

**National Aging and Disability Transportation Center:**

**2021 Equity and Accessibility: Transportation Planning Grants**

**Awarded: April 27, 2022**

In 2021, the NADTC awarded nine **Equity and Accessibility** grants to support the planning of program innovations and new models that address equity and accessibility in the following two areas: 1) Transportation Equity & Inclusion: Addressing the Transportation Needs and Preferences of Diverse Older Adults and People with Disabilities and 2) COVID-19 Recovery: Addressing the Unique Transportation Needs and Preferences of Older Adults and People with Disabilities to Impact Social Isolation. These projects launched in April 2021 and ended on September 30, 2022. Over the course of five and a half months, each project engaged in inclusive planning with community representatives from historically marginalized and underserved populations and local aging, disability, and transportation organizations, and developed a written plan of action to address transportation equity and accessibility. Grants of up to $20,000 were awarded.

Together, the nine NADTC grantees identified community transportation needs by engaging diverse older adults and people with disabilities through focus groups, surveys, community meetings and advisory committees. Innovative methods of engagement included:

* Hosting a table to collect surveys and feedback at a “food truck night;”
* Including program information in “Heritage Food Boxes,” culturally specific food boxes distributed by a local food bank;
* Distributing surveys at a county fair;
* Developing an “outreach touchpoint tracker” to identify and develop relationships with community-based and culturally specific organizations.
* Conducting focus groups at locations such as hospitals, senior centers, community centers, and organizations representing diverse populations;
* Distributing surveys through Emergency Medical Technicians, the American Legion, Meals on Wheels deliveries, churches, and a blanket mailer using a voter registration list to reach those unable to leave their homes.

**2021 NADTC Transportation Planning Grants**

**Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut**

**Location:** North Haven, CT **Project Service Area:** New Haven County

**Population Served:** Older adults 60+ and adults with disabilities who need assistance to travel

**Contact:** Beverly Kidder, Vice President, [bkidder@aoascc.org](mailto:bkidder@aoascc.org)

* Developed a plan to assess the expansion of TrustedRide-Certified (TRC), a transportation chaperone program, to diverse older adults and individuals with disabilities facing mobility challenges.
* Convened an Advisory Group to guide the project and develop the plan.
* Collected 117 survey responses, 90% representing communities of color, and conducted 6 listening sessions.
* Held 3 community meetings to discuss results and share proposed plan.
* Resulted in more than 90% of stakeholders supporting the implementation plan to expand TRC to underserved communities and to recruit diverse chaperones.

**This project:**

**Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc.**

**Location:** Albany, NY **Project Service Area:** Village of Menands, and City of Watervliet

**Population Served:** Older adults with low-income

**Contact:** Andy Koenig, Finance Director, [akoenig@colonieseniors.org](mailto:akoenig@colonieseniors.org).

* Developed a plan to identify the vital transportation needs of diverse older adults and people with disabilities related to isolation during the pandemic.
* Convened a 13-member Advisory Committee to guide the project.
* Held 14 community meetings/events where the project was explained, and paper surveys were disseminated to the target audience.
* Collected 235 survey responses, 30% from people with a disability and 8% from people with a “diverse background.”
* Resulted in a plan to expand transportation services to two diverse, underserved communities.

**This project:**

**Family Health Services**

**Location:** Sandusky, OH **Project Service Area:** Erie County

**Population Served:** Older adults 60 and older, and adults with disabilities

**Contact:** Taylr James, Clinical Administrative Assistant, [tjames@Familyhs.org](mailto:tjames@Familyhs.org)

* Worked to increase the understanding of, and support for equitable and accessible transportation for diverse older adults, and people with disabilities.
* Convened a 6-person subcommittee for transportation stakeholders in the community to create a needs assessment and guide the project.
* Conducted a needs assessment to identify inequities and barriers in transportation for the target population:
  + Convened 5 focus groups
  + Collected 434 survey responses, 81% from older adults, 53.8% from people who receive disability, and 18.4% from diverse individuals.
* Resulted in a plan to increase marketing for free transportation services, purchase a secondary wheelchair accessible van, and share results of the needs assessment with other healthcare agencies.

**This project:**

**HIRTA Public Transit**

**Location:** Urbandale, IA **Project Service Area:** rural Central Iowa

**Population Served:** Older adults and people with disabilities

**Contact:** Brooke Ramsey, Business Manager, [Bramsey@RideHIRTA.com](mailto:Bramsey@RideHIRTA.com)

* Built on current planning efforts to engage more fully with diverse older adults and people with disabilities, including introducing IDEAS (Inclusion Diversity Equity Assessment) into the existing mechanism for identifying unmet needs.
* Convened a HIRTA Connections Coalition to guide the project.
* Reached about 100 people through surveys, a community meeting and focus groups at the OneIowa conference; 25% of whom were older adults, 14% individuals with disabilities, and 18% people of color.
* Resulted in a plan to make the agency’s scheduling software available in multiple languages and to expand transportation options.

