

Transcription from Webinar on Rural Transportation

James Butler: Thank you and good afternoon everyone. Thank you for joining us for our first Webinar for 2009 for the Rural Communities Initiative. This particular Webinar will be on funding and planning rural transportation programs. During the Rural Communities Initiative Academy back in September, the challenges of providing reliable and cost effective transportation was identified by many of the rural communities sites as one of the most critical issues facing rural organizations serving TANF participants. As part of most of the technical assistance plans prepared during the Academy, sites expressed interest in learning more about current rural transportation models that serve TANF participants, resources on how they could form partnerships with local transportation stakeholders, and some direction on how to obtain funding for these types of projects. Based on the interests that were expressed by the rural sites, we have designed a series of technical assistance events that focus on the issue of rural transportation, the first of which is today's Webinar. For today's Webinar we have six very knowledgeable speakers from four national agencies that assist rural communities in designing, funding, and implementing rural transportation programs on a regular basis. After all the speakers have presented, we will open the lines up for any of you that have questions or comments. So, without further ado, I have the assumed pleasure of introducing our first speakers. Our first speakers are Mr. Charles Rutkowski and Chris Zeilinger from the Community Transportation Association of America or CTAA.

Charles comes before you having more than 35 years of experience in the community transportation field with extensive skills in transit planning, evaluation, management, operations, and financing. He manages CTAA's USDA Rural and Tribal Technical Assistance Programs, which provide planning assistance and training to help establish, expand, or enhance rural and tribal transit programs, services, and facilities. Through these programs, he has had direct involvement in the development and implementation of transit service and facility projects in over 125 communities in 43 states. Included among these projects are several which have become national models, such as transit development and coordination projects in Lee County, North Carolina, Clarksdale, Mississippi, and Kodiak, Alaska. Prior to joining CTAA, Mr. Rutkowski was the director of a coordinated rural transit system in Chenango County, New York where he was responsible for operations, scheduling, dispatching, financial management, marketing, and maintenance of that system.

Chris Zeilinger is the Director of the National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination, housed within the offices of Community Transportation Association of America. His duties revolve around the Center's purpose of providing states and communities with the support they need to better integrate public transportation services with the services and demands of their human services networks. He joined CTAA in 1988. Prior to that he was employed by the Capital Metropolitan Transit Authority in Austin, Texas, where he supervised the transit authority's paratransit reservation and dispatching systems. Welcome Charles and Chris.

Charles Rutkowski, National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination, CTAA

Thank you James and welcome to all of you and good morning. When we started discussing this Webinar I was wondering at what level the information should be presented and I guess we agreed it should be fairly basic. I think a lot of you participating are new to the transportation arena so if some of it sounds a little bit repetitive, bare with us. I think as we proceed through the Webinar and through subsequent training and learning opportunities it will become a little bit more advanced. I'll try to go to our first slide. I'm not seeing my slide proceed. Patrick, are you seeing the slide move?

Patrick: Hi Charles, this is Patrick. I can see your slide. Your slide has moved.

Charles Rutkowski: Okay, for some reason it is not showing in my screen. We may have to do this manually. I will just give you cues when we need to move the slides then, okay?

Patrick: Sounds good.

Charles Rutkowski: Okay. Well, we are going to talk on a very basic level, about sources of funding for transportation programs. They fall into two basic funding categories, if we can go to the next slide. The categories are capital and operating. Capital, as the name suggests, encompasses funding for vehicles and facilities and that would include associated equipment, computer equipment, radio, communication equipment, as well as vehicles. Generally, capital funding is easier to secure than operating funding. There are more sources out there, some creative, unconventional sources. Generally speaking it's easier to secure capital funding than operating. It is not an annually recurring expense. Basically, if you are starting a new program you need to acquire funding to secure the vehicles and then you would not need to replace them until they break, which might be anywhere from three to five to six years later. So even though the expenses are not recurring, you do need to anticipate that they are going to recur at some point. There is a match requirement for capital sources and that match generally must be in cash. If you are buying equipment or vehicles from a vendor, in-kind matches do not really work. The matches do need to be in cash. On the operating side, there are more potential sources, more unconventional sources, but it may be more difficult to secure operating funding on a continuing basis. There is a lot of flexibility on providing a match in several of the federal programs and we will talk about that in just a bit.

If we can go to the next slide. We are going to talk about conventional federal funding sources and these are sources that are available through the Federal Transit Administration. I am just going to quickly go through them. Section 5309 is the Capital Program and that is available in both urban and rural areas. Sometimes there is an assumption that it is only an urban program but rural areas can access funds through this program. Before SAFETEA-LU, which is the framework for federal funding, this program, 5309, was entirely earmarked through Congress and in the past couple of years it is no longer entirely earmarked. You can certainly secure funds by going to your congressional delegation and requesting earmarks but the program is becoming a more traditional program where you would access the funds through your state department of transportation or metropolitan planning organization.

5310 is an elderly and disabled capital program. The recipients must be not-for-profit organizations or municipalities that are involved in coordination. The vehicles must be used primarily for serving seniors and/or persons with disabilities. There is a provision in this program that allows for contracting service, so there is kind of an operating side to this program.

5311 is the rural program which provides both capital and operating assistance and that is at the option of the particular state in which you live.

5311T is a set aside within the rural program that is a tribal grant program. This is a new program. They are now entering the third year. Nationally, this year there is \$12 million available which really is not a whole lot considering all of the potential tribal transit programs out there. Next year there will be \$15 million available. The funds can be used for planning, capital, and operative assistance.

Section 5316 is the Job Access Reverse Commute Program (JARC). As the name suggests, funds through this program are to be used for employment related transportation and the match for that program is 50% so basically the federal dollars need to be matched dollar for dollar.

