

# Passenger Transportation Plan

RPA 13 & 18

2018 – 2023



FINAL

Approved

RPA-13: 04/16/2018

RPA-18: 09/12/2018

This report was funded in part through grant[s] from the Federal Highway Administration [and Federal Transit Administration], U.S. Department of Transportation. The views and opinions of the authors [or agency] expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the U. S. Department of Transportation.

Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO) and Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) are equal opportunity employer, provider, and lender organizations.

RPA 13 Resolution Adopting PTP

OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING AGENCY  
REGIONAL PLANNING AFFILIATION 18

Adoption of Final FY2018-2023 Passenger Transportation Plan

WHEREAS, MAPA is the designated Regional Planning Affiliation (RPA) for the Regional Planning Affiliation 18 Transportation Study Area (TSA); and,

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the RPA, in conjunction with the States, to certify that the transportation planning process complies with all applicable federal laws and regulations; and,

WHEREAS, a fiscally constrained and prioritized Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) for intermodal planning is required by the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) and was developed by MAPA for RPA-18; and,

WHEREAS, in RPAs, all projects, except National Highway System, Interstate Maintenance, and Bridge projects are to be selected by the RPA in accordance with the priorities in the Transportation Improvement Program; and,

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Year 2018-2021 Regional Transportation Improvement Program, dated July 2017, which defines the capital improvements for streets, highways, transit and airports for the local jurisdictions in the TSA for a four-year period, has been approved by the RPA-18 Technical Committee; and,

WHEREAS, the FY 2018-2021 Regional Transportation Improvement Program, dated July 2017- 2018 has been given due consideration by the RPA-18 Policy Committee; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that RPA-18 approves the FY 2018-2021 Regional Transportation Improvement Program, dated July 2018, and recommends said program be forwarded to the appropriate state and federal agencies; and be it further

RESOLVED that the FY 2018-2021 Regional Transportation Improvement Program serve as the vehicle for project selection, that is to say that FY 2019 projects have the highest priority in the RTIP and be selected first, FY 2019 projects would be selected next and so forth; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the RPA-18 Transportation Planning Affiliation adopts the FY2018-2023 RPA-13 & RPA-18 Passenger Transportation Plan.

PASSED this 12<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2018.

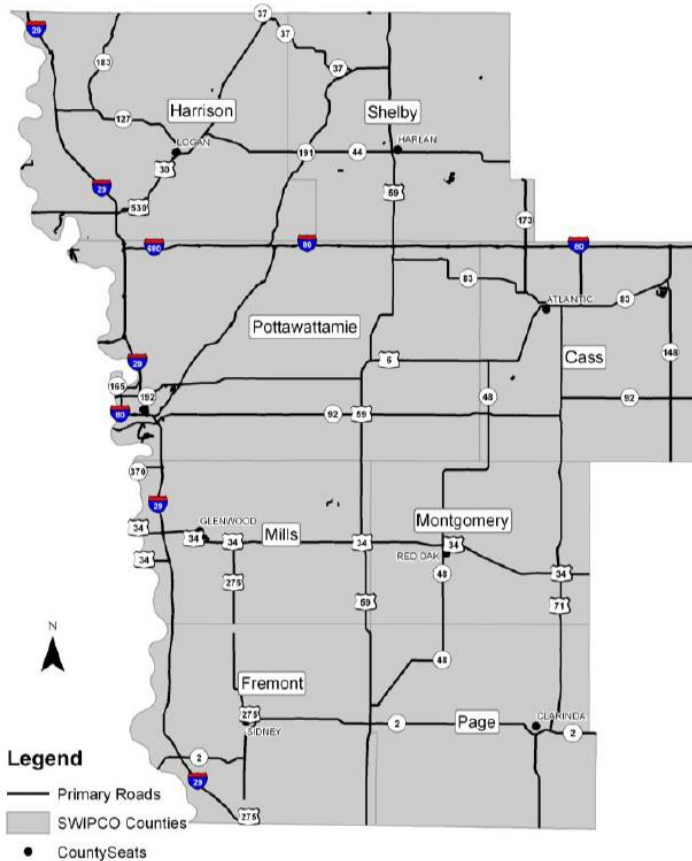
  
Charles Parkhurst, Chairman  
RPA-18 Policy Committee

**RPA 13 & 18**  
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## Introduction and Planning Process

The Passenger Transportation Plan's (PTP) purpose is to promote coordinated transportation planning and create a needs-based project justification for all passenger transportation programs including public transit and human service transportation. This PTP addresses passenger transportation services in Iowa's Regional Planning Affiliations (RPA) 13 & 18. The counties within this region include Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, and Shelby. This five-year plan is the result of a process to inventory the available transportation services, assess the transportation needs of the residents, explore the effectiveness and shortcomings of current services, and explore options to better meet the needs of the citizens of RPA 13 & 18/SWITA region. The PTP promotes joint, coordinated passenger transportation planning programs that further the development of the local and regional public transportation systems.



The main public transit provider in RPA 13 & 18 is Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA). SWITA, based in Atlantic, consists of 94 vehicles and 87 employees providing various services throughout the eight-county region.

RPA 13 and 18, through guidance provided by the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT), developed the PTP. The following groups provided input:

- RPA-13
- RPA-18
- Southwest Iowa Transportation Advisory Group (TAG)
- Humans Services Advisory Council (HSAC)
- Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA)
- Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO)
- Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT)

Goals of the PTP:

1. Improve transportation services to Iowans
2. Increase passenger transportation coordination
3. Create awareness of unmet needs
4. Develop new working partnerships
5. Assist decision-makers, advocates, and consumers in understanding the range of transportation options available
6. Develop justification for future passenger transportation investments
7. Eliminate overlapping of services

The document provides a better understanding of the passenger transportation services delivered and guidance for future decisions. It coordinates health and human service, transportation, and public transit to promote and further the development of the region's public transportation system.

Previous PTP's have relied heavily upon the input of the Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC) and the Coordinated Transit Committee (CTC). Well connected to stakeholders who utilize transit or encounter transportation barriers, these groups provide valuable input. However, the large majority of the membership of these groups primarily serve clients in the Omaha/Council Bluffs metropolitan area and in many cases service providers, stakeholders, and underrepresented citizens from the RPA regions. Therefore, SWITA, with guidance from the Iowa DOT, and RPA's 13 & 18 have actively worked since the 2013 PTP to develop a Transportation Advisory Group (TAG) to speak for the needs of the rural areas that make up the constituencies.

Appendix C provides a current list of the TAG group. The most recent TAG meeting was on March 29, 2017 and the next scheduled meeting is September 20, 2018. Typically, the TAG group meets at least twice a year. Minutes of these meetings are in the Appendix D.

### **PTP Survey**

In January 2018, all member-organizations of the TAG and the HSAC and other human service agencies/organizations and private transportation providers providing services in the region received a survey entitled "Human Health & Services Transportation Coordination Survey". The surveys were distributed by e-mail and responses were collected electronically over a thirty-day period through Survey Monkey online survey software. The survey was conducted in an effort to obtain private transportation provider inventory information and to identify transportation needs and gaps in service. The information collected from twenty-three (23) responding organizations was used in the development of this document and a more detailed discussion of the survey results is in Section IV Coordination Efforts and Issues. A sample survey can be found in Appendix E.

### **Draft PTP Review**

The Draft PTP was distributed to members of the TAG for their review, comments and concurrence. A Draft PTP was also submitted to the SWITA, the Iowa Department of Transportation, and to the Federal Transportation Administration for review and comments. The RPA-13/SWIPCO website allows members of the public to view and comment on the Draft PTP also. Copies of the draft document were available at the office of SWIPCO in Atlantic and at MAPA in Omaha. The final version of the Passenger Transportation Plan was drafted and submitted to the RPA-13 and RPA-18 Transportation Technical Committees for their recommendation to the Policy Boards of the RPAs. Following public meetings, the Policy Boards passed the Resolution shown on page one of this document approving the final version of the Passenger Transportation Plan.

## SECTION I Inventory

The following is a discussion of existing passenger transportation operations within the RPA 13 & 18.

### I. Types of Services

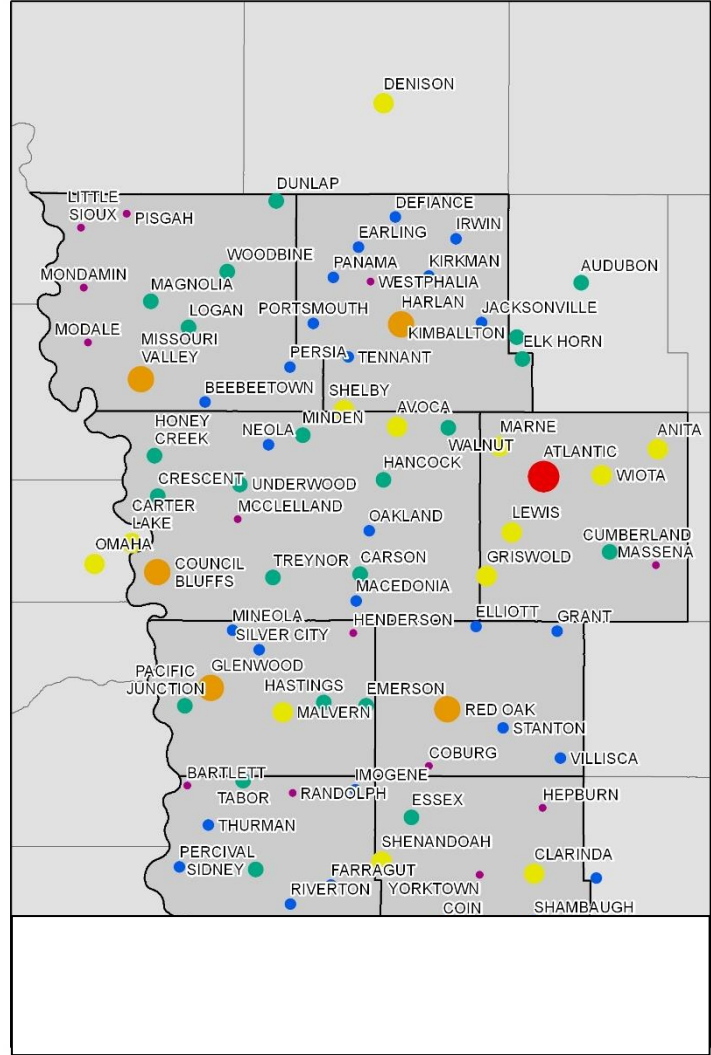
#### Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA)

SWITA provides demand response, taxi service, Medicaid medical transportation, general medical transports, shopper routes to trade centers, and contracted services. These services are located throughout the RPA 13 & 18 regions.

The figure to the right shows ridership totals for SWITA from origination points. Additionally, 10,834 riders departed from points outside the mapped area (i.e. Des Moines, Iowa City, etc.), which are not included in the above numbers.

The SWIPCO Policy Board manages SWITA. A Board of Supervisor and an additional nominated representative represent each county provide representation on the SWIPCO Policy Board. One Board of Supervisor represents each Pottawattamie and Mills Counties. There are three at-large representatives as well.

SWITA is open to the general public 24 hours/7 days a week depending on driver availability. Office hours are 6:00am to 5:00pm Monday-Friday. SWITA is closed on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Friday after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. The vast majority of SWITA vehicles are ADA accessible. The non-ADA accessible vehicles are used specifically for contract services with corporations for employee transit. The health and human service agencies generally provide services to and from medical appointments, work, and/or community services/facilities. These occur during weekday hours. Some also provide transportation to social events/leisure activities or shopping that may occur in evenings. The agency provides these services only on an "as needed" basis.



SWITA rates are as follows:

**SWITA Rates**

Non-Medical \$40.00/hour  
 Medical \$30.00/hour  
**Atlantic, Glenwood, Red Oak, Shenandoah, Missouri Valley,  
 Harlan Taxi**

Seniors \$2.00  
 General Public \$2.50

*\*\* Additional services provided with rates available by request.*

*Ridership*

**Taxi Services**

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Ride Program</u>	<u>Rides</u>	<u>Elderly</u>	<u>Disabled</u>	<u>Public</u>
FY16	Atlantic Taxi	28164	5611	21609	944
FY17	Atlantic Taxi	30519	5341	24258	920
<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Ride Program</u>	<u>Rides</u>	<u>Elderly</u>	<u>Disabled</u>	<u>Public</u>
FY16	Harlan Taxi	6319	461	5196	662
FY17	Harlan Taxi	6832	983	5523	326
<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Ride Program</u>	<u>Rides</u>	<u>Elderly</u>	<u>Disabled</u>	<u>Public</u>
FY16	Red Oak Taxi	3634	1593	199	1842
FY17	Red Oak Taxi	3148	1201	582	1365
<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Ride Program</u>	<u>Rides</u>	<u>Elderly</u>	<u>Disabled</u>	<u>Public</u>
FY16	Shenandoah Taxi	2591	1647	304	640
FY17	Shenandoah Taxi	2986	1714	672	600

**Van Pool**

SWITA has provided vanpool services to professionals impacted by the closing of CDS Global’s Red Oak location since April 2010 from Page County to Harlan. In addition, extended taxi service hours in Red Oak to meet the needs of the community.

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Ride Program</u>	<u>Rides</u>	<u>Elderly</u>	<u>Disabled</u>	<u>Public</u>
FY16	CDS Van Pool	1663	0	0	1663
FY17	CDS Van Pool	1652	0	0	1652

**Employee/Student Commuter Services**

In March 2012, SWITA began coordinating with Menards, Inc. officials at their Shelby Distribution Center to provide commuter transportation to and from pick-up points in Atlantic, Harlan, and Council Bluffs. In addition to providing rides for employees of the Distribution Center, the service allows commuters from any of the three pick-up points to reach any other point with a transfer in Shelby. There are currently 500+ employees at the Menard facility, and officials are looking to expand by another 100 employees. Labor shed studies show that Harlan, Atlantic, and Council Bluffs are heavy commuter locations, and that transportation service is a common barrier to employment for otherwise qualified individuals. After a



year of service, the Harlan stop was discontinued due to lack of ridership but the Atlantic and Council Bluffs stops are very successful. Council Bluffs and Atlantic have average 2,163 riders per month since that time. SWITA has increased its capacity in Council Bluffs, incorporating a 39-passenger vehicle into the service rotation. Ridership for these services is listed below.

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Ride Program</u>	<u>Rides</u>	<u>Elderly</u>	<u>Disabled</u>	<u>Public</u>
FY16	Menards	17477	0	0	17477
FY17	Menards	13193	0	0	13193

SWITA initiated a service with Iowa Western Community College in August of 2012 for transporting students from the Council Bluffs to the Atlantic campus, where the Design Technology program operates. SWITA offers this service twice a week, and has coordinated the schedule to meet the needs of the students. SWITA anticipates the service to expand in concert with the anticipated growth of the Design Technology program. Listed below is the ridership numbers.

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Ride Program</u>	<u>Rides</u>	<u>Elderly</u>	<u>Disabled</u>	<u>Public</u>
FY16	IWCC	766	0	0	766
FY17	IWCC	575	0	0	575

SWITA Fleet Inventory

**Buses**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Chassis</b>	<b>Body</b>	<b>Class Size</b>	<b>ADA Compliant</b>
2005	Chevy	School bus	LD158	No
2005	Chevy	School bus	LD138	No
2007	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes
2007	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	No
2008	Ford	Supreme Startrans	LD176	Yes
2008	Ford	Supreme Startrans	LD176	Yes
2008	Ford	Supreme Startrans	LD176	Yes
2008	Ford	El Dorado	LD138	Yes
2008	Ford	El Dorado	LD138	Yes
2008	Ford	El Dorado	LD138	Yes
2008	Ford	El Dorado	LD138	Yes
2008	Ford	El Dorado	LD138	Yes
2008	Ford	El Dorado	LD138	Yes
2008	Ford	El Dorado	LD138	Yes
2008	Ford	El Dorado	LD138	Yes
2009	Ford	Goshen	LD176	Yes
2009	Ford	Goshen	LD176	Yes
2009	Ford	Goshen	LD176	Yes
2009	Ford	Goshen	LD176	Yes
2010	Chevy	School bus	LD138	No
2010	International	IC 65	MD40	No
2010	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes
2010	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes
2010	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes
2010	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes
2010	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes
2010	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes

2010	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes
2010	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes
2011	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes
2011	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes
2011	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes
2011	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes
2012	Ford	Glaval	LD176	Yes
2012	Ford	Glaval	LD176	Yes
2012	Ford	Glaval	LD176	Yes
2012	Ford	Glaval	LD176	Yes
2012	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes
2012	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes
2013	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes
2013	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes
2014	Ford	Glaval	LD176	Yes
2014	Ford	Glaval	LD176	Yes
2014	Ford	Glaval	LD176	Yes
2014	Ford	Glaval	LD176	Yes
2015	Ford	El Dorado Aerotech	LD176	Yes
2015	Ford	El Dorado Aerotech	LD176	Yes
2015	Ford	El Dorado Aerotech	LD176	Yes
2015	Ford	El Dorado Aerotech	LD176	No
2016	Ford	E450 Cutaway	LD176	Yes
2016	Ford	E450 Cutaway	LD176	Yes
2016	Ford	Aero Elite 320	MD32	No
2017	Ford	El Dorado	LD176	Yes
2017	Ford	El Dorado WB	LD176	Yes
2017	Ford	El Dorado Aerotech	LD176	Yes
2017	Ford	El Dorado Aerotech	LD176	Yes
2017	Ford	El Dorado Aerotech	LD176	Yes
2017	Ford	El Dorado Aerotech	LD176	Yes
2017	Ford	El Dorado Aerotech	LD176	Yes
2017	Ford	El Dorado Aerotech	LD176	Yes
2017	Ford	El Dorado Aerotech	LD176	Yes
2017	Ford	El Dorado Aerotech	LD176	Yes
2017	Ford	El Dorado Aerotech	LD176	Yes
2017	Ford	El Dorado Aerotech	LD176	Yes
2017	Ford	El Dorado Aerotech	LD176	Yes
2017	Ford	El Dorado Aerotech	LD176	Yes
2017	Ford	Goshen Coach	LD176	Yes
2017	Ford	Goshen Coach	LD176	Yes

**Vans**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Chassis</b>	<b>Body</b>	<b>Class Size</b>	<b>ADA Compliant</b>
1999	Plymouth	Grand Voyager	MV	No
2004	Chrysler	Town and Country	MV	No
2006	Ford	Freestar SE	MV	No
2007	Dodge	Grand Caravan	MV	Yes
2008	Chevy	Uplander	MV	Yes
2010	Dodge	Caravan	MV	Yes
2010	Dodge	Caravan	MV	Yes

2010	Dodge	Caravan	MV	Yes
2010	Dodge	Caravan	MV	Yes
2010	Dodge	Caravan	MV	Yes
2010	Dodge	Caravan	MV	Yes
2010	Chrysler	Town and Country	MV	No
2012	KIA	Sedona	MV	No
2014	GMC	Acadia	MV	No
2015	Toyota	Sienna	MV	No
2015	MV-1		MV	Yes
2015	MV-1		MV	Yes
2016	Dodge	Caravan	MV	Yes
2016	Dodge	Caravan	MV	Yes
2016	Dodge	Caravan	MV	Yes
2016	Dodge	Braun Minivan	MV	Yes
2016	MV-1		MV	Yes
2016	Nissan	Quest	MV	No

### Cars

2000	Ford	Taurus	Sedan	No
2008	Ford	Taurus	Sedan	No
2012	Ford	Taurus	Sedan	No
2012	Chevrolet	Malibu LS	Sedan	No

### Health and Human Service Agencies

The following chart lists the types of services available through the six (6) health and human service agencies responding to our survey that provide transportation using agency-owned or leased vehicles. These organizations do not receive transit funding through contracts with SWITA or Metro Area Transit (Metro).

Agency	County	City	Type of Service	Fixed	Demand
Support Services of South Central Iowa	Adair	Greenfield	Disabled		✓
Elm Crest Retirement	Shelby	Harlan	Elderly		✓
Faith in Action Volunteers	Fremont	Sidney	Other	✓	✓
Children's Square	Pottawattamie	Council Bluffs	Disabled/Youth		✓
Partnership for Progress	Cass	Atlantic	Disabled		✓
Park Place RCF/PMI	Cass	Atlantic	Other	✓	✓

The following chart lists the types of services available through health and human service agencies responding to this and the previous survey using agency-owned vehicles, contracted transportation services, or volunteers/staff driving personal vehicles.

