

# Find Anything Toolkit



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# Welcome to the Find Anything Toolkit

The National RTAP Find Anything Toolkit is an easy-to-use guide designed to showcase valuable resources available to rural and tribal transit providers and State DOT staff. You will learn how to quickly and easily search for, find, and access high-quality and relevant training and technical assistance materials, information, peer networks, and more.

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## Fundamentals of Searching for Results

Sometimes it's difficult to identify sources of needed information. If you are looking for rural or tribal transit information, the Find Anything Toolkit will help you get started. The most successful searches share common elements and follow this process (click on one of the steps below to jump to a section):

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### Formulate a Question

When starting research, it is crucial to develop a simple and straightforward question to identify what you hope to find.

1. Formulate a question, or group of questions about what you want to find. It may help to discuss the topic with colleagues, particularly if it is a new area for you.
2. Identify words and subjects related to your question.

Your research topic can have many components (e.g., good customer service), or you could just be searching for one specific piece of information (such as regulations for personal care attendants on

public transit buses). Brainstorm, write down or type up a brief summary of what you think you already know and what you may want to find out about the topic. This process should lead to at least one question.

For example, suppose your question is, “How do I set up a non-emergency medical transportation company?” Some search engines, including Google and Ask.com, let you ask a question like this as a full sentence with a question mark at the end (without quotation marks) and the search engine will display meaningful results.

You should **also** enter new searches with separate search terms to retrieve additional relevant results. Search terms for the question above can include NEMT (the acronym for this type of service) or Medicaid (the funding source for most NEMT providers).

**The following are images captured from two Google searches conducted at the same time for “Non-Emergency Medical Transportation” and “NEMT.”**

www.cms.gov › Medicaid-Integrity-Program › Education ▼

#### Non-Emergency Medical Transportation | CMS

Jul 15, 2020 — Non-Emergency Medical Transportation. Image Depicting Transportation. Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT). Non-emergency ...

www.mtm-inc.net › Healthcare Services ▼

#### Non-Emergency Medical Transportation - NEMT Services

What is **NEMT**? Transportation is inexpensive compared to the high and rapidly growing cost of healthcare, making it more cost-effective ...

www.mtm-inc.net › Healthcare Services › NEMT ▼

#### What is Non-Emergency Medical Transportation? (NEMT) ...

What is **Non-Emergency Medical Transportation**? (NEMT). Let's face it. If you don't have solid transportation, even the best medical facility in the world won't be ...

www.snugsafe.com › all-posts › non-emergency-medical... ▼

#### Your Guide to Non-Emergency Medical Transportation ...

May 21, 2020 — Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) services are provided when you need to get medical attention but don't have a means of ...

patientengagementthit.com › news › what-is-non-emerg... ▼

#### What is Non-Emergency Medical Transportation, Patient ...

Jan 30, 2018 — Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) includes transportation services offered to patients and healthcare consumers who face extraordinary barriers getting to their medical appointments. NEMT is widely known to serve Medicaid beneficiaries.

www.healthinnovation.org › building-advocacy-capacity ▼

#### Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) | Center for ...

The Medicaid-funded Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) benefit, which has been part of Medicaid since the program was founded in 1965, seeks ...

www.ensocare.com › nemt ▼

#### Transitions of Care Solutions | Ensocare NEMT

Ensocare **NEMT** is a comprehensive communications and logistics management platform linking healthcare systems with non-emergency medical transport ...

voyo.com › what-is-nemt ▼

#### What is NEMT? - Voyo

Aug 15, 2016 — Medicaid **NEMT** or Non-Emergency Medical Transportation is a phrase typically used to describe a transportation benefit for Medicaid or ...

mtacoalition.org › Medical Transportation 101 ▼

#### About NEMT | Medical Transportation Access Coalition

About **NEMT** · Dialysis for persons with advanced kidney disease, a service typically needed three times a week · Mental and behavioral health appointments ...

www.tripsark.com › medical ▼

#### TripSpark Medical Transportation Software (NEMT)

**NEMT** Reporting Software. Robust reporting capabilities for audits and performance reviews. Medical Brokers and Providers Software. Improved productivity and ...

www.logisticare.com › blog › a-brief-look-at-the-histor... ▼

#### A brief look at the history of NEMT - LogistiCare

Some search engines, including Google, let you use quotations for "exact phrases" and Boolean connectors (AND, OR, NOT), so you can search for multiple search terms at a time.

Tip: Remember the 5 W's: Who, what, why, where, and when.

