

VTrans United We Ride Action Plan Update August 2004

CURRENT PROJECTS TO COORDINATE HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION WITH TIMELINES

- **Administrative integration of services for transporting elders and persons with disabilities (E&D Transportation) into Vermont's rural public transportation program.** According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Vermont is the most rural state. The presence of some form of rural transportation in every county allows Vermont to lessen administrative barriers between programs, increase efficiency, and improve effectiveness by funding E&D Transportation services—excluding vehicle and equipment acquisitions—through the Section 5311 program and combining funding with state public transit operating grants. The integrated program will run under state administrative guidelines that will keep funding earmarked by the state legislature for E&D Transportation services intact. VTrans will continue to closely collaborate with the Vermont Agency Human Services (AHS)—especially the Department of Aging and Independent Living—on implementing integrated E&D Transportation services. For several years VTrans has used Surface Transportation Program monies to augment E&D Transportation services. Although future supplemental funding depends on annual decisions made while formulating the state budget, it is reasonable to expect that Vermont will continue to commit resources to E&D Transportation services over and above the population-based formula funding available via the S. 5310 program. Section 5310 funds will be used for vehicle and equipment procurements. Administrative integration of E&D Transportation services also will enhance state oversight and reduce the number and kinds of grant agreements, contracts, and reports needed to administer separate programs. This will make more transportation choices available to all passengers. In future years, the E&D Transportation services program will coordinate closely with other state and Federal agencies, and non-governmental sources, to identify additional resources. Public meetings on integrating E&D Transportation services were held in each of the state's twelve planning regions. Program guidance documents are being developed. The target date for starting the revised program is October 1, 2004. **This project addresses four Framework for Action goals: working together, putting customers first, adapting funding for greater mobility, and moving people efficiently.**
- **Survey to assess Vermont's unmet human service transportation need.** The May 28, 2004 status report on Vermont's United We Ride (UWR) Action Plan states, "The eleven regional planning organizations and Vermont's sole Metropolitan Planning Organization have been funded during Federal Fiscal Year 2005 to assess unmet human service transportation need . . . Meetings to define the goals and develop uniform procedures will take place in the summer of 2004." A steering committee

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was formed, with representatives from AHS, VTrans, and regional planning organizations. The first meeting was on June 2, 2004. The steering committee identified two of the twelve regional planning organizations that will be the first to conduct the survey. A draft survey instrument was designed. It will be discussed at the next steering committee meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for September. The project is scheduled for completion by September 30, 2005. **This project directly addresses the Framework for Action goal taking stock of needs and moving forward.**

- **Update the Public Transportation (Transit) Policy Plan of January 15, 2000 with the assistance of partners.** This project also was in the May status report. It is vital to the future direction of human service transportation in Vermont. State statute mandates use of this five-year plan when public transit services are changed or new services are considered. For this reason, Vermont's UWR coordination grant proposal asked for funds for greater participation by state agency and community partners in developing this VTrans plan. Other funds pay for most of this project. The proposed timeline is to select a consultant in the last quarter of calendar year 2004 and begin work early in 2005. The proposed completion date is December 2005. A final report to the state legislature will be made on January 15, 2006. If the proposed grant is approved, the new plan will be able to include a five-year Action Plan for human service transportation coordination that covers January 2006 through December 2010. **This project addresses Framework for Action goals of working together, leadership & partnership, and taking stock of needs & moving forward.**
- **Schedule a meeting with State Agencies responsible for the funding sources identified in United We Ride documents.** This action step is part of the May 28 status report. The first meeting, on July 28, 2004, included the state Department of Education, Department of Employment & Training, AHS and one of its component units, the Department of Aging and Independent Living, and VTrans. Future meetings will focus on developing coordinated solutions and including more partner organizations. This action step is linked to the execution of the previously listed projects. **Ultimately, this project will involve all six goals in the Framework for Action Self Assessment Tool for States because it intends to establish ongoing coordination meetings among state agencies to consider all aspects of human service transportation.**

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- **Develop fully-coordinated transportation models for Vermont's public transit providers.** This new activity is underway. A consultant, Wagner Associates, started work with Connecticut River Transit—a newer provider. Work will start with Rural Community Transportation, Vermont's most rural provider, in late September. The aim is to create a template that can be replicated by other public transit properties. This intensive process involves multiple stakeholders. The unique characteristics of each public transit service area and provider must be considered. The first two providers should be done before June 30, 2005. Replicating the process at every other provider may take two to three years longer. **This project also involves all Framework for Action goals. Within each public transit provider, both management and the board must work with passengers and partner organizations. The model emphasizes needs assessment, customer focus, productive use of funding, use of technology, and efficient sharing of resources.**

VERMONT AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION
POLICY & PLANNING DIVISION

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FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

TO: <u>Janeise Beckwith</u>	FROM: <u>Krista Chadwick</u>
COMPANY: <u>ETA</u>	PERSONAL PHONE: <u>802/828-5750</u>
FAX NUMBER: <u>202/366-3136</u>	DATE: <u>12/22/05</u>
PHONE NUMBER:	TOTAL NO. OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER <u>4</u>
RE:	

UWR Application - Vermont

NOTES/COMMENTS:





















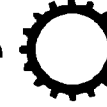



Vermont Agency of Transportation

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION:

OVERALL STATE SELF-ASSESSMENT

You have completed Step 1 of the State Self-Assessment. The six sections highlighted in the questionnaire represent the core elements of building a fully coordinated transportation system.

This questionnaire was designed to help you see the big picture of your overall progress. Take a moment to review the evaluations you made at the end of each section and make a note of them on this page. By doing so, you will create an at-a-glance summary of your individual assessment that identifies areas where your system is working well and areas that can be improved.

Section	1	Making Things Happen by Leadership and Partnership	Needs to Begin 	Needs Significant Action 	Needs Action 	Done Well 
Section	2	Taking Stock of State Needs and Moving Forward	Needs to Begin 	Needs Significant Action 	Needs Action 	Done Well 
Section	3	Putting Customers First	Needs to Begin 	Needs Significant Action 	Needs Action 	Done Well 
Section	4	Adapting Funding for Greater Mobility	Needs to Begin 	Needs Significant Action 	Needs Action 	Done Well 
Section	5	Technology Moves Coordination to the Next Level	Needs to Begin 	Needs Significant Action 	Needs Action 	Done Well 
Section	6	Moving People Efficiently	Needs to Begin 	Needs Significant Action 	Needs Action 	Done Well 

Notes: _____

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MICHAEL K. SMITH, SECRETARY

STATE OF VERMONT

AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES

November 28, 2005

Vermont Agency of Transportation
1 National Life Drive, Drawer 33
Montpelier, VT 05601

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Vermont Agency of Human Services (AHS) I write to lend our support to your application for a United We Ride Coordination Grant. Since our agency, contractors and consumers are also currently the largest consumer/purchaser of public transportation in Vermont, and as the lead agency for the development and implementation of Vermont's Olmsted Plan, we have a vested interest in making sure that services are well-coordinated and designed to meet the specific needs of AHS consumers.

Throughout AHS, the various Departments and Offices have very specific goals that hinge on the availability of well-coordinated, accessible and consumer responsive transportation. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation strives to help people with disabilities to obtain employment. For those living in rural areas where there is limited public transit, or for the many consumers pursuing employment during non-traditional work hours, it is very important that there be access to coordinated systems that provide flexibility and offer creative solutions to meeting transportation needs. Consumers of the Department for Children and Families need transportation to and from work and other daily appointments, but also needs assurance that their children will be transported safely to and from school and child care. The Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living is working to ensure that older adults and people with disabilities will be able to remain in their own community and to access an array of long term services and supports. The Office of Vermont Health Access administers the Medicaid Transportation Program which is a major provider of essential medical transportation for thousands of low-income Vermonters. Indeed, AHS recognizes that transportation is one of the major components needed in order for us to be successful in achieving our goals; and it is for this reason that my position of AHS Director of Housing and Transportation was created.

While AHS, our partner agencies, and consumers have worked closely with VTrans and the public transportation providers for a number of years, we agree that there is much work to be done to achieve a well-coordinated and effective system of transportation. Still, the usual practice is for people to work together to respond to a specific transportation need, rather than looking more broadly at all of the resources available and how we might work together to fill some of the gaps that are evident throughout the state. We also share your interest in working more closely with other key partners, such as the Regional Planning Commissioner, the Departments of Labor and Education, and the Office of Veterans Affairs. Through the United We Ride Coordination Project, we will work with you not only at the state level with regards to planning and evaluation, but will also help to identify and bring to the table the agencies and consumers in the local regions that are selected to implement coordinated systems who can participate and help shape that process.

If you have other thoughts on how we at AHS can support your efforts to advance the development of coordinated transportation systems, please do not hesitate to be in touch. Otherwise, I will look forward to working with you on this exciting project and hope to hear from you soon regarding the outcome of your application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Cathleen M. Voyer'.

Cathleen M. Voyer, Director
Agency of Human Services Housing and Transportation

*Krista Chadwick*JAMES H. DOUGLAS
GOVERNORState of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

December 22, 2005

Ms. Bryna Helfer
Federal Transit Administration
400 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Ms. Helfer:

I recommend approval of the United We Ride application of the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) to develop coordinated transportation services. It is a program that will achieve increased efficiencies and will be able to provide enhanced mobility and accessibility to a greater number of consumers, particularly those with special transportation needs. This proposal is the result of President George W. Bush's Executive Order on Human Service Transportation Coordination.

Vermont is a small rural state with a population of 608,827 people. We are a state of modest income levels, rural geographic challenges, and an expanding elderly and special needs population. The increasing need for public and human services transportation continues to surpass the funding available for these programs and remains a significant challenge for Vermont.

Vermont has recently made enormous coordination achievements in public transportation. A few of these are outlined for your consideration in support of Vermont's application for the United We Ride grant.

- Through state law, we created the Public Transit Advisory Council (PTAC) to bring together key partners – including state agencies, public transportation agencies, consumer advocacy agencies, consumers, private bus operators, intercity bus operators, and representatives from the Vermont State Legislature – who can collaborate on the current and future operations of transit throughout the state.
- VTrans and the Agency of Human Services (AHS) are working together with the Regional Planning Commissions and Vermont's only Metropolitan Planning Organization to complete an unmet needs survey of all 62 federal programs that were identified on the Transportation Service Chart given to

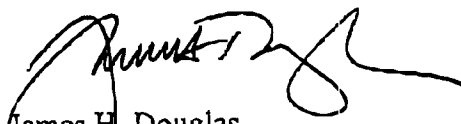
Ms. Bryna Helfer
December 22, 2005
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states through the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility.

- We reorganized the Elders and Persons with Disabilities Program (E&D Program) so the Regional Public Transit Advisory Committees (RPTACs) are required to meet quarterly to discuss issues, such as funding, service quality or changes in transportation needs. RPTACs include representatives of: VTrans, AHS, public transit providers, area agencies on aging, adult day services, community mental health centers/designated agencies, community action councils, Agency of Human Services field services directors, consumer representatives, chambers of commerce, statewide advocacy groups, local human service agencies and other concerned parties.

I appreciate your consideration and respectfully request acceptance of Vermont's application.

Sincerely,



James H. Douglas
Governor