

Transit Update

April may bring showers, but May Day is the deadline day. The Transit Update's spring 2012 edition highlights the consolidated funding application deadline, the disadvantaged business enterprise deadline, and Transportation Program Management System deadline along with other updates and reminders of importance to public transit providers.

TransitCares

The Iowa DOT's Office of Public Transit has created TransitCares, a program for providing transportation to IowaCare health system clients to their medical appointments and pharmacy visits.

IowaCare recently underwent a restructuring that has had a transportation impact to IowaCare clients and IowaCare does not have transportation as part of the benefit package. Because transportation is not an approved benefit under the IowaCare program and clients have an immediate need to get to the medical facilities, the Iowa DOT's Office of Public Transit is making available State Transit Assistance (STA) Special Project funds to help fund transportation for IowaCare clients to clinics and hospitals serving IowaCare patients. The available funding will pay 100 percent of the operating deficit. The Office of Public Transit encourages transit systems to work with IowaCare and its clients to provide this much need transportation option. Transit systems can apply to the Office of Public Transit for full reimbursement. More information is attached to this email about this new program, TransitCares.

Consolidated funding applications

Fiscal year (FY) 2013 consolidated funding applications are due to the Iowa DOT's Office of Public Transit May 1, 2012. This application is used by all of Iowa's transit systems to apply for funding under all state and federal programs, which also includes Public Transportation Infrastructure Grants (PTIG), Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC), and New Freedom (NF) projects. Late and/or incomplete applications under these three programs will not be considered for funding, as funds for these programs are competitively awarded. Consolidated funding application materials may be found on Iowa DOT's website at <http://www.iowadot.gov/transit/applications.html>.

Please be aware that all project proposals submitted for funding consideration under the 5310, JARC, and NF programs must be included in your Passenger Transportation Plan.

STA Special Project applications from any of the 35 transit systems, along with new mobility manager project applications for nonurban and rural transit systems are accepted anytime. Please keep in mind that fellowship funds cannot be used for mobility manager positions; therefore, your proposed budget should cover all travel expenses.

TPMS

As we move into the second year of using the Transportation Program Management System (TPMS), please make sure that all projects contained in your Consolidated Funding application have been submitted in TPMS by May 1, 2012. This moves the projects up to your planning agency for review/approval and then allows those agencies to complete the local draft Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) and submit them to the Iowa DOT by June 15. The projects programmed in TPMS, and submitted to your planning agency, must coincide with your funding application materials.

Care should be taken in reviewing, adding and/or deleting projects in TPMS. Please make sure the FY 2013 Programming Guidance is followed for all vehicle projects. Questions can be directed to Pam Lee at pamella.lee@dot.iowa.gov.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program

The DBE program seeks to ensure nondiscrimination in the award and administration of Iowa DOT-assisted contracts in the department's highway, transit and airport financial assistance programs to the socially and economically disadvantaged; and to create a level playing field on which DBEs can compete fairly. Those individual(s) presumed to be socially and economically disadvantaged by the federal government include Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian-Indian Americans, Asian-Pacific Americans, Subcontinent Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Women.

A reminder that if you are a small urban or regional system, your semiannual DBE report is due to the Iowa DOT by May 1, 2012.

There was a much-sought-after Federal Transit Administration webinar on DBE reporting on April 9. However, the session filled up very quickly and FTA is looking into offering more sessions – any information we receive on this will be forwarded to you. In the meantime, if you have any questions about completing the semiannual report, please contact Sreeparna Mitra at 515-239-1806 or sreeparna.mitra@dot.iowa.gov.

The Iowa DOT can provide assistance to DBE firms. This aid (if applicable) may include:

- Assistance in the preparation of the certification application.
- Information about how to obtain bidding documents and plans.
- Assistance in reading plans.
- Assistance in dealing with contractors.
- Information about dealing with the Iowa DOT.
- Assistance in developing loan packages and financial statements.
- Assistance from our consulting firm when requested and approved.

Interstate certification: If a DBE is certified in another state, the Iowa DOT has established a procedure for the firm to apply for Iowa certification using supporting documentation from its home state.

For more information on interstate certification and for help on any other DBE certification matters, please contact Len Hill, Iowa DOT's DBE Certification Specialist, at 515-239-1833 or Len.Hill@dot.iowa.gov.

The Public Transit Advisory Council (PTAC) meeting May 3

On May 3, the Public Transit Advisory Council (PTAC) will meet. This council replaces the committee formerly known as the PTMS Committee and has expanded its role and its relationship with the Iowa DOT's Office of Public Transit.

There are five council members that represent the four different sizes of transit systems, including:

- One urban system greater than 200,000 population
Member: [Elizabeth Presutti](#)
- One large urban system of 50,000-200,000 population
Member: [Mark Little](#)
- One small urban system less than 50,000 population
Member: [Doug Roelfs](#)
- Two regional systems
Members: [Randy Zobrist](#) and [Hugh Lively](#)

The council's charge is to discuss policy and program issues related to all public transit systems in Iowa and provide the Iowa DOT with feedback and guidance. Quarterly meetings will be held the first Thursday in the months of February, May, August and November. Agendas for these meetings will be available on the IPTA website forum at least seven days in advance of each meeting. All policy changes will also be posted to this website for a period of no less than 10 days for public comment. Attached to this Transit Update is a draft agenda. Please contact your appropriate representative, listed above, if you have input you would like shared on any of these items or if you have any other topics you would like discuss.

Federal and state funding

On Jan. 11, 2012, FTA published a portion of the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2012 apportionments. The funding published under the various programs was only about one-half of the FFY 2011 amounts. On March 30, 2012, President Obama signed another 90-day extension of federal transportation funding (until June 30, 2012). It is not clear at this time when the remainder of the FFY 2012 funding will be appropriated. Given the uncertainty of the funding levels and when additional funds may be appropriated, federal operating contracts may not be issued for services that begin July 1, it is planned to have the contracts issued prior to the beginning of the second quarter of state fiscal year 2013.

New signage policy

The new signage policy is near completion. Everyone has seen a rough draft version of the policy and provided feedback. The policy draft will go in front of the Public Transit Advisory Council (PTAC) one more time for recommendations in May before being enacted. So watch for information soon about the policy! If you want to see the policy to provide comments, please contact your transit programs administrator (TPA). Just a reminder that the signage policy will apply to vehicles submitted into inventory on July 1, 2012, and then forward.

Make sure your radio systems are updated or you have a plan

The Jan. 1, 2013, radio narrowbanding requirement* is fast approaching, and all transit systems not certain of how this will affect their communication equipment should contact a trusted radio system specialist soon to determine if this will affect your service. The Office of Public Transit recommends completing the Narrowbanding Checklist with your trusted radio professional well in advance of the narrowbanding deadline. For additional information, please contact Brent Paulsen at 515-239-1132.

*The Federal Communications Commission is requiring all public safety and business industrial land mobile radio systems operating in the 150-512 MHz radio bands to cease operating using 25 kHz efficiency technology and on Jan. 1, 2013, begin operating using at least 12.5 kHz efficiency technology. The reason for the switch is to allow more channel capacity using the same radio spectrum. This change has a direct effect on our industry as all mass transit and paratransit radio systems must be compliant.

Training

Not all reserved-for-Iowa spaces for the **Procurement Level III** training have been filled for June 5-8, 2012, session in Ames. There are still six spots open. For more information, contact Kristin Haar at kristin.haar@dot.iowa.gov.

Public Transit Operator Defensive Driving training is now available for scheduling. The drivers will receive a four-hour training certification. This training is funded 100 percent from the fellowship program. For more information, please see the attached flyer.

Please forward this onto anyone that may have an interest. Thank you.

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