

Iowa Transportation Coordination Council

July 13, 2011

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Polk County River Place, Room 2

2309 Euclid Avenue

Des Moines, IA 50310

MEETING NOTES

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.

II. Introductions

Those in attendance included:

Margi Ness, United We Ride Ambassador, Vice-Chair

Angie O'Brien, Iowa State-wide Mobility Manager

Bridget Bartlett, Mobility Manager for Region 8

Zach Young, Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

David Mitchell, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Doug Keast, Iowa Workforce Development

Max Christensen, Iowa Department of Education, School Transportation Office

Tim Weltzin, Iowa Medicaid Enterprise

Scott Anderson, TMS Management

Heather Byron, American Cancer Society

Mary Beth Mellick, Iowa State Association of Counties

Erin Mullenix, Iowa League of Cities

Lisa Sieren, United Ways of Iowa

Shanell Wagler, Iowa Department of Management

III. Review March 9, 2011 Meeting Notes

Correction: Iowa City has asked for New Freedom dollars, not Cedar Rapids

Correction: American Cancer Society has a network of volunteers, but this is not an interfaith network.

IV. Statewide Mobility Manager

Margi introduced Angie O'Brien, Statewide Mobility Manager. The hiring of a Statewide Mobility Manager has been a major goal of ITCC. The Mobility Manager can help staff, ITCC, and sub-committees. ITCC had planned to wait until Mobility Manager was hired to come up with ITCC's Action Plan.

Margi and Bridget talked about establishing an advisory committee to serve as a "sounding board" for Angie, and to help with the action plan. Bridget suggested the advisory committee membership be: 2 people from ITCC, 2 from the Iowa Mobility Managers Network, 1 from IARC, and 1 from IDOT. The advisory group will help with the action plan.

Lisa suggested having membership from across the state, particularly rural areas for a statewide perspective.

Bridget proposed to the group that the Iowa Mobility Manager's Network (IMMN) would come up with the action plan, go through it with the advisory committee, and then go to the full ITCC group with the action plan.

Margi talked about the time commitment for the advisory committee. She envisions this being a 1-day session for IMMN to hammer out the action plan, and the advisory committee will meet approximately bimonthly on an ongoing basis.

There was a motion to go forward with establishing an advisory group and have the IMMN work on the Action Plan. Motion passed.

Discussion on who from ITCC should serve on the advisory committee. Erin asked for additional information on the type of representatives ITCC would like to have on the committee (i.e., human services, state agencies, etc). Bridget responded that IMMN will come up with a list of potential members for the advisory committee and get back to the group.

V. Iowa League of Cities

Erin introduced herself as a research and fiscal analyst for the League. There was continued discussion from the March ITCC meeting on putting together a survey on volunteer transportation services as a way to identify volunteer providers. Erin said that the League would be interested in putting together a survey, but would need some parameters defined and a time frame.

Margi suggested that the volunteer transportation subcommittee be put on hold until a survey is put out.

VI. Iowa Workforce Development

Doug spoke on the future potential changes to IWD. Some IWD offices are expected to close, reduce to 16-20 offices, whereas the push used to be to have an office in every county.

In place of the closed offices, IWD is working on a "virtual" office system, which would consist of something like a kiosk in a public place (i.e. public library). However, the issue with the virtual office is that it brings about an expectation of digital literacy. Also, Doug explained that many of those who are coming to an IWD office are really looking to talk to someone.

IWD's stake in transportation issues: how do job seekers get connected to unemployment services, as well as jobs? This may become even more difficult once IWD offices close. To help this, it would be great to partner with the Mobility Managers.

Margi had the idea of "housing" mobility managers around these physical and virtual IWD offices. Doug said that although he would be interested in promoting this, the final decision rests with the regional boards. Margi thought this is something that could be further explored and/or included in the action plan. David suggested that if we don't have Mobility

Mangers housed in the same place, we could look into having some sort of virtual connection to Angie/Mobility Managers at the IWD kiosks.

Lisa said that we should try to have a plan in place (i.e. transit to the nearest IWD office, volunteer drivers) as soon as we know which IWD offices plan to close. That way, there could be an immediate follow-up to the media, and we can avoid a lag between when the offices close and alternative locations and transportation are known.

VII. Department of Education, School Transportation Office

Max introduced himself, explained that Iowa has 359 school districts and approximately 6,000 buses. Districts are always short on drivers, and many times transportation directors take on 3-4 districts. There is a need for more coordination.

Margi talked about how in Washington state, school buses are open to the public. Transit agencies give money to the school, and this way it expands the public transit system.