Agency	County	City	Type of Service	Fixed	Demand
Cass County Health System	Cass	Atlantic	Disabled/General Public	✓	✓
Amerigroup	Dallas	West Des Moines	Elderly/Disabled	✓	✓
Iowa Vocational Rehab Services	Cass	Atlantic	Disabled		✓
Boost4Families	Pottawattamie	Oakland	Other	✓	✓
REM	Cass	Atlantic	Disabled		✓
Crossroads of Western IA	Harrison	Missouri Valley	Human Service		✓
Manor of Malvern	Mills	Malvern	Medical		✓
Good Samaritan Society	Montgomery	Villisca	Elderly		✓
Waubonsie MHC	Page	Clarinda	Medical		✓

Page County Passengers	Page	Clarinda	Other		✓
Nishna Productions	Page	Shenandoah	Disabled	✓	✓
Gardenview Care Center	Page	Shenandoah	Medical	✓	
Bethany Heights	Pottawattamie	Council Bluffs	Elderly	✓	
Jennie Edmundson Hosp.	Pottawattamie	Council Bluffs	Medical	✓	✓
Good Samaritan Society	Montgomery	Red Oak	Elderly		✓
Goldenrod Manor Care	Page	Clarinda	Elderly		✓
Fair Oaks Residential Care	Page	Shenandoah	Elderly		✓
Carter Lake Senior Center	Pottawattamie	Carter Lake	Elderly		✓
Salem Lutheran Homes	Shelby	Elk Horn	Elderly		✓

*Human Services Fleet*

Agency	City	Vehicle Type	Condition	Seating Capacity
Crest Services	Harlan	2 -- minivans	Good	6
Faith in Action Volunteers	Sidney	5 – minivans (2 wc*)	Good	6
Children’s Square	Council Bluffs	10 – minivans	Good	7
		2 - cars	Good	5
Partnership for Progress	Atlantic	4 - minivans	Good	6
		1 – light duty bus	Good	15
Park Place RCF/PMI	Atlantic	2 - minivans	Good	7
Waubonsie Medical	Clarinda	3 – minivans	Good	7
Jennie Edmundson Hosp	Council Bluffs	1 – minivan (wc)*	Good	9
		1 – light duty bus	Good	8
Bethany Heights	Council Bluffs	1 – light duty bus	New	15
Elm Crest Retirement	Harlan	1 – car	Excellent	2
		1 – light duty bus (wc)*	Excellent	15
Manor of Malvern	Malvern	1 – minivan	Good	5
Crossroads of W Iowa	Missouri Valley	4 – minivans	Excellent	7
Garden View Care Cent.	Shenandoah	1 – minivan (wc)*	Good	5
		1 – maxi van	Good	10
Nishna Productions, Inc.	Shenandoah	14 – cars	Fair-Excellent	4-5
		14 – minivans	Fair-Excellent	6-8
		7 – light duty bus (2 wc)*	Fair-Excellent	8-15
Good Samaritan	Villisca	1 – light duty bus (wc)*	Good	14
		1 – minivan	Good	6
Support Services of South Central Iowa	Greenfield	**	**	**

\* - Wheelchair accessible

\*\* Vehicle information not provided

**Private Charter Operators**

Windstar Lines is a private charter company located in Carroll that serves RPA 13 & 18. According to their website ([www.gowindstar.com](http://www.gowindstar.com)), Windstar Lines provides luxury charter service throughout the State of Iowa and to all 48 contiguous states and Canada. Customers include tour companies, high schools, colleges, universities, senior citizen groups, government agencies, bank travel clubs, military, community organizations, politicians, and sports teams. Windstar Lines also provides convention shuttles for groups in Des Moines, Iowa City, Cedar Rapids and Omaha. Groups can charter by

the hour, day, or multi-day. The hours involved, miles, and additional fees such as parking, tolls, and relief drivers determine prices. Should Windstar decline a charter request, SWITA is able to assist with rates available upon request.

### Schools

The school districts within RPAs 13 & 18 provide transportation for rural students. Students living within the city of the school's location are not provided transportation through the district in most cases creating a transportation need for families.

Pre-school and very young elementary students often lack transportation to and from school because they are too young to walk by themselves or their parents or caregivers are unable to transport them. Some parents believe that it is not safe for their children to walk to school and chose riding public transportation as a safer alternative. However, the majority of towns where schools are located are quite small and in most instances, the distances from home to school are only a matter of a few blocks.

SWITA provides in-town bussing services for the Atlantic School District. Parents contract with SWITA directly to provide this service outside of the school district. This service currently serves 45 students. SWITA also provides in-town preschool transportation in Glenwood and Red Oak. These rides are coordinated through Boost 4 Families.

School districts provide fixed route transportation to students within their respective school district. The cost of this service per pupil varies with each school district, but is typically very expensive. The average cost per mile, ranges from \$1.48 to \$5.36. With 30 school districts servicing the eight counties, the need for consolidation of districts and transportation services may be beneficial to reduce the cost to each district.

2016-2017 Annual Transportation Data for Iowa Public Schools										
Revised 12/11/17		Enrollment (cert less share time)	Route Miles	Non- Route Miles	Net Operating Cost	Ave # Students Transported	Ave Cost Per Pupil Transported	Ave Cost Per Pupil Enrolled	Ave Cost Per Mile (Route)	Approx. Dist. Sq. Miles
Dist. #	District Name									
387	Atlantic	1,384.70	83389	53328	\$333,762.99	312	\$1,069.75	\$241.04	\$4.00	206
441	A-H-S-T	778.4	141383	18506	\$337,602.81	560	\$602.86	\$433.71	\$2.39	277
914	CAM	488.4	101618	14322	\$308,682.44	289.5	\$1,066.26	\$632.03	\$3.04	280
1197	Clarinda	961.3	76773	36619	\$203,939.36	384.9	\$529.85	\$212.15	\$2.65	165
1476	Council Bluffs	9,256.90	542969	440670	\$2,356,589.56	2378	\$991.00	\$254.58	\$4.34	74
1917	Boyer Valley	415.7	71758	12268	\$203,501.68	182.6	\$1,114.47	\$489.54	\$2.84	180
2113	Essex	196	21854	8569	\$61,476.57	40.4	\$1,521.70	\$313.66	\$2.81	90
2151	Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton	442.5	163417	15904	\$242,127.92	274	\$883.68	\$547.18	\$1.48	249
2369	Fremont-Mills	456	46385	10447	\$167,811.28	339	\$495.02	\$368.01	\$3.62	151
2511	Glenwood	1,956.70	141100	71677	\$542,606.38	1057.9	\$512.91	\$277.31	\$3.84	167
2718	Griswold	516.6	105911	18206	\$333,816.40	320	\$1,043.18	\$646.18	\$3.15	245
2772	Hamburg	235	26061	4704	\$96,029.10	103	\$932.32	\$408.63	\$3.69	102
2826	Harlan	1,399.40	119449	62142	\$497,309.46	572.7	\$868.36	\$355.37	\$4.17	279
3168	IKM-Manning	658.8	303600	12525	\$468,589.34	628	\$746.16	\$711.28	\$1.54	322
3645	Lewis Central	2,494.50	242421	93521	\$911,227.97	2185	\$417.04	\$365.29	\$3.76	64
3798	Logan-Magnolia	552	55070	28210	\$234,988.58	347.9	\$675.45	\$425.70	\$4.27	115
3978	East Mills	534.3	98211	16259	\$339,020.09	356.3	\$951.50	\$634.51	\$3.45	225
4356	Missouri Valley	842.1	63268	18427	\$229,987.57	255.1	\$901.56	\$273.11	\$3.63	149
5463	Red Oak	1,110.30	65857	24337	\$272,302.21	266.9	\$1,020.24	\$245.25	\$4.14	203
5510	Riverside	704	105223	19791	\$341,508.32	313	\$1,091.08	\$485.10	\$3.24	227
5976	Shenandoah	1,075.70	110352	30524	\$314,576.29	529.9	\$593.65	\$292.44	\$2.85	248
6003	Sidney	408.9	56064	27541	\$176,851.16	196	\$902.30	\$432.50	\$3.16	177
6097	South Page	197.9	32288	31079	\$37,498.47	66	\$568.16	\$189.48	\$1.16	143
6165	Stanton	204.1	32402	14287	\$80,806.49	62	\$1,303.33	\$395.92	\$2.50	80

6453	Treynor	587.2	72422	20663	\$289,558.52	513.3	\$564.11	\$493.12	\$4.00	99
6460	Tri-Center	632.1	90320	30107	\$269,604.61	431.2	\$625.24	\$426.52	\$2.99	179
6534	Underwood	685.1	90080	24092	\$289,024.56	596	\$484.94	\$421.87	\$3.21	140
6651	Villisca	304	44206	9675	\$237,180.36	134.8	\$1,759.50	\$780.20	\$5.36	160
6969	West Harrison	343.7	61313	31870	\$168,797.36	183	\$922.39	\$491.12	\$2.75	360
7092	Woodbine	479.1	51380	14233	\$168,774.14	177	\$953.53	\$352.27	\$3.28	151
<b>Totals &amp; Averages</b>		30,804	3,289,213	1,235,707	\$10,688,223.73	14,275	\$748.72	\$346.98	\$3.25	5,744

*School District Fleet Inventory*

District Name	Yellow Buses	Small Vehicles	ADA Compliant
A-H-S-T	10	1	1
Atlantic	20	10	3
Boyer Valley	10	10	1
CAM	13	12	0
Clarinda	9	4	1
Council Bluffs	0	2	0
East Mills	12	8	0
Elk Horn-Kimballton-Exira	11	9	0
Essex	5	4	0
Fremont-Mills	8	7	0
Glenwood	27	13	2
Griswold	12	8	2
Harlan	23	12	1
IKM-Manning	17	10	0
Lewis Central	29	15	3
Logan-Magnolia	11	5	1
Missouri Valley	10	8	0
Nishnabotna	4	8	0
Red Oak	12	9	1
Riverside	12	5	1
Shenandoah	11	10	1
Sidney	6	10	1
South Page	6	6	1
Stanton	6	5	0
Treynor	12	5	0
Tri-Center	17	5	1
Underwood	15	4	1
Southwest Valley (Villisca)	15	10	1
West Harrison	11	7	2
Woodbine	8	4	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>26</b>

## Taxis

SWITA provides taxi service in six cities in RPAs 13 & 18. The cities and hours of taxi service are listed below:

Atlantic	Monday – Saturday: 7:00 a.m to 10:00 p.m; Sunday: 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m
Glenwood	Monday – Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Harlan	Monday – Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Missouri Valley	Monday – Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Red Oak	Monday – Friday: 7:30 a.m to noon and 1:00 p.m to 3:30 p.m.
Shenandoah	Monday – Friday: 8:30 to noon and 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The rate for taxi service in these cities is \$2.50 for the public, and \$2.00 for elderly clients.

Private taxi companies serving Council Bluffs and Carter Lake are listed below. These firms will also go out into the rural area, though because of distance fares are high.

- Casino Cab – Council Bluffs (10 vehicles, 0 ADA)
- Bluffs Taxi and Courier, Inc.—Council Bluffs (9 vehicles, 0 ADA)
- Happy Cab – Council Bluffs (100 vehicles, 11 ADA)
- City Taxi – Carter Lake (5 vehicles, 2 ADA)

## Passenger Rail Service

Passenger rail operator, Amtrak, maintains one scheduled stop in the region. Amtrak is a federally subsidized passenger rail provider serving the region. Amtrak's passenger rail network encompasses 24,000 miles stretched across 45 states, serving approximately 530 communities. Amtrak tends to concentrate on larger markets. Although predominately serving urban centers throughout the Northeast, Midwest and West Coast, Amtrak also serves about 180 destinations in non-metropolitan communities. Amtrak provides train service to approximately 10 percent of the communities that have intercity bus service.

