State RTAP Manager's Peer Roundtable Summary

January 28, 2026

Our Winter 2026 State RTAP Manager Peer Roundtable was based on questions that State RTAP Managers asked within the past year, including discussions during National RTAP/State RTAP 1:1 outreach calls. There were 12 attendees; the states that participated were Connecticut, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Washington. The icebreaker question was, "How did Winter Storm Fern impact your area?". Answers included temperatures up to 30 degrees below zero to a few inches of ice on top of snow to 2 feet of snow to 80 degree weather (you know that was Florida!).

Q: Training for Transit Board Members

A: Kim Angel from North Carolina RTAP started the group off with, "I think there should be thought given to governing board training and transit advisory board training. And then there are those authorities that are kind of the hybrids, where they are both." North Carolina DOT requires all their 5311 recipients to have an advisory board unless they are an authority that has one governing board, and then it can also serve as the advisory board, and their RTAP provides board training. Cathleen Amick from Minnesota RTAP added, "We've had, a few systems that have changed their organizational structure. Minnesota has joint powers, nonprofit boards, government boards, and others. She recommends that board training incorporates all the different types, and the responsibilities of the transit systems, and then also includes those transit staff, or those that report to the boards. In Oregon, training was developed for county commissioners and an advisory committee; the training included FTA regulations and was well received. Cara Marcus from National RTAP mentioned that National RTAP has board training: Boards that Perform and Roles and Responsibilities of Transit Board Members.

Q: State RTAP Newsletters

A: Marianna Hanefeld from Washington RTAP sends a monthly email newsletter to her subrecipients. She gathers materials from National RTAP eNews, emails from various lists, and features a variety of different local projects, such as new buses that are being put into service, routes, tribal transit success stories, conferences and training opportunities, etc. Oklahoma does not publish a newsletter, but they have a monthly meeting for all 5310s and 5311s covering everything they need to know and then send out the recording. Colorado (CASTA) provides two e-newsletters a month using Constant Contact. They streamline their e-newsletter to make sure that it's not

overwhelming in terms of information and really try to make it information that they're not getting from other lists people subscribe to. Maryland Transit Association and the Transportation Association of Maryland contract with KFH Group to publish a professional magazine twice a year that's about 50 pages long, with federal and state updates and articles of interest, such as microtransit and artificial intelligence. John Bannon from Illinois RTAP uses MailChimp for their newsletter, which comes out four times a year. He is interested in knowing what the best time frequency would be for an RTAP newsletter. Florida RTAP produces a quarterly newsletter in partnership with FDOT programs, such as compliance. They also spotlight local initiatives, including their Roadeo, and of course, Rural Transit Day. Oklahoma doesn't have a specific statewide RTAP conference, but they do lots of RTAP-related trainings at their annual state conference, like the Roadeo and other trainings, shared Tom Nutter.

Q: State RTAP Conferences

A: Florida RTAP hosts sponsored sessions at other statewide conferences. Their transit agencies get together 3-4 times a year, and they partner with the Florida Public Transportation Association, have a professional development workshop, and host between 2-4 sessions at each conference, depending upon the needs of the agencies. The RTAP does a formal needs assessment and holds informal conversations to see what the transit agencies want to learn about. Illinois has an annual RTAC conference, a 2 1/2-day conference focused on rural transit. Their advisory committee is always looking for good, different, interesting topics that fit both the topic and the budget. The conference moves to different parts of the state. CASTA holds 2 RTAP conferences each year and works with its advisory committee, Colorado DOT, FTA regional staff, and transit agencies on topic selection. They tailor the conference to the audience; for example, if there are a lot of new transit managers, they will hold a Transit 101 session. Connecticut RTAP holds biannual advisory committee meetings to plan their conference and provides training through organizations like CTAA. The CTRTAP conference has different tracks, such as leadership, operations, and administration. They've tried maintenance, but agencies find it difficult to give up their maintenance staff for a day. Their conferences also include state legislative updates by senators and congressional representatives. The Community Transportation of the Northwest has an annual conference that uses the National RTAP Ambassador Program to share training resources. Oregon RTAP sponsors the annual Oregon Transit Association conference. A wide variety of topics are presented. It starts with a training needs survey of transit providers, Ongoing training topics are grant management, reporting, procurement, and updates on grant cycles that are coming up. ODOT hosts the sessions and then there are many other sessions on submitted topics. Missouri doesn't host an RTAP conference but participates in the Missouri Public Transit Association (MPTA) annual conference where they host a session for the rural transit agencies. The RTAPs also provide scholarships to external conferences.

Q: State RTAP Communities of Practice

A: Participants in this breakout session discussed the importance of coordination and building that partnership with RTAP managers and DOT managers. It is important to be able to understand the needs of rural areas, and how best to learn about those needs. Oregon does roundtables to find out about the needs of their stakeholders. RTAP managers should visit smaller communities to understand what is happening on the ground.

Q: Fund Braiding

A: North Carolina RTAP is planning on providing a series of financial management training, and one of them will include information about fundraising. And it'll be basically construed to be how to maximize transit agency funds using this technique. Minnesota will also be planning similar training. The breakout room participants discussed that this year there are fewer federal funds available and given the intricacies of administrating and reporting on receiving funds from different funding sources, transit agencies should look to their own operations to see what may be worthwhile. Cara also mentioned the fund braiding resources available through CCAM and CCAM-TAC.

Q: Starting a Statewide Mobility Management Program

A: While no one in this breakout session had a statewide mobility management program, all were interested in it. Information about the forthcoming National RTAP Mobility Manager's Handbook was shared. Marianna mentioned that Massachusetts DOT did some great work in this arena.

Q: Additional Questions

A: Al Benedict asked what is being done with GTFS in the states. In North Carolina, the GTFS is handled through North Carolina State University, the Institute for Transportation Research and Education. The state NCDOT has a contract with them. Emily Nacco from Connecticut asked about Maintenance Roadeos. Florida RTAP does that, and Emily and Stephanie Lewis will discuss after the roundtable. Cara told participants that RLS is updating the National RTAP Bus Roadeo Toolkit, and it will include information about Maintenance Roadeos.

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Please reach out to info@nationalrtap.org if you would like to suggest any additional topic(s) for our next roundtable, which will be in July 2026.