

Ai-Media Transcript -EMPOWERING_MOBILITY_TOGETHER_PART_2 (English)
AUG_12_2025

Live captioning by Ai-Media

CARRIE DIAMOND:

Hello, everyone. Thank you for joining us. We will be letting people populate the room and we will get started in just a couple of minutes. Thanks for joining us! Thank you for joining us. We will get started in just a minute as we see people are populating the room.

Welcome, everybody! We will get started today. Thank you for joining us for the second in our series of webinars. I am Carrie Diamond and I am joined by our other NADTC staff, Jane Mahoney.

Just a bit about the webinar today. If you are on Zoom, you are all in muted. The recording of the session can be accessed after today's event, I hope you are able to access that. Live captions are being provided by a Ai-Media. They are live and you can click on the CC button or we have the livestream link in the chat.

Throughout the webinar please use the Q and a button to ask questions or raise your hand to speak and you will just have to unmute yourself after you ask the question. And please use the chat for any other technical issues that you have.

So, we are going to start the day with a poll question. You should see it, and it is related to mobility management and travel training. I made this live and the question is, do you fund mobility management or travel training with your five 310 -- 5310 funds. You can click for either mobility management, travel training, both, neither or not sure, or not applicable.

Into the captioner, is the link working?

3% travel training, 26% both so we have over half on this poll that do mobility management with 5310 funds. We have some neither and 20% not applicable. So we just wanted to figure out, those are some of the things that can be funded with 5310 and we talked about that last time.

And thank you for those who told us that the link was working.

So again, I want to introduce our speakers. We have Jess Maffey, who is with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation. Lucinda Shannon with Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, and Kristin Peraza, the Director of Regional Mobility Programming and Partnerships.

So, we will stop sharing at this point because we are going to start the conversation. So, Jane, if you want to get started with the first question? If you unmute yourself!

JANE MAHONEY:

Good idea! So, today we are going to be talking about the application process 45310 and then sustainability. Let us talk about the application process first.

Their first question I will have Lucinda and Kristin answer. What was your experience with the 5310 application process? --

LUCINDA SHANNON:

I will go first. The current applicant asked our organization to take it over and apply in the next year. So, the first thing we did was talked with DRPT and Jess, and kind of figure out what they intended for the 5310 program and what areas we could possibly fill for that for our region. And I kind of already knew that there were many agencies asking for volunteer driver programs or just saying they needed more senior transportation. So we also talked with transit providers and just like a lot of partnership talking before we filled out the application.

And the application itself is – I want to say easy? (Laughs) But I also don't want to. It has questions and you answer the questions. It is a lot to put together. For me, budgeting is a new thing for me so I had to have help with that. And, yeah, it took a long time, you know? So we started early and started talking with people early as well.

JANE MAHONEY:

Awesome! Thank you for that. And Kristin, I would love to hear what your experience is like with the application.

KRISTIN PERAZA:

It is changed over the years. I have been applying for about a decade. And during that time, the state has changed positions as well in the administration side of things. And they have been updating the process of applying for grants, so I would say that now – it is much more accessible of a process than it has been in the past. Typically the state is great about answering questions or, if I get hung up on something, like a budgeting question, like Lucinda said, I can check in with them and ask their thoughts before I submit which is really, really helpful.

The process of creating the narrative is hard for me because I am a data nerd and because I like to put a lot of information and the boxes now are limited to how many characters you can put in. So! That is just me. I am teaching myself to be more concise with the messaging I am trying to put through about the grant.

I always try to compile it from the perspective that people may not know what my program is, especially if they are reading it. That might have no experience with my location at all. So I try to focus on important details that I would want to explain to someone who has never been to my area or heard of my program before. So trying to take it from that perspective is always a challenge, right? To set your brain at step one and start from zero.

But the process itself, because the state is a willing and accessible partner in this, I have found it to be very easy, as Lucinda said, to submit this versus other grants and federal grants that I have submitted where it is not accessible to talk to the administrator or to the person who will be reviewing your grant, for example. So I appreciate that in Virginia.

JANE MAHONEY:

That is great advice! And yeah, it is different and every state for each applicant. Those are two of our Subrecipient's. So just, for you, what is some of your experience with application process?

