



NATIONAL CONFERENCE of STATE LEGISLATURES

*The Forum for America's Ideas*

# Transportation Coordination Newsletter

Vol. 3, No. 2

Q2 2012

## NCSL to Host Info Session on Veterans Transportation

*Jaime Rall and Alice Wheet, NCSL Transportation Program*

On Aug. 7, NCSL will host an informational session on veterans' transportation at the NCSL [Legislative Summit](#) in Chicago, Ill. The session will feature key findings about state-level activities that facilitate access to transportation mobility for veterans, with an emphasis on best practices from across the nation. The accompanying report is planned for release later in August, and will feature a state-by-state comparison and three in-depth case studies. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this foundational research by sending in a survey response!

## State Activity

*Eventful Second Quarter*

A number of state legislative measures were passed during the second quarter of 2012 that have an impact on human service transportation coordination.

- Legislation in [Alaska](#) continues the work of the Governor's Coordinated Transportation Task Force. The newly established, 13-member Community and Public Transportation Advisory Board will facilitate the coordination of community-based transportation services (see also p. 2).
- A task force was established in [Connecticut](#) to study how the state can encourage aging in place, which includes an examination of infrastructure and transportation improvements.
- The [Mississippi](#) legislature authorized the City of Itta Bena to contribute up to \$3,000 annually to Mississippi Valley State University Mass Transit for transportation services for the city's older adults and citizens with disabilities.
- A measure signed June 13 in [Pennsylvania](#) eliminates provisions that give county port authorities exclusive control over transportation services within their counties. The Public Utility Commission can now regulate transportation services by other providers.
- In [Tennessee](#), the state Department of Human Services (DHS) may now provide transportation assistance to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients on a case-by-case basis, rather than requiring transportation be provided for all recipients who participate in TANF-required work activities. DHS must first utilize available community transportation resources before providing assistance from DHS funds.

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- The sunset date of July 1, 2012, for the [Virginia](#) Disability Commission was repealed. The bill requires convening of a workgroup made up of legislators, state agencies and other stakeholders to develop a plan for improving access to housing and transportation for people with disabilities.
- Within the larger [West Virginia](#) budget bill, \$625,000 was allocated to the Department of Veterans' Assistance for veterans' transportation.

In addition, two [Washington](#) bills failed to pass that would have extended statutory authority for the state coordinating council (see below). More details about all these bills are available in NCSL's online [database](#).

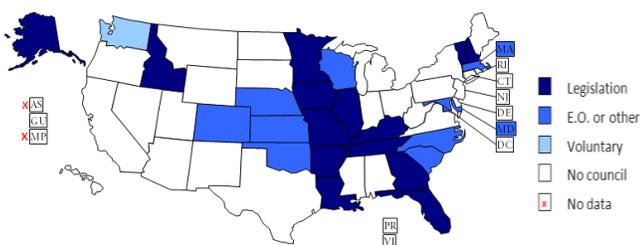
### **Coordination Laws Lost in Washington, Gained in Alaska**

On June 30, statutory authority for Washington state's [Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation](#) (ACCT) expired. Two bills that would have extended the ACCT and other related sections of law beyond this date—[House Bill 2725](#) and [Senate Bill 5817](#)—failed during the 2012 legislative session; however, the ACCT voted unanimously to continue its work without the legislation or any appropriated funds. ACCT will focus on activities that align with federal priorities, such as its working group on veterans' transportation, a review of the federally required local plans and a new statewide coordination plan. Local coordinating councils established in state law were affected by the expiration as well, but these groups also will continue to meet.

The Alaska Community and Public Transportation Advisory Board was a recommendation of the Governor's Coordinated Transportation Task Force (GCTTF). Created by [House Bill 131](#) (see also p. 1), the new Board will continue the work of the GCTTF, which itself was established by executive order and expired after submitting its final report in January 2012.

These and other changes bring the number of states with coordinating councils to 24.

**State Coordinating Councils by Authority**



### **27-Month Federal Surface Transportation Bill Signed, Affects Transit**

On July 6, President Obama signed the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, known as MAP-21 ([H.R. 4348](#)), which extends current levels of federal surface transportation funding through Sept. 30, 2014.

MAP-21 authorizes \$21.3 billion for the Federal Transit Administration. Program authorizations include:

- \$9 billion for Urbanized Area Formula Grants;
- \$2.3 billion for Fixed Guide Modernization; and
- \$850 million for the Bus and Bus Facilities Program.

The bill maintains the existing funding structure for rural transit and keeps the commuter tax benefit level for combined vanpooling and transit at \$125 per month.

Programmatic changes include:

- A pilot program for transit-oriented development (TOD) planning;
- Incentives for the development of bus rapid transit (BRT) projects;
- A system to monitor and manage public transportation assets; and
- A streamlined review process for new transportation projects.

A separate bill introduced on July 2—the Commuter Savings Act ([H.R. 6066](#))—would make the transit commuter tax benefit retroactive to Jan. 1, 2012. The most recent adjustment expired on that date, and reduced the benefit from \$230 to \$125 per month. The transit benefit must be adjusted by legislation, while the parking benefit automatically adjusts for increased costs of living—and stands at \$240 per month.

### **\$29 Million Awarded to Link Veterans with Transportation**

On July 2, the U.S. DOT [announced](#) its second round of grant awards under FTA's Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative (VTCLI), supporting 64 [projects](#) in 33 states and the Northern Mariana Islands. The grants will allow new technologies—including kiosks, web, mobile and smart phone applications—to be implemented so veterans can more easily schedule rides on available transit vehicles. The U.S. DOT also recently launched a [web portal](#) to help veterans find transportation jobs in the private sector.

## **Promising Ideas Generated by National Online Vets Dialogue**

More than 450 stakeholders came together from May 7 to June 8, 2012 for a groundbreaking online dialogue, which sought to identify the transportation needs, challenges and opportunities facing veterans, wounded warriors, military service members and their families. Key themes discussed included:

- The importance of transportation access;
- Utilizing technology to enable access;
- Opportunities for collaboration between medical facilities and transportation providers;
- The need for special transit benefits for military service members and veterans; and
- The needs of rural communities.

Comments from participants led to many specific suggestions for implementation of the group's ideas. A full summary of the conversation will be released soon; for now, the full dialogue is available [online](#). Thank you to everyone who was involved!

## **NCSL Offers Resources and No-Cost Technical Assistance**

NCSL makes many of its transportation resources available to the general public.

- The NCSL [website](#) contains resources related to human service transportation coordination, including reports on various topics and a searchable [database](#) of state legislation.
- The [NCSL Transportation Funding Legislation Database](#) provides information about state transportation funding legislation, including transit funding.
- The [Transport Report](#) is a monthly newsletter that focuses on state and federal transportation news, trends and analysis. For more details or to join the distribution list, please contact [Jaime Rall](#).
- NCSL can offer no-cost technical assistance or testimony to state legislative audiences on human service transportation coordination issues. In addition, NCSL regularly offers expert, nonpartisan presentations to diverse audiences on a full range of transportation topics. Please [contact us](#) about how NCSL could be useful to coordination efforts in your state or region.

## **Easter Seals Partnership to Serve Military Community**

On May 4, Easter Seals—one of the nation's leading disability service organizations—[announced](#) a new partnership with the military community by welcoming Col. David Sutherland, United States Army-Retired, to its team. The new partnership aims to develop a nationwide network of collaborative, community-based services and supports for military service members, veterans and their families, focusing on assistance with reintegration, employment, health status and family stability, as well as expand options for housing, transportation and recreation.

## **Calendar**

- [Economic Census: Uses for the Transportation Community Workshop](#) – hosted by TRB – Washington, D.C. – July 17, 2012.
- [78th Annual Meeting of the Indiana Transportation Association \(ITA\)](#) – hosted by Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA), IndyGo, and ITA – Indianapolis, Ind. – July 17 to 19, 2012.
- [Pennsylvania Public Transportation Association \(PPTA\) Annual Meeting](#) – Erie, Penn. – July 28 to 31, 2012.
- [CTAA & Association for Commuter Transportation \(ACT\) Summit](#) – Savannah, Ga. – July 29, 2012.
- [NCSL Legislative Summit](#) (see also p. 1) – Chicago, Ill. – Aug. 6 to 9, 2012.
- [2012 State Public Transportation Partnerships Conference](#) – Chicago, Ill. – Aug. 14 to 16, 2012.
- [5<sup>th</sup> National Bus Rapid Transit Conference](#)—hosted by TRB – Las Vegas, Nev. — Aug. 20 to 22, 2012.
- [13th National Tools of the Trade Conference](#) – hosted by TRB – Big Sky, Mont. – Sept. 12 to 14, 2012.
- [2012 Ohio Conference on Freight](#) – hosted by NARC, Ohio DOT and Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments – Sandusky, Ohio – Sept. 13 to 14, 2012.



## New Resources



### GAO Report on Transportation Disadvantaged Populations

This [report](#) released in June by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) makes recommendations about how to strengthen federal coordination efforts. It includes results of interviews from state agency representatives and perspectives on state-level coordination.



### Developing, Enhancing, and Sustaining Tribal Transit Services: A Guidebook

This [guidebook](#) from the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) offers tools to help plan and implement a tribal transit system. In addition to the guidebook, the final research report, a brochure and accompanying PowerPoint presentation are available online.



### Putting Transit to Work in Main Street America

Reconnecting America and CTAA released a [report](#) that explores how smaller cities, towns and rural places are integrating transit into their communities to provide mobility choices and promote sustainable economies.



### USF Journal of Public Transportation: Volume 15, No 1, 2012

The University of South Florida's Center for Urban Transportation Research released its latest Journal of Public Transportation. This [issue](#) includes articles on current U.S. transit coordination practices and the potential role of flexible transport services to enhance rural transit.



### Uses of Social Media in Public Transportation

New [research](#) from the TCRP explores the use of social media among transit agencies and documents successful practices in the U.S. and Canada.



### Guidelines for Providing Access to Public Transportation Stations

The TCRP released this [report](#) to aid in the planning, developing and improving of access to high-capacity commuter rail, heavy rail, light rail, bus rapid transit (BRT) and ferry stations. It includes guidelines for arranging and integrating station design elements.



### Local and State Partnerships with Taxicab Companies

This National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) [digest](#) discusses how states and local governments can partner with taxicab companies to provide public transportation.



### Rural Strategies for the Livable and Sustainable Communities Initiative

This [report](#) from NCHRP explores ways that state departments of transportation may help rural organizations advance transit-related solutions to rural mobility challenges.



### Planning for the Future of Transit in Missouri

The Missouri Public Transit Association released a [document](#) that addresses the public transit funding crisis in Missouri. It outlines current trends in the state, funding methods, transit needs and an action plan for transit in Missouri.