A MISSION TO SERVE: State Activities to Help Veterans Access Transportation

Wednesday, Oct. 2, 2013
National Conference of State Legislatures
Today’s Moderator and Presenters

**Moderator**
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Veterans’ Transportation Community Living Initiative
October 2nd, 2013

Rik Opstelten
United We Ride Program Analyst
United We Ride

Promoting effective, efficient, coordinated services to provide for the transportation needs of people with disabilities, older adults, people with low incomes, and others with transportation disadvantages.
Our Goals

• Effective Transportation:
  – Transportation services satisfy customers’ needs so they can achieve mobility

• Efficient Transportation:
  – Transportation is provided in a way that maximize the use of the taxpayer dollar, reducing duplication and inefficiency

• Accessible Transportation:
  – Transportation services are known, and easily available to the community served
Our Philosophy

“Nothing About Us Without Us”

Consumer groups empowered to direct the services that benefit them.
Our Tools

• Special Initiatives
  – Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative
  – Back-to-Work
  – Possible Healthcare Initiative

• CCAM Work Groups
  – Federal inter-agency collaboration to address: Policy; Coordination Infrastructure; Open Government; Back to Work; Emergency Preparedness; Health, Wellness and Transportation; Veterans Transportation

• Technical Assistance Centers
  – Creating solutions around mobility management, addressing barriers for specific rider groups, and promoting state-level action.
VTCLI in Brief

- $63 million awarded to 86 communities in 37 states
- Fosters the development or expansion of One-Click, One-Call systems to link veterans and others with community transportation resources
FY2011 and FY2012 Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative Grants
VTCLI Creates Progress

• Many Goals in One:
  – Establish or expand One-Click/One-Call centers
  – Strengthens partnerships with veterans populations
  – Requires plan examination
  – Promotes open government
    • Social-media enhancing planning processes
Federal Transit Administration
www.fta.dot.gov
A MISSION TO SERVE:
State Activities to Help Veterans Access Transportation

Staff Presentation for NCSL Webinar
Wednesday, Oct. 2, 2013
Jaime Rall and Alice Wheet, NCSL Transportation Program
Who is NCSL?

- Bipartisan organization
- Serves the 7,383 legislators and more than 20,000 legislative staff of the nation's states, commonwealths and territories through:
  - Research, information, technical assistance and training on pressing state issues
  - Opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas
- Regarded as nation's authority on state legislative and policy issues
- Covers all topics, not just transportation
NCSL's Research on Veterans’ Transportation

- Broad analysis of state actions that facilitate transportation access for all veterans, for all purposes
- Under a cooperative agreement with Federal Transit Administration and U.S. Department of Labor
- Based on survey data from all 50 states, D.C., Northern Mariana Islands and Puerto Rico
- Synthesis, case studies and state-by-state profiles
- Published in early 2013
A Snapshot of Veterans' Mobility Issues

- Aging WWII and Korean War veterans
  - Affects their mobility
  - Decreases core volunteer base for peer-to-peer veterans' transportation programs
  - Require transportation to ongoing medical care

- Younger veterans are surviving battlefield injuries that were previously fatal and require transportation to ongoing therapeutic care
A Snapshot of Veterans' Mobility Issues

- Veterans are more at risk for:
  - Unemployment
  - Homelessness
  - PTSD, major depression and suicide
- Require transportation to jobs and training, social services, mental health care and social activities
- 40 percent of veterans live in rural areas where transportation and other services can be scarce
So yes, veterans' transportation is ...
But it also is ...
All Levels of Government Help Veterans Access Transportation

- **Federal**: Nationwide leadership and programs
  - VA reimbursement
  - Veterans Transportation Service (VTS) program
  - Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative (VTCLI) and VA grants
  - National Online Dialogue (2012)
- **Regional/Local (and Private)**: Direct services
States Also Play Critical Roles in Helping Veterans Access Transportation
State Interagency Coordination

- Include veterans’ interests in coordination efforts related to transportation (12 states)
- Include transportation stakeholders in coordination efforts related to veterans’ services (Calif. and N.J.)
- Interagency task forces to address veterans’ transportation specifically (Colo., Mass., Ore.)
State Funding for Veterans’ Transportation

