

Request for Proposals for Local Host for National Rural and Tribal Technical Assistance Conference in Fall 2021

November 19, 2019

RFP closes upon selection

The National Rural Transit Assistance Program (National RTAP) is requesting proposals for a location for our 5th biennial Rural and Tribal Technical Assistance Conference in fall 2021. National RTAP, as the lead agency, will work directly with the successful proposer.

The 2021 conference will focus on the implementation and improvement of rural and tribal transit programs, including intercity services. The purpose of the conference is to provide training and to share strategies, current regulatory information, and best practices related to rural and tribal public transportation.

The conference is generally held between mid-September to early November. Attendance typically ranges from 300-400 and includes rural public and human service transit providers, tribal transit managers, planners, state agency staff, intercity bus operators, consultants, researchers, and trainers. The conference traditionally rotates among regions of the country, with the previous four conference locations listed below:

- March 2012 – Scottsdale, Arizona
- October 2015 – Denver, Colorado
- October 2017 – Omaha, Nebraska
- September 2019 – Portland, Oregon

This solicitation is for a local host of this conference with responsibilities associated with local site planning. The selected local host will form a Local Host Committee to assist with identifying a conference facility (meeting space and lodging) and participate in program development and conference implementation, including activities related to the local site.

State Transit Associations, State RTAP Programs, State Departments of Transportation (DOT), universities, or some combination have served as the local host for previous National RTAP conferences and other similar conferences. Significant weight will be given to proposers who demonstrate the interest and capacity of the State DOT and State Transit Association. We are especially interested in working with the State RTAP Program to coordinate mutually beneficial training opportunities at the conference.

A Conference Program Planning Committee, which consists of National RTAP staff and members of other federally-funded technical assistance centers, is responsible for conference program content. Representatives from the Local Host Committee can also be members of the Conference Program Planning Committee in order to incorporate local training needs and highlight regional best practices of national interest.

Local hosts are extremely important to the success and vitality of the conference by reaching out to local transit agencies, universities, State DOT staff, and vendors and encouraging them to participate in the conference as attendees, speakers, moderators, volunteers, and exhibitors. Local hosts are also critical to incorporating and highlighting the features of the conference location. The responsibilities of the local host are listed below.

Direct costs of the conference are paid through conference fees and National RTAP.

Requirements and Responsibilities

Transportation Requirements

The proposed conference location must be able to meet these transportation requirements:

1. Access to a major airport within 60 miles or less
2. Reasonable time and cost of local transportation connections to the conference site

Hotel/Conference Site Requirements (Sunday-Wednesday)

The local host is not responsible for procuring the facility contract; however, any proposed site must have a hotel that meets these basic requirements.

1. Plenary space to accommodate 350-450 in classroom style, riser/head table in front
2. Banquet space to accommodate 350-450 in rounds, riser/head table in front with 8-10 people per table
3. Space for 5-6 concurrent sessions at a time, ideally separate from the plenary/banquet space
4. Break space that also accommodates up to 30-40 6' or 8' tables for vendors
5. Reception space for 250 to 350
6. Outdoor display space in proximity to accommodate up to 10 buses
7. Sleeping rooms from Friday-Thursday (with the majority of rooms on Sunday-Wednesday), ideally with an option for the conference rate three days pre- and post-conference
8. AV support which allows for some equipment to be brought on site as needed

Local Host Responsibilities

Prior to and during the conference the local host will be responsible for:

1. Assist with soliciting proposals from local hotel sites in the region
2. Invite local VIPs for opening plenary session as confirmed with the conference committee
3. Invite other local entities (e.g. tribes, color guard) to participate in the conference kick-off to welcome guests

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4. Develop a list of local/state volunteers to serve as session moderators, room hosts and/or registration desk help and assist with coordinating the volunteers
5. Identify AV resources, such as computer projectors and laptops, for use at the conference (to supplement AV contractor services, where appropriate). National RTAP has some equipment consisting of laptops and projectors.
6. Assist with arranging local events during the conference, including engaging the local convention and visitor's bureau if possible, also event space for an evening event
7. Help publicize the conference to local transit agencies in the region to encourage attendance
8. Assist with Student Research Poster marketing/recruitment, by identifying potential professors and students for involvement
9. Assist with conference program planning
10. Support a vendor development committee for the vendor expo
11. Assist with identifying local sponsors and contributors for the conference
12. Assist with identifying and procuring local giveaways

Responsibilities *not* Required by Local Host (National RTAP Responsibilities)

1. Negotiate and sign the contract with the conference hotel
2. Procure a contractor as event planner to assist with conference planning and implementation
3. Identify and purchase attendee giveaways (e.g. bags, notebooks, and/or pens)
4. Assemble the conference sessions and agenda
5. Solicit sponsor support and vendors for the expo
6. Solicit keynote and FTA speakers
7. Manage conference registration
8. Conference marketing

Required Qualifications

1. Demonstrated support of State DOT transit staff
2. Demonstrated support of State RTAP Program
3. Demonstrated support of State Transit Association
4. Experience with planning and implementing transit conferences

Desired Qualifications

1. Experience with hosting conferences of 300 or more
2. Relationship with the local transit agency for volunteer support and bus passes

Proposal Submission

To provide notice to National RTAP of intent to propose, email conference@nationalrtap.org with the subject "Intent to Propose." Provide your name, organization, and contact information. Those who have given a notice of intent to propose will be notified of any changes or the selection of a host site.

Please submit proposals via email to conference@nationalrtap.org with "2021 Conference Local Host Proposal" in the subject line. Proposals may be in letter format and must reference the

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requirements listed in this RFP. Please limit to 6 pages. Example: “We propose _____ which meets your location requirements and has _____ hotels which meet your space requirements...”

Please identify the lead person for the local host proposal and the representatives for the supporting organizations.

Proposal Evaluation

The evaluation committee is made up of National RTAP Staff and Review Board members.

Evaluation of proposals will begin when received. National RTAP would like to have a location identified in April 2020, but no later than May 31, 2020.

Q&A Webinar

Local Host RFP Q&A Webinar

Thursday, December 19, 2019, 2:00-3:00pm ET

Registration: register.gotowebinar.com/register/5275128438975354123

The purpose of the webinar is to provide information and answers about the 2021 National RTAP Technical Assistance Conference. You may submit questions in advance of the webinar or during the webinar.

The target audience for this webinar is State DOT Staff, State RTAP Managers, and State/Regional Transit Associations who are interested in serving as the Local Host for the 2021 conference.

For more information or questions about the RFP, please contact:

Robin Phillips, Executive Director
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conference@nationalrtap.org
781-697-7194 (Work Cell)
888-589-6821 (National RTAP Main)