State RTAP Manager's Peer Roundtable Summary

July 18, 2023

Our Summer 2023 State RTAP Manager Peer Roundtable was based on questions State RTAP Managers asked since our last meeting, including discussions during National RTAP/State RTAP 1:1 outreach calls. There were 11 attendees; the states that participated were Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, and Utah. The icebreaker question was on the current temperature and weather in each attendee's location, it was summer everywhere with temperatures ranging from 77 - 94 degrees.

Q: What training support is needed for the NTD GTFS requirements?

A: Michigan DOT hired consultants for NTD reporting and has a program manager. They will be providing a session at their conference in August 2023. Texas DOT worked with the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) to evaluate data and collect the information they need. The Utah Transit Authority hired a contractor for training. Oregon DOT's Capital Asset Program Coordination team is working with direct reports. They are looking for training options for providers.

Q: How are agencies addressing the supply shortage – are they buying new or repairing existing vehicles?

A: In Oregon, providers are doing more preventative maintenance to extend the life of vehicles. They are starting a new grant cycle and finding out some vehicles aren't available after completing Scopes of Work (SOW). They will have regular meetings with vendors and keep the providers updated. Utah will be providing additional funding for maintenance. They are using some other types of vehicles because there is more availability. They also donate their old vehicles to subrecipients. Michigan is also using some other types of vehicles and have bus procurement staff who communicates with the transit agencies. Ellen Kent, Michigan RTAP Manager, suggests having legislators work with manufacturers on solutions. The Texas co-op is not renewing any vehicle types, so Texas DOT is now working with the Oklahoma co-op.

Q: How do you hold a successful roadeo?

A: Cindy Frene, National RTAP Principle in Charge, finds the most challenging thing about the roadeo planning is the elements. The Michigan Association of Transportation Systems

(MASSTrans) holds a roadeo the first week in August on a Thursday, and Michigan DOT provides funding. They have many volunteers and about 70-100 participants. Agencies will send between 1 and 6 drivers, but because there is a driver shortage, not as many who would like to participate can go. Everyone brings their families and there is food, vendors, prizes, entertainment, and a water park. They use RTAP funds for food and MASSTrans matches 20%. Utah generally gets 20 operators for its roadeo, with large buses, cutaways, and vans. Florida hosts a mega roadeo with paratransit and fixed route combined. Last year there were 19 cutaways, 13 fixed route, 6 maintenance, and 5 paratransit maintenance. Each agency is limited to 2 operators. Florida also sends drivers to CTAA and APTA for their roadeos.

Q: Are you delivering driver training for passengers on drugs, including administering Naloxone? (breakout session, moderated by Kathy Lyons)

A: In Oregon, there is no state-sponsored training, and each agency has its policies. One driver saw a person using a controlled substance while on the bus, and law enforcement was called and the passenger was removed. Some of the agencies carry Narcan on the buses. In Florida, no rural providers have taken Narcan training. Jacksonville Transportation Authority has trained their safety staff and road supervisors on Narcan and they saved one life to date. To address if someone is acting inappropriately because of drug use, drivers rely on the CTAA PASS and Defensive Driving training. Stephanie Lewis, Florida RTAP Project Manager, would like to have more training available for situations where there is an overdose. She explained that urban agencies have more training programs on this topic, but rural ones do not have as many.

Q: Are you planning for statewide programs? (breakout session, moderated by Cindy Frenè)

A: URSTA did a statewide study with Utah DOT and the Utah Transit Association to identify all providers in the state for gaps and find solutions. When they identify what is needed, they will provide tools to address the needs. One resource identified is the volunteer driver program. They had a statewide voucher program, but it was burdensome, so they created an electronic platform (e-voucher) where a smartphone is required. The passenger can choose the driver, and when the ride is over the driver gets paid. It is in development to provide the service for free and sell the license to other providers and the revenue will go back to their programs. They are also looking to replicate a program that Oklahoma has implemented. They would like to either hire or have a volunteer drive a donated bus that will be retrofitted with a TV screen and include a wheelchair for securement practice. That person would provide regional training on accessing the National RTAP products and how to use them and also present them if needed.

Q: Have you set up a knowledge repository? If so, describe. (breakout session, moderated by Cara Marcus)

A: Missouri is working on its statewide data repository. Handoff is challenging; they are now capturing information in training manuals. They are putting together documents on training to process reimbursements; it should take 6 months to a year to complete the project. They are working with promising new software that will be able to provide transit agencies with secure access. RTAP Manager Heath Pickerill worked with NC DOT, who already developed a successful knowledge repository. In Michigan, 3 team members and several new project managers are working together to produce electronic training guides that any transit agencies can use. Part of the training will include what National RTAP offers. They are also exploring new software for their project.

Q: Does anyone have any input on a state RTAP logo?

A: National RTAP had a request for a design of a standard RTAP logo. URSTA has used the website 99designs.com in the past, which provides 99 designs for $99 and the user can choose one. The participants decided that a map of the state with the state colors will be used as a template, and any State RTAPs that want a logo designed can reach out to Cara Marcus, National RTAP Knowledge and Resource Manager, at cmarcus@nationalrtap.org.

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 January 2024.