**Who** did any initial information come from?

**What** is the essence of the question?

**Why** are you looking for this information?

**Where** would it make sense to start the research?

**When** was this information likely to be published or stated?

**Who** could be asked for more information?

**What** type of answer is expected?

**Why** is the issue important?

**Where** was the information published?

**When** was the information first mentioned?

## Narrow the Topic

The Internet is a helpful resource for doing background research about a topic and can lead to answers (or articles and reports where research has already been conducted on the topic). Once a well-thought-out question is formulated, the key to finding useful information online is knowing how to refine an Internet search.

For example, you may be looking for FTA rules and regulations about buses. If you simply type “bus” into Google, you will retrieve over a billion results, many that aren’t useful. To find relevant answers, employ the following search tip:

**To search for government information, use the following search:**

**bus site:gov** will search all .gov (government) sites for the word “bus” - this search will retrieve bus rules and regulations from FTA and other sites, such as FMCSA, FHWA, etc.)

**To search only the FTA website, use bus AND (rules OR regulations) site:transit.dot.gov** to search FTA rules and regulations for buses.

Use any part of a website URL that may be helpful to your search: .com (commercial, business sites if you want information from vendors or commercial transit organizations), .org (associations or non-profits often contain very trustworthy information), .edu (educational institutions), or any specific URL, such as “nationalrtap.org” to search that specific site.

You can also search Google to retrieve results where your search terms appear in the title of a webpage:

**allintitle: paratransit eligibility application** will retrieve application information from various agencies for paratransit eligibility.

## Search Tips

Two basic search tips that can always be applied are:

**Simplify**—the fewer and more direct words in a search, the better the results. For example: Instead of, “Which federal grants apply to bus operators?” better searches would be:

- transit rural 5311
- transit grant funding

Continue to refine and remove terms that will narrow the results if the first search is too broad.

For specific search tips based on popular search engines, visit:

[Google’s Basic Search Tips](#)

[Yahoo’s Search Tips](#)

[Bing’s Search Tips](#)

Don't feel that you need to limit yourself to the most popular search engines. Performing a search in multiple search engines will probably yield different results and possibly some hidden gems. Try these:

[Ask](#)

[DogPile](#)

[DuckDuckGo](#)

[Earth-Scout](#)

[HathiTrust Digital Library](#)

[Lens](#) (searches scholarly works)

[OneSearch](#)

[State DOT Google Search Engine](#)

[Swisscows](#)

[US Government Search Engine](#)

While Internet search engines are useful for performing broad searches, they only search a small part of the Internet. They also do not search databases within websites, such as National RTAP’s [Resource Library](#)—which you have to visit the National RTAP website to search.

You can also search individual [transportation journals](#), which are often peer-reviewed and may have open access (free) full-text articles. Kendra Levine of the Institute of Transportation Studies Berkeley published this spreadsheet so users have access to over 100 quality transportation journals, including information on their open access policies.

## **Identify Information Clearinghouses**

An information clearinghouse is any agency or organization that collects and distributes information and is a go-to place for information assistance. These clearinghouses are also known as Information and Referral (I&R) organizations. A library is a general information clearinghouse, and librarians (reference librarians in particular) can direct users to more specific resources. Here are some places

to get started:

**Public Libraries:** can find local, state, federal laws; books on best practices; articles in newspapers/journals; area-specific demographic information; and factual information. Public libraries are a good starting point for some searches. Ask if you can talk to a reference librarian.

**State Department of Transportation (DOT) Libraries:** contain training manuals and resources, technical specifications, journal articles, laws, best practices and rules, and may provide research assistance. Some State RTAPs also have libraries.

**Transit Technical Assistance Organizations:** provide training and technical assistance, industry best practices, and help locating information. National RTAP is an example of this type of clearinghouse. A group of librarians and knowledge managers form the National Transportation Knowledge Network (NTKN), offer LibGuides of carefully selected materials on various transportation topics.

**Chambers of Commerce:** information about local programs, directories, resources, services to help connect businesses to residents, and sometimes local grant money.

**Government Offices:** laws, assistance, and possibly grants. Local government offices can include town or city halls, planning and finance departments, and town commissions and councils.

**Human Service Organizations:** (Red Cross, United Way, faith-based groups, etc.): can help with local needs, demographics, challenges, partnerships, and sometimes financial assistance.

**Federal Agencies:** Many federal agencies deal with transit in a direct or indirect way. For example, FTA, U.S. DOT, USDA, and FHWA all provide information, regulations, training, and other resources related to transit. FTA's Technical Assistance (TA) Centers: NADTC, National RTAP, NCMM, N-CATT, SUMC, and TWC can also offer assistance.

## Put it All Together

Suppose that a law that affects transportation has recently been updated and you need to know how it will impact your transit agency.

1. Ask a question: “What has changed in the new law?” or “How will the new law affect my transit agency?”
2. Narrow the topic by thinking about where the information might be found. For example, was it a federal, state, or local law? Determining what level of government enacted the law will help narrow down where to look, such as on a federal or state website, the Federal Register, and in the appropriate U.S. or State law.
3. Do a broad Internet keyword search to find some preliminary information about new law. If you know the exact law number (such as 49 U.S. Code 5310), search for that directly.

4. Contact the appropriate government agency or organization that provides best practices and technical assistance in that subject area or contact a local public library or State DOT library for help. When calling, ask for reference assistance.
5. Transportation Research Board's (TRB) [Literature Searches and Literature Reviews for Transportation Research Projects](#) is a useful resource that addresses the steps for producing a high-quality literature review for a transportation research project. The circular explores how to conduct literature searches; where to search for transportation information; how to put it all together as a quality literature review; and what the definitions are for related terms.

## Uncovering Data

### A Brief Introduction to Data

Data and statistics are extremely important to transit management. There are several reasons why a rural transit manager may need to find data:

1. Understanding community demographics to plan new or expand existing transit services
2. Analyzing the performance of the transit system
3. Determining where passengers are going and for what purposes
4. Benchmarking the performance of the transit system among peers and similarly sized and/or geographically related agencies
5. Leveraging data to frame transit's community value
6. Sharing data with community partners and potential partners, including elected officials

Data for the six subject areas listed above are likely to be found in different sources. In this case, it is not a good idea to use any general Internet search engines. Data used for transit planning purposes should be accurate, from a credible source, up-to-date, and of the highest quality. The resources listed in this section of the Find Anything Toolkit will assist those looking for data to quickly zero in on what they need.

### Community Demographics Data

Demographic data on community members (age breakdown, language spoken, etc.) should be gathered from a wide variety of sources. Data can be gathered from, but should not be limited to:

- Local Departments of Commerce
- Economic Development Associations
- Divisions of Community and Regional Affairs
- U.S. Census Bureau
- University-generated population data
- Locally administered surveys



Searching [Census Bureau](#) data can be challenging, and it is recommended to start with the drop-down menus on the home page to find the most relevant data. For example, click on the Data and Maps button, and under data tools you will find a link to [My Community Explorer](#), which is an easy way to find county-level data by clicking on an interactive map.

## Transit Agency Performance Data

Performance measures are based on data obtained from multiple sources. Common data sources include driver logs, vehicle records, safety records, financial data, employee records, customer input, complaint records, and funding agencies. Rural systems can also use qualitative sources of data to evaluate performance. Riders can provide information on perceived service quality through contact with centralized dispatching, formal surveys, or informal information collected from drivers. Additional data sources may include feedback received from the transit agency website and transit agency social media post statistics and comments.

## Rural Transit Industry Data

There are many excellent sources of data to help transit agencies understand the state of rural transit in America, as well as how their agency compares to peers.

The annual Small Urban and Rural Center on Mobility (SURCOM) [Rural Transit Fact Book](#) provides national level data, as well as statistics by state, FTA region, tribe, and mode, as well as other agency characteristics.

The [Rural Integrated National Transit Database \(iNTD\)](#) compiles multiple years of National Transit Database (NTD) data and allows users to retrieve and analyze data. This iNTD is part of the Florida Transit Information System, created by Florida International University for Florida DOT. The Rural Module is sponsored by National RTAP. It includes ready-made reports, the ability to search by individual variables, and a peer grouping function.

National RTAP publishes a biennial survey of rural and tribal transit managers. A summary of survey data is provided. The report summarizes types of services provided, funding sources, use of technology in operations and compliance, training requirements, and other topics. See the [Planning and Evaluation](#) section of the Transit Manager's Toolkit for the most recent survey results.

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) [County Transportation Profiles](#) includes county-level person trips by week and percent of resident workers who commute by public transportation.

The BTS [National Transit Map](#) is a national catalog of fixed-route transit service in America. A geospatial database is included that can be used to display transit agencies' stops and routes.



The BTS [Transportation Statistics Annual Report \(TSAR\)](#) presents an overview of the U.S. transportation system and key indicators, including data on passenger travel, transportation and the economy, system reliability, safety, energy use, and transportation environmental impacts.

BTS also provides a [National Transportation Atlas Database \(NTAD\)](#), with data on passenger connectivity, bikeshare, National Transit Map routes, and many additional topics.

