also taking the time to refresh them on the skills they already know, so that they don’t lose touch with best practices and they can improve upon what they already know.

If you spend time developing your hiring and training practices, you will undoubtedly be glad you invested the time and resources involved in doing so. Hiring right and training well will set the foundation for an effective organization.

Laura Calderon