JESS MAFFEY:

Yes, so, just thinking about a bit of information about the application process. So, our application, it comes around once a year. It is open from December to February 1 and that is been my understanding – that's been pretty consistent over time.

I came into this position around two and half years ago. So, as Kristin said, it is iterated over time and we change grant management programs so, I tried to take input in from the grantees as well on the application to make sure that it is clear but I have a grant writing background. So technical assistance has always been important to me personally with applications because I know things can be confusing. And a lot of people often put a lot of work in.

But, I guess overall, I would say that our application process is pretty extensive in terms of the amount of information that we have applicants submit upfront. I would say it is very different from transit agencies in the state. Their applications are extremely simple compared to the 5310 application and that is because it is a competitive application that is not guaranteed funding. So that means we can have new applicants coming in every year as well as returning applicants. So can the application kinda has to take into account both of those groups. Some who may be really familiar and some who might not be.

And, so, one thing we like to focus on, the questions is, getting an idea of how well that group will be able to comply with the federal requirements and state requirements. Not that we expect them to know everything upfront, but getting a sense from the beginning like, OK, are you set up organizationally to handle this funding? Do you know what it takes to have vehicles and drivers and all the different components of that?

And we also ask questions around the coordinated human services plan. Making sure they are aware of that, and the application ties into that. We ask them to meet with us before the application. Opens to – just a once a year meeting that is required for the application but is really to make sure they are aware of the plan and again, I think it is really sussing out to them understanding the requirement and asking about coordination. As well as their plans for sustainability which I know we will talk about.

It helps us build a picture of OK, are they really ready for this grant? Maybe they need more time and we need to talk to you more about what it takes. So, yeah. There are a lots of questions and I have tried over my short tenure to sort of hone in on what we really need because it is obviously, and administrative time to sus that out as well. It is a balance.

JANE MAHONEY:

So you mentioned local match and I'm curious if Lucinda or Kristin can tell about finding your local match?

LUCINDA SHANNON:

We are a regional planning District and the jurisdictions that are members of our agency provide funding like, it is per capita to our agency. So, we were able to, we asked the commission if we could do this. We were able to use those funds for the match for our program. So, it was really nice like, the THPAC has been really supportive of the program and me.

And also I use all the HR and accounting, and the help with budgeting and all of that as well – that is available to me here. So it has been a really good, supportive environment and an important step of the program.

JANE MAHONEY:

And Kristin? Similar experiments? Different?

KRISTIN PERAZA:

I have been dealing with this program for a while and when my predecessor was around, I remember her talking all the time about going up and fundraising, you know? Fundraising the match and having conversations with partners and trying to figure out and leverage resources. And I knew what I took over this position that that part of it was not for me!! I am not a fundraiser in that sense where I am more of a planner. So I try to plan out where these things will happen so that when I have a bright idea, like expand my 5310 application and out on a call center, for example. OK I'm talking about \$200,000. Am I gonna get \$20,000 in match? Or whatever it may be. I will plan out where that can come from and I will try to leverage and free up expenses that I have coming in from other sources so that I can free up funding that might be available to me for those purposes.

For the commission we work for we have town and county dues that come in every year. A portion of those dues are designated to this program but every time I add on and build and try to grow that budget, I also have to kind of correspond that match money and over the years I partnered with -- partnered with foundations and try to explain where our transportation programs connect with their same goals or align with their goals. So if we have a goal without foundation getting people to medical appointments, I try to pull our data and information that shows that we are really transporting people to medical appointments. We are connected to health.

Then I have those conversations with foundations and I try to operate outside of typical grant cycles and I know that that sounds – unattainable. But I have found

better luck trying to have conversations and build new partnerships with foundations instead of going through traditional grant processes where I am actually taking away local money that is meant for another purpose for a match. So I kind of go around, so to speak, and meet with these foundations and try to show them that our goals are aligned. Show them data and show them that we can create a lot of impact for their investment by providing match funding. We have been quite fortunate in our area to have lots of great support locally for that match and a lot of support with us as we have grown, our budget substantially over the last five years, they've been with us and providing a lot of that match.

