



January 13, 2025 Meeting Minutes for the Rhode Island Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council

The Rhode Island Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council (Coordinating Council) meeting was called to order at 2:01 PM in the RIPTA board room, 705 Elmwood Avenue, Providence, and online through Microsoft Teams. An attendance sheet is attached to these minutes.

Joelle Kanter, RIPTA planner, began by announcing the Coordinating Council's vision: accessible, coordinated statewide mobility for all Rhode Islanders.

Steven Boudreau motioned to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2024 Coordinating Council meeting. Lorna Oinonen seconded the motion, and all were in favor. Minutes were approved.

Joelle Kanter shared a brief video on the federal Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM), founded twenty years ago to improve access and mobility for older adults, people with disabilities, and those with low incomes. CCAM is comprised of eleven federal agencies that support 130 grant programs. To improve efficiency, coordination, and availability of transportation services, many of these funding sources can be combined. Information about CCAM and its new national technical assistance center administered by the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) is available on the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) [website](#).

Joelle then presented several RIPTA project updates:

- RIPTA has extended the Ride Anywhere pilot program, giving qualified Ride paratransit customers the option to request trips anywhere in the state. Before the pilot launched in January 2024, the Ride program served an area within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of bus routes, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. RIPTA will prepare a report on the first year of the pilot program and present recommendations to the General Assembly this spring.
- RIPTA's low-income pilot program is now permanent. Local organizations that support low-income riders facing housing insecurity or experiencing homelessness can apply to receive a 50% discount on specific fare products available for purchase through institutional Wave accounts.



Pam Jennings spoke on behalf of Mathewson Street Church, which is one of the sites that helped riders during the early phases of the pilot program. They've also been assisting applicants who are eligible for the two-year reduced fare bus pass for seniors and people with disabilities. They view transportation access as critical, and because of their location in downtown Providence, they contribute significant resources to supporting these riders. They're now seeking additional grants and donations to continue this work.

- Materials are still in development for the statewide travel training network, funded through an FTA grant. This spring, RIPTA plans to launch new training modules, videos, and a print guide to share with organizations that work directly with older adults and people with disabilities who may use public transportation.

Agency project updates followed. Mario Olivieri, EOHHS, said that the state's Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) program provides about 200,000 trips per month for Medicaid recipients. As the broker, MTM coordinates with approximately 100 transportation companies with a fleet of 375 to 400 vehicles. About 40% of NEMT trips are on RIPTA buses. Mario regularly presents statistics and contract updates at Long Term Care Coordinating Council meetings, and he said that MTM has been scheduling appointments to talk about issues at facilities such as nursing homes, adult day programs, and behavioral health centers.

Maureen Maigret asked whether the state's Elderly Transportation Program (ETP) could expand to allow older adults to visit patients in hospitals or residents in nursing homes. Mario explained that program funding is restricted to taking people to medical appointments, adult day care, and meal sites, and it doesn't have the capacity to increase its trip volume. Maureen encouraged the group to think about expanding transportation options for caretakers including parents who are responsible for their children's medical planning, even when their children aren't present.

Darlