

# PUBLIC TRANSIT NEWSLETTER

September 2024

## FTA RELAUNCHES ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS PORTAL

At FTA's Earth Day event on April 22, 2024, FTA Acting Administrator Veronica Vanterpool announced the relaunch of FTA's Environmental and Sustainability Management System (ESMS) program. The training and technical assistance program will help up to five transit agencies develop and implement an ESMS at their facilities. An ESMS is a set of management processes and procedures that allows an organization to analyze, control and reduce the environmental impact of its activities, products and services, and operate with a greater efficiency and control. The program includes an on-site baseline environmental review, three virtual workshops, a virtual gap audit and an on-site final audit.

Transit agencies interested in applying for the program should submit a signed letter of application by May 22, 2024, as outlined in the application instructions. More information about the program, reports of past rounds, and a suite of ESMS resources can be found on FTA's ESMS website.

## Calendar - State Fiscal year (July 1 - June 30)

### OCTOBER

- 1 Intercity Bus Applications due
- 1 ICAAP Application due to Systems Planning Bureau
- 1 STA Special Project applications due
- 25 Regional/Small Urban System Quarterly Report due
- 30 1st Quarter Fuel Tax Report due
- 30 Regional/Small Urban System DBE (April – Sept.) Semi-Annual Reports due
- 30 Large Urban System Quarterly Charter Report due to FTA
- 30 Large Urban Quarterly TrAMS Report (if in TMA) due to FTA
- 30 Large Urban Annual TrAMS Reports (if in 50,000 – 200,00 UZA) due to FTA

### NOVEMBER

- 15 1st Quarter Statistical Report due
- 30 Large Urban NTD Reports due to NTD

### DECEMBER

- 1 Large Urban System DBE (April – Sept.) Semi-Annual Report due to FTA

**\*\*\*THIS FULL CALENDAR CAN BE FOUND IN THE TRANIST MANAGER'S HANDBOOK**

<https://iowadot.gov/transit/handbook/TMHandbookBinder.pdf>



**NEEDED!!! UPDATED PUBLIC TRANSIT BUS PHOTOS**



**We are trying to update our files to use pictures of updated public transit buses to use for Power Point Presentations, etc. As you can see by the picture to the left our files are very outdated. These photos can include just the bus, bus with people, just use your imagination. Please submit your photos to [amy.colwell@iowadot.us](mailto:amy.colwell@iowadot.us) Thank you!!!**

## KRISTIN'S KEYWORDS

Trust is earned, not given. Communication is key. There are reasons these sayings became old adages... they're true and stand the test of time.

Over the last several years we have been working to build a public transit team Iowa's transit agencies and the general public can rely on. In 2020, Iowa DOT had a public transit staff of five, with two vacant positions. Since that time, we have had two retirements, two long-term illnesses, two resignations, and one new position created. As of August 2023, we have been fully staffed with a team of nine. While many of our team members are brand new to transit, in my opinion, the public transit team as it stands today is fantastic. The team members are smart, inquisitive, cooperative, compassionate, while also being pragmatic. I have told the team on several occasions that I look forward to our in-office days because I 'get to' work with them rather than 'have to' work with them – I look forward to our meetings and interactions because of the people they are and the good qualities they possess. Unfortunately, there have been some bumps along the way and all of these positive traits are not always seen through emails and phone calls with our public transit agency partners.

We have heard feedback from transit managers about needing clearer communication, confusion on processes, not knowing who to contact with questions, and rushed deadlines. For those reasons, our transit team has discussed ways we can improve in those areas.

One of Iowa DOT's training courses required of employees is known as CARE. CARE stands for Consistent, Accountable, Responsive, and Engaging. The public transit team is putting CARE principles into practice. To increase communication and engagement, this newsletter will be coming out quarterly, with more usable content. Also, to help with consistency, the transit programs administrators (TPAs, Laura and Matt) are sending out monthly emails with useful tips and reminders about reporting and deadlines. To keep us accountable and responsive, the public transit team members will work to reply to emails within 24 hours, at a minimum acknowledging receipt and letting the sender know we are working to answer their questions. We also distributed a list of transit team members with our contact information and our days of availability at the March IPTA Legislative Meeting to help transit agency staff identify the best person to contact with questions. If you need a copy of that contact list, please email Emma Simmons, [emma.simmons@iowadot.us](mailto:emma.simmons@iowadot.us).