We also try to secure additional matches, even more than what we are asked for because we know that a lot of our smaller partners may not have the match available in their budget. So we try to plan for that as well. So back to the planning side, I am more of a planner in advance for those funds instead of someone going out there and, you know, beating the bushes and trying to fund raise at the last minute. That is not me! (Laughs)

JANE MAHONEY:

I love that you presented two different ways to go about this, it is great. And you can see that people are appreciating that as well. Carrie?

CARRIE DIAMOND:

Two things, we see that mobility management is just going to one recipient in the state. And then they as an organization will be a Subrecipient. They are wondering how that will affect the state matching amount?

I guess that is going to depend on how Michigan does it but some states do not provide any additional match for their 5310. And so you would just be bound by the, if it is operational, it would be 50-50 match, if it is capital like mobility management it would be 80. If the state chips and to reduce that 20%, that would be great, right? Otherwise that would be what hopefully they would have to come up with.

And Jess, I cannot recall if you had mentioned this if the state has funding that they help with some of the match? It may not be for this program but if you had anything to add to that?

JESS MAFFEY:

Yes, so, Virginia, my understanding – somewhat unique in that we do have state funding that we match and we have a good amount of – of course, we always want more – (Laughs) For transportation! But we have a Commonwealth mass transit fund that is sort of dedicated funding for transit and there is a component of that called state transit which is what we use for the human services program. And so for operating we match 40% for vehicles. This was the first year that we actually put state funding on the vehicle wards and it was kind of an experiment because we had state funding that had rolled over from previous years and we wanted to make sure to use that and we had heard about the cost of vehicles going out. And, you know, their local match not necessarily going up in the same way. And so, yeah. Previously it was the 8020 and this year it was a 10% state match and for the other capital mobility management contract and transportation, it is the 16% and 14% local match?

So, yes, we do match state funds on top of that as well.

CARRIE DIAMOND:

That is great. And I do recognize that not all states offer that but that is advocacy at the state level. And Katherine had mentioned that they use volunteer hours for matching funds and that would be, I am assuming for volunteer driver programs and that would be in kind matches which are eligible. You can do in kind matches for (indiscernible).

I think that is all we have in questions right now.

JANE MAHONEY:

Great, great conversation. I am also going to ask a bit right now about performance measures and if any of you have some advice as you were creating plans and projects for writing performance measures? Who wants this one?

JESS MAFFEY:

Kristin because she has influenced the state performance measures with my predecessor. If you would like to go, then I can add on!

KRISTIN PERAZA:

OK! Yeah, part of my soapbox continued here, I stand on a soapbox all the time and talk about how transportation is more than just putting somebody in his seat. And there is a lot more data to collect as you are providing services that can really

be very dynamic for a lot of reasons. And it helps with this metric in this self-improvement that we should just be doing on a regular basis.

In Virginia it is a little unique because we are Subrecipient's, typically the state is not coming back to me and saying, "you provided a thousand rights this year and we need you to provide 2000 next year." It is really a self-awareness of what is going on in my region, what I'm trying to accomplish at my local level, and am I trying to accomplish more people on a bus? Or people using volunteer transportation? More people walking? What am I really trying to accomplish here, locally because I see this, I see what the trends are and what the problems are and so I kind of take it upon myself to go through strategic process and look at what we have done, look at our impacts, our need areas and come up with these changing metrics and I have worked with the state for a long time to try and change the metric collection to be more dynamic, to show that there are so many different types of ways to influence mobility management. And to help support these populations.

And there are a lot of creative ways that have to be sort of quantitative, even though they are mostly qualitative metrics. And so, I love that in Virginia we have the ability to design those metrics ourselves. And I always give the advice of everyone to collect as much information as you can! And then transform the information. It is not that I gave 100 people a ride to the hospital or to a physical therapy office. I gave 100 people 20 hours of physical therapy for 12 months out of the year, and that resulted in an 80% increase in mobility in this area. There are a lot of ways to transform that data to make it way more descriptive than what we traditionally look at, or the baseline, so to speak.

And I always tell people to be conservative. You set your own goals. There is no need for me to set an unattainable goal for myself. I can set a goal that is realistic for me and in Virginia, the process is competitive, but it is not competitive to me against my last year. It is competitive to me in my area, what I'm trying to accomplish, versus the states funds. I do not have to push myself every year to say that I will do a thousand, 2000, 3000 next year, the growth does not have to be an exponential thing. It can be more qualitative, as long as I can translate that information appropriately into the application process.