## If You Need Extra Help Finding (and Using) Data

Data specialists have spent years learning and applying the skills they need to work with datasets, but it is not an intuitive process, even for the most skilled of transit managers. The datasets listed on this page all have links to technical support professionals, who can help users with their data needs. Many of them also have recorded or live training webinars to assist users.

While the datasets listed on this page will be helpful in getting started, there are many other specialized data products available. [Contact](#) the National RTAP Knowledge and Resource Manager, who can also assist users with how to find specific types of data. National RTAP's [eNews](#) regularly publishes a column on Databases and Tools, which summarizes new and updated datasets of interest to the rural transit industry.

Another FTA technical assistance center, the [National Center for Applied Transit Technology \(N-CATT\)](#), can also assist users with transit data questions.

## Knowledge Management Approaches

Sometimes, the information you need is right in your backyard (or at least in your office building or files) and you can tap the collective knowledge of your team to find answers. However, without good knowledge management practices, it can be difficult to find what you need. Does this sound familiar?

“You know that report we’re supposed to write? Didn’t our team do a presentation on that last year? The data would be helpful.”

“I remember that, but I have no idea where to find it.”

“Do you know the title of it? Who did it? Was it recorded?”

“I have no idea. Sorry.”

## How Knowledge Management Can Help

There is a better way! Knowledge Management (KM) is the efficient handling of information and resources within an organization. It is usually accomplished by appointing one or more staff with expertise in this area to become KM champions and define approaches to collective organization, naming, and sharing of resources. KM works best when everyone in the organization buys into the approach and follows the conventions decided upon.

## Steps to Knowledge Management

A simplified approach to using Knowledge Management to increase findability of internal resources includes:

1. Assign a champion or a team to define KM approaches, platforms, and conventions.
2. Determine what platform(s) will be used to organize internal resources (such as the shared network drive, Intranet, cloud-based system, or software product). There can be multiple platforms, but there should also be a way to link resources to the primary platform. Schedule demos and discuss the pros and cons of various platforms, based on organizational needs.
3. Decide what is necessary to include in the KM platform and what is also good to have. An organization may want to start with resources that all staff use, such as policies and procedures, or minutes of staff and board meetings.
4. Assign short, logical names to folders and files to increase findability. For example, a good folder name would be Job Applications and a poor name would be Apps. The poor name could be misunderstood as the abbreviation “apps” could also mean technology applications. Think of the most common-sense, descriptive name for something and don’t use acronyms or abbreviations unless they are the only name that everyone uses. By all means - don’t name a folder Miscellaneous.
5. When filing documents in folders, use standardized names too. While most KM platforms are sortable by date, it can be helpful to add the date to the file name, such as Rider Guide 2022.
6. If the platform allows keywords, tags, or descriptions to be added, take advantage of that feature. The more tags that are added to a document, the more likely it is to be found when searched for. For example, tags for an ADA Policy could include ADA, disability, disabilities, paratransit, wheelchair, mobility aid, etc. If the platform allows a description of the resource, a brief paragraph that summarizes it clearly is also helpful.
7. The KM Champion or team will need to present their plan and approach and train the staff on how to submit resources (or add resources themselves). They should be prepared for initial pushback (Why do we need to do this? It’s a lot of extra work!), but after the transition staff will see that KM will improve their work efficiency and productivity.

8. Remember -- staff are often experts at what they do -- consider capturing scanned notes or recordings of informal trainings and meetings where knowledge is shared to include on the KM platform.

9. Regularly test the KM system to ensure that it meets the organization's needs. The approach and conventions may need to change and the platform may need to be upgraded or changed.

## Knowledge Management Resources

If you need help getting started, there are national organizations that provide resources and training on Knowledge Management:

- [National Transportation Knowledge Network \(NTKN\)](#)
- [TRB Standing Committee on Information & Knowledge Management](#)

## Peer Support

Peer support is an excellent way to gain intimate knowledge of an aspect of the transit industry. Generally, to take advantage of peer support, a rural or tribal transit employee or State DOT staff-person contacts an organization with a peer network, explains their needs, and is connected to an industry professional who can provide a level of mentorship and guidance. A peer support request may entail a simple interaction, such as through an email or phone conversation, or it may involve a more comprehensive conversation about anything from starting up a transit agency to understanding what information to include in an effective grant proposal. Transit agencies who use peer support can save time and money by gaining skilled knowledge from one expert at a time.

This section of the Find Anything Toolkit contains information on: (click on any of these links to jump to a section)

[Online Dialogues and Forums](#)  
[Technical Assistance Resources](#)  
[State DOT Peer Resources](#)  
[University Transportation Centers](#)

## Online Dialogues and Forums

Online dialogues are excellent tools for acquiring information and public opinion on a specific topic, and for allowing transit agencies and state personnel to have an active say in the formulation of regulations and best practices. Dialogues and forums are an effective way to network and form partnerships.

National RTAP offers peer networks for [rural transit managers](#), [State RTAP managers](#), [tribal transit managers](#), and [intercity transportation providers](#). Peer support services include all

aspects of operating a rural and tribal transit agency or a State RTAP program. Visit the [Connect with Us](#) page and contact National RTAP to make a request for, or to be, a peer.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) [Multi-State Technical Assistance Program \(MTAP\)](#) is a network of state personnel, the primary purpose of which is to help states implement Federal Transit Administration Programs, provide feedback to FTA on implementation issues and best practices and to create a professional network to share best practices, receive technical assistance, and obtain new ideas from other states. States must become paying members to belong to MTAP. [AASHTO Peer Exchanges](#) are a regulatory requirement for State DOT departments of research, development and technology.

The Canadian Public Transit Discussion Board includes an [American Transit Discussion Forum](#).

FTA offers a [Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan \(PTASP\) Community of Practice](#). The Community includes at PTASP Technical Assistance Forum and a State Safety Oversight PTASP Forum. FTA's [TAM Peer Library](#) is a resource to exchange information about transit asset management.

[National Association of City Transportation Officials \(NACTO\) Peer Networks](#) meet to exchange ideas and experiences both online and in-person.

The National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) offers a [Mobility Management Connections](#) peer forum.

U.S. DOT's Intelligent Transportation Systems Joint Program Office [ITS Peer Program](#) provides short-term technical assistance to agencies facing ITS planning, procurement, deployment, and operational challenges.

[US DOT's Transportation Planning Capacity Building \(TPCB\) Peer Exchange](#) - One-on-one site visits and small-group discussion of specific, shared transportation planning issues that respond to agencies' direct needs.

## Technical Assistance Resources

Technical assistance is information related to transit operations and management that is generally provided by state DOTs and programs such as National RTAP and similar organizations. Technical assistance is generally assistance provided for the explanations of rules, regulations and standards. Community Transportation Association of America's (CTAA) [Rural Passenger Transportation Technical Assistance Program](#) (RPTTAP) promotes economic development through improved transportation systems in rural areas. CTAA's [Tribal Passenger Transportation Technical Assistance Program](#) (TPTTAP) focuses on helping tribes spur economic growth through improved transportation systems.

Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) [Tribal Technical Assistance Program](#) (TTAP) provides resources about tribal topics.

[FTA Training & Technical Assistance](#) is available for federal, state, and local jurisdictions and public transit providers and operators.

National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) facilitates [Coordination Coalition Teams](#).

National Center for Applied Transit Technology (N-CATT) technical assistance activities include [state summits](#) and [technology strike teams](#).

[Shared-Use Mobility Center \(SUMC\)](#) provides guidance to transportation leaders in regions across the US on a variety of project tasks.

The [Transit Oriented Development \(TOD\) Technical Assistance Initiative](#) is a project of the Federal Transit Administration.

## State DOT Peer Resources

The following resources are technical assistance programs for State Department of Transportation program managers.

AASHTO's [Environmental Technical Assistance Program](#) provides assistance for State DOT personnel about implementing environmental standards. See above in the Peer Forum section for information about the AASHTO MTAP.

[U.S. DOT](#) offers a variety of a variety of technical assistance and training program that can help States build needed traffic safety data collection, management, and analysis capacity.

## University Transportation Centers

These are research-focused organizations that typically support FTA's strategic goals through research, education, workforce development, and technology transfer activities across modes and disciplines. FTA's strategic goals include safety, state of good repair, economic competitiveness, livable communities, and environmental sustainability.

[Council of University Transportation Centers](#) (CUTC) includes research databases and member highlights.

The [National Center for Sustainable Transportation](#) (NCST) is one of **five National University Transportation Centers**, and is the only national center focused on the FAST Act research priority area of Preserving the Environment.

U.S. DOT provides a full list of [current University Transportation Centers](#) along with links to Browse UTC Research.

## State Transit Associations

State Transit Associations can be excellent sources for training and technical assistance. Many have annual conferences where members can network with their peers. Not all State Transit Associations have websites, but we have provided links to the ones that do.

[Alabama](#)

[Alaska](#)

[Arizona](#)

[Arkansas](#)

California: [\(CalACT\)](#) /

[California Transit](#)

[Association](#)

[Colorado](#)

[Connecticut](#)

[Delaware](#)

[Florida](#)

[Georgia](#)

[Hawaii](#)

[Idaho](#)

[Illinois](#)

[Indiana](#)

[Iowa](#)

[Kansas](#)

[Kentucky](#)

[Louisiana](#)

[Maine](#)

[Maryland](#)

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[Nebraska](#)

[Nevada](#)

[New Hampshire](#)

[New Jersey](#)

[New Mexico](#)

[New York](#)

[North Carolina](#)

[North Dakota](#)

[Ohio](#)

[Oklahoma](#)

[Oregon](#)

[Pennsylvania](#)

[Rhode Island](#)

[South Carolina](#)

[South Dakota](#)

[Tennessee](#)

[Texas](#)

[Utah](#)

[Vermont](#)

[Virginia](#)

[Washington](#)

[West Virginia](#)

[Wisconsin](#)

[Wyoming](#)

## Policies and Procedures

Below are links to collections of policy and procedure templates covering everything from safety and emergency preparedness to compliance, Title VI, and ADA policies.

CalACT, California's RTAP provider, lists an extensive array of [Title VI documents and templates](#).

Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA) posts [Non-Discrimination policies](#).

This [Delaware Blank Policy Form](#) is part of National RTAP's Transit Manager's Toolkit.

Indiana RTAP provides policies on [Drug and Alcohol](#) and [Procurement](#).

Kansas RTAP, run by Kansas University Transportation Center, including on ridership and dispatch. Scroll to find the Sample Policies section. They also have a [searchable database](#), where you can filter by Sample Policies and Procedures.

Nebraska Public Transit has a [Transit Manager Resources](#) page, with policies on drug and alcohol, ADA, and other topics.

New Hampshire RTAP has a [Compliance Webpage](#) with policies on ADA, bloodborne pathogens, drug and alcohol, preventive maintenance, procurement and Title VI.

[Ohio DOT](#) posts policies, as well as a Policy Model

Oklahoma RTAP posts their [Civil Rights](#) and [Drug and Alcohol](#) policies

South West Transit Association (SWTA) provides [sample policies](#) on many topics.

Utah DOT's Rural Public Transit Team provides [sample policies and compliance forms](#) on various topics.

Wisconsin RTAP provides a [compliance page](#) with various policy and plan templates.

## Assisting People with Finding Transportation

### Introduction

If your organization provides a telephone or chat hotline service, you may receive inquiries from the public about how they can travel from Point A to Point B. Sometimes helping them is quite straightforward if there are public transportation agencies with fixed route and/or demand-response services that meet their needs. However, some rural regions do not have transportation to all areas that people need to travel. In addition, many individuals may have special needs due to disability or income level and may need extra assistance with transportation. These instructions provide agencies with guidance to assist people to find transportation options for various travel situations.

When someone calls and asks for assistance finding transportation, you may be able to help the person right away if there is an established transportation service that fully meets his or her needs. If there is not, you will need to gather some basic information about him or her, perform online and



telephone research, and prepare the information so that the person will be able to use it to travel. If you are a national agency, you may receive requests for this type of help for any area throughout the country, so these steps can be used regardless of where requesters live or travel.

## Assess the Situation

Thank the person for the request and let him or her know you will be able to help, but first you need to find out some basic information. Find out the person's town, county and state (and if he or she needs to travel outside of those, what the destination town, county and state are).

Find out what type of transportation he or she needs (medical - emergency/non-emergency, transportation to work, errands, etc.).

Ask if the individual has a disability and his or her age. When asking for this information, explain that some agencies offer free or low-cost transportation if a person has a disability and/or is above a certain age.

If someone needs medical transportation, ask what insurance he or she has (private, Medicaid, etc.). Explain that sometimes insurers provide transportation. You don't need the insurance IDs.

Let the individual know that you need to research options and you will call back. Sometimes a person is anxious and want answers immediately, but you cannot do a good job of research while you are on the phone.

## Perform Research

Use a web search engine to find the official (government) website for the town (and/or the town the person needs to travel to). Navigate to a transportation button. If there is no transportation button, call the main phone for the government agency number on the website and ask what transportation is available for the area.

If the passenger needs to travel to a specific hospital, check the hospital website first and see if transportation service is offered. Even if it is not offered on the website, call the hospital and inquire.

Use national databases to find transportation agencies and rides. Depending on the type of request, these resources may be helpful:

- [National RTAP Rural Transportation List](#) (when you click this link, a spreadsheet will download)
- [Eldercare Locator](#) \*
- [NCMM Database of Volunteer Drivers](#) and [NCMM Community Transportation Database](#)

- [BTS National Transit Map](#)
- [Montana State University Western Transportation Institute Interactive Mobility Map](#)
- [Rides in Sight](#)
- [Findhelp](#)

\* The Eldercare Locator, a service of the Administration for Community Living, contains information about other services in addition to transportation.

Mobility managers can assist people with identifying transportation options in their communities. Visit the National Center for Mobility Management [NCMM States at a Glance](#) database to find state contacts.

The [National Aging and Disability Transportation Center \(NADTC\)](#) can also provide technical assistance on transportation for older persons and those with disabilities.

Start gathering your lists. Include agency name, website and phone number. Call agencies that have a hotline (like elder services agencies) to see if they know of any transportation providers. Take notes.

Perform web searches (based on what passenger needs.) Here are some sample searches to use:

- Public transportation town state
- NEMT town state
- Paratransit town state
- Disabilities transportation town state
- Senior transportation town state
- Volunteer transportation town state
- (Their health insurance) transportation town state

*Note: You can substitute county for town in any of the above searches.*

If you are really coming up with no transit options for a specific town (and this happens), look for cabs/taxis and try to find low-cost options. This may involve calling the cab companies. Social services agencies and religious organizations in the person's town may help pay for some private transportation.

## **Relay the Information**

Most people who need ride information call to ask for help and appreciate a phone call back. Read the person all of your notes that may be helpful (for example, the agency needs for you to call 24 hours in advance to book a ride) and verify that they wrote down the correct phone numbers. If someone wants web addresses, ask for an email address and send the information that way. Use your organizational email, rather than a personal email.

Some individuals express their anger regarding being refused a ride on paratransit, lack of availability of public transportation in their town, cost of transportation, or other issues. Be kind and sympathetic and, if possible, find any available phone numbers, emails, forms, etc., where the person can express concerns. Let the person know whether your organization can or cannot advocate to any agencies on their behalf.

When you end the conversation, let the person know that if additional information resources are needed, they are welcome to contact you again.

## Hot Topics

This section includes informational and technical assistance resources are some of the most highly requested from National RTAP customers within the past year. If you would like any lists of hot topics that were on this page from previous years, please contact [info@nationalrtap.org](mailto:info@nationalrtap.org).

The following are selected resources that answer questions posed by users of the National RTAP Resource Center, and respondents to our national surveys of transit organizations. Thank you to volunteer Barbara Slover for assistance with resource selection for 2022 Hot Topics.

## Jump to Section

- Bus Stops**
- Climate Change**
- Construction**
- Cybersecurity**
- Driver Recruitment**
- Marketing**
- Medicaid Transportation**

## Bus Stops

Florida DOT's [From Bus Shelters to Transit-Oriented Development: A Literature Review of Bus Passenger Facility Planning, Siting, and Design and Developing Bus Transfer Facilities for Maximum Transit Agency and Community Benefit](#), 2004

Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative's [Age-Friendly Bus Stops: Creating Bus Stops for People of All Ages](#), 2022

National RTAP's [Building Better Bus Stops: Planning and Partnerships](#), 2022

PPTA/Pennsylvania DOT's [Building Better Bus Stops Resource Guide](#), 2020

TCRP's [Better On-Street Bus Stops](#), 2015, and [Transit Agency Relationships and Initiatives to Improve Bus Stops and Pedestrian Access](#), 2021

Utah DOT's [Impact of Bus Stop Improvements](#), 2020 and [The Role of Bus Stop Features in Facilitating Accessibility](#), 2020.

## Climate Change

Eno Center for Transportation's [Transit Strategies to Meet Climate Goals](#), 2022

FTA's [Transit Leaders Climate Change Roundtable](#), 2021, and [FTA Sustainable Transit for a Healthy Planet Challenge Initiative webpage](#), 2022

National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine's (NAS) [Transportation Planning to the Extreme for Weather and Climate Change](#), 2021

National RTAP's Climate Change and Transit Twitter Chats: [2020](#) and [2021](#)

National Transportation Library's [Transportation and Climate Change Clearinghouse](#), 2022

NCHRP's [Incorporating the Costs and Benefits of Adaptation Measures in Preparation for Extreme Weather Events and Climate Change—Guidebook](#), 2020

TRB's [Public Transit as a Climate Solution](#), 2021

TCRP's [An Update on Public Transportation's Impacts on Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#), 2021

## Construction

FTA's [Facility Condition Assessment Guidebook](#), 2018

Harnett, Greg. [Construction of Rural Transit Projects](#). Presentation at Pre-RIBTC, 2021