To address the rushed deadlines experienced over the last year, especially with National Transit Database (NTD) reporting, many of the difficulties leading to those tight turnaround times will be alleviated because we will all have a year of experience of having gone through the NTD process under our belts. Also, we will be sharing in this newsletter a calendar of upcoming deadlines – mostly taken from the Transit Manager's Handbook – to literally get all of us on the same page with expectations. Speaking of the Handbook, we do realize it is in need

of an update and it will be made current in the coming year, even if only a chapter at a time.

In these last four years, public transit has changed a lot – from funding, to costs, to service offerings, to the types of projects we're undertaking. The public transit team has changed a lot, too, and in many cases we are learning right along side of you. I hope as we all get to know this new public transit landscape we can earn and keep your trust and keep the lines of communication open.

Thank you for all you do for public transit in Iowa. You're all bussin'!

- Kristin

## 2024 STAFF TRAINING

- 2024 State & Tribal Public Transportation Partnerships Conference
- 2 - Transit Manager Handbook Trainings
- Council on Public Transportation and AASHTO Transit Management Annual Meeting
- TrAMS Application Award Enhancement
- Procurement 1
- FTA Region 7 Procurement Systems Review Workshop
- CTAA Conference
- PTA Mobility Conference
- CIE Quarterly 2024 Coalition Meetings
- FTA Triennial Review Workshop
- 2024 Passenger Transportation Summit
- 2024 IPTA Annual Meeting
- State Management Review Training

## STATUS OF GRANTS

Grant Name	Grant Status
FFY23/SF24 5310	Active (Executed)
SFY25 IRXB – CMAQ Funding	Transmitted/Ready for FTA Review
Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) Urban Vehicles	Transmitted/Ready for FTA Review
Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) Regional Vehicles	Transmitted/Ready for FTA Review
FFY22 Bus and Bus Facilities Formula (Urban/Rural) Shortfall 5339	Transmitted/Ready for FTA Review
FFY22 CMAQ Urban - Shortfall	Transmitted/Ready for FTA Review
FFY22 CMAQ Regional - Shortfall	Transmitted/Ready for FTA Review
DART Transit Shelters TAP	Transmitted/Ready for FTA Review
Flex Funds from MAPA	Transmitted/Ready for FTA Review
ICAAP Projects	Transmitted/Ready for FTA Review

## LOW-NO/BUS AND BUS FACILITIES APPLICATION - FY24

Bus and Bus Facilities Federal Request of \$36.9 million

- 133 replacement vehicles

Low-No Federal Request of \$32.1 million

- Cedar Rapids Transit – 5 hybrid vehicles = \$4,674,717
- Sioux City Transit – transit facility, 1 electric vehicle = \$12,805,898
- MuscaBus – transit facility, 2 electric vehicles = \$1,116,839
- SWITA – transit facility, 2 electric vehicles = \$13,459,681

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PASSENGER PLANNER

Spencer Thompson came to the Iowa DOT about a year ago, having recently graduated from Iowa State University with a Bachelor's in Community & Regional Planning. He has experience working for various local municipal agencies, from Parks and Recreation and GIS roles in Iowa City, to being a transit driver in Ames. In his role as Passenger Planner, he provides support in developing various long-range plans, such as annual Passenger Transportation and this year's upcoming Public Transportation Long Range Plan, while also working on statewide Park & Ride efforts. He also serves as the Sustainability Chair on the DOT's Resiliency and Sustainability Committee, making steady process to make the DOT as sustainable as possible. In his free time, he likes to travel, paint, take photos, watch movies, play board games, and go to farmer's markets and other local community events.

### WHO TO CONTACT

#### FIND YOUR TPA!

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