The New Freedom Program is a new program, as the name suggests, created through SAFETEA-LU and New Freedom will support services for persons with disabilities that go above and beyond existing

programs so it must support new programs that somehow do not duplicate what might already exist in a community. Okay, I am able to change my slides now so I think I'm in control of the slide show here.

Generally, federal funding levels for transportation programs have increased over the past several years but the difficulty that we are seeing is that the communities are having difficulty securing the local match. However, FTA does provide a lot of flexibility on sources and mechanisms for the match. Within the 5316 program and JARC, there is, as I said, a 50% match requirement. However, FTA allows non-department transportation funds to serve as a match. For example, TANF's welfare to work funds can be used as match. Normally, there is a prohibition against using federal funds to match federal funds but as a result of rule changes within FTA, FTA does basically wave that restriction and there is flexibility on using any non DOT sources to match FTA funded sources.

5311, which is the rural program, on the operating side it has a 50% match requirement and non-DOT contract funds can serve as match. So if you are running a rural transit program, a public transit program, and you might be contracting with a human service agency and receiving funds to provide that service that contract revenue can serve as a source of match funds.

When we talk about collaboration and contracting relationships among organizations we get into the realm of transportation coordination which is a principle that has been out there for 25 or 30 years but increasingly it is being embraced by both human service agencies interested in mobility and transportation providers. Coordination can provide opportunities for all of the partners: the provider, agencies, as well as providers who use the service and actually transportation coordination is a requirement. There is a requirement within section 5310, 16, and 17 programs that there be a locally derived coordination plan in place. This locally derived plan is the plan that should be developed with collaboration of the stakeholders who have some interest or concern for transportation in the community. You cannot access funds for these programs unless that plan is in place. Some of the other benefits of coordination include access to some additional revenue sources, greater efficiency of operations, better use of resources, and more services for users. You might note that we did not include here that coordination will reduce cost. It is sometimes an expectation that transportation coordination will reduce cost to participants and it does not always occur. What we hope is that we can squeeze more efficiency out of the transportation network but we do not always see decreases in transportation cost across the board.

There are some opportunities for existing transportation providers. If you are actually providing services now you can offer it to others under contract. You might be able to share resources in contract with others to provide the service. Maybe you are a transportation provider but you do not want to continue that. Maybe someone else is better qualified to do it. So you can be a provider or a consumer of service. Some of the opportunities for human service agencies: they can also contract for the services. By having a transportation professional provide it the services, the quality of service can be enhanced a bit and existing agencies can focus on their primary mission. What we very often see in working with community service agencies is that case workers, health workers, and human service staff sometimes spend a good part of their day actually providing transportation; driving their clients from appointment to appointment and that is not really part of their mission, not in their job description, and it's a transportation cost. If a situation can be changed so that somebody else is providing the transportation, those case workers and counselors can do their case work and counseling and focus on their primary mission within the agency.

Coordination is not limited to operations, it could include provision of services such as dispatching, scheduling, management, maintenance and repairs, staff training, staff hiring and screening, or drug and alcohol testing. There might also be some opportunities for sharing functions such as shared purchasing of parts, fuels, supplies, shared vehicle acquisition, or pooled insurance and those are some areas where

you can actually see some reduced cost by sharing the acquisition cost of various items you can bring down unit cost in some areas. But just a note on insurance, you might be able to achieve some savings by a pooled insurance procurement, however, generally the cost of insuring a vehicle and coordinated service can be higher than the cost of insuring a vehicle that is just being used for a single human service agency. It's basically related to the hire exposure to risk.

So this is my second to the last slide. The byword that we encourage you to remember is diversification. Transportation can be funded, supported through a variety of different sources and we encourage communities to look to a wide variety of funding sources, to enhance the ability of programs. There are some conventional sources that we talked about. There are a lot more unconventional sources that we often get into when we develop transportation plans for CTAA so we encourage folks to diversify the funding base. As James mentioned in the intro, here at CTAA we do have a technical assistance program through which we can provide detailed, hands-on assistance to help communities develop, enhance and grow their transportation programs and I encourage you to copy down the information on the slide. We also have information on our various technical assistance programs on our Web site which is www.ctaa.org. That is my last slide and Patrick I'll hand it back to you.

Patrick: And I'll hand it over to James. Thanks Charlie.

James: Patrick, Chris is now speaking.

Chris Zeilinger: Yes, I'm here.

James: Okay.

Chris Zeilinger: Basically, I'll wait for the question and answer period to see what the participants on the call might have as questions but I wanted to underscore just a few of the points that Charlie has made in the slide show that we just looked at and listened to. One is that for folks that are serving the TANF population we have a lot of experience in our organization working with folks at the state and community level in this. It is really important to try to identify the existing transportation providers if they exist, now, in a lot of rural areas they do not exist or do not exist in a way that is adequate to these programs' purposes that you may have but we found in a lot of communities even with those that did not initially think so, that there are indeed transportation providers with whom some type of coordination or collaboration is possible. That is why much of what we have just heard from Charlie has been reminding us about coordination among partners whether it is agencies or non-governmental organizations, or tribal nations or state agencies, or what have you, because, as many of us have experienced, especially trying to provide transportation in rural communities, it can be incredibly resource intensive to try and do it yourself. Although there is money there, a lot of that money, Charlie started off the slide show listing the sources of transit funds for these types of activities, that money does indeed exist but a lot of it is already subscribed to. It's not that you can just come knock on the Department of Transportation's door and they will greet you with an open check book and say, "Here it is. Go buy a bus and hire some drivers." So the importance of networking and collaboration is very important.

One of the other opportunities we can offer to anyone in this network on this call is that we do also, in partnership with the Federal Transit Administration and its United We Ride program, have a network of coordination ambassadors that can work with you, that are familiar with some of the details in the various states and regions and can work with you to build some partnerships or relationships to address some of your own local transportation needs. And then folks like Charlie and myself can come in and do additional technical assistance as necessary. So that was one point I wanted to underscore.