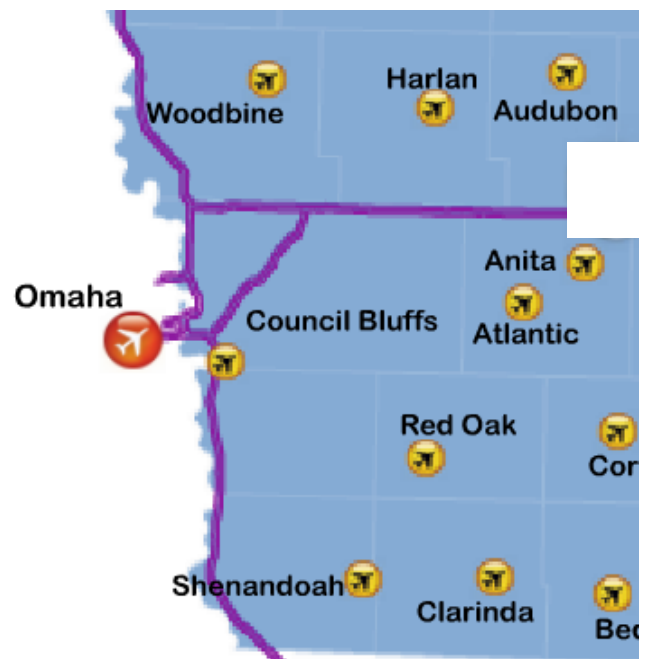
There are no Amtrak stations located in RPAs 13 or 18. The nearest Amtrak stations are in Omaha, Nebraska and Creston, Iowa.

## Airports

There are no commercial airports within RPAs 13 & 18. The closest commercial airport is located in Omaha, Nebraska, which is approximately 80 miles from the furthest point in the RPAs. There are eight (8) basic-service, publicly owned airports located within the region.

## Air and Rail Coordination

As there are no commercial airports or railway stations within the region, these modes of transportation have not been a focus of the PTP process or the transit advisory group. On average, SWITA provides 2 trips per year to the Omaha Eppley Airfield and one or less trips to either the Omaha or Creston Amtrak stations.



**SECTION II**  
**Area Profile**

<b>Population</b>	
<b>RPA-13</b>	
Cass County	13,865
Fremont County	7,373
Montgomery County	10,710
Page County	15,902
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>47,850</b>
<b>RPA-18</b>	
Harrison County	14,838
Mills County	15,028
Pottawattamie County	30,563
Shelby County	12,158
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>72,587</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>120,437</b>

The region consists of seventy-five incorporated communities and is largely rural with land use being primarily used for agriculture. Urban areas consist of only six to seven percent of the land use in each county. The five largest cities or economic centers located within the region include Atlantic, Clarinda, Glenwood, Red Oak, Shenandoah each having a population over the 5,000 minimum to be considered an urban area. The City of Council Bluffs is part of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and its population is not included in the RPA.

According to the 2010 Census, the region’s population is 120,437 and is primarily rural population. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, each county had between 94-98% of its total population being of white ethnicity, more than the State percent of 91.3%.

RPA-13 is the second smallest planning affiliation in the state regarding population; Page County has the largest population of the four counties with 15,932 residents and Fremont is the smallest with 7,441. The population in

the RPA has declined steadily in each of the four counties over the past few decades and has not seen an increase since the 1980 census with the exclusion of Page County having seen a slight increase in the 1980 Census. The overall trend in each county, and the region as a whole, has been a steady population decline.

RPA-18 is significantly larger with its proximity to the Council Bluffs-Omaha Metropolitan area. Mills and Pottawattamie Counties are the only counties in RPA-18 that have seen growth in population since 1980. Harrison and Shelby Counties show similar trends to RPA-13 counties.

The region is considered lower income compared to the State of Iowa as a whole. Because of these, cost of transportation and public transit make affordability difficult for some low-moderate income families. The average unemployment rate is less than the state with Montgomery, Page and Pottawattamie counties being higher than the State of Iowa rate.

	State of Iowa	RPA-13				RPA-18				Average
		Cass	Fremont	Montgomery	Page	Harrison	Mills	Pottawattamie	Shelby	
Persons Over 65	452,888	2924	1456	2141	3175	2659	2023	13,333	2540	<b>3,781</b>
White Alone	2,781,561	13,626	7212	10,460	15,039	14,658	14,639	86,558	11,909	<b>21,763</b>
Hispanic/Latino	151,544	253	187	305	438	183	359	6151	219	<b>1,012</b>
Mean Travel To Work Time	18.7	17.1	22.7	19.7	17.3	26	24.5	20.3	18.9	<b>21</b>
Median Household Income	51,129	43,114	49,245	40,530	41,803	53,939	62,908	49,941	47,731	<b>48,651</b>
Per Capita Personal Income	26,545	24,001	25,422	22,811	22,895	25,348	27,382	25,239	25,031	<b>24,766</b>
Percentage of Persons Below Poverty Level	12.20%	12.70%	9.10%	16.20%	12.60%	9.90%	7.60%	13.20%	11.30%	<b>11.58%</b>
Current Unemployment Rate	5.60%	4.40%	4.50%	5.70%	5.90%	5.20%	4.50%	6.30%	2.70%	<b>4.90%</b>

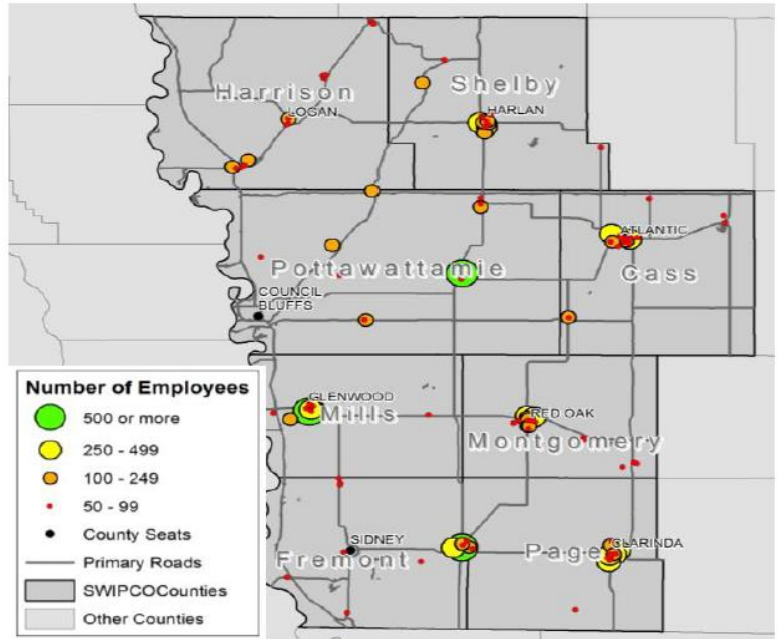
Residents are heavily dependent upon their own vehicle for transportation. Among workers over 16 years of age, 91.6% drive a vehicle to work and 79.8% drive alone. This is higher than the state percentage of 89.4% who drive a vehicle and 78.6% who drive alone. The average commute time for the region is 21 minutes, which is slightly higher than the State of Iowa but lower than the national average of 25.7 minutes.



## Employment Clusters and Cities

There are six designated employment clusters in Southwest Iowa. These clusters are located in Atlantic, Clarinda, Glenwood, Harlan, Red Oak, and Shenandoah each with at least two firms employing over 250 employees and additional employers with over 100 employees. In addition, the City of Oakland has one employer with over 500 employees. Overall, there are approximately 130 employers with more than 50 employees.

Based on this information, the need for transportation services are great. To meet these needs, transportation services are greater in each of these clusters to assist as requested. Taxi services are provided in the six main employment clusters with additional services provided to employers in Shelby (Menards Warehouse), Red Oak (CVS Van Pool) and Council Bluffs (Iowa Western Community College). Efforts to expand assistance to businesses in the region will continue.



### Over 100 Employees

Name	City	Size
Glenwood Resource Center	Glenwood	500
OSI Industries	Oakland	500
Pella Manufacturing Plant	Shenandoah	500
Communications Data Service	Harlan	250
Western Engineering Co	Harlan	250
Mahle Engine Components USA	Atlantic	250
Cass County Health System	Atlantic	400
Atlantic School District	Atlantic	250
NSK Corp	Clarinda	250
Lisle Corp	Clarinda	250
Clarinda Regional Health Center	Clarinda	250
Medical Record Dept Health	Clarinda	250
American Hydraulics	Red Oak	250
Montgomery County Memorial Hospital	Red Oak	250
Sage Software	Pacific Junction	100
AHST Community School District	Avoca	100
Treynor School District	Treynor	100
Tri Center Community High School	Neola	100
Underwood School District	Underwood	100
Concerned Inc.	Harlan	100
Monogram Packaged Meats	Harlan	100

Hy-Vee	Harlan	100
Panama Transfer, Inc	Panama	100
Qbe First Enterprises LLC	Harlan	100
Elm Crest Retirement Community	Harlan	100
Perfection Learning Corp	Logan	100
Longview Home Inc.	Missouri Valley	100
Carry-On Trailer Inc.	Missouri Valley	100
Griswold Community School District	Griswold	100
Henningsen Construction Inc.	Atlantic	100
Heritage House	Atlantic	100
Walmart	Atlantic	100
Clarinda Academy	Clarinda	100
Shenandoah Medical Center	Shenandoah	100
Walmart	Shenandoah	100
EZ Way	Clarinda	100
Hy-Vee	Shenandoah	100
HyVee	Red Oak	100
Parker Hose Products Div	Red Oak	100
Good Samaritan Society	Red Oak	100
Red Oak Greenhouses, Inc	Red Oak	100

### Limited English Proficiency

The purpose of this Limited English Proficiency analysis (LEP) is to outline how RPA-13 and RPA-18 identify persons who may need language assistance, the ways in which assistance may be provided, staff training that may be required, and how to notify LEP persons that assistance is available. As defined in Executive Order 13166, LEP persons are those who do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. RPA-13 and RPA-18 have always worked informally to meet the needs of LEP individuals; the following analysis gives a more detailed view of the LEP population in the region and ways to assist that population. This LEP analysis will utilize the framework of the U.S. DOT's four-factor LEP analysis, which considers the following elements:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons in the region who may be served by public transportation or are likely to encounter a public transportation program, activity, or service.
2. The frequency with which LEP persons encounter public transportation programs, activities, or services.
3. The nature and importance of programs, activities, or services provided by public transportation providers to the LEP population.
4. The resources available to public transportation providers and overall costs to provide LEP assistance.

RPA 13 & 18 do not have a significant limited English population. The overall total percentage for the region of limited English is 1.2% with Pottawattamie County having the largest with 1.6% of the total population over 5 years old. Because the population of LEP is small, there are no large concentrations of limited English speaking individuals outside of the Council Bluffs area. The following chart shows the number and percentage of people for each county in both RPAs that speak another language and do not speak English well.