Max said that Iowa transit agencies can contract with schools. There was more discussion about whether or not this is legal at a recent IARC meeting, and FTA is following up with the Iowa DOT on clarifying this.

VIII. CTAA Coordination Institute

Bridget talked about shadowing Sioux City during the Coordination Institute. She found it especially interesting to see the issues with another tri-state region on the other side of the state.

There was discussion on getting together a list of teams and their action plans from team shadows.

Discussion on how many Mobility Managers we currently have in Iowa. Officially, we have one statewide Mobility Manager (Angie), and one for RTA 8 (Bridget). However, Davenport has someone in a similar position (though not called a "Mobility Manager"), and Council Bluffs has a Mobility Manager through Omaha. At this point, the city of Dubuque and Cedar Rapids have applied for funds for a Mobility Manager, and Des Moines has applied for two positions.

IX. Volunteer transportation

Margi suggested that the volunteer transportation committee could get more information and ideas from Faith in Action in Austin, TX. They use New Freedom dollars to provide volunteer transportation and have taxis as a backup. Website: www.beverlyfoundation.org

X. American Cancer Society – Road to Recovery Program

Heather talked about the Road to Recovery Program. The program is nationwide, yet not in every community at this point. Volunteer drivers take cancer patients to medical appointments. There is also a fuel card program, and a bus pass program. The volunteers are "true" volunteers, in that they use their own vehicle, and pay for gas. Heather also talked about the public transit voucher program in Minneapolis.

Margi asked if the American Cancer Society could work with Medicaid. Heather said it's a possibility, but it is already difficult for them to meet the needs out there.

Scott said that TMS could try to coordinate with the Road to Recovery program, but cost is an issue. TMS has a framework in place, covering the whole state, but sometimes you need to use private companies to fill the gaps and that can lead to higher costs.

Heather talked about the American Cancer Society's hotel voucher program in Des Moines and Ames, where people traveling 50 or more miles can stay overnight in a hotel for free.

There was a discussion on how transportation needs have not been identified on a statewide level. Anne mentioned that all of the planning agencies do Passenger Transportation Plans (PTPs) each year, which includes an analysis of needs established by each region's Transportation Advisory Group. It was talked about that some sort of collection of these needs could be put together. Anne and Angie will talk about this some more.

XI. Non-Emergency Medical Transportation

Scott at TMS offered to provide data on number of rides by county, and number of trips by county. These trips must be used for a medical appointment to a Medicaid provider, and from March-May, about 28,000 trips/month were provided.

There are 395,000 Medicaid members in Iowa, which means that 1-1.5% of members use NEMT each month.

Scott said that ridership hasn't really changed since TMS took over. Margie suggested that those who are newly eligible for rides are not aware of the service (previously, people couldn't get rides within their own community).

Bridget talked about how there is (and always has been) a lot of paperwork involved with TMS/IME. Some people don't have case workers to help them with the paperwork and faxing. Many of these people also get waivers for leisure transportation each month, and some are using these waivers on medical transportation because they can't or don't want to deal with the paperwork. Bridget explained that she has a blanket email that she sends to case workers saying to be patient with TMS, and that TMS will help once they have that initial paperwork.

Margi suggested adding "how to work with TMS" to the Action Plan.

XII. ITCC Subcommittee Report-out

There were no reports.

XIII. Member Roundtable

American Cancer Society – Heather talked about the patient lodging program in Des Moines and Ames, and that soon they will also be launching this program in Cedar Rapids, Sioux City, Waterloo, and Northwood. She also said that the Road to Recovery Program (curb-to-curb volunteer service) has provided almost 2,500 rides in Iowa so far.

Department of Education – Provides rides to over 230,000 children per day.
Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services – David is going out to offices around the state in August, and will be able to talk about mobility management, needs, transportation network, etc. He would like to find out who participated in the Transportation Coordination Institute to target some individuals.

United Ways of Iowa – During the legislative session, talked about whether transportation costs were still being covered in “wraparound” programs. Lisa also mentioned that she wants to include a note about mobility managers in their newsletter.

United We Ride – Margi suggested that Angie have regular updates in agency newsletters as part of the Action Plan.

RTA 8 – Looking for different ways to help rural people in the counties. Transit providers focus on needs, but if needs are unknown, can’t find a solution. Working on a volunteer transportation program, and looking for tax incentives for businesses to get employees to and from work. Dubuque has also applied for a Mobility Manager for the urban fixed-route system.

XIV. Adjournment/Next Meeting Date and Location:

September 14, 2011
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Polk County River Place, Room 2
2309 Euclid Avenue
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