National RTAP's [Facilities Planning Section](#) of the Transit Manager's Toolkit, 2022 and [Transportation Facilities Section](#) of the ADA Toolkit, 2021

National RTAP's and Shared-Use Mobility Center's (SUMC) [Livable Communities: Transit Services and Infrastructure that Promote Livability](#), 2021

NCHRP's [Independent Cost Estimates for Design and Construction of Transit Facilities in Rural and Small Urban Areas](#), 2015

Washington DOT's [Transit Facilities Manual](#), 2015

## Cybersecurity

American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) [Cybersecurity Considerations for Public Transit](#), 2014

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA) [Cyber Essentials Starter Kit](#), [Cyber Resource Hub](#), and [Free Services and Tools](#), 2022

Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) [Transportation Cybersecurity Incident Response and Management Framework: Final Report](#), 2021

Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) [Cybersecurity Basics](#), 2022

Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) [Cybersecurity Resources for Transit Agencies](#) and [Cybersecurity Awareness for Transit Agencies](#), 2022.

FTA, MetroLINK, Max Cybersecurity, and Grayline Group's [Cybersecurity Assessment Tool for Transit \(CATT\)](#), 2023

Federal Virtual Training Environment's (FedVTE) [Publicly Available Free Cybersecurity Courses](#)

Florida Department of Transportation's [Enhancing Cybersecurity in Public Transportation](#), 2019

Mineta Transportation Institute's [Aligning the Transit Industry and their Vendors in the Face of Increasing Cyber Risk: Recommendations for Identifying and Addressing Cybersecurity Challenges](#), 2022.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's [Cybersecurity in Transit Systems](#), 2022, [Security 101: A Physical Security and Cybersecurity Primer for Transportation Agencies](#), 2021, and [Protection of Transportation Infrastructure from Cyber Attacks: A Primer](#), 2016

National Cyber Security Alliance's (NCSA) [Stop. Think. Connect. General Tips & Advice](#), 2022

National RTAP's [Cybersecurity 101 Summary and Q&A](#), 2021

Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) [Surface Transportation Cybersecurity Toolkit](#), 2022

## **Driver Recruitment**

FTA's [Advancing Frontline Workforce Development Meeting: Synthesis](#), 2020

Kansas RTAP's [Retaining and Recruiting Quality Bus Drivers](#)

Mineta Transportation Institute's [Attracting and Retaining Women in the Transportation Industry](#), 2019

National RTAP's [Applying Good Business Practices: Hiring, Training and Evaluating Employees](#), 2018, and [Driver Recruitment, Training, and Retention](#) section of the Transit Manager's Toolkit, 2022

TCRP's [Vehicle Operator Recruitment, Retention, and Performance in ADA Complementary Paratransit Operations](#), 2010

Transport Topic's [Driver Retention Boosted by Recognition, Opportunity](#), 2019

Virginia Tech's [Pre-Employment Screening Best Practices in the Commercial Motor Vehicle Industry](#), 2020

## **Marketing**

National Aging and Disability Transportation Center's (NADTC) [Marketing Your Transportation Program](#), 2021

National RTAP's [Marketing Toolkit](#), 2014, [Transit Marketing Matters Twitter Chat Summary](#), 2019, [Marketing Workshop Series](#), 2022, and [Transit Marketing 101](#) Webinar, 2021

NCHRP's [Best Practices and Marketing to Increase Rural Transit Ridership and Investment](#), 2018

Thompson, Sadiya. A Closer Look: [Cultivating Marketing Campaigns for Transit Success](#). Metro Magazine, February 8, 2021.

Transit Center's [Winning Transit](#), 2019

TCRP's [A Guidebook for Marketing Transit Services to Business](#), 2014

## Medicaid Transportation

Center for Health Care Strategies' [Disruptive Innovation in Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation](#), 2017

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' [Assurance of Transportation](#), 2022

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' [Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Booklet for Providers](#), 2016

Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission's [Medicaid Coverage of Non-Emergency Medical Transportation](#), 2019

National RTAP's [Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Guide](#), 2022

TCRP's [Handbook for Examining the Effects of Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Brokerages on Transportation Coordination](#), 2018

Additional collections of resources are contained in our [Topic Guides](#) on the following subjects:

[ADA](#)

[Funding](#)

[Alternative Fuels](#)

[Intercity Transportation](#)

[Bloodborne Pathogens](#)

[Livability](#)

[Defensive Driving](#)

[Mobility Management](#)

[Disasters](#)

[Older Adults](#)

[Distracted Driving](#)

[Transit Asset Management](#)

[Drug and Alcohol Programs](#)

[Tribal Transit](#)