The other thing, and I know that any time I'm in a presentation where someone is talking about sources of funding I'm immediately thinking "Gee, where do I get that money, who do I talk to, who do I call?" Almost all of those programs that Charlie listed out as a Federal Transit Administration program, while they are federal programs they are largely managed and administrated by state agencies. So rather than say here is a convenient list of everyone in the Federal government you need to talk to, the key point there is that for most of these programs, and again working in a TANF environment you're used to working with state agencies or should be used to that at least. So again, if you find yourselves for your own local needs or intents or desires or purposes as wanting to explore some transportation funds for some of these activities you're trying to address there will be a state agency, typically a state department of transportation transit office that you would be wishing to contact. And again, we can put you in contact with the appropriate agency where you'll be hearing elsewhere through today's presentation additional resources that can put you in touch with the folks you need to talk to in your state governments. So those are the only two points I wanted to add to the power point show. And with that, those are my prepared remarks, and when the time is appropriate for questions and answers Charlie and I will both be happy to field those as time and appropriateness permits.

James: Thank you very much Charles and Chris. Great job. So we're going to move on now to our next speaker who will be Dr. Mary Leary from Easter Seals Project ACTION. Dr. Leary is the Senior Director of Easter Seals Project ACTION, the National Center on Senior Transportation and other Transportation Initiatives for Easter Seals. She manages three major cooperative agreements and projects. These three projects are Easter Seals Project ACTION that assists communities to further accessible transportation for people with disabilities of all ages; the National Center on Senior Transportation in partnership with the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging that assists communities to further transportation options and resources for older adults and a special project to further person-centered mobility management to ensure that people have the mobility options so they are able to remain in their community and connected them to whatever human and health services they may require.

Before joining Easter Seals, Dr. Leary was employed by the DHHS Administration on Aging and worked with the United We Ride program office to develop field programs in transportation coordination. Welcome Dr. Leary.

Mary Leary, Easter Seals Project ACTION

Thank you very much and please it is Mary. After I got my doctorate, people started calling me Dr. Leary and I said, "Oh my heavens, it's definitely Mary." It is such an honor to be able to participate on this call. Thank you so very much for the opportunity to speak to all of you today. And I always like to start off with a quote and this is a quote that I think is particularly compelling because it is from Ann Frank. She said, "How wonderful it is that nobody needs wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

And Easter Seals Project ACTION and the National Center on Senior Transportation that we have in partnership with the Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the CTAA with their programs and their technical assistance centers that you just heard about. You know the RTRTAP technical assistance center and all of our partners in training and technical assistance cooperative agreements with the Federal Transit Administration, including of course, the American Public Transportation Association, and their work with intelligence transportation systems. We are all striving to make the world a better place for people with disabilities, older adults, persons with limited incomes, their families, youth with disabilities, and really anybody who has perhaps some sort of mobility ability or mobility impairment. We want to make the world just as available and accessible as it is for many others who perhaps take getting up in the morning and getting in the car for granted. So it is an honor to be able to talk to you all.

I'm going to probably do a little bit of a shift from the excellent discussion that Charlie just gave you, from the funding side. I did prepare, we did put together a number of slides but they're primarily background here. I'm going to focus most specifically on the work that we're doing on human services transportation, particularly our new, very exciting, project that we're working on in partnership with the Community Transportation Association of America on behalf of the federal transit administration to develop a person-first or person-centered mobility management plan. And I really want to take this opportunity to begin some context setting for you all on this whole concept on persons centered mobility because I think it is very pertinent to the planning activities that you are going to be undergoing in your communities. One of the things that I wanted to mention just to build initially on Charlie's discussion is, when we look at the funding sources there is a lot of excitement now. I think the fact that the FTA did such a phenomenal job in being able to have legislation that increased human services funding by 40%, though it was practically unheard of. It's incredibly exciting to have that happen. The key stakeholders that you really might want to make sure that you have the opportunity to connect in your local communities, there's kind of about seven of them at the state level: the state department of motor vehicles, the state Medicaid offices, the state highway administration, the state disability organizations; actually there is more: the state employment, the state education, the state department of transportation, the state units on aging. If you have the opportunity to engage with many of these groups including sometimes, the state law enforcement, what we are finding when we work with states and local communities around the country is that they have to increase transportation options for their clients and amazing things happen when people come together from these various groups. And there have actually been some pretty good studies that have been done where these groups have been surveyed to talk about the joint planning so if you have not had a chance to kind of jump in and be a part of that coordinated planning process that Charlie mentioned that's now institutionalized in some SAFETEA-LU, I really want to suggest that that might be an excellent opportunity for you.

I want to just give you some scales for these numbers and I want to add one more set of numbers. JARC 2008 appropriations are about \$156 million, 5317, New Freedom, are about \$7.5 million. 5310 is about \$726 million, and then there are also the state units on aging Older American Acts Fund, what we call Title 3b. The Older Americans Act Fund is about \$70 million in transportation with a small part of that going to assistance transportation. And then when you look at the state match it is about another \$130 million. That's about \$200 million. And then on top of that if you add the Medicaid funding which it is hard to get any hard and fast numbers but often times people talk about that in the neighborhood of \$1 billion in funding. Looking at the numbers you really start to gain an appreciation for the fact that as the General Accountability Office said back in 2004, when United We Ride began, there is a lot of funding to take advantage of and with match that FTA and SAFETEA-LU legislation allows for now you can actually use older American direct funds as match for those FTA programs. So I just really wanted to reinforce that for you all.

Just to do a little bit of additional context setting, when we look at it from the two groups that we work the most with and that is older adults and people with disabilities just want to kind of key in on a few key demographic statistics just from a positioning point of view. First of all, the fact that the over 80 population cohort is one of the fastest growing cohorts is a very significant issue for the transportation services at a community level. It is a huge need. It is a growing need because often times people in that age bracket probably are not able to drive safely, very often. And with the growth that we're expecting to see going from about 5.3 million to 8.9 million between now and 2030 it underscores the importance of developing capacity and infrastructure to support this growing need. It's also an opportunity. You know, William Millar, as president of the American Public Transportation Association, often talks about that and reinforcing how important it is that there is an opportunity to build around these needs and the older adult community. So all of our readers from the transportation association side I know have been talking about this for many many years and, you know, many of us have been working with these groups for quite a while. Easter Seals has been working on behalf of and supporting people with disabilities and

their families for almost 90 years and we have been honored to have the opportunity to work with the federal transit administration, the Easter Seals project action cooperative agreement contract for over 20 years now, which kind of brings me to the next slide on trans-impact with people with disabilities.

What I wanted to really underscore here were two things. One, we have a growing number of people with cognitive limitation and cognitive disabilities. This is really significant because it causes a lot of challenge in terms of being able to navigate transportation systems in communities. Sometimes this is also related to returning veterans and this is another group that you can tie into and connect into from a collaboration and a planning point of view. There is a lot of funding that you might be aware of that is going to the community to help returning veterans; to help them get jobs, to help them, you know, connect in and transition back into the community, particularly for those veterans who may have come back from war with a disability and that cognitive issue is really sometimes significant for them because of the high incident of traumatic brain injuries. The second statistic that we're really concerned about is the poverty rate, 26% poverty rate for people with severe disabilities compared to 8% for the non-disabled population. This just shows the importance of making sure that we're working to increase transportation options for people with disabilities and really paying attention to the need to connect them to jobs. There is another program that CTAA has called Job-link that Carolyn Jeskey manages and that is providing a lot of wonderful support to really increase and connect in with the disability program navigators for services.

So what does this all mean in terms of transformation and what is going on today? We see a real transformation; I know I am preaching to the choir, having been in the Department of Health and Human Services myself for about four years, where I had the opportunity to start and to work with the United We Ride program. You all from the TANF point of view, I am sure you have seen a shift and it's been particularly acute for the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Service and for the Administration on Aging to really try to drive this independence and dignity strategy and to move away from institutional living particularly with the Americans with Disabilities Act with the Olmsted Act. We have a legislative underpinning to for that.

But all of this has really shifted transportation. Transportation now is far more than, I think, what it perhaps used to be or perhaps in many ways we wish it had always been this but it indeed is part of this whole structure to allow people to stay in the communities and it is intimately connected to economic cost savings that really dwarf the actual cost allocated to transportation services in our public system. You know, once we are able to start to better understand these actual costs for what transportation access can do to reduce depression because if we can reduce depression, often times when a person can no longer drive he or she can fall into deep depression, that depression then decreases their health status, and increases their healthcare costs. There is a lot of work and a lot of discussion being done about that and, of course, employment and education opportunities.

So this is one of the impacts and I always like to talk about this including what we call the stain on the population. As we move forward, one of the reasons we hear so much about the transformation of many of these human services systems, particularly systems like Medicaid, is that we have an equivalent number of working adults to the number of older adults who have retired. We are really stressing the system because historically we have had a lot more people and if you look at the demographic charts you have really more like an expansion in the middle of going smaller in the top and smaller in the bottom. But now it's squaring with the population so that's really going to make it tough for all of us as we move forward. So we talk about United We Ride, the family services, and when Charlie was talking about the various types of funding streams that you have access to that really kind of ties to the various opportunities and the types of transportation.

I know particularly for rural communities, if you do not already have a public transit system, or other transportation systems that might be the area that you are going to focus on. There is a lot going on, as an example, for older adults, volunteer driver programs. There are a couple of very interesting models that are being filled in across the United States. One, is I Can American and it's www.icanamerican.com/org. I Can is a public/private partnership that is really starting to take root and it is a very interesting model where people sort of bank credits, if you will, by participating as a voluntary driver and then when they need transportation and services they can utilize those services through this program. Another is something that the Beverly Foundation has been working on for quite a while and that is supplemental transportation services. And a lot of these grew out of communities where they did not have a lot of access to fixed route services. And of course the other area that we focus a lot on at Project Action is acceptable fixed routes. We have a proper training program to help people with disabilities learn how to utilize the fixed route system in their communities and it's really important because it's much better to help someone learn to use something that's accessible to them without having to call up and make a reservation. They can also use the ADA complementary paratransit but where that's something that is necessary for them that is also a very important mode of transportation.

There are a number of other activities going on with driving continuation and then here [inaudible] transportation and that is another place where the numbers can be pretty staggering. What I would call lost opportunity costs. Metlife Foundation did a study and for about seven million family caregivers, the cost for providing, the cost to communities, to businesses if you will, that were being lost was in the neighborhood of \$17-33 billion but an even more compelling study is that which was just updated by AARP, they issued this study in 2007 and then updated it for 2008 and it is growing and it's called Valuing the Invaluable. That study talks about the unpaid cost of 34 million family caregivers providing care from \$350 billion - \$375 billion. So, you know, when we really look at this and really look at all of the different options and the different family of services there really is an opportunity here to not just talk about the actual funding sources but also talk about what types of dollars can you save in your community by being able to harness transportation systems. There are a number of states, South Carolina is one, that are doing a lot with something called the data-Q where they are gathering person-centered information that helps them to justify and develop strategies to increase transportation options in the community by talking about some of these various cost-saving strategies.

This slide is a confusing array of programs and funding; it is sort of a famous slide. It was made famous by Brian Helper, who you might know. Brian was over at the Federal Transit Administration when he initially made this slide. That person in the middle with all the question marks that is Joe Rider and poor Joe Rider what a confusing array of systems that Joe Rider is trying to gain access to! So one of the things that you can also spend time doing is looking at ways to streamline access to transportation options and that's why I wanted to spend a little bit of time talking about mobility management.

There was such a big discussion on transportation coordination that I'm not going to go into that but just to underscore this slide here- this is FTA's vision of One Vision One Call. That is why there is a lot of work going on in something called Mobility Services for all Americans. It talks about how to utilize information technology to increase accessibility to information on transportation options that might exist in the community.

Now I am going to kind of jump ahead a slide to really start talking about mobility management. One thing I wanted to mention is there is, the Federal Transit Administration has grants for building mobility management and transportation capacity in the human services and it closes in I think about another 30 days. These are very significant grants and it can be upwards of about \$100,000 that communities can get and so I really suggest to everyone, you might want to take a look at it. One of the neat things about mobility management is there is flexibility now with some of the funds that used to be used for capital

investment only; now you can use them for short-term management activities, one of which is this area of mobility management.

And let me kind of explain what mobility management is. I know you're probably going to hear this term a lot. Mobility management we think is probably best described by the process required and this is a planning process. A lot of folks may come in on this planning side, and if you're not familiar with something called the Framework for Action, I would go to www.unitedweride.gov and download the Framework for Action guide. Framework for Action is a planning process that has generated tremendous results and it is basically getting all the right people around the table and doing what many of us would call FLAT. I don't like the [inaudible] piece of it. But basically what you want to do is do an assessment in your community first of the needs of your citizens, of your particular clients, of your families. Then decide what the transportation services are that the community needs. Then you take a look and assess and catalogue the community resources that are available. This sounds simple but you'd be surprised on how many communities actually do not have that. But what you really want is to hopefully be able to go to one place and download a list of all the transportation options and how to access those options. We, all of the technical assistance centers, have access to templates that we can provide on that. There are a number of resources that are available and Easter Seals Project ACTION has a clearinghouse where we have over 100 materials that you can use and we will send them out at no charge to you. You can order 100 of them. You can run a training program. We shipped out almost 100,000 materials last year and we probably average sending out anywhere to about 50-100 organizations a month. So we get a lot of requests and we're really delighted to fill those requests.

And then when you look at the planning process it's kind of connecting the two sides together. You look at what the person needs and then you look at what's available and then you look at what do we need to do to help that person use those resources that are in the community.

And then in the beginning when I talked about those various groups at the state level and often times at the community level, it's connecting those access points. We sort of have a dream of "wouldn't it be wonderful if every time someone walks into a Department of Motor Vehicles and they walk out not being able to drive that not only do they not feel like the world has just been lost to them but perhaps they have in their hands a brochure that guides them to the other resources". Perhaps they have talked to a very nice person there who has helped redefine for them what the concept of mobility means. Perhaps they are not walking out depressed and wanting to kill themselves like a man in Iowa did when he told one of the human service providers if I can't drive anymore I don't want to live and he went home and shot himself. These are things we do not want to happen.

And you know in rural communities, it is particularly acute and we know these folks have to have resources, we know they have to have answers. And so in this person-centered mobility management plan that we're putting together for FTA and that we have issued our first draft that is now up for review. We are currently recommending five major goals. One: educating community leaders. Two: assessing existing options. Three: insuring access to mobility services. Four: expanding community awareness with the new and enhanced projects that are being implemented. And last, and very important, ensuring sustainability of this new infrastructure and these new goals and many communities are fielding mobility managers. Wisconsin has fielded over 40 mobility managers using the New Freedom initiative funding and I know David's going to talk a lot more about New Freedom because he's just put some wonderful information on the Web site so I won't go into much more information on that. I don't want to take away what David's going to be talking about but my message is there are lots of opportunities for everyone. This is the initial resource center that Chris Islander supports. We always like to talk about this center. It's a very strong partner with CTAA with the NRC and it's a very important part of United We Ride, particularly the long-term view of it. And this tells you a little bit about Easter Seals and our history. What I'd like to do though is go to our mission.

Our mission at Easter Seals Project ACTION is that at the end of the day it is about transportation for everyone, everywhere, whenever they need it to facilitate inclusive independent living in the community. We do four major activities: we do training events, technical assistance, outreach, and applied research. We do the same four functions in our National Center for Senior Transportation.

And one of the things I really wanted to suggest is to please take a moment to go to our Easter Seals Web site and that Web site is www.projectaction.org. Go to the top right-hand corner, there is something called a user profile. If you take a moment to create a new user profile that way every time we have a new training program, as an example right now we have about six different trainings that are going to be happening over the next 60 days. We also have a mobility planning services institute that we're going to be fielding, a senior oriented transportation institute happening June 15th through the 18th and then the accessible community transitions to primarily focus on pulling together those stakeholders focusing on the disability community and disability transportation options for people in the community with disabilities and that's happening on July 12th through the 15th. We typically fund about 22 of these events to come together to do joint planning and if you take a moment to register online at one of these two sites you will get our updated e-newsletter or blurb on any of our upcoming activities. For example, we just finished a Webinar on trip planning, we have an audio conference on transportation by the number which helps you figure out, and that's coming up by the way because this might be something you might want to do on January 22nd and 29th. We actually have a CD that's available that helps you understand what the different costs are for planning transition services in the community. We also have, there is another discussion on, rural transportation, startup and expansion of transportation services in rural areas. This event is on February 10th. There is a lot more so take a moment and look at our Web site and build a profile and we really look forward to serving you and seeing how we can assist you in a more targeted fashion in your work. And with that I turn it back to you and thank you so very much Patrick for the invitation and for this opportunity to talk with everyone today.

James: Thank you so much Mary for that information. I'm going to move ahead to our next speaker who will be David Schneider from the Federal Transit Administration. David works as the Program Specialist for the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities, Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) as Charles mentioned earlier, and New Freedom grant programs. Part of his duties are to provide guidance and technical assistance to FTA staff, grantees, and stakeholders on implementing the programs and conducts evaluations of the effectiveness of the programs. David joined the FTA in 2003 as a Presidential Management Fellow and spent four years with the agency's Office of Civil Rights prior to joining the FTA's Office of Transit Programs in 2007. Welcome David.

David Schneider

Thank you and good afternoon everyone. Thank you for this opportunity and thank you also to my colleagues at Easter Seals and CTAA and the National RTAP for their work and for being such great ambassadors of the initiatives and programs that we are all working together on.

I was asked to talk specifically about the Job Access and Reverse Commute program. So my presentation is limited to information on that program primarily. We administer a wide range of grant programs at FTA but it's the JARC program that was designed specifically to try to meet the transportation needs of TANF recipients and we've had a long standing relationship between the JARC program and the TANF program. At one point, in the early years of the JARC program, over half of the JARC services that were in operation were matched with dollars from the TANF program and the FTA and HHS issued joint guidance on working together. So I'm always happy to talk with folks who are working with TANF populations and I'm going to encourage folks who are TANF administrators to reach out to the transportation providers and other stakeholders at the state level and local level.

As I go through this I'll try to skip over some of the things that may be redundant at this point in the presentation and try to emphasize some things that I think bear emphasizing. The goal of the JARC program is to help welfare recipients and other low income individuals travel to job sites as well as other employment related activities such as job training and child care. JARC funds can also be used to improve what's known as reverse commute transportation for the public at large. And the notion behind reverse commute transportation is, in a traditional transportation system in a city, people would be living in the suburbs and maybe driving to a park-and-ride lot and then taking a train into the downtown, I'm talking about a large city. Well, now that many jobs and other opportunities are located in the suburbs, reverse travel commute would allow people to travel to suburban locations from downtown areas. The JARC program was established in response to the welfare reform legislation passed in 1996 and that legislation increased pressure for welfare recipients to find employment and it became obvious to people in the transportation world that in order to be able to find a job and to maintain a job you're going to need to have transportation to that job. Yet there were transportation barriers that were preventing low income individuals from finding and maintaining employment. Two-thirds of the new jobs are in the suburbs so that's three out of four welfare recipients live in rural areas or central cities and many recipients don't own reliable vehicles. And also many entry level jobs require weekend or evening hours in areas that may not be well served by existing transit routes or maybe well served by an existing transit route but because you have to take multiple vehicles and multiple transfers the trip could be two hours one way and two hours the next way which is not a sustainable commute for most people. So the JARC program was designed to enhance public transportation services beyond what's currently provided at the local level to help meet these job access needs and help reduce these barriers.

Initially the JARC program was a discretionary program where people submitted an application to FTA and FTA staff selected recipients. Gradually, over time, starting around 2000, more and more of the funds were earmarked by Congress so members of Congress selected specific programs that they wanted to fund and instructed FTA to fund those programs. A change came in 2005 when our legislation was reauthorized and the JARC program was converted from a discretionary program to a formula program. So now each state gets an allocation of money based on the number of low income individuals within the state and there's a separate allocation provided to metropolitan areas with populations over 200,000. And our program is due to be reauthorized in 2009.

In terms of the overall funding levels, the program started with about \$60 million in 2000 and it has grown incrementally to where in 2009 \$165 million has been authorized for the program. 60% of the apportionment every year goes to areas with populations of 200,000 or more, 20% goes to states to be used in cities with populations between 50,000 and 199,000 people, and 20% goes to states for uses in areas with populations under 50,000. When you get down to the individual states apportionment the dollar amounts aren't relatively large as far as federal government programs are concerned. So, for example, Florida last year received \$901,000, Pennsylvania received \$1.1 million, and these are numbers for the rural apportionment. Arizona received about \$560,000, North Dakota received \$143,000. I think the point to keep in mind though is that the JARC program is not out there to help the agencies establish a brand new transit system. It is out there to enhance the existing public transit services. And the other thing to keep in mind is that the JARC funds can be matched by other federal government programs as well as local government programs so that we hope that the JARC program provides some seed money for other programs and for coordinated planning so people are working together and funding programs jointly.

Previous speakers have mentioned other funding sources. If you have more detailed questions about any of these funding sources feel free to give me a call or to call one of our regional offices who can provide more details about eligible activities for some of these other sources of money.

In terms of how the money gets out there from Congress to the individual, local organizations, the way it works is something like this: Congress appropriates funds every year and once they do the Federal Transit Administration issues and apportionment notice. And in that notice is how much money is available to rural areas in each state. Once we publish the apportionment notice, there is a coordinated planning process which isn't really triggered by the apportionment notice it's something that has been going on for the past several years since SAFETEA-LU required it. The coordinated planning process, as folks have eluded to before, is a collaborative effort between local transit agencies and human service agencies and members of the public and it identifies the transportation need of low income persons as well as people with disabilities and older adults; the existing resources available; gaps in services; and it identifies priorities to fill those gaps. And coordinated plans can be developed at the state level for all rural areas in the state or they can be developed within specific rural planning areas if the state has divided its rural areas into planning areas. It will vary from state to state. Coordinated plans need to be revised at least once every four years. Most states have already developed their coordinated plans but if you haven't had the opportunity to participate in the coordinated planning process, you still have that opportunity because it's an ongoing process and the plans will need to be revised and taken a look at. Once the priorities for specific job access projects have been documented in the plan the state holds a competition for projects that address those priorities and select what local agencies, at the local level will receive funds and local recipients can be public agencies, they can be private non-profit agencies, or they can be private for-profit providers of public transportation. And the state can hold a competitive selection annually or at intervals but not to exceed three years.

Once the state has selected what projects it wants to fund it applies to FTA for its apportionment. We review the application to make sure the activities that they want to fund are eligible and under the JARC program and then we obligate the funds. And then once the funds have been obligated the state transfers the funds to a local provider and monitors the provider to ensure the activities of the grant are being accomplished.

In terms of what activities are eligible under the JARC program, one of the more traditional things that we have funded under the JARC program is expanding demand responses trans service. Situations where there is a small town that has a limited fixed route service, maybe two or three routes and it goes to maybe the end of town and you imagine a situation where maybe there's an industrial park or other job site that has located maybe a mile or two from the end point of the transit route. Well, JARC funds could be used to extend that route to the employment site. Another activity that has been funded by the JARC program is transportation that employers arrange to pick up their employees and shuttle them back and forth to work. Another JARC eligible activity is to fund late-night service that extends the hours of the transit's system say from 7 p.m., when they normally would stop, to midnight in order to allow people who work later hours to come home from work. Another activity is our ride-sharing, our carpooling programs. Often these are administered by nonprofit organizations to help people that do not have their own car share transportation. Another JARC program that has been implemented to some extent around the country are automobile loan programs. You can use JARC money to fund loans so that people can purchase an automobile at a lower interest rate than they might ordinarily be able to receive. Once they purchase the automobile they are required to use it in a ride-sharing program.

One of the other activities I wanted to mention is voucher programs. In a lot of places you may have some limited fixed route or demand response transit service and it's just not feasible to extend that fixed route service say until 11 o'clock or midnight as in my previous example. One way to meet the transportation needs of people that need transportation during this time of the day would be to setup a program so that an individual can have a voucher and they can use that voucher on a local taxi system or on a local nonprofit's van or on a local ride-sharing program so they are connected with a ride at a time or during the day when the existing more traditional transit just is not available.

And then the last thing which has been touched on already is mobility management. We are seeing a growing number of people who are recipients of JARC funds use JARC money for mobility management. One of the benefits of mobility management is you can start up projects with a relatively small amount of money because you're not using the money to build a whole new station or buy lots of vehicles. What you're using it for is coordination activities. Things like establishing a call center that coordinates multiple services and you can use it to pay for people to serve as travel navigators to help people identify what their travel needs are but also what options they have in the community. Because of our limited time, I won't go into much more detail about mobility management except to say that there's a lot of information about mobility management on our Web site and the United We Ride Web site as well. In terms of collaboration, if you have not reached out to the transit agencies or Department of Transportation at the state or local level we encourage you to do so. If you are having difficulties doing it you can call me or call our regional staff or call some of the United We Ride ambassadors and we can brainstorm on ways to break some bottlenecks.

This slide identifies three opportunities for collaboration. One is to share knowledge, to be at the table, at the coordinated planning process so that other stakeholders in your area can learn about the needs of the clients that you serve and you can learn about some of the resources that are there. There is an opportunity to pool financial resources as I mentioned. TANF funds can be used to match JARC dollars for transportation projects that serve your clients. And then if you're operating vehicles or other services there's opportunities to take a look at and avoiding duplication and streamlining the services.

In terms of the results of the program, the JARC program has been around since 1998 and over time we have developed evaluation studies of the program and we're continuing to take a look and evaluate the program. I have some of the results of the reports we've been developing in recent years. I just want to highlight a few facts. In 2006, JARC services provided access to about 43.4 million jobs including about 21 million jobs that we would characterize as low wage jobs. When we go out and measure the travel times between point A to point B on a JARC service versus the existing transit service out there, JARC services generally reduced travel time for users, which is important. When we go out and talk to users of the services and ask them to rate the importance of the services most users say that they are very important to them. And we've done some cost-effectiveness studies and it looks like the JARC services that we surveyed are relatively cost-effective compared to other transit services as well as cost-effective when compared to other programs that seek to assist low-income persons. And we have also had some positive results when we go out and compare the cost of the services to the benefits of the services. When you are going out and you are reducing transportation barriers and you are helping put someone who was unemployed get a job, when you are helping someone who had a lower paying job get a higher paying job, when you are helping someone who was on public assistance get off public assistance there are a wide range of benefits that can be achieved through that. And so we are continually interested in trying to quantify those benefits so that we can demonstrate the importance of transportation that gets people to work on a reliable basis and off public assistance. There are benefits to both the users and to members of the public at-large. That is my presentation essentially. We have some technical assistance resources and some links here and then I have my contact information here and I encourage folks to contact me or my colleagues on the call and our regional offices as well. Thanks.

James: Thank you so much David. And in the essence of time we're going to go ahead and move on to our last two speakers for today's Webinar. Our next speakers are Nichole Goldsmith and Robert Tassinari from the National Rural Transit Assistance Program and I'm going to refer to it as RTAP.

Nichole is the Executive Director of RTAP and is responsible for coordinating interactions between the Federal Transit Administration, RTAP State Managers, national and state partners. Nichole comes before you with an extensive experience, specifically in program management, consortium building and rural transportation programs, and policies and regulations.

Robert serves as the Senior Technical Manager. He is responsible for the financial administration and all technical aspects of the National RTAP. This includes data collection, tracking and outcome measurements, and management of RTAP Resource Center staff. Robert is also the Program Manager of the Massachusetts Statewide Access to Jobs Initiative under contract with the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA). He has many years of experience in management of private shuttle bus services and the implementation of other transportation systems management programs. Welcome to you both.

Nichole Goldsmith: Thank you. Good afternoon everyone. It's a pleasure to be here. My role will simply be to give a quick overview of the National RTAP program services and then I'll turn it over to my colleague Rob Tassinari to speak about the 5311 program.

We are pleased to represent National RTAP that has a 20 year history. Our mission, of course, is to improve the mobility of rural and small urban as well as travel communities with populations under 50,000. The founders recognize that transit drivers, dispatchers, workers, managers, and board members needed certain skills and knowledge to provide quality service to their customers across large service areas.