So, setting realistic goals is my key advice there!

JANE MAHONEY:

Excellent! Jess, you are going to hop on?

JESS MAFFEY:

To hop off that a little bit – coming into this role, I have definitely I think, you know, Kristin's critique of me is that I do not ask for enough!

(Laughter)

JESS MAFFEY:

Because she has so much! But for me, at the state level, at the administrative level, we sort of have to balance what these different sized groups can handle and also what we can handle in terms of processing the information and so, I think there is a lot of opportunities for grantees to use their performance metrics to tell their story and we require quarterly reporting on performance metrics. And some of that for us is just to show you know, progress. You are doing something but again, it is your own goals. And part of that is just the reality of this type of transportation. It is like, you are not really, you know, it is not a business. You are not growing revenue. You are providing a service to people. We just want to see what you are doing, how you are doing it, and then be able to, like she said, put that into the application and see what you have accomplished and what you're planning to do.

So, yeah. I'm trying to think of advice. I think one thing that I know changed right before I came on was, previously it was more open ended, the types of metrics that people could submit and then we sort of standardized it a bit so that we could again – administratively it is easier to see a bigger picture when everyone is reporting on the same data. That is one point that happened to be a change when I came on that I had seen. So, yeah.

KRISTIN PERAZA:

So at that state level creating 5310 data categories, basically. It is hard to compare apples to oranges because all of these programs are different, what they're doing is different and what they are trying to accomplish is vastly different.

The state created this concept of having these data categories where this information from my program that is serving maybe a thousand people per year to Lucinda's program which serves maybe 5000 people per year, that that data can be comparable because it is in the same category of service.

So that is been really hopeful for us as programs to talk to each other as well. To compare impacts and what we are doing as well but also, from the state level to be able to get a picture of the impact that is available with that money.

LUCINDA SHANNON:

I found that the people that we are helping are like, desperate, you know? They are the harder customers to serve. So we do have some transit services here and they do serve a lot more people than we are right now with path. But the people we are serving need it so much more, you know? These are the people who really need to get to doctors appointments and other medical services and they are just not going to be able to do it without very specialized transportation.

So, it is kind of telling that story because not only reporting to DRPT, we report to other funders. As well as the commission. A lot of boards, elected officials. And I always try to say, you know, if we did not help this person, they would have to move into a nursing home. You know? Just to really explain that we are not going for superhigh numbers. We are really helping the people who need it the most.

JANE MAHONEY:

Great. Great ideas. Great conversation. And I am seeing little bits here and there and some of these ideas and questions can be carried out in our online forum, as well!

We are going to move on, it is almost 2:30 PM. We are going to move to sustainability but I think before we do, Carrie has another survey pole that she wanted to do.

CARRIE DIAMOND:

Yes, just a minute. The survey that we are doing now, we note that we have a lot of integration between 5310 and 5311 funding and that is what the is about. Does your program integrate 5310 and 5311 funding? Yes, both. No, we only get 5310. Not sure. And not applicable, we do not get 5310. So we are curious if you get it, integrate it, or you do not get it. We will give people a minute to answer that.

We have people connecting in the webinar chat, that is great! The other place you can connect is in the forum. Posing a question and responding there. So that is great. I will end this and share that.

18% integrate both of those. 48% of those online only get 5310, so they are not operating in addition. 13% are unsure and 21% say it is not applicable, they do not get 5310. So, that is just as people are looking at the services and getting 5311 can influence your reporting and other things that they need to know but in addition to the funds that we are talking about today.

So, that is all I have and I think we are all caught up on questions as well.

JANE MAHONEY:

Thank you, Carrie. So, just you started to mention already, looking as you look through the application and making sure that the agency has capacity and then moving on to sustainability. So, looking to just have a discussion from perhaps Lucinda and Kristin first about, how are you sustaining your program beyond that initial grant.? Where do you look for your supports? Lucinda, would you like to start?

