



## State RTAP Manager's Peer Roundtable Summary

July 10, 2024

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Our Summer 2024 State RTAP Manager Peer Roundtable was based on questions State RTAP Managers asked within the past year, including discussions during National RTAP/State RTAP 1:1 outreach calls. There were 7 attendees; the states that participated were Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, Ohio, and Texas. The icebreaker question was an activity you enjoy doing in the summer; answers included golfing, Boston Swan Boats, road trips, bike-riding, kayaking, enjoying the outside in the quiet country with their dogs, and swimming at Barton Springs.

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### **Q: How are State RTAPs working with 5310 Programs?**

A: Ohio works with 5310 programs by offering training and providing templates for ADA, Title VI, cost allocation, and other topics. They also offer some assistance with operating funds. Most of Texas' 5310s are also 5311s and some 5310 funding is given to transit districts. RTAP funding is used to provide training across the state. New Hampshire's consultant has a website for the RTAP program where 5310s can sign up for training and compliance monitoring. Their 5310 funds also fund Regional Coordinating Councils (RCC) that mobility managers and others from 5310 programs can become involved with. One training area identified for 5310s through the RCC was finance.

### **Q: What scholarships guidelines have you developed?**

A: Texas is in the process of revising its scholarship policies. There is a \$3,000 individual limit for conferences on training in or out of state. Training attendees need to prove they are taking the lowest cost airline and use GSA rates for hotels and food. The funding is 50% from RTAP and 50% from the planning budget. They increased their budget \$50,000 post-COVID. New Hampshire's scholarship program was suspended in April as the contract with their consultant ended in March, but they will be obtaining a new one. Iowa has parallel scholarship programs with larger agencies, they do not have a per person dollar amount limit but like the idea, and they also had to increase their scholarship budget.

Attendees also discussed scholarships for CTAA's Passenger Assistance, Safety And Sensitivity (PASS) training and general Passenger Assistance Training (PAT). Texas had discussed providing scholarships to PASS but decided not to do so. Ohio offers PAT training for drivers that is similar

to CTAA's PASS Training. New Hampshire also offers PAT training; RTAP Manager Laura Lutz took it herself and saw the challenges drivers face.

[New Hampshire](#) RTAP shared its scholarship web page. Michigan RTAP partners with Michigan Public Transit Association to provide training. For many of the events, MDOT staff volunteer to facilitate.

**Q: What are people's thoughts on doing a current The State of the States?**

A: In 1992, National RTAP published a [special newsletter](#) on "The State of the States." Everyone was enthusiastic about publishing a new edition. This would require State RTAPs to share 1-3 sentences about something that occurred in the past year that they are most proud of. Every State and Territorial RTAP would participate. The result will be added to the State RTAP Manager's Toolkit. The plan is for it to be released in the next fiscal year; it will be put in National RTAP's Statement of Work and discussed at the fall National RTAP Review Board meeting. Kari Banta from Texas RTAP suggested that it be arranged by region instead of state. On a similar topic, National RTAP Executive Director Robin Phillips suggested that TCRP perform a synthesis project in the next year or so to review what State RTAPs are doing.

**Q: How can RTAPs best help subrecipients comply with the NTD GTFS mandate? (breakout session, moderated by Cara Marcus)**

A: For some small transit agencies, it is challenging for staff to understand what needs to be done to create and maintain GTFS. For GTFS to work well, it should be usable. It would help if the National Transit Map and NTD were based on the same data. States face obstacles to getting 100% GTFS compliance and need more resources. So far, there has been about a 70% compliance rate. Michigan held 1:1 training meetings with rural transit agencies, obtained a waiver for several who were not able to meet the deadline (they will be complying at a later time), and helped agencies obtain SMART grants to implement GTFS Flex. In New Hampshire, some agencies have GTFS, others are currently working on it.

**Q: Do you have any special day/week promotions that you offer? (breakout session, moderated by Cindy Frene)**

A: New Hampshire will promote Rural Transit Day on Facebook. For other special events, they produced a commercial for intercity carriers on TV and promoted that on Facebook. New Hampshire Transit Association has a new [Keep New Hampshire Moving](#) website that has a list of all the transportation providers, and that will be promoted. Iowa will do a newsletter blast to rural transit agencies. Neither state currently has local promotions to get people to ride transit. New Hampshire has a ceremony during their State Transit Association conference in June where they pick a transit agency or person who has excelled over the year and recognize them with an award. Iowa does the same and has several different categories.

**Updates from National RTAP**

If you haven't completed your [RTAP Survey](#), please do so. National RTAP Knowledge and Resource Manager Cara Marcus can create a State RTAP logo for your state with a map overlaid with the state name; please [contact her](#) if you are interested.

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Please reach out to [info@nationalrtap.org](mailto:info@nationalrtap.org) if you would like to suggest any additional topic(s) for our next roundtable, which will be in January 2025.