- Special funds or trust funds to support veterans services (13 states and V.I.)
- Other or unknown means of funding veterans’ transportation (18 states, P.R. and V.I.)
State Leadership for Veterans’ Transportation Activities

- Coordinating federally funded projects (VTCLI)
- Encouraging or requiring veteran participation in transportation planning (10 states)
- Transportation studies and reports involving veterans (4 states)
- Building partnerships

2011 and 2012 VTCLI Awards
Other State Roles

- **State veterans’ transportation programs and services**
  - Contracting or providing rides to veterans’ homes, VA medical facilities, behavioral health appointments, and more

- **Exemptions from transportation fees, taxes, fares and tolls**
  - Driver’s license fees
  - Registration fees or taxes
  - License plate and disability placard fees
  - Vehicle taxes
  - Transit fares
  - Tolls

- **Special privileges**
  - Parking privileges or other privileges related to disabled veteran license plates or placards
What Lessons Have States Learned?

“Coordination and communication have been the foundation to build upon...”

“Outreach and education are a continuing necessity...”

“Participants need translators at first and need to learn a new language...”

For more on successes, challenges and key recommendations related to veterans’ transportation, check out the full report at http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=25751
Contact Details and Resources

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Download the free PDF online at

NCSL Transportation Access and Mobility Legislation Database

NCSL is always seeking public and private funding partners for collaborative research and outreach initiatives that serve the needs of state legislatures.

We also offer no-cost technical assistance to state legislative entities upon invitation.

Please contact us if you're interested.
Veterans Transportation

Kim Adair
Public Transit Section Manager
North Dakota Department of Transportation
North Dakota’s Five Coordinated Transportation Regions

Region's for Coordination
FTA Veterans Transportation & Community Livability Grant (VTCLI) - Overview

(1) to implement or establish access to a local One-Call/One-Click Transportation Resource Center to include transportation resources and address identified needs of veterans and military families;

(2) creating partnerships between transportation providers and veterans and military communities and;

(3) Increasing involvement of veterans and military communities in local Coordinated Human Services Transportation Planning process.

Importantly, the One-Call/One-Click infrastructure funded by VTCLI II will be available to all members of the community.

(Federal Register, 2/7/12)
FTA VTCLI Grant Application:

Grand Forks Regional One-Call/One-Click Center
One-Call/One-Click Center - Project Vision

Consumer with Mobility Needs

U.S. State & Local Government Funds, Policies, and Regulations

One Call

Funding Agencies

Transportation Service Providers
One-Call/One-Click Project Vision and Goals

Participation and Impacts

- **Vision:** “To facilitate greater personal mobility” for all individuals in the region and the state of North Dakota.

- **One-Call/One-Click Goals & Objectives**
  - Need/Goal: Facilitate greater personal mobility
    - Objective: NDDOT Website
    - Objective: Inform and educate the public
    - Objective: Facilitate seamless regional transportation
    - Objective: Single point of transportation access
    - Objective: Grand Forks information and referral center

  - Need/Goal: Provide Human Service Information & Referral (I&R) Services
    - Objective: Objective: Provide human services & community information
    - Objective: Coordinate with 911 to reduce non-emergency calls
    - Objective: Expand service coverage to meet unmet need
    - Objective: Facilitate all human service transportation regional from call center
One-Call/One-Click Center: Partners

- Cities Area Transit
- North Dakota Department of Transportation
- Department of Medicaid and Area on Aging

Regional Providers:
- Nutrition United
- Pembina County Meals and Transit
- Walsh County Transportation
- Devils Lake Transit/Eddy County Transit
- Benson County Transportation
One-Call/One-Click - Customer Access

- **Telephone:**
  - Available 24/7
  - Live person
  - Automated attendant
  - Multi-language services
  - TDD/TTY/KY Relay

- **Internet:**
  - Available 24/7

- **Walk-in**
  - Available during normal business hours
  - All information as available by telephone and internet
North Dakota Statewide
Statewide Coordinated Transportation Vision

Regional Administrator/Mobility Managers

- Establish routes
  - Find the most efficient and effective provider
  - More customer options with more frequent services/trips

- Technology
  - Customers scheduling rides on the web, phone or PDA
  - All transportation providers connected through automated scheduling and dispatching software, if they have software

- Funding Source – Shared rides with passengers of more than one funding source on a vehicle

- Dependable
  - No more drivers doing the dispatching and driving at the same time
  - Provide true estimated times of arrival (ETA)
  - On-Time Performance (OTP) for better customer service
One-Call/One-Click - Technology Needs

- **Human Service Integration**
  - Federal and State Agency Information (Health & Human Service)
  - Information and referral center

- **ND 511 - Traveler Information / Assistance**

- **Pay System**
  - Non discriminatory – *no matter the funding source*

- **Safety & Security**
  - Cameras / Monitoring (Bus & Depot)
  - Interoperability with Police / Fire / EMS

- **Inclement Weather Notifications**
VA Pilot Grant

- NDDOT and ND VA Commissioner
- 2 Counties in ND
- Accessible vehicles
- Quarterly meeting attendance
- Fares and Services
Other Items

- *State Agency Meetings*
- *Regional Meetings*
- *Guest Speakers*
- *Let people know what you do*
Veterans Transportation:

Questions/Comments?
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Oregon’s Experience
Oregon

3,831,074
2010 Census
Oregon Regional Public Transportation

![Map of Oregon showing key cities]

Key Cities:
- Portland
- Roseburg
- White City
- Walla Walla
- Boise
**Legislative Task Force on Veterans Transportation**

- FY 2009-10
- Six state agencies (Transportation, Employment, Human Services, Veterans’ Affairs, Oregon Military)
  - Chaired by ODOT Public Transit
- Part of “reintegration initiative” designed to connect vets to housing, education, employment, transportation, other resources
Purpose of the Task Force

• Veterans identified lack of transportation to and from VA medical appointments as a major barrier to veterans receiving their earned benefits

• The task force explored the various issues related to lack of transportation and recommended a number of actions that could assist to improve the situation
Report Findings

• ADA Accessible transportation lacking, particularly in rural areas
• DAV volunteer drivers “aging out”; younger vets not volunteering
• VA travel programs very complex and discouraging for vets
• Vets unaware of public transit resources
• Lack of coordination between transit providers and vets organizations
Key Recommendation

• Reduce unmet need by
  – Educate vets about available transit services
  – Create new opportunities by using existing public transportation, including statewide NEMT system
  – Leverage vets current services
  – Encourage VA to provide more local medical options
Oregon DOT Actions

- Refurbish and donate used accessible vehicles to vets organizations, and provide driver training
- Initiate 3 Pilot Projects to connect vets with transit services
- Advocate for additional funds
Example Vehicle
Oregon Pilot Project

Purpose is to provide medical trips
- Specifically, trips to VA-sponsored medical services
- Any vet is eligible
- ODOT provides state-source funds to cover costs
- Vets pay fares for public transit
Oregon Pilot Project (cont)

Primarily a resource coordination project

• Use one-stop call centers already operated by regional transit coordinators
• Provide individualized travel planning, travel training, other travel supports
• Use public transportation when available and appropriate
• Coordinate with DAV, other VA resources
• Use public or private transportation to supplement existing services
Pilot Project Performance Measures

- # rides; # unique individuals; and estimated cost per ride

- Need to know more for future planning
  - How many trips does each vet generally need?
  - What is the travel pattern?
  - What is the cost in rural and in urban areas?
  - Does project result in $ savings and increased opportunity for vets?
Pilot Lessons To Date

- Great success when local veterans representative are involved as partner
- Many trips are already possible with existing resources
- VA medical service is more localized – most trips are relatively short
- Vehicle donation has limited success
- Veterans need more than medical trips for successful integration
Oregon Next Steps

• Continue to communicate with Oregon Legislature

• Expand program
  – Additional support $ for pilot
  – Additional state and federal funds to go statewide
  – Evaluate research and continue to improve program through planning

• Coordinate with local, regional and state partners (Gov’s office, DVA, others)
  – ODOT Public Transit Advisory Committee now has Veterans’ representative
Task Force Report and ODOT Contacts


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Questions?

Please type your questions into the chat box.
Archived Webinar

Slides and a recording of today's event will be made available within 5 business days at http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=26936

Questions or Comments?

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