



## State RTAP Manager's Peer Roundtable Summary

July 23, 2020

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Our Summer 2020 State RTAP Manager Peer Roundtable had a training focus. Thank you to Stephanie Lewis of Florida RTAP for suggesting the topic. States that participated were Alaska, California, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin. We had an “icebreaker” and asked what participants’ favorite school subject was (since this was a training-focused webinar) and answers included art, math, science, geography (of course), physics, music, and even lunch.

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### **Q: What new courses are you planning for the upcoming year?**

A: Kari Banta of Texas RTAP worked with Easter Seals Project Action (ESPA) to develop a comprehensive two-year training program with two dozen courses covering everything from transit management to board training to COVID-19 training. The training program started in May 2020 on the Zoom platform. Texas DOT developed the core courses, and then ESPA suggested other topics. The lessons are taught by various instructors. It has been so successful that students are coming back early from lunch to get back to the training.

Andrew Williams who trains with Tennessee RTAP has started a different type of training which is hands-on. He is the trainer for sessions on COVID-19, including personal protective equipment (PPE) training. Courses are available for drivers, managers, shop staff, and others.

### **Q: What new online training platforms and methods have you been using?**

A: Iowa RTAP has been using Microsoft Teams. RTAP Manager Kristin Haar described a how it was used to train learners on an entire training handbook – five 2-hour sessions can go through 3 chapters each. People who have an interest in a specific chapter can log in on a specific day. Missouri RTAP uses both Zoom and WebEx and their subrecipients also use National RTAP eLearning. Alaska RTAP has a monthly Microsoft Teams call with their subrecipients and after a learning curve, are now using it effectively and have good conversations. Washington RTAP is using Microsoft Teams, Skype, GoToMeeting, GoToWebinar, and WebEx.

To help reluctant virtual learning participants feel more confident, Marianna Hanefeld of Washington RTAP has been doing training on the virtual learning platforms themselves. This training includes how to share screens and use polling devices, and even how to adapt lesson plans

to virtual platforms. She shared some helpful advice: help people move their computers/webcams so you can really “see” them, callout people by name and “look” at their faces as if you are in a classroom, use breakout rooms with 3-5 people for easier discussions and then get back to the larger group to share what was discussed.

Limitations of online platforms was discussed in-depth. Issues included not everyone having basic knowledge of computers, technical difficulties, conversation is not as easy or personal as in-person communication, not easily customizable to individual transit agencies, some subrecipients are just not interested in virtual learning.

**Q: Are you planning in-person trainings? If so, what COVID-19 safety measures will you be implementing?**

A: Many states still have travel restrictions and/or their staff are still working virtually. Andrew was the only person on the call providing in-person training at this time. He is taking many steps to make sure the training is safe, including masks, 15-20 feet social distancing between students, students have to provide own writing materials, and sanitization of all surfaces.

**Q: Do you provide certificates for any training?**

A: Idaho RTAP provides certificates for all their trainings. Missouri and Tennessee RTAP also provide certificates. When Andrew trains, he gives a pre-test to gauge knowledge. He stressed that it is also important for learners to demonstrate behavioral change to show they’ve learned the expected knowledge.

**Q: Do you have rules for recipients of your training scholarships to adhere to, and how do you make sure they follow them?**

A: Kristin said her program has determined specifically what scholarship recipients can and cannot spend money on and there is a detailed application process for scholarships. Shauna Miller of Idaho RTAP said that scholarship recipients to her state’s program also have to submit an application. Idaho RTAP has an RTAP Program Guidebook that details all the scholarship considerations. Recipients have to submit a summary of training received. She has encountered subrecipients who did not do this, and had to follow-up individually. When Andrew trains, the learners have to provide an online evaluation of the session. There is a lottery with a prize as an incentive for filling out the evaluation. The results of the evaluation also provide good feedback for future sessions.

**Q: How do you market your training and track the results of your marketing efforts?**

A: Idaho and Iowa have small numbers of RTAP subrecipients, so it is easy to market via email. The Iowa Transit Association also helps with marketing, and Idaho posts the training on their website. In Tennessee, RTAP training marketing is done through word-of-mouth, email, website postings, direct mail, commercials, and through local councils. Roberta Yegidis of Florida RTAP described how their state has a number of networks, including a small rural network, that helps with marketing. They also have a listserv. Their subrecipients receive email notices about their trainings a month in advance and a day in advance. They are concentrating on reaching other types of community service agencies that perform transportation too. Finally, their State DOT has been incredibly helpful in promoting their trainings.

**Q: What new trainings has National RTAP produced or is working on?**

A: We just updated our [ADA Toolkit](#) and are commencing another update to our [Transit Manager's Toolkit](#). We updated our [eLearning Emergency Management course](#) and are starting an update to Customer Driven Service. An update to [Fundamental Financial Management](#) will be released soon. We've created a new product – [Essential Spanish for Rural Transit](#).

**Q: Is there training about Zinger Chairs, particularly in regard to securement?**

A: National RTAP has been asked that question in our recent ADA Toolkit Update Webinar. We have provided an answer in our [Q&A document](#). Agencies who need guidance in this area are asked to work with their regional FTA Office of Civil Rights.

We will be planning a Winter State RTAP Manager's Peer Roundtable. Please reach out to us at [info@nationalrtap.org](mailto:info@nationalrtap.org) if you would like to suggest any specific topic(s).