LUCINDA SHANNON:

Yeah. So, we write grants and get smaller amounts of funding from the community. I think one of the things that I had mentioned last week is that I go to a lot of meetings and I talk about path. We created a year-end report and distributed that to a lot of potential funders. And so, you know, having partners at our transit agencies, and our jurisdictions, senior centers, volunteer driver programs, it helps gather community support and then we also are trying to connect with larger funders in the area, and this is only our second year so, you know, that will take some time. We apply from grants for the community foundation and we have received those every year. So knock on wood, that is really good!

And we are continuing to apply and court larger funders, which I think, you know, I think that will be successful in the coming years. It just takes a little while to develop those relationships.

JANE MAHONEY:

Kristin?

KRISTIN PERAZA:

My program is similar to Lucinda's in that we are doing similar activities in trying to expand and maintain sustainability. Our biggest feature is that we try to leverage everything. So, we are having partnerships that go beyond just a traditional

partnership where we are sharing resources, sharing what resources they have available beyond just funding because if they can leverage – if I can leverage the use of vehicles or equipment or staffing, that frees up my budget and other ways. And it enables me to use those funds in a different way or reduce the budget overall, over time.

And I also have a very good community funder who is invested in providing supports for people who are accessing health options. We collect a lot of information and data to make sure we are demonstrating all of that information. And we have town and county localities that provide investment so, we are continuously pulling reports and trying to show impacts that are relevant to those audiences. So we have learned to tailor our data and information to what these funders and investors and stakeholders want to see. Some of them are really interested in the bottom line. They want to know how much it costs and what was the result of that investment. Some of them really want to know more about that quantitative information. So we try to share and highlight stories about really, you know, unique impacts that come from our work.

We are trying to continually build those partnerships, leverage the relationships, the funding and also the resources.

CARRIE DIAMOND:

You may have in passing mentioned healthcare, but I know that certainly is an area where people try to build those relationships and show that they are getting people to the healthcare appointments, there are reduced no-shows at the hospital. Have you had inroads there specifically in the healthcare sector in terms of getting buy-in and financial or other resources that you talked about?

LUCINDA SHANNON:

So, the (unknown name) health clinic, our regional health department, came to us when they did their chip plan – the community health improvement plan and they said that transportation was the number one priority for health in our region. And most of it was to medical appointments. And there were some needs for when people were discharged from the hospital, especially if it was after hours or they lived in a rural area, like, getting them home was difficult for clinics and we have two large hospital providers here. UVA medical, I VA health and sent Tara. -- (unknown name), and the district got some numbers from them and they identified it as a priority. We tried to meet with them and the health district tried to set that up. We were not successful. We will still continue to try, I think it is just finding the right person there. I think because they are also a private organization, they are

focused on income – (Laughs) And revenue and not as much on, you know, community services. Their job is to provide medical support.

So, we have been able to work with, like, departments. Like oncology and kind of do workshops with them on what services are available and how the social workers at the hospital can connect to transportation for their clients and, you know, they can refer to us as well to help out with that. But, yeah. We were not able to meet the right people.

The health department did connect us with the (unknown name) health clinic which is much smaller and in Nelson County so it only serves the southern area of Nelson County and they have been super receptive. We have been talking with them about how we can help them because their clients need rights to other services as well and they just, you know, cannot get them.

So, we just did a survey with them and we got 300 responses – which is big for us! Saying where people need to go. So we will look at that data and talk with them again and hopefully see if we can help out with meeting the needs of those people.

KRISTIN PERAZA:

We have a couple different relationships with some free clinics in our area and we have partnered on grant applications to try and bring in funding and add transportation as a component to these, primarily medical and health grants that are focused on that. We have helped coordinate the kind of accessibility of the funds that they draw in from these grants through our mobility center. And most of our clients are overlapping. So a lot of the people that we serve are also being served at these free clinics and it works out well. We also have some relationships where we leverage some of our staffing to help free clinic individuals navigate their transportation benefits which was previously worked at a nurse – it was taking way from their time to do that. And we thought that is not a good use of nurses time. We can do that and you can focus on your medical work.

So, that has borne fruit as far as developing a valuable relationship with those individuals.

In my community, about five years ago, I heard through the grapevine that there was a large foundation in our area that had a pot of money, around \$200,000, set aside for services for older adults and people with disabilities. And it was health oriented. Their goals were health oriented and that was when the examples were I

went outside of the normal grant process. I approach that foundation and put together a proposal and asked for some time with them. And I had the audacity to ask for that pot of money. And believe it or not, I was awarded almost the entire pot of money. And since that time, I have become a regular investment for that foundation because that money is making a huge impact for the population that they wanted to serve. They did not have a clear definition on how they wanted to use that money, what they wanted to do specifically with it, but they knew they wanted to make a more livable community for older adults and we were able to show that and we have been able to continue that relationship over time and extend the investment they are making and make really great impacts for them to share with their board, their stakeholders. So that was something that just kind of worked out (Laughs) So, my advice is to ask. They can say no and typically when people give me a no, I get it a lot – I go back and instead of trying to convince them and change it from a no to yes, I rephrase and reframe what I am asking for to eliminate those barriers. What was it that caused the no? Why is it I cannot have the support? And I go back and I reframe everything and I take a new proposal out to them. I am persistent with it and just trying to push, respectfully, on those boundaries that are traditional and our area and it has resulted in a lot of funding for us.

CARRIE DIAMOND:

Take you for that. And there is a discussion string in the forum, specific to healthcare partnerships! Thank you.

JANE MAHONEY:

Just has not had a chance to weigh in here on the sustainability. And you have the Direct Recipient, the pleasure of reading all the different ideas. So I suspect that you have read at least as well as seen, a lot of different things that take place with sustainability.

JESS MAFFEY:

Yeah, so, I think Lucinda and Kristin both demonstrate this well, is, you know, thinking about sustainability before you even apply. I note this type of grant process can seem daunting in terms of the timeline and getting everything set up. But, there is a lot to get out of it if you can kind of set yourself up for success. That is sort of what I advise my grantees, is to really think about those connections and a big recommendation that I have, as was stated, is that it does not work and all types of areas, but thinking about local government support. You know, we all want that dedicated funding and some places are successful at getting it. If you can try to start getting in front of your local government, your region, different governing bodies, to sort of make your case and your value. And also the sorts of things that

they talked about, opportunities for partnerships with hospitals, employers, Chamber of Commerce, Department of Social Services. I get is a lot of building awareness of your services and building relationships.

I like the point Kristin was making a lot about, you know, not everyone – not even you, necessarily, can offer money. But resources, someone's job, if you can take away some of the strain of a different job that someone has, I think that is of huge value and also the goal of the program to have that collaboration to say hey, we are forming a partnership with this, whatever it is. DSS that helps us execute this part of this.

So, yeah.

CARRIE DIAMOND:

Just come off review actually, there was a question early on that relates to this topic and it is, what would you say is your lead time for starting talking with partners before submitting an application? Lucinda mentioned at least three months but do you have any expansion of that in terms of partnership? And the time it takes, really?

And I would also put out there that this goes with planning, right? Planning further in advance, how far – I don't know if the state has a schedule that you have to follow but, those take time before the application. How much time would you suggest?

(Multiple speakers)

LUCINDA SHANNON:

So, yeah. I had relationships with my initial founding partners before we had even considered applying for the grant I was part of the coalition of aging service providers and that is where I was hearing that they really needed help with transportation and so, it may being a part of that committee and the chair of their transportation working group kind of developed a relationship with them. And meeting regularly over a period of probably three years? Before we applied for that grant. So when we did, we needed a partner to run the call center and you know, the people in that coalition were ready to step up and help out. So it was easy for me to identify partners and we ran the RFP process and every thing but they applied, a couple of them, from that group applied and then they helped us out a lot because we were paying them to run the call center but they spent a lot more

staff time you know, kind of donated in-kind to helping the program start up. They worked with us on marketing plans and things like that. So, our relationships, really, it does take a long time.

I am from New England and it is more fast-paced, but here in Charlottesville everyone here is friendly and nice. So it takes a long time to meet with people over again, you know, we just met with (unknown name) today and we have been meeting with them over six months to talk about helping them with data collection system and you know, every time we get a little bit closer and I think any type of business relationship, they need to build trust and understand that you are dependable. So it just takes time to develop that and it is very small steps.

KRISTIN PERAZA:

I second what Lucinda said. I have been working with her a lock on her developing these types of partnerships. And it does take time and in the rural area that we serve, people want to know, what are you really after? This seems too good to be true. You are here to help me? And I spend a lot of my time explaining that this money, we are bringing it into the region to serve a purpose. We want to have them included in on purpose and play a part in what they are trying to accomplish with transportation and mobility and how that can be aligned. In most programs think yeah, what do you want from me?

So there's sometimes been convincing that my role, I am paid to do this, this is what I'm paid to do, create the solutions and I do not want anything from you. I want to leverage what is around you to accomplish your organization's goals for mobility.

It does take a long time to develop these relationships and they change over time. So really, starting at step one in trying to get partners on board, you do not have to accomplish steps 1 to 10. You can start at step one and it will transform over time.

Facilitation is my main take away there. If you are asking an organization to help you with in-kind match, for example. If I ask them for a direct in-kind match, it may down someone's desk. But if I say that I was looking at your organization and I thought that you could provide an in-kind match, this is what this could look like, this is how this could happen and this is how we would record it. Would you mind taking this back to your board? Let us set up a next step to have a meeting. I have to facilitate all of this legwork and that will provide a better outcome for me for that partnership versus just, you know, kind of sending it cold call and leaving it on someone's desk.

JANE MAHONEY:

Great. So, Jess, from a Direct Recipient point of view, do you have suggestions for other Direct Recipient on how you help people applying, the agencies applying, with sustainability? Use of fundraising or any other types of resources that might assist people?

JESS MAFFEY:

Yeah. It is a little bit tricky at the state level in terms of light, we cannot advocate for funding. I mean, we can provide information. We do the coordinated service plan. We want people to use as much as our information like, DRPT as a whole publishes a lot of studies that we want people to use to make their case. I think, you know, any time we see something come through from the FTA, we are signed up for various newsletters and we try to make sure to make our grantees aware of discretionary grants. Obviously those can come and go.

But try to hook people into our networks of, you know, we have different transit related networks here and different conferences and I don't know, trying to facilitate the connections and opportunities for people to come join in those conversations and meet people that might spark some ideas.

And I would say... I was going to stay at the state level -- say? The state level, this year we have actually had the opportunity to work with a legislative committee that is looking at rural medical transportation specifically. And to make recommendations for state funds. This happened to come up at a great time when we were working at a coordinated plan at the same time. So we have been working really closely with that, the manager of that study to incorporate our recommendations.

So that is something again, this isn't necessarily the state level the way that we can but the way that we can find, you know, convince the higher ups may be, whether that is increasing the state funding pot that we have or other potential solutions at a state level that we can implement. We definitely try to influence that in the ways that we can. And then, yes, we are definitely aware of (unknown term). This is something through the coordinated axis – you know all about that. But I was recently at a panel where someone was there from NADTC am a name is Melissa great? -- Melissa (unknown name)? Anyway.

We were talking about someone coming in to talk to us giving us technical assistance training about federal fundraising. I think we are kind of like, trying to take everything we learn and give that technical specific to our grantees to make sure that they are aware of all the different options. So, yeah, that is what I'm thinking about right now.

KRISTIN PERAZA:

In Virginia, the 5310, you have to apply about eight months at a time. Before you are awarded the fund. So it is a lot of lead time! There is a lot of lead time after the eight months, after you submit during that waiting period, there is a lot of time to talk and meet with people but you may come up with great ideas and new projects to fund, but you have to wait for the next funding cycle. So trying to look at potential partners there and their budget cycles. They never happen to align with mine so looking at is your budget flipping in the summer? Is it flipping in the winter? And then trying to get on their radar so that they have a good amount of time to follow their internal processes to communicate and potentially talk about allocating funding for matching in kind.

CARRIE DIAMOND:

Thank you. Bobby had their hand up. Can you let us know where you are from?

QUESTION FROM FLOOR:

I am Bobby (unknown name) and I work with (unknown name) which is now called compass IL and I am the director of transportation and I kind of wanted to add something to Kristin. It is a lot of work to go out and, you know, collaborate with everybody and get your letters of support. It took me a long time. But I had to do it for 42 counties. So I attend 41 planning meetings. I attend them but after you do that, life is much simpler because now, we all attend the T TC meetings and we cross paths all the time.

So I just sent out a short and sweet letter – it is that time again. And everyone starts sending everybody letters of support. I send that to them, they sent it to me. Some people I send a simple -- sample and they signed on the letterhead but it helps so much for the 5310 grant. Right now I probably have 15 letters that I will send with it.

But, it takes a lot of work but it is so worth it in the end. And a lot of traveling. We are rural areas so it is a lot of travel. Sometimes I travel four hours for in our meeting and then four hours back because it is all rural. Yeah. And some areas it –

I don't want to drive in after the summer is over. I do not go up there anymore. Because you could get stuck, no cars, in the snow. But! The letters of support and working with other people, it is great. Even state funding. I work with people and do MOUs and it helps them and helps us. We are all helping each other together to meet the same goal.

KRISTIN PERAZA:

That is a great example of laying a foundation that will serve you through multiple years. Yes. You establish that relationship, like you said, and then it is just an email and a letter of support, do you have that relationship that is continued year after year. I think a lot of grantees think about needing it right now this one time. But it is something that can last from year to year!

QUESTION FROM FLOOR:

The only time I fully write the whole thing is when directors retire and a new person takes over. So then you just send the letter from last year and they add their touch. You know? Then you have your matches in there and all of that. Makes life so much simpler.

CARRIE DIAMOND:

Thank you so much for sharing. And to those of you listening going all my gosh, I don't have any of it and it is overwhelming, where do I start? Start with the first step. It gets ongoing and then you can build from there. One baby step at a time.

KRISTIN PERAZA:

And reaching out to somebody who has gotten the funding is a great way to share your application, share what you've written and what you asked for and how you asked for it and why. It gives you a great leg up to start on instead of starting at .0.

JANE MAHONEY:

Lots of themes. Patience is one. Starting slow. Community partners. So, so important. You guys have presented so much good information. Are there any other questions that have gone unanswered? Or does anyone else want to ask a question or add a comment?

CARRIE DIAMOND:

I do not have any other ones I see that you have put the federal funding guide in the chat, people are interested in that. Other than that, could you please bring it the last bit of the presentation?

JANE MAHONEY:

I am also going to come I know you all have our website but there is are NADTC website, we have a lot of information. We just released a new webpage that is the 5310 resource hub where we have kind of put together all of the 5310 resources that we have in one place. Also links to that FTA page, and just to try that, if you have 5310 funding for a while, you want information, or you are just starting, it is a great place to check out.

Thank you Carrie for putting the link in the chat!

I encourage you all to keep this conversation going by joining the online forum. We will put the link for that in the chat. Your login is your email address all lowercase and you should have made a password and if you have forgotten, you can hit forget password. But read through, even go forward, Carrie. We have quite a few conversations happening in different topics and I put them on here in case one of them piques your interest.

One of the questions was what you would like to see changed and how that money is used? There is a bit about software as a service and what are you using. There was also a thread on 5310 applications and platforms and what is your application process? Also as Carrie mentioned earlier, one about healthcare and partnerships and how to build those relationships up with healthcare agencies. Mobility is a service is a topic and here is one of my favorites – first time 5310 agencies, some tips and tricks if you are just starting out.

One more slide. Some other topics include what projects to use five through 104? And I saw in the chat, how do we not just by vehicles? Great topics there. Great information on mileage reimbursement programs if people use their own drivers. Trysts -- trip planning and dispatching tools. And someone asked how we are recruiting paid or volunteer drivers.

And a new theme throughout it webinar is valuable partners. Who are your valuable partners? We probably all have a partner that might just be a little unique and if you share it might give someone an idea that they can reach out to.

So, that is all we have time for today. We really want to thank our candidates, you have all done a fantastic job of sharing. Great programs, great information. And so you know they are participating in an online form if you want to connect with them there, as well as the other attendees.

So, that is what we have for today. Thank you all so much for joining us.

CARRIE DIAMOND:

And a webinar survey is in a link in the chat, please complete that and let us know how we can improve.

JANE MAHONEY:

Thank you!

Live captioning by Ai-Media