101 Webinar: Veterans Highly Rural Transportation Grants

Wednesday, September 28, 2016

National RTAP
Rural Transit Assistance Program
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101 Webinar: Veterans Highly Rural Transportation Grants

Wednesday, September 28, 2016
Presenters

• **Darren Wallace**, National Coordinator, Highly Rural Transportation Grants, Veterans Health Administration

• **Dave Cooley**, Program Analyst, Statewide Veteran Services, Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs

• **Joni Bramlett**, Regional Transit Coordinator, Rail & Public Transit Division, Oregon Department of Transportation

• **Angie Jones**, Transit Manager, Grant County Transportation District, John Day, Oregon
Highly Rural Transportation Grants
Introduction

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has established a program to provide grants to Veteran Service Organizations and State Veteran Service Agencies to assist Veterans in highly rural areas through innovative transportation services to travel to Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers and VA authorized community care.

The program is authorized by section 307 of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010, Pub. L. 111-163.
Purpose

This program provides grants to eligible recipients to assist Veterans in highly rural areas through innovative transportation services to travel to the Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers and to non-VA authorized care. (Authority: Pub. L. 111-163, 38 U.S.C. 501)
Program Goals

- Innovative approaches to transportation
- Focus: Highly Rural Areas
- Increase access to transportation
- Improved medical care through transportation
- Leverage other innovative transportation approaches
- Improve community transportation partnerships
Program Expectations

- Transportation innovation
- Increase access to care
- Operate in Highly Rural Areas
- Transportation options in connection with VA care
- Improve community linkages and relations
- Adhere to all federal rules, laws and Office of Management & Budget (OMB) guidance as it pertains to grants
- Enhance Veterans transportation coordination
Eligible Entities

1. Veteran Service Organizations
2. State Veteran Service Agencies

Organizations **recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs** for the representation of Veterans under section 5902 of title 38, USC.
Highly Rural Defined

- In the case of an area, highly rural means that the area consists of a county or counties having a population of less than seven person per square mile.
States with Highly Rural Counties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AK</th>
<th>AZ</th>
<th>CA</th>
<th>CO</th>
<th>ID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KS</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>MN</td>
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<td>MT</td>
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<tr>
<td>NY</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>WY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Approximately $3 million is available each year under Grants for Transportation of Veterans in Highly Rural Areas. The maximum allowable grant size is $50,000 per year per highly rural area.
Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

- When funds are available for grants the NOFA will:
  - Specify grant application requirements
  - Will be posted on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)
  - Will be posted in the Federal Register
  - Date, time and place for submitting completed grant applications
Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

- List of the counties that are highly rural
- Explain the things that you need to know to apply for the grant
- Explain the scoring and selection criteria of the grant
- The length and term of the grant award
Current Program Status

- Almost 100% of the $3 million funded for the program has been allocated to the current grantees.
- There are currently 14 grantees in the HRTG program.
- FY 15 Grantees=14
  - American Legion-4
  - Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)-4
  - State Departments of Veterans Affairs-6
- FY 16 Notice of Funding Availability was posted for current grantees.
- There is a small possibility that there will be a new NOFA coming out with about $500,000-$800,000 in available funds.
Fiscal year 2015 was the HRTG program first full year of grant operations. The grant programs and their sub recipients realized the following performance results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 15</th>
<th>Time it takes to pick up and drop off</th>
<th># of trips completed</th>
<th>Total distance in miles</th>
<th># of Veterans served</th>
<th>% of Veterans satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1-Q4</td>
<td>34,851.42</td>
<td>25,220</td>
<td>755,761</td>
<td>8,033</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contact Information

- Darren Wallace, HRTG National Coordinator
- HRTG@va.gov
- (404) 528-5380
- Link to HRTG Final Rule:
- Link to HRTG Website:
  http://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/vtp/highly_rural_transportation_grants.asp
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Award Date</th>
<th>8/8/2014</th>
<th>9/5/2014</th>
<th>9/15/2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Amount</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Grant Amount</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Harney and Lake counties approved in March 2016, but will adhere to same grant time frame. Every eligible Oregon county now participates.
Sub-Grantee Structure

- Grant, Gilliam, Morrow, Sherman, and Wheeler Counties deliver transportation services through county government agencies and employees.

- Baker, Harney, Lake, Malheur, and Wallowa Counties deliver transportation services through private, not-for-profit transit districts.

- ODVA conducts on-site training and assistance visits as well as annual audit visits to each county. Additionally, ODVA hosts a one day conference annually to allow all sub-grantee counties to meet and share ideas as well as ensure everyone is clear on the guidelines.
## Performance Metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Totals Reported October 2015 – June 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Hours Spent</td>
<td>7,573.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Trips</td>
<td>4,316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Distance Driven</td>
<td>215,081.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Veterans Served</td>
<td>796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Trip Time</td>
<td>1.75 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Miles per trip</td>
<td>50 miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vets picked up and delivered back to their own homes.

**Destination Examples:** Portland, Walla Walla, and Boise VA Medical Centers, various VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics, local regional medical centers, dental clinics, eye care clinics, and dialysis centers.
Oregon’s Pilot for Veterans Transportation
Oregon

4,013,845
2015 PSU Census Est.
VA Hospitals in the Northwest
Oregon Regional Public Transportation

Portland
Roseburg
White City
Walla Walla
Boise
Legislative Task Force on Veterans Transportation (2009)

- Access the document (link on last slide)
- Report was issued October 2010
- Findings:
  - Transportation is a major barrier to veterans’ reintegration
  - Recommended education / access to existing systems; local options; ride coordination
Oregon DOT Actions

• Refurbished and donated vehicles

• Driver training on ADA equipment

• Conducted three Pilot Projects

• Educated Legislators about need for additional funds
**Example Vehicle**

![Example Vehicle Image](image-url)
Oregon Pilot Project

Purpose was to provide medical trips to VA-sponsored services:

- when no other options or ADA-accessible vehicle required;
- any veteran with a medical card was eligible;
- coordinated trips with veterans organizations (VA and DAV);
- provided travel planning, training to veterans.
Pilot Project Performance Measures

• Number of rides, unique individuals served, and cost per ride

• Provided information to plan for future:
  – How many trips each veteran needs
  – Travel patterns (local vs. distant)
  – Cost: rural / urban

• Results: cost savings and more rides for veterans
Statistics

• By the end of the pilot (6/30/16), agencies reported the following data per quarter:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totals for the three pilot areas:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals served</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average cost per ride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total pilot funds spent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pilot Lessons Learned

• Success achieved when local veterans service officers and VA collaborated with pilot agencies
• Pilot meant more trips when existing resources not available/appropriate
• Local VA medical service meant shorter trips, more access
• Veterans need more than medical trips for successful reintegration
Next Steps

• Continue to communicate with Oregon Legislature

• Continue to coordinate with partners

• Restart and expand program statewide if/when funding is available
Task Force Report

http://www.oregon.gov/ODVA/TASKFORCE/Pages/2008-09_Governors_TF.aspx

ODOT Contact

Joni Bramlett
e-mail: joni.d.bramlett@odot.state.or.us
Phone: 541-388-6185
Attention Grant County Veterans:

Do you need transportation to your medical appointments? The People Mover has received grant funding through the Department of Veterans Affairs specific to highly rural areas to provide medical transportation for Grant County Veterans. These funds will provide transportation to medical appointments at VA facilities as well as non-VA facilities.

Call 541-575-2370 to schedule an appointment.

Grant County Transportation District

The People Mover
PO Box 126 / 229 NE Dayton St.
John Day, OR 97845
541-575-2370 – Office
541-575-2162 – Fax
844-808-8964 Toll Free
7-1-1 Oregon Relay

Email us at: peoplemover@outlook.com

Visit us on the Web: www.grantcountypeoplemover.com

Veterans Customer Satisfaction Survey Number:
1-855-488-8445

Grant County Veterans Service Officer: 541-575-1631

Veterans Medical Transportation

Transporting Grant County Veterans Is Our Honor

Thank you for your service!
Eligibility

You must live in Grant County. We will need to see one of the following: your DD214 showing honorable discharge, your VA Medical Benefit Card, or your Oregon Driver’s License which shows your Veteran status. *Verifying eligibility only needs to occur once.*

This service is completely FREE for all eligible Grant County Veterans.

Where Can You Go?

We will take you to any medical appointment or pharmacy locally.

We travel to Bend on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and can take you to any medical appointment in Bend or Redmond. Appointments should be scheduled between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

We travel to Pendleton and Walla Walla on Tuesday. Pendleton medical appointments should be scheduled after 9:45 a.m. and concluded by 4:30 p.m. We arrive at the Walla Walla VA Clinic at 10:55 a.m. and depart at 3:30 p.m.

We travel to Burns on 1st, 3rd & 5th Thursday. We arrive in Burns at the VA Clinic at 1:30 p.m. and depart at 5:05 p.m.

We travel to Baker City on the 2nd & 4th Thursday. Arriving in Baker City at 12:00 p.m. and departing at 4:20 p.m.

We can travel to Boise once a month for Veterans who are unable to utilize the DAV Van. These rides must be scheduled a minimum of 2 weeks in advance.

Satisfaction

In addition to letting your driver know how they did, it is extremely important that at the completion of your ride you contact the Veterans Customer Satisfaction Survey Number and let them know how we’re doing so the funding for these rides can continue for all eligible Grant County Veterans.

The survey number is: 1-855-488-8445

Contact Us

Grant County Transportation District
PO Box 126 / 229 NE Dayton
John Day, OR 97845

541-575-2370
peoplemover@outlook.com

Visit us on the Web:
www.grantcountypeoplemover.com
Grant County Transportation District
Veterans Medical Transportation - Service Area

Red Pins - Bend Route every Mon, Wed, Fri.
Purple Pins - Burns Route, Baker City Route - alternating Thursdays.
Blue Pins - Walla Walla Route every Tuesday.
Grey Pins - Occasional trips, reservation only.

We are unable to provide transportation to Portland due to funding limitations.
Questions

Type your question in the Questions box or click the Raise Hand icon to ask a question via your phone or mic & speakers.
Thank you!

National RTAP
888-589-6821
info@nationalrtap.org
nationalrtap.org
facebook.com/nationalrtap

The recording will available soon at nationalrtap.org/webinars. Transcripts can be provided upon request.

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National RTAP
Rural Transit Assistance Program

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration