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NADTC Equity and Accessibility: Transportation Planning Grants Will Address Transportation Inequities in Nine Communities Across the Country

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Contact:

Carrie Diamond
NADTC Co-Director
Easterseals
Phone: (312) 405-2248
Email: cdiamond@easterseals.com

Virginia Dize
NADTC Co-Director
USAgings
Phone: (202) 872-0888
Email: vdize@usaging.org

WASHINGTON—The [National Aging and Disability Transportation Center](https://www.nadtc.org) (NADTC) has announced a new round of funding to support the development of program innovations and new models for equitable and accessible transportation to meet the needs of vulnerable and underserved populations, especially older adults and people with disabilities from diverse communities. NADTC has awarded \$173,495 in competitive grants to 9 communities in eight states—CO, CT, IA, NM, NY, OH, OR, and RI.

The 9 grantees will each receive grants of up to \$20,000 to engage in inclusive planning with community representatives from historically marginalized populations and local aging, disability and transportation organizations, and develop a written plan of action that addresses transportation equity and accessibility.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical role of public transit in communities across the country, yet even where public transit is readily available, it may not fully meet the unique mobility needs of older adults and people with disabilities,” said Sandy Markwood, CEO of USAgings. “Responses to a 2021 NADTC national equity, diversity and inclusion transportation [survey](#) indicate that trip costs, safety issues, lengthy wait times and a lack of mobility options are some of the most significant barriers faced by both older adults and younger adults with disabilities from historically marginalized populations. To begin to address equity and accessibility challenges in transportation, older adults and people with disabilities representing populations with unique needs must be invited to the transportation planning table so their needs are recognized, and their voices are heard.”

“According to the Easterseals’ recent COVID-19 study, the pandemic has increased the inequities affecting people with disabilities,” said Kendra Davenport, President and CEO of Easterseals, Inc. “Our research also found that isolation is the most reported cause of stress during COVID-19. Older adults face barriers to transportation and often, physical challenges related to aging that make it harder for them to access and use public transportation. The freedom and mobility public transit provides helps people with disabilities, older adults, and caregivers remain involved in and connected to their communities. These grants will ensure their voices are heard in the planning process and help communities establish new, viable solutions to address the inequity and social isolation that a lack access to transportation can create.”

The Innovations in Mobility grantees are:

- **Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments** in Colorado Springs, CO, will provide direction to specialized transportation services offered in the region and aim to better understand the needs of the African American, AAPI, Hispanic, Native American, and White individuals who depend on specialized transit services, identify gaps, and create a list of innovative projects to incorporate into the new Specialized Transit Plan. Visit www.ppacg.org to learn more about this grantee.
- **The Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut** in North Haven, CT, will develop a plan for the expansion of TrustedRide-Certified (TRC) in Greater New Haven and implement door-through-door services that serve African American, AAPI, Hispanic, Native American and White older adults and individuals with disabilities who face obstacles such as mobility challenges, limited technology access, language barriers, anxiety and travel avoidance, and living in underserved towns. Visit www.aosccc.org to learn more about this grantee.
- **HIRTA Public Transit** in Urbandale, IA, will build on current planning efforts to more fully engage African American, Hispanic and White people with disabilities and create a committee called IDEAS (Inclusion Diversity Equity Assessment) to expand the organization's ongoing unmet needs assessment specifically focused on improving transportation for people with disabilities. Visit www.ridehirta.com to learn more about this grantee.
- **North Central New Mexico Economic Development District** in Santa Fe, NM, will identify longstanding mobility needs of Hispanic, Native American, and White older residents with disabilities using inclusive stakeholder assessments to develop equitable plans for adding targeted demand-response microtransit in rural New Mexico. Visit www.ncnmedd.com to learn more about this grantee.
- **Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc.** in Albany, NY, will develop a plan identifying vital needs of African American, AAPI, Hispanic, Native American,

and White older adults and those with disabilities due to isolation during the pandemic. The plan will include a strategy to re-engage them by providing transportation to medical appointments, shopping, health and wellness activities, dining, social and cultural events. Visit www.colonieseniors.org to learn more about this grantee.

- **Family Health Services** in Sandusky, OH, will work towards regionalization of transportation systems by increasing the understanding and support for equitable and accessible transportation for African American, AAPI, Hispanic, Native American, and White older adults and people with disabilities through a sub-committee of the Mobility Management Team of community stakeholders and members of the target population. Visit www.familyhs.org to learn more about this grantee.
- **The Ohio State University, College of Social Work, Age-Friendly Innovation Center** in Columbus, OH, will focus on inclusive engagement of African American, AAPI and Hispanic older adults, individuals with disabilities and individuals with limited English proficiency to capture participant challenges and ideas for solutions for improving the local transit system infrastructure through focus groups, walk audits and transit audits. Visit www.agefriendlycolumbus.org to learn more about this grantee.
- **Ride Connection, Inc.** in Portland, OR, will develop a Technology Innovations Strategy through an inclusive planning process to learn from older adults, people with disabilities, and BIPOC (Black and Indigenous People of Color) communities about their priorities and how people may be burdened by or excluded through innovation. Visit www.rideconnection.org to learn more about this grantee.
- **Rhode Island College Foundation-Age Friendly RI** in Providence, RI, will explore the expanded use of community and nonprofit vehicles to reduce transportation gaps, and involve updating an inventory of transportation resources, understanding unmet demand, and designing a pilot project in a targeted geographic area for African American, AAPI, Hispanic, Native American and White older adults and people with disabilities. Visit www.agefriendlyri.org to learn more about this grantee.

About the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center

The National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) is funded through a cooperative agreement of Easterseals, USAging and the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, with guidance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living. NADTC's mission is to increase accessible transportation options for older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers nationwide.

About USAging

USAging is the national association representing and supporting the network of Area Agencies on Aging and advocating for the Title VI Native American Aging

Programs. Our members help older adults and people with disabilities throughout the United States live with optimal health, well-being, independence and dignity in their homes and communities.

About Easterseals

Easterseals is leading the way to full equity, inclusion, and access through life-changing disability and community services. For more than 100 years, Easterseals has worked tirelessly with partners to enhance quality of life and expand local access to healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. Through the national network of Affiliates, Easterseals provides essential services and on-the-ground supports to more than 1.5 million people each year – from early childhood programs for the critical first five years, to autism services, to medical rehabilitation and employment programs, to veterans' services, and more. Easterseals public education, policy, and advocacy initiatives positively shape perceptions and address the urgent and evolving needs of the one in four Americans living with disabilities today. Together, we're empowering people with disabilities, families, and communities to be full and equal participants in society.

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National Aging and Disability Transportation Center

Washington, D.C. 20003

Telephone: (866) 983-3222

TTY: (202) 347-7385

Email: contact@nadtc.org

Website: www.nadtc.org

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