

2024 Rural Community Innovations: Transportation Planning Grant Program Will Fund 12 Rural Communities to Develop Transportation Plans

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WASHINGTON, DC—The National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) has announced a new round of grant awards to spur the development of community transportation plans that address equitable and accessible transportation options that meet the needs of underserved populations, especially older adults and people with disabilities in rural communities. NADTC has awarded \$412,448 in competitive grants to 12 communities including one Tribe and 10 states—Georgia, Kansas, Maine (2), Massachusetts, Michigan, New York (2), Montana, Texas and Washington.

The 12 Rural Community Innovation Transportation Planning grantees will each receive grants of up to \$35,000 to engage in planning activities that identify transportation barriers, address current and future needs, establish multisector partnerships and actively involve older adults and people with disabilities. By the end of the funding period, grantees will develop a written plan to guide the implementation of strategies supported by the community to increase the availability of accessible and equitable transportation services in their rural community.

“Easterseals is pleased to administer the FTA-funded NADTC in cooperation with USAging,” said Kendra Davenport, President and CEO of Easterseals, Inc. “The grant program provided through this national center is instrumental in supporting communities to conceptualize and implement innovative transportation and mobility solutions for people with disabilities and older adults. These solutions allow individuals to access the many places that are critical to health and well-being—principles espoused by the [Easterseals National network](#).”

“For older adults without access to a car or for those whose physical ability to safely drive has declined, having alternative transportation options is incredibly important,” said USAging CEO Sandy Markwood. “Transportation mobility enables independence, promotes good health, decreases social isolation and improves quality of life. These grants will not only help to serve the needs of the grantees’

communities but will create plans that could be replicable in other rural communities as well.”

The Rural Community Innovation Transportation Planning Grantees selected are:

- **Aroostook Area Agency on Aging** in Presque Isle, ME, will develop a plan to address transportation barriers, including long travel distances and challenging winter conditions, impacting older adults and people with disabilities, including the Houlton Band of Maniseet Indians, in this large rural area in the northern part of the state. Visit www.arostookaging.org to learn more about this grantee.
- **Benzie Transportation Authority** in Beulah, MI, will develop a plan for improving access to health services for older adults and people with disabilities that integrates the scheduling of medical appointments with the scheduling and management of public transportation in rural Benzie County. Visit www.benziebus.com to learn more about this grantee.
- **Cortland County Planning Department** in Cortland, NY, will develop a plan to identify underutilized resources and solutions for increasing access to transportation among older adults, people with disabilities and their caregivers in underserved areas in their rural upstate community. Visit www.cortlandcountyny.gov to learn more about this grantee.
- **Franklin Regional Council of Governments** in Greenfield, MA, will develop a plan to identify the unmet needs of older adults, people with disabilities, people living with dementia, their caregivers and individuals facing social isolation. They will also explore opportunities to expand their micro transit system to rural communities in the county. Visit www.frcog.org to learn more about this grantee.
- **Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas** in Horton, KS, will develop a plan that identifies solutions for increasing access to transportation for medical appointments, official business and social opportunities, including a safe walking path for the tribe’s older adults and people with disabilities. Visit www.ktik-nsn.gov to learn more about this grantee.
- **Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow** in Billings, MT, will develop a plan to address the needs of older adults and people with disabilities across several rural counties and the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Agency Indian reservations, with the goal of increasing access to ADA accessible transportation to medical and essential government agency appointments. Visit www.liftt.org to learn more about this grantee.
- **Penquis C.A.P, Inc.**, in Bangor, ME, will develop a transportation plan that aims to reduce transportation barriers for older adults, people with disabilities and people who need frequent nonemergency medical

transportation so they can be healthy, safe and connected to their community. Visit www.penquis.org to learn more about this grantee.

- **Project Amistad** in El Paso, TX, will develop a plan in collaboration with their regional transportation planning committee that aims to increase availability, quality and access to transportation services with an emphasis on access to medical appointments and mental health services for older adults and people with disabilities in four rural, mountainous communities in West Texas. Visit www.projectamistad.org to learn more about this grantee.
- **Snohomish County Transportation Coalition** in Everett, WA, will develop a plan to identify solutions for increased access to transportation to older adults, people with disabilities and individuals with low income in the rural Skykomish Valley communities that currently have limited public transit options due to their remote location. Visit www.gosnotrac.org to learn more about this grantee.
- **Southwest Georgia Regional Commission** in Camilla, GA, will develop a plan that aims to identify solutions for increasing access to and frequency of rides on public transit for older adults, people with disabilities and individuals with low income across this large rural region. Visit www.swgrc.org to learn more about this grantee.
- **Southwest Missouri Council of Governments** in Springfield, MO, will develop a transportation plan to address challenges faced by older adults; people with disabilities; and underserved areas in rural Webster County, including the Amish communities. Visit www.smcog.org to learn more about this grantee.
- **The Arc Chemung-Schuyler** in Watkins Glen, NY, will develop a plan to identify transportation solutions for cross-county and regional trips; analyze ridership trends; and increase access to transit for older adults, people with disabilities and individuals with low income in this rural upstate community. Visit www.arcofcs.org to learn more about this grantee.

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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. For more information, visit www.usaging.org and follow @theUSAging on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram.

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.