**Southwest Iowa Region - Population Speaking English in population 5 years and older**

	RPA-13				RPA-18				Total
	Cass	Fremont	Montgomery	Page	Harrison	Mills	Pottawattamie	Shelby	
Total Population	13,895	7,576	11,055	16,047	14,733	13,616	81,997	12,405	171,324
Speak only English	13,519	7,268	10,773	15,607	14,438	13,377	78,283	12,027	165,292
Speak another language, but speak English "very well"	279	173	172	314	176	171	2,370	245	3,900
Speak another language, and speak English "well"	61	52	6	50	49	68	534	79	899
Speak another language, and speak English "not well"	33	82	51	68	66	0	585	51	936
Speak another language, and speak English "not at all"	3	1	53	8	2	0	225	3	295
Percentage that speak another language and speak English less than "very well"	0.7%	1.8%	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%	0.5%	1.6%	1.1%	1.2%

Source: US Census Bureau

RPA and SWITA staff has assessed the frequency with which staff and drivers have, or could have, contact with LEP persons. This includes documenting phone inquiries and surveying drivers. Staff and drivers have had very little to no contact with LEP persons. To date, no requests have been made for interpreters or for translated documents in the service area.

**Importance of Programs**

There is no large geographic concentration of any type of LEP individuals in the Southwest Iowa region. The overwhelming majority of the population (165,292 of 171,324 people, or 96%) speak only English, or speak another language but speak English “very well”. As a result, there is a lack of social, service, professional, and leadership organizations within the SWITA service areas that focus on outreach to LEP individuals. Services provided by SWITA that are most likely to encounter LEP individuals are the on-demand system that serves the general public and the dial-a-ride system which serves primarily senior and disabled persons. Majority of rides for SWITA are on-demand; however, the Menards fixed route is more likely to have LEP individuals.

**Resources Available**

SWITA has considered its available resources that could provide LEP assistance, including how much a professional interpreter and translation service would cost on an as-needed basis, which of their documents would be the most valuable to be translated if the need should arise, and taken an inventory of available organizations that SWITA could partner with for outreach and translation efforts. The amount of staff and vehicle operating training that might be needed have also been considered. Based on the needs and costs identified by the four-factor analysis, SWITA has developed the following guidelines for identifying and assisting LEP persons.

**A. Identifying LEP Persons**

How SWITA staff may identify an LEP person who needs language assistance:

1. Examine records to see if requests for language assistance have been received in the past, either at meetings or over the phone, to determine whether language assistance might be needed at future events.
2. When SWITA sponsors an event, have a staff person greet participants as they arrive. By informally engaging participants in conversation, it is possible to gauge each attendee’s ability to speak and understand English.
3. Have Language Identification Flashcards on transit vehicles to assist vehicle operators in identifying specific language assistance needs of passengers. If such individuals are encountered, vehicle operators will be instructed to try to obtain contact information to give to the transit system manager for follow-up. Dispatchers and schedulers may also be instructed to obtain contact information from LEP individuals they encounter, either in person or over the phone.
4. Vehicle operators and other front-line staff, such as dispatchers, may be surveyed annually on their experience concerning any contacts with LEP persons during the previous year.

**SECTION III**  
**Coordination Efforts and Issues**

The twenty-three human services agencies responding to the PTP Survey identified a number of transportation deficiencies and barriers to providing transit services to their clients.

**Service needs:**

Deficiencies:

1. Transportation to work (including job searches and jobs in metropolitan area)
2. Assistance to elderly/wheelchair clients
3. Night and weekend services
4. General public needs

Barriers:

1. Affordability – high costs with lack of funding
2. Hours of operation
3. Marketing/education about available services
4. Lack of coordination/cooperation

Given the sparse population spread over a region the size of Connecticut, combined with the limited availability of resources in equipment, manpower, and funding, addressing these deficiencies is always a challenge. As the following examples of new transit services adopted in the past five years suggest, success depends on coordinated planning efforts and maximized use of existing resources to address transportation deficiencies.

In March 2012, SWITA began coordinating with Menard, Inc. officials at their Shelby Distribution Center to provide commuter transportation to and from pick-up points in Atlantic, Harlan, and Council Bluffs. In addition to providing rides for employees of the Distribution Center, the service allows commuters from any of the three pick-up points to reach any other point with a transfer in Shelby. There are currently 500+ employees at the Menard facility, and officials are looking to expand by another 100 employees. Labor shed studies show that Harlan, Atlantic, and Council Bluffs are heavy commuter locations, and that transportation service is a common barrier to employment for otherwise qualified individuals. After a year of service, the Harlan stop was discontinued due to lack of ridership but the Atlantic and Council Bluffs stops are very successful. Council Bluffs and Atlantic have average 2,163 riders per month since that time. SWITA has increased its capacity in Council Bluffs by incorporating a 39-passenger vehicle into the service rotation. Ridership for these services is listed below.

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Ride Program</u>	<u>Rides</u>	<u>Elderly</u>	<u>Disabled</u>	<u>Public</u>
FY16	Menards	17477	0	0	17477
FY17	Menards	13193	0	0	13193

SWITA initiated a service with Iowa Western Community College in August of 2012 for the purpose of transporting students from the Council Bluffs to the Atlantic campus, where the Design Technology program operates. SWITA offers this service twice per week, and have coordinated the schedule to meet the needs of the students. Ridership for this service is listed below.

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Ride Program</u>	<u>Rides</u>	<u>Elderly</u>	<u>Disabled</u>	<u>Public</u>
FY16	IWCC	766	0	0	766
FY17	IWCC	575	0	0	575

Ten human services agencies responding to the PTP survey indicated they provide transportation services using agency-owned or leased vehicles. All but one of these agencies indicated they are able to meet their peak service demands with existing fleet levels. SWITA will contact the one agency indicating an inability to meet peak demand to examine the possibility of providing supplemental service during peak hours.

As the chart below indicates, there is significant interest in pursuing coordination efforts.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Joining a network of service providers	42.86%	6
Centralized fueling	7.14%	1
Centralized scheduling	21.43%	3
Centralized operations	14.29%	2
Vehicle sharing	14.29%	2
Joint vehicle purchasing	7.14%	1
Contracting to provide or purchase transportation services	28.57%	4
Joint training programs	14.29%	2
Other (please specify)	42.86%	6
Total Respondents: 14		

Direct discussions with SWITA management and staff identified the needs of management as well as needs for the fleet, equipment, and facilities.

### Management Needs

SWITA management continues to see strong demand for transportation services. However, often requests for services are for one off trips or for very small routes that are not necessarily economically feasible. Increased awareness of the available services, as well as their cost would assist management in coordinating these various needs into viable routes. Highly variable reimbursements for disabled transportation for Medicaid clients is also a concern of management, and strong support for public transit as an economical first choice for Medicaid transportation needs to be communicated to stakeholders and decision makers. Staffing is often a concern, with a high turnover rate for drivers, though more aggressive recruitment has helped reduce this issue.

### Fleet, Equipment, and Facilities Needs

In order to maintain a high-quality fleet, SWITA continues to replace approximately six (6) buses per year. This is necessary for safety upgrades, maintenance cost reduction, and efficiency of vehicles. Funds used to replace these buses are typically FTA5339. Other health and human service providers outline this as a concern as their own fleets continue to deteriorate. Replacement of vehicles tends to be past their intended use dates with many continuing to fix broken buses for longer than expected to reduce costs.

Approximately 90% of the SWITA fleet is equipped with surveillance to monitor the safety of the driver and passengers. SWITA will continue to update its surveillance equipment and add to new vehicles as funding becomes available. In 2017, SWITA purchased tablets and installed in all buses for the purpose of digital scheduling for all transit vehicles.

In 2011, SWIPCO constructed a fleet storage facility to house approximately 20 buses. This facility continues to add to the life of the buses, vans, and cars ensuring limited outdoor exposure. The SWIPCO building was expanded in 2014 to add a wash bay for the SWITA fleet.

## **SECTION IV Priorities and Strategies**

Transit goals for the region are:

1. Expand work route services
2. Increase awareness through marketing
3. Increase partnerships with human service agencies and businesses
4. Improve driver training
5. Maintain fleet quality

### **Short Term/Long Term Priorities**

The following are short-term priorities identified in the needs assessment:

1. SWITA vehicle replacement including signage, radios, and cameras. This priority will keep the SWITA fleet safe and reliable to meet the demands of the transit system.
2. Continued coordination efforts through the TAG. This priority will ensure coordination efforts are continued throughout the region. SWITA's Transit Director is assisting in creating Health and Human Service Agency groups in those areas that it currently does not exist.
3. Continuation of discount taxi ticket coupon program for elderly and disabled in the Cities of Shenandoah, Red Oak, and Missouri Valley despite funding cuts. This program helps meet the demand from Health and Human Services Agencies for taxi services within these cities.
4. Continued marketing efforts of existing services. Several needs have been expressed in areas where a service already existed. This priority will help those with needs become aware of the services available.
5. Expansion of area work routes. There is a need for additional service in Harlan, Shelby, Oakland, and Red Oak.

The following are long-term priorities identified in the needs assessment:

1. SWITA vehicle replacement including signage, radios, and cameras. Similar to the short-term priority, this will keep the SWITA fleet safe and reliable.
2. Continued marketing efforts. This priority ensures that possible clients are continually aware of the services available.
3. Continued coordination efforts with each county's medical facilities as well as Health and Human Service Agencies will remain a high priority.

### **STRATEGIES**

The strategies outlined in the previous PTP are still very relevant and the region continues to work toward these goals as modified under the current PTP. The coordination strategies are as follows:

**Goal #1.** Provide transit services to cover needs of region.

With the mission of, "Transit services for anyone, anytime, anywhere," the broad-range of services needed is extensive. SWITA will continue to expand its ride types available within budget constraints to ensure all who wish to utilize our services are able to at a reasonable cost.

#### Action Items

1. Revitalize shopper routes.
2. Review needs for work transportation throughout region.
3. Continue marketing efforts to ensure low-income, elderly, disabled, and the general public is aware of services.

Since the previous PTP shopper routes have been reinstated in communities around Council Bluffs. The work transportation environment has changed significantly since more disabled clients are now working out in the community and are not necessarily going to one central location. There has also been a huge increase in demand for worker

transportation from the population center of Omaha/Council Bluffs out to larger employers such as Menards and OSI. SWITA has responded by adding higher capacity vehicles on these routes and adding new routes and shifts to better meet the needs of workers. Anticipate continuing these efforts into the future.

**Goal #2.** Continue coordination efforts with health and human service agencies.

The importance of working directly with these organizations is instrumental in reaching the specific population in need of assistance. The TAG consists of nearly all human services groups in Southwest Iowa making it the go-to group for distributing transit information. The organization is the perfect avenue for informing riders of changes and new services provided by SWITA.

Action Items

1. Continue working with the TAG.
2. Continue marketing efforts to ensure health and human service agencies are aware of services.
3. Ensure each county has an active group to discuss and make suggestions to meet unmet goals.

Previous iterations of the PTP have relied heavily on the Omaha/Council Bluffs based Human Services Advisory Council. Since the last PTP update, RPAs 13 & 18 have worked with SWITA to stand up a Transportation Advisory Group that more closely aligns with the planning region. This group has been and will be into the future the primary group that the RPA's and SWITA will coordinate with in order to ensure good contact and communication with health and human services agencies and groups that represent demographics with higher ridership or barriers to transportation.

**Goal #3.** Maintain an adequate transit fleet.

Fleet maintenance is imperative to providing adequate transit services. SWITA employs one fulltime fleet mechanic and a fulltime mechanic's assistant who assesses vehicle reliability and completes required maintenance/repairs to the fleet. Vehicle life is assessed based on Iowa DOT standards and replacement is completed on a rolling timeline. SWITA will continue to work with human services agencies to determine where partnerships can occur to promote sustainable and equitable ridership.

Action Items

1. Place vehicle purchases on TIP as scheduled.
2. Maintain current fleet to extend vehicle life.
3. Work with health and human service agencies for possible joint purchases and/or services.

Maintaining an adequate fleet will always be a priority. Since the last PTP, SWITA has partnered with Crossroads of Western Iowa (CWI) and RPA-18 in order to purchase vehicles through SWITA that are leased to CWI to meet the needs of disabled individuals in the region without adding significantly to the cost or burden of the public transit fleet. These types of partnerships will continue where they make sense to do so. SWITA is also exploring options to add a vehicle storage facility in the Council Bluffs area—either inside the city or near it—in order to have a secure facility to park vehicles when not in use and to keep them out of the weather to extend their service life. Vehicle and facilities investments will only be made in ways that take into account the long-term costs of operations and maintenance.

**SECTION V**  
**Financial Resources**

RPA 13 and 18 take advantage of as many funding sources as possible. Main programs utilized are 5311 funds, STA, Passenger Revenues, and Contract Revenues. Section 5311 is typically utilized to subsidize the transit system and fleet upgrades. Rates are reviewed annually to determine what is reasonable and cost effective for passenger paid rides and contract services. While Surface Transportation Block Grant funds have not been distributed directly to the transit provider in a number of years by RPA-13, SWITA is eligible to apply for funding. RPA-13 has utilized STBG funds to help defray the cost of SWITA vehicle purchases to reduce congestion on Highway 6. 5310 funds have also been distributed by RPA-18 to SWITA to purchase vehicles to enhance mobility for seniors and the disabled.

Local funds are provided by contributions made by cities and counties that support SWITA services. Each county served, Harrison, Shelby, Pottawattamie, Cass, Mills, Montgomery, Fremont, and Page provide \$6,000 each in their own general funds dollars to SWITA. The cities of Red Oak, Harlan, Missouri Valley, and Shenandoah contribute \$5,000 each to support taxi service in their communities. Glenwood does not pay the requested amount of \$5,000, though SWITA has continued to provide service. Atlantic pays \$8,000 because of higher utilization of taxi in that community.

Possible financial resources, according to the Iowa Department of Transportation, include the following:



**Section 5305d Metropolitan Transportation Planning** - This is a FTA program to support planning activities in metropolitan areas on an 80% federal, 20% non-federal basis. By law, the state is the direct recipient of the funding. In Iowa, these funds are administered by the Iowa DOT's Office of Systems Planning and are distributed annually to each of the state's nine Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) through the following formula. One-third is distributed equally among all MPOs; one-third is distributed based on each MPO's share of the total statewide urbanized area population from the most recent decennial census; and one-third is distributed based on each MPO's share of the total statewide urbanized area population from the prior decennial census. The 5305d funds are administered jointly with Metropolitan Planning "PL" funds available through the Federal Highway Administration as part of a Consolidated Planning Grant. The 5305d and PL funds can support any MPO costs related to intermodal transportation planning activities for the urbanized area. [Chapter 4](#) contains more information on planning activities.

**Section 5305e Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning** - These funds are intended to support transit planning in addition to what is conducted by the individual MPOs. By law, the state is the direct recipient of the funding. Iowa uses these funds, along with 5311 funds set aside specifically for planning, to support a system of Regional Planning Affiliations (RPAs). The RPAs are responsible for local intermodal transportation planning in areas of the state not included in a Metropolitan Planning Organization. Iowa DOT's Office of Systems Planning serves as the direct recipient of these funds. The combined 5305e and 5311 planning funds are distributed annually to each of the state's 18 RPAs through the following formula. One-half is distributed equally among all RPAs; one-quarter is distributed based on each RPA's share of the total statewide non-urbanized population from the most recent decennial census; and one-quarter is distributed based on the ratio of the number of counties in each RPA out of 99 total counties. The Office of Systems Planning also distributes Statewide Planning and Research (SPR) funds from the Federal Highway Administration to the RPAs, for the same purpose and via the same formula. The 5305e and/or 5311 planning funds and SPR funds are administered jointly with any Surface Transportation Program (STBG) funds programmed for planning support by the RPAs. These funds jointly support regional intermodal planning on an 80% federal, 20% non-federal basis.

**Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Grants** - This is a federal program for support of urban transit systems serving communities with more than 50,000 population.

In all urbanized areas, eligible activities for 5307 funds include planning, engineering design and evaluation of transit projects and other technical transportation-related studies; capital investments in bus and bus-related activities such as replacement of buses, overhaul and rebuilding of buses; crime prevention and security equipment; construction of maintenance and passenger facilities; and capital investments in new and existing fixed guideway systems including rolling stock, overhaul and rebuilding of vehicles, track, signals, communications, and computer hardware and software. All preventive maintenance and some Americans with Disabilities Act complementary paratransit service costs are considered capital costs. In general, funding is provided on an 80% federal, 20% non-federal basis for capital projects funding under the 5307 program. Purchase and installation of special equipment or features required by the Americans with Disabilities Act or the Clean Air Act Amendments, and certain bicycle accommodation projects are eligible for 90% federal assistance. FTA has allowed revenue vehicles with required ADA and clean air equipment to be purchased at a blended participation rate of 85% federal, 15% non-federal.

For urbanized areas with populations less than 200,000, operating assistance is an eligible expense. In areas over 200,000 in population, operating assistance is an eligible expense in certain situations.

Transit systems may use up to 20% of their total 5307 funds to pay for ADA paratransit costs, if certain conditions are met, on an 80% federal, 20% non-federal basis. See [FTA Circular 9030.1E](#) for specifics.

Areas with populations over 200,000 receive their own 5307 allocation directly from FTA. The allocations are based on a combination of bus revenue vehicle miles, bus passenger miles, fixed guideway revenue vehicle miles, and fixed guideway route miles as well as population and population density. Four Iowa transit systems are funded under this program: Des Moines receives its own allocation, Davenport and Bettendorf both receive a portion of funds allocated to the Quad Cities area, and Council Bluffs receives benefit of a portion of the funds allocated to the Omaha-Council Bluffs area. Within each of these larger urbanized areas, transit systems are no longer required to set aside one-percent of the 5307 funds for transit enhancement activities, but do have to submit an annual report listing projects that were carried out during the previous fiscal year. Each recipient of these funds must also expend at least one-percent on public transportation security projects or certify that this is not necessary. Within each area, the MPO is responsible for programming the funds as part of the Transportation Improvement Program.

Each state receives a single allocation of 5307 funds for use in the smaller urbanized areas (with population from 50,000-200,000). For these 'Governor's Apportionment' areas, funding is apportioned to the state on the basis of population and population density. There is also a "small transit intensive cities" tier that provides additional funding if any of the small urbanized areas in the state exceed the average performance of the larger communities across the nation on one or more of six specified performance measures. The state distributes these funds using this same formula. Ames, University of Iowa's Cambus, Cedar Rapids, Coralville, Dubuque, Iowa City, Sioux City, and Waterloo all receive funding from the Iowa Governor's Apportionment. (Sioux City also receives funding from the Nebraska and South Dakota Governor's Apportionments.) In addition to capital and planning uses, funding for these smaller urbanized areas can also be used to support operating deficit. Funds for operating support must be matched by non-federal funds (other than passenger revenues) on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

The Iowa DOT determines the allocation of the 5307 Governor's Apportionment funds after the federal appropriation process is completed. At present, Iowa DOT is using the information that FTA publishes in the Federal Register regarding the amount of the total Governor's Apportionment attributable to statistics from each urbanized area as a guide in determining the suballocations. All transit systems in this category, except those in the Ames and Iowa City areas, depend on this allocation to support transit activities in the current fiscal year.

**Section 5310 Formula Grants for the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities** – This is a federal program for support of transit services serving elderly and persons with disabilities. These funds are allocated to Iowa on the basis of the number of older adults and individuals with disabilities and allocated by area: Large Urbanized Area (60%), Small Urbanized Area (20%), and Rural (20%). By law, the state is the direct recipient of the funding for areas under 200,000 population. Urbanized areas over 200,000 in population receive a direct allocation. Public agencies responsible for coordinating human service transportation are eligible, as are private not-for-profit agencies. Because Iowa requires the designated public transit systems to coordinate all publicly-funded passenger transportation services, Iowa distributes these funds to the public transit agencies. At least 55% of program funds must be used on capital or 'traditional' 5310 projects (buses, vans, wheelchair lifts, ramps, etc.) and 45% is for non-traditional projects once eligible under the New Freedom program (projects that go 'beyond the ADA,' travel training, etc.) Mobility management is eligible under either the traditional or non-traditional funding. The cost of contracted operations, equipment and passenger or vehicle shelters are funded on an 80% federal, and 20% non-federal basis. Purchase of vehicles equipped for access by persons with disabilities can be funded at 85% federal participation. Facilities other than passenger or vehicle shelters are not eligible. Operating assistance is funded at 50% federal share. Match can come from other Federal (non-US DOT) funds.

Section 5310 funds administered by the OPT are distributed based a formula that factors in ridership and revenue miles. To simplify administration, the 5310 funds going to rural systems are only distributed to transit systems that purchase contracted transportation services. All projects using 5310 funding must

derive from the Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) prepared by the respective metropolitan or regional planning agency through their joint public transit/human service transportation planning process (see [Chapter 4](#)). All services supported with 5310 funding must be operated open to the general public. (Complementary ADA paratransit meets this requirement, as long as it matches up with an urban transit system's fixed-route hours and service area.)

Federal guidance on the 5310 program is found in [FTA Circular 9070.1G](#).