The type of technical assistance that comes from the National RTAP program includes everything from surveys and reports to practices, research, scholarships, resource center, as well as a peer network.

The national RTAP is directed through a national review board who among many duties, their primary one is to help direct and develop the subject matter for the training materials and DVDs that you will find in our resource center. The types of programs that we offer and outreach include information delivery through the resource center, an online community for RTAP managers and boards to utilize message boards, Webinars, and a place in general for the rural community to talk about the types of challenges that they face whether it be through funding or training or specific regulations that you might find that are troublesome in our community. In addition, on our end, we'll be tracking program utilization elements by category and issues. Our goal is to conduct research through our RTAP managers; we have one in each of the 50 states. We have begun a dialogue to make certain that the information that comes out of National RTAP is indeed relevant and current and represents your needs. In addition, we look to reestablish a national dialogue regarding overall impact. We also service Native American tribes. The type of things that we will be working on this particular year is toolkits, a scheduling and dispatch module, insurance primer, a tutorial focused on travel transit, and expanding the rural technical resources and communication center, also known as RTRAC. Now I am going to turn our program over to Rob Tassinari who is our Senior Technical Manager and he will talk about the 5311 program. Thank you.

Robert Tassinari: Thank you Nichole. Hi to everybody. Happy New Year. I was going to go into detail on the 5311 program but Charles did a pretty good job of explaining most of the points about it so I'm just going to go briefly through it given the time. I think it's, at least on the East Coast, about 4 o'clock. The 5311 program is specific to rural, non-urban transportation. It's a formula grant. That means that the federal government allocates funding to states based on their rural population as well as the area of the particular state. And then the state is supposed to draft up a plan of action on how to allocate the funding to the sub-recipients.

The 5311 program is specific to rural transit. It doesn't matter who the actual user of the service is. It's really the general public so if the person is receiving state assistance they'd be eligible to use the service that's being provided through these funding sources. Of course, it's really to enable people to access health care, education, employment, public service, as well as access recreation. Part of the 5311 does require some funding to go to intercity bus transportation, if there is a need for additional funding for

that, as well as in the event that there are private vendors out there and not public vendors that the FTA would like to see the public transportation providers included in any additional services that are provided through the funding. And I'm sorry our screens for whatever reason are coming in like this.

The state and local governments are eligible recipients, non-profit organizations, Indian tribes and groups, as well as public transportation operators are eligible to receive funding. They would have to provide proposals to the state and work with the state in order to access these funds. You can use the funds for capital and operating costs. For capital it's an 80/20 match. For operating it's a 50/50 match. Some other funding that does go to the state is used for administrative costs that the state may have.

Now there is another section of funding called 5311C and that's our tribal transit program. In order to be a recipient of this you have to be a federally recognized Indian tribe and in the information that Patrick had sent me the three Indian tribes, the one from California, from Arizona, as well as Wisconsin, they're actually all federally recognized tribes. I'm not sure whether they are on the line on this Webinar or whether they've tried to access this funding but in the event that you had not, you're eligible to access this funding. And, of course, the purpose for the C funding is the same as the 5311 funding. And I apologize once again, the slides are going a little slow.

Your next step, in the event that you're interested in accessing these funds, would certainly be to contact your state RTAP manager. If you don't know who your state RTAP manager is, you can go on to our Web site at www.nationalrtap.org/state and you'll be able to see a map of the United States, click on your state and it will list out the state's name. If you are looking to access the 5311C program you can certainly go through your state RTAP because there is specific funding in the 5311 for tribes. As well as this 5311, you can go directly to the FTA and you could contact Lona Wilson at FTA and her number is there. And, of course, if you have any other questions you can contact us at National RTAP. Our resource center number is 888-589-6821. I think that's all from my slides. I just want to mention, we are having a Webinar that will be coming up on Monday, the 12th. If you want to go to our Web site you'll be able to sign up. It has to do with human resources and this Webinar will be on how to investigate misconduct and that is it for me.

James: Thank you so much Rob and Nichole. Before we open the lines up for questions or comments are there any additional comments from any of today's speakers? Okay, Patrick if you can have the operator open the lines up for questions and comments please.

Patrick: Thank you James. Operator, we're ready for questions now.

Operator Instructions

Operator: There appears to be no questions from the phone lines. Please proceed.

James: Okay, I will go ahead and move to our closing remarks then. I just wanted to thank everyone who has joined us on this Webinar. Thank you to Charles, Chris, Mary, David, Nichole, and Robert for sharing your knowledge and expertise on funding rural transportation projects and initiatives. Last, but not least, the staff at ICF International who were very instrumental in pulling this Webinar together, in terms of all of the logistics.

Operator: Pardon for the interruption sir. We do have a question from the phone line.

Cathy Manning: Hi, I'm in the state of California and I have a rural transit program that we have been trying to work on so I guess my question would be, if we wanted to develop several different sources and we do have a rural transit here, would it be best that we talk with them about how to access these funds

or if they're accessing these funds already for rural transit or should we contact the RTAP folks directly to talk about our program?

Nichole Goldsmith: Hi, this is Nichole. You can actually do both. Beginning a dialogue is absolutely important. You can go directly to your RTAP manager and they are the first point of contact on giving information and accessing who's connected throughout your state.

Cathy Manning: Oh, okay. Thank you.

Operator: I have no further questions from the phone line.

James: Thank you. I'd like to also mention that the PowerPoint presentations and an audio recording from today's Webinar will be made available for everyone within the next few weeks. Also, feel free to contact me or anyone from the Rural Communities Initiative team if you have any further questions. So, on behalf of the Office of Family Assistance, the Technical Assistance Branch, under the leadership of Lisa Washington-Thomas, I thank you all very much for joining us and have a pleasant day.