

Community-Based Transportation Service Planning

The Connecticut Department of Transportation and regional planning organizations across the state are working together on a community planning process for Federal Transit Administration (FTA)-funded transportation of older adults (60+), persons with disabilities and individuals with low incomes. The plan will determine how those funds will be spent in Connecticut and will be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and nonprofit human services transportation providers and participation by the public. At this time the process only covers the three FTA-funded programs described below. In the future, it could encompass additional federally-funded and state-funded programs.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Human Services Transportation?

For the purposes of this planning effort, it is defined as transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults (60+), and individuals with lower incomes. This could include services provided by public transit agencies, municipalities, human service agencies and private providers such as taxi or medical livery companies.

Why are we doing community-based transportation planning?

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law on August 10, 2005. This law establishes programs and funding for the Federal Transit Administration through federal fiscal year 2009 and requires the development of Locally-Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plans. These plans will determine how transportation funding for the three programs listed below will be spent.

What types of programs will the locally-coordinated transportation plan include?

SAFETEA-LU requires that three federal programs be included in the plan. These are the:

- Section 5317 New Freedom Program,
- Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute program (JARC), and
- Section 5310 Vehicle Grant program to serve Older Adults and People with Disabilities.

How much funding is there?

Statewide, there is \$1 million for Section 5317, \$1.1 million for Section 5316 and \$1.3 million for Section 5310 for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2006. Funds increase by a small percentage every year through FFY 2009.

What can the communities and the state do with these funds?

- *Section 5317 New Freedom* projects must assist individuals with disabilities with transportation. The projects must be for new public transportation services and public transportation alternatives beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA.)
- *Section 5316 JARC* projects must improve access to employment and employment related activities for low-income workers.
- *Section 5310* provides vehicle grants to non-profit agencies or municipalities to provide transportation to seniors and people with disabilities.

Why should I get involved?

As an agency, you can represent the needs of people your agency serves. As an individual you can let us know your own needs and make those needs a part of the planning process. If you already operate a Section 5310 vehicle or are interested in applying for one, you should be involved, since future program priorities are being considered.

How do I get involved? Who do I contact?

You can get involved by attending regional meetings or by responding to a survey concerning human services transportation needs. Contact the Department at dotadmin.ctrides@po.state.ct.us or Transit Administrator, P.O. Box 317546, Newington, CT 06131 and we will direct your inquiry to the right place.

Do I have to attend meetings?

No. We can keep you informed about what is going on in your region by adding your name to the mailing list for the region.

What will happen during the planning process?

During the planning process, partners will do the following:

1. Build a database of interested participants.
2. Inventory available services.
3. Identify gaps in service and unmet travel needs.
4. Develop proposals to address gaps in service.
5. Evaluate and select proposals to address gaps in cooperation with a panel of planning partners.
6. Prepare a list of selected projects for each region.
7. Adopt the final list in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and apply for FTA funds.

When will this happen?

The first plan was in place in spring 2007. Updates are required every four years, but Connecticut is preparing an update to the plan scheduled for completion in fall 2008.