**[Section 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas](#)** – This federal program supports transit activities in rural areas and communities with populations less than 50,000. These funds are allocated to Iowa: 83.15% based on land area and population in rural areas, 16.85% based on land area, revenue vehicle miles, and low-income individuals in rural areas. By law, the state is the direct recipient of the funding. Iowa DOT serves as the direct recipient of the funds, through both the Office of Public Transit (OPT) and the Office of Systems Planning. The OPT administers the bulk of the 5311 funding that is provided to small urban and regional transit systems, as well as the 15% of the annual apportionment, that in conformance with federal law, is utilized to support intercity bus services, described later in this chapter. The Office of Systems Planning administers that portion of the 5311 funds that are combined with the 5305 funding to support rural transit and intermodal planning activities described in [Chapter 4](#). The amount used for planning is determined on an annual basis between the offices of Public Transit and Systems Planning. In recent years, that amount has been \$350,000 annually.

The portion of the 5311 funds used for support of public transit services in Iowa is administered in conjunction with the non-urbanized area (less than 50,000 in population) allocation of the 5310 funding. The 5311 funds may be used to support operating deficits (potentially on a 50% federal, 50% non-federal match), capital purchases (on an 80% federal, 20% non-federal match or 85% federal, 15% non-federal for vehicles meeting ADA and Clean Air standards), job access/reverse commute projects, mobility management, or planning activities (on an 80% federal, 20% non-federal match). State policy does not allow local transit administration costs for public transit systems to be treated any differently than operating expenses.

The Iowa DOT formula allocating 5310 and 5311 funds uses the past year's performance statistics. The amount of formula funds to be distributed to small urban systems versus regional systems is determined by first splitting the allocations with 75% going to the regional systems and 25% going to the small urban systems. The individual allocations to small urban systems are then determined on the basis of 50% of the percentage of total small urban ridership accomplished by that system and 50% of the percentage of total small urban revenue miles provided by the individual system. Individual allocations for regional systems are based on 40% of the system's percentage contribution to total regional transit ridership and 60% on the system's percentage contribution to total regional revenue miles. See [Exhibit 3](#) to view the formula with an example.

The formula apportionment funds received by each system must be used to support services open to the public. This would include eligible transit capital or operating expenses as defined by the federal government. The decision of how the formula funds are programmed is a part of the local transportation planning and programming process conducted through the regional planning affiliation. OPT provides a projection of the formula funding that will be available to each system for the coming state fiscal year in early December, in order to facilitate integration of the 5311 programming process with the annual preparation of the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

OPT decides which agencies will receive 5310 funds versus 5311 funds, based on how the transit systems will use the monies. At present, most transit systems choose to use their formula funds for support of transit service costs. The 5310 funds are targeted to systems that purchase services from sub-providers, and 5311 funds are targeted first to systems that provide their services directly. To the extent that any system proposes to use its 5310/5311 allocation for purchase of rolling stock to operate within an urbanized area, 5310 funds will be used (and the project will be included in that urbanized area's

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)). If facility improvements are programmed with the formula funds, 5311 funding will be used.

The federal requirements for the 5311 program are described in [FTA Circular 9040.1G](#).

**[Section 5311\(b\)\(3\) Rural Transit Assistance Program \(RTAP\)](#)** – This federal program provides a source of funding to assist in the design and implementation of training and technical assistance programs and other support services tailored to meet the specific needs of transit operators in non-urbanized areas (less than 50,000 in population). By law, the state is the direct recipient of the funding. In Iowa, the DOT's OPT serves as the recipient of these funds. Federal guidance for the RTAP program is contained in [FTA Circular 9040.1G](#).

Iowa's RTAP funds are mainly used to provide local transit agencies training fellowships. The fellowships pay 80% of the cost for Iowa's small urban and regional transit systems and their planners to attend Iowa DOT sponsored seminars, as well as transit-related courses or conferences sponsored by other groups. Transit systems may also be reimbursed for training held in-house. A parallel program funded with state transit assistance (STA) funds pays for costs incurred by large urban systems and their planners. [Chapter 12](#) explains the procedures for receiving training fellowships.

Additional RTAP projects funded by OPT include:

- Statewide training seminars
- Statewide annual driver rodeo
- Transit training library
- Transit marketing video

Previously funded Iowa RTAP projects that continue to benefit transit systems in Iowa and around the nation are:

- Training video on bloodborne pathogen precautions
- Training video on coordination of transit services

**[Section 5311\(f\) Intercity Bus Assistance](#)** - A minimum of 15% of each year's non-urbanized formula funds allocated to Iowa under the 5311 program is required to be set aside to support intercity bus transportation. Private-for-profit companies, private non-profit corporations, or public entities may apply for this funding. Connections to Amtrak or passenger air service terminals are desirable. Service strictly for commuter purposes is not eligible. Projects may include operating assistance, capital assistance, planning, or administrative costs such as marketing and insurance.

### **What types of projects are eligible?**

Proposed projects must directly support the provision of intercity bus services in Iowa. Eligible routes must serve Iowa intercity bus terminals connected to the nationwide intercity bus network and include stops in nonurbanized areas. The following funding categories have been established for the Iowa Intercity Bus Program. These categories are listed in **priority order**.

#### **Priority 1: Provide a base level of funding support to preserve the existing intrastate system**

- Funding will be approximately 20 cents per revenue mile based primarily on preventive maintenance and insurance costs
- Funding will be allocated based on existing miles of Iowa intercity service
- To qualify for these funds, carriers must provide quarterly reports noting the number of Iowa passenger trips by route, miles of revenue service, and total cost per revenue mile
- Eligible carriers must serve Iowa intercity bus terminals connected to the nationwide intercity bus network

**Priority 2: Provide support for the development of new connector/feeder service**

- Funding assistance shall be up to 50 cents per mile based primarily on preventative maintenance and insurance costs. Funding for new routes that duplicate existing route shall be limited to 50 cents per mile
- New service projects are eligible for funding for three years
- To qualify for these funds, carriers must provide quarterly reports noting:
  - The number of Iowa passenger trips by route
  - Miles of revenue service
  - Total cost per revenue mile
- Eligible carriers must serve Iowa intercity bus terminals connected to the nationwide intercity bus network
- New intercity bus service must be ADA accessible and each route must include service to nonurban population centers

**Priority 3: Provide funding assistance for route specific marketing projects**

- Marketing of new services will have the highest priority for this category of funding
- Marketing of new routes will be funded at 80% federal and 20% nonfederal, with a federal cap of \$12,000 per route
- New marketing of existing service will be funded at 80% federal and 20% nonfederal, with a federal cap of \$7,500 per carrier
- Joint project development between cities, intercity carrier terminal managers, and operators is encouraged
- The funding will be limited to external non-labor costs only
- Applicants should include a system wide overview of their current marketing efforts
- Applicants with unused marketing funds may have their marketing funding requests reduced or eliminated unless proper justification is provided. Justification should include reasons why funding is unspent plus a plan that assures the balance and any additional funding will be spent in a timely manner

**Priority 4: Provide support for vehicle and bus terminal improvements**

- Vehicles required to support new services for Iowa will have the highest priority for funding, terminal improvements will have the next highest priority
- Terminal improvements shall require commitments to continue service for a period of years
- All improvements must meet ADA accessibility standards

The Intercity Bus Assistance Program is included as a statewide total in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Annual intercity bus assistance applications must be received by OPT by the first business day of October for projects to begin in January. Project selections are finalized by December.

**Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities Formula Grants** – Section 5339 funds can finance capital projects to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities. In Iowa, approximately \$1,750,000 is received annually to be spent in small urban (under 50,000 population) and regional transit systems and approximately \$910,900 is received for large urban transit systems serving populations between 50,000 and 200,000. All funds are spent on vehicle replacements rather than on expansion vehicles or bus-related facilities and are distributed utilizing the vehicle rankings of the Public Transit Management System (PTMS). Transit systems serving populations over 200,000 receive direct allocations from the Federal Transit Administration and are not included in the statewide distribution through PTMS.

Funding amounts are 80% federal/ 20% local basis or 85% federal/15% local for vehicles with ADA features and Clean Air adaptations.

**Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program** – These funds come to the state based on a number of factors including Vehicle Miles of Travel, Highway Lane Miles and the number and size of bridges. The funds can be used for roadway, transit capital projects, pedestrian/bikeway projects, or intermodal planning projects on an 80% federal, 20% local basis. In Iowa, a portion of these funds is programmed by local governments acting through metropolitan or regional planning agencies. Nearly all of Iowa RPAs and some MPOs fund a portion of their intermodal transportation planning activities from STBG funds. Most transit systems have also been successful in receiving STBG funding from their local MPO or RPA. When programmed for transit or planning projects, these funds are transferred from FHWA to FTA for administration, either through a direct 5307 grant for large urban transit systems, through a statewide 5311 grant for small urban or regional systems, or through the statewide consolidated planning grant for planning projects. OPT administers the statewide grant for individual small urban and regional transit systems. The Iowa DOT Office of Systems Planning administers the planning grant.

**Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) Program** –This program is one of the five core funding programs of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that can be flexed between highway, transit or bicycle/pedestrian uses. Nationally, the CMAQ program is intended to fund transportation projects to assist metropolitan areas in non-attainment of Clean Air Act standards. In those states with areas in non-attainment, all CMAQ monies must be spent in the affected areas for projects conforming to a state air quality implementation plan. Because Iowa does not have any area in non-attainment of transportation-related federal clean air standards, the state receives a minimum allocation of CMAQ funding that can be used anywhere in the state for any purpose for which STBG funds can be used on the same 80% federal, 20% non-federal basis. City, county, and state projects are all eligible under this program.

The Iowa DOT Commission has set aside \$3,000,000 from this program to be used to replace revenue vehicles for Iowa's 35 transit systems. The funds are programmed based on the Public Transit Management System (PTMS) process that selects projects based on their useful life thresholds of miles and age. These funds are transferred from FHWA to FTA and administered through statewide grants by the Office of Public Transit, using the rules of either the 5307 or 5311 program, depending on whether an urbanized or non-urbanized transit system is the project sponsor.

In Iowa, a portion of the CMAQ funds are also split off to create a competitive grant program for eligible city, county, or public transit clean air attainment projects. This grant program is called Iowa's Clean Air Attainment Program (ICAAP). Funds are programmed for highway or transit projects through a statewide application process based on the project's anticipated air quality or congestion relief benefits. Applications are due the first business day of October for projects to begin the following federal fiscal year. Project selections are determined in February. Again, funding is transferred from FHWA to FTA for administration through statewide grant under either the 5307 or 5311 programs depending on whether the projects are in urbanized or non-urbanized areas. Additional information is available in the [Iowa DOT Funding Guide](#) available on the Iowa DOT's website.

**Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) Grant Program** – The Iowa DOT administers the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) DERA grant program for the state of Iowa. DERA comes out of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Annually, the counties eligible to apply for funding are those determined by the EPA where all or part of the population is exposed to more than 2.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup> of diesel particulate matter emissions in the 2011 National Scale Air Toxics Assessment. Public transit agencies operating medium- and heavy-duty diesel vehicles in the targeted counties are eligible to apply. In 2017, the amount of funding available was \$233,504. Visit [https://iowadot.gov/dera/pdfs/DERA\\_Grant\\_Program\\_Info\\_Guide.pdf](https://iowadot.gov/dera/pdfs/DERA_Grant_Program_Info_Guide.pdf) for current application deadlines and further information.

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Career Link Program – Employment Transportation** – is a program administered by the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). The Career Link program can be used to address other employment barriers by providing funding for

employment related transportation services. Eligible activities include transportation services for individuals to job activities and adult students to educational training/instructional opportunities. The majority of beneficiaries (individuals utilizing transportation) must reside in non-entitlement communities [i.e. communities under 50,000 in population].

- Eligible applicants are non-entitlement cities (under 50,000) or counties. Funds will flow through the local government to a non-profit transportation entity [i.e. public transit agency] providing the transportation services.
- The majority of beneficiaries (individuals utilizing transportation) must reside in non-entitlement communities.
- Eligible activities will include transportation services for individuals to job activities and adult students to educational training/instructional opportunities.
- Participating businesses may not include retail or service businesses. A service business is a business providing services to a local consumer market which does not have a significant proportion of its sales coming from outside the state.
- The maximum grant award for employment related transportation projects will be \$150,000.
- IEDA will require a 1 for 1 cash match for projects. Matching funds can be a combination of funds from participating businesses, local, state, and federal funds.
- Funds will be used for operational expenses only (not buses/equipment)
- For each project, the majority of beneficiaries (51%) must be low to moderate income individuals, as defined by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- Grant recipients must document compliance by collecting income surveys from project beneficiaries.

For more information, please call 515.725.3081 or email [cdbq@iowa.gov](mailto:cdbq@iowa.gov).

## State Programs

The State of Iowa currently offers three programs providing financial assistance to public transit systems.

**State Transit Assistance (STA)** - All public transit systems in Iowa are eligible for funding under the STA program. STA funding is derived from an amount equal to four-percent of the fees for new registration collected on sales of motor vehicle and accessory equipment. The majority of funds are distributed by a formula based on each transit system's performance during the previous year in terms of rides, miles and local funding support. These formula funds can be used to support any operating, capital or planning expenses related to the provision of public passenger transportation. The STA program is described in [Chapter 920](#) of the Iowa Administrative Rules.

**STA Formula Program** - The majority of the state transit assistance funds received in a fiscal year are distributed to individual transit systems on the basis of a formula using performance statistics from the most recent available year. Each month, the dollars received in the fund during the prior month are allocated to the transit agencies. These funds can be used by the public transit system for operating, capital or planning expenses related to the provision of open-to-the-public passenger transportation.

The STA formula funds are first split between urban and regional systems on the basis of total revenue miles of service provided by each group. The funds are then split among individual systems in each category, 50% on the basis of locally determined income (LDI), 25% on the basis of rides per dollar of expense, and 25% on the basis of revenue miles per dollar of expenditure. OPT calculates LDI by subtracting FTA and STA formula funds from the system's operating expenses. [Exhibit 4](#) provides an illustration of the STA formula and an example of how it works.

**STA Fellowship Program** - A major component of the STA funding is a program of transit training fellowships that parallels the RTAP fellowship program described previously. The STA fellowship program focuses on training costs for Iowa's large urban transit systems and metropolitan planning

organizations that are not eligible under RTAP. (See [Chapter 12](#) of this Handbook for fellowship information.)

**STA Special Projects** - Each year up to \$300,000 of the total STA funds are set aside to fund "special projects." These can include grants to individual systems to support transit services which are developed in conjunction with human service agencies, or statewide projects to improve public transit in Iowa through such means as technical training for transit system or planning agency personnel, statewide marketing campaigns, etc.

These funds are available on an "immediate opportunity" basis, meaning these funds can be applied for at any time of the year as an opportunity arises, provided that funding is still available. Projects are intended to assist with start-up of new services that have been identified as needs by health, employment or human service agencies participating in the Passenger Transportation Planning process. Most projects will fall within the \$5,000-\$25,000 range. Operating projects are eligible for funding up to a maximum of 80% state participation for the first year and 50% state participation for the second year. Capital projects are eligible for funding up to a maximum 85% state participation. Priority is given to projects which include a contribution from human service agencies, as well. [State Transit Assistance application materials](#) can be found on OPT's website.

The statewide project funds can also be used on statewide transit marketing and projects exploring new transit technologies. The administrative rules provide flexibility for use of the funding.

If not needed for special projects, the money set aside for that purpose may be moved back into the STA formula program for distribution to all systems.

**Public Transit Infrastructure Grants (PTIG)** – In 2006, the Iowa Legislature established a new program to fund some of the vertical infrastructure needs of Iowa's transit systems. Applications are accepted as part of the annual Consolidated Transit Funding Applications. Projects can involve new construction, reconstruction or remodeling, but must include a vertical component to qualify. Projects are evaluated based on the anticipated benefits to transit, as well as the ability to have projects completed quickly. The infrastructure program participation in the cost of transit-related elements of a facility project is limited to 80% and cannot, in combination with federal funding, exceed that number. No single system can receive more than 40% of the available infrastructure funding in a given year. Additional specifics of the program can be found in [Chapter 924](#) of the state's administrative rules.

PTIG projects are also subject to useful life standards, similar to federally-funded capital projects. The PTIG useful life standards can be found in [Chapter 10](#) of this handbook.

When applying for PTIG funding, those transit agencies organized under Iowa Code Chapter 28E should keep the requirement of [28E.18 "Share use of facilities"](#) in mind:

Before proceeding to construct or purchase a facility as otherwise provided by law, a public agency shall inquire of other public agencies having facilities within the same general geographic area concerning the availability of all or part of those facilities for rent or sharing by agreement with the inquiring public agency. If there are no suitable facilities available for rent or sharing, the governing body of the public agency shall record its findings in its meeting minutes.

**Capital Match Revolving Loan Fund (AMOCO Loan)** – The capital match revolving loan fund was created by the Iowa Legislature in the early 1980's with funds from Iowa's share of the federal government's petroleum overcharge settlement against the American Oil Company (Amoco). The loan program is subject to an intergovernmental agreement between the Iowa DOT and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). All public transit systems are eligible for loans under this program. The intent of the program is to increase the inherent energy conservation benefits of public transit by expediting the implementation of transit capital projects.



The program allows no interest loans to transit systems, which the transit system uses towards the required local match on a state- or federally-funded capital project, paying the loan amount back over a period not to exceed five years. The loan can be used to temporarily fund the entire local match on capital equipment projects or 50% of the required non-state or non-federal match on facility projects. Loan recipients may be required to report project energy savings annually to OPT until the loan is repaid.

A project is eligible if it is a transit capital project that is approved for state or federal funding. The project should be targeted at energy savings.

The public transit system must submit the AMOCO Loan request at the same time as the capital funding application. The request shall include, but not be limited to, the following topics and documents:

- a. A description and cost estimate of the proposed project
- b. An explanation of the benefits to be gained from the project, including how the project will save energy
- c. An explanation and justification of need for the loan
- d. A proposed schedule of when funds will be needed for the project
- e. A proposed loan repayment plan

The OPT Director will review the loan request based on available funds and project eligibility. Upon approval, the public transit system will be offered a contract designating the amount of the loan and the repayment schedule.

Note that all funding agreements between the Iowa DOT and transit agencies include the provision that all payments will be withheld to any transit system delinquent in loan repayments. If repayments are not received in a reasonable timeframe, the transit system's STA funding may be applied to the loan repayment obligation.

Based on the agreement between Iowa DOT and DNR, if loan funds are not needed to expedite transit capital projects, they may be used as no interest loans to individuals for the purchase of vans for vanpooling.

The administrative rules for the Transit Capital Match Revolving Loans are found in [Chapter 923](#) of the department's administrative rules.

## **Local Funding**

The bulk of transit funding in Iowa comes from local sources, especially on the operating side. How systems generate their local financial support varies, but some of the more common sources are as follows:

**Passenger Revenues** – Fees paid by the passengers is one of the most common sources of local support. This can include monies collected on-board the transit vehicle (usually called "farebox receipts"), as well as prepaid fares from sale of passes or tickets, or fares billed to the passenger after the fact. FTA requires that all passenger revenues be subtracted from the total cost of operating transit service to identify a net operating cost, before eligibility for federal financial support of operations can be calculated.

**Contract Revenue** – Human service agencies, local communities, as well as private businesses are often willing to pay a part or all of the cost for certain types of rides provided as part of the open to the public transit operation. Such subsidies are classified as contract revenues and can count toward the required local match on federal projects.

**Local Taxes** –

**Municipal Transit Levy** – Iowa law authorizes municipalities to levy up to 95 cents per \$1,000 of assessed taxable property in order to support the cost of a public transit system. Most of Iowa’s larger communities levy for support of their urban transit systems. A number of smaller communities use this authority to generate funding used to support services contracted from their designated regional transit system. [Exhibit 5](#) shows which communities are currently using the levy authority and how much is being generated.

**Regional Transit Levy** – In 2005, the Iowa legislature authorized that counties with populations exceeding 175,000 are able to form regional transit districts for support of area-wide public transit services. A commission appointed from the governing bodies of participating counties and municipalities is responsible to manage and administer the regional transit district. Once formed, adjacent counties can become part of the district, and municipalities in non-participating adjacent counties can join. The district can levy up to the 95 cents per \$1,000 of the assessed value of all taxable property in a district. Unlike the provisions in the municipal levy, a regional transit district can set differing levy rates across their territory. While both Linn and Polk Counties have the population to form a regional transit district, as of March 2011 only Polk County has chosen to form a district, including several municipalities from adjacent non-participating counties. [Exhibit 6](#) shows which communities are participating, their respective tax rates, and the total amount of funds generated.

**General Fund Levy** – The cost of supporting transit services is an eligible use of general fund revenues for all Iowa governments and is the primary source of funding to support transit for counties who don’t have the option of a transit levy, as well as for cities which chose not to use the transit levy.

**Trust and Agency Levy** – The [Trust and Agency Levy](#) can be used by cities and counties to support employee benefit plans. As such, it can be used to help support the cost of a city operated transit system.

#### **Other Local –**

**Student Fees** – Mandatory student fees established by a college or university are similar to a tax levy in that all members of the particular community contribute.

**Advertising Revenues** – Sale of on-board advertising or advertising space in brochures, etc. can provide some additional revenues to the transit program.

#### **Other**

As part of an employer’s fringe benefits package, Qualified Transportation Benefits may be provided. These benefits may assist with the costs of vanpooling in a “commuter highway vehicle” or for purchasing a transit pass and can generally be excluded from the employee wages up to the allowed limits. For 2017, the value of these benefits was \$255 per month for combined commuter highway vehicle transportation and transit passes. Transit agencies may want to discuss these benefit offerings with local businesses to encourage more transit ridership. For more information, refer to the Internal Revenue Service publication, <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p15b.pdf>, and speak to a tax professional.