**This project:**

**North Central New Mexico Economic Development District**

**Location:** Santa Fe, NM **Project Service Area:** Santa Fe, Taos, and Rio Arriba counties.

**Population Served:** Older adults aged 60+ and adults with disabilities.

**Contact:** Paul Sittig, Transportation Planner, [pauls@ncnmedd.com](mailto:pauls@ncnmedd.com)

* Identified longstanding mobility needs of Hispanic, Native American, and White older residents with disabilities in rural areas, including lingering social isolation impacts of the pandemic.
* Convened a steering committee of stakeholders to guide the project.
* Collected surveys from 380 people and held 3 focus groups with 21 diverse older adults and people with disabilities.
* Resulted in a plan to develop a volunteer driver program, a website and accompanying brochure outlining transportation resources, and technology training to access the website and transportation providers.

**This project:**

**Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments**

**Location:** Colorado Springs, CO  **Project Service Area:** El Paso County

**Population Served:** Older adults and people with disabilities

**Contact:** Laura Crews, Mobility Coordinator, [lcrews@ppacg.org](mailto:lcrews@ppacg.org)

* Identified gaps impacting African American, AAPI, Hispanic, Native American, and White individuals who depend on specialized transit services and developed a list of possible solutions to incorporate into the region’s Specialized Transportation Plan.
* Mapped geographical gaps in services using paratransit and specialized transit geo-coded ridership data.
* Held focus groups and interviewed 66 diverse older adults and people with disabilities on their transportation challenges and possible solutions.
* Resulted in a plan to increase outreach to diverse communities on available options, and pilot an on-demand transportation service with a specialized transportation provider.

**This project:**

**For more information on the NADTC Grants, visit** [**www.nadtc.org**](http://www.nadtc.org)**.**

**Rhode Island College Foundation-Age Friendly RI**

**Location:** Providence, RI  **Project Service Area:** Statewide

**Population Served:** Older adults, people with disabilities, and people with low-income

**Contact:** James Connell, Program Director, [jconnell@ric.edu](mailto:jconnell@ric.edu)

* In partnership with the public transit provider, explored using underutilized community and nonprofit vehicles to provide trips for diverse older adults, individuals with disabilities, and low-income individuals who want to stay connected to their communities, and developing a shared-use service pilot project.
* Convened 4 focus groups with over 100 participants from the target population and stakeholders.
* Researched best practices and models of vehicle sharing.
* Resulted in a plan to pilot a program using underutilized vans to meet local transportation gaps in an historically underserved, very diverse area.

**This project:**

**Ride Connection, Inc.**

**Location:** Portland, OR  **Project Service Area:** Napa County

**Population Served:** Older adults and people with disabilities from diverse backgrounds

**Contact:** John Whitman, Planning Supervisor, [jwhitman@rideconnection.org](mailto:jwhitman@rideconnection.org)

* Sought to develop a technology innovations strategy to identify the impact of exclusion from innovation upon diverse older adults and people with disabilities.
* Engaged with 130 members of the target audience, 45% of whom were Black and Indigenous People of Color, through focus groups and surveys.
* Identified how a lack of technology and language barriers impact transportation access for the target population.
* Resulted in a plan to create a position, “Inclusive Programs and Partnerships Coordinator,” to cultivate partnerships with culturally specific organizations to enhance mobility options for the target population and convene a steering committee of diverse older adults and people with disabilities.

**This project:**

**The Ohio State University, College of Social Work, Age-Friendly Innovation**

**Center**

**Location:** Columbus, OH **Project Service Area:** Central Ohio

**Population Served:** Older adults and people with disabilities

**Contact:** Marisa Sheldon, Director, Age-Friendly Innovation Center, [Sheldon.127@osu.edu](mailto:Sheldon.127@osu.edu)

* Engaged diverse older adults, individuals with disabilities and individuals with limited English proficiency to determine challenges and ideas for improving the local transit system infrastructure.
* Convened Age-Friendly Innovation Center collaborators and network to guide the project.
* Conducted 5 focus groups, walk audits and transit stop audits to inform transportation infrastructure updates.
* Resulted in a toolkit for local transit authorities on how to integrate the voices of older adults and individuals with disabilities into infrastructure updates and transit planning and state funding to implement specific recommended infrastructure improvements.

**This project:**

Any questions on NADTC’s Innovations in Accessible Mobility Grant can be directed to Melissa Gray, [mgray@usaging.org](mailto:mgray@usaging.org), Heather Edmonds, [hedmonds@usaging.org](mailto:hedmonds@usaging.org) and Jane Mahoney, [jmahoney@easterseals.com](mailto:jmahoney@easterseals.com).

**For more information on the NADTC Grants, visit** [**http://www.nadtc.org/grants-funding/**](http://www.nadtc.org/grants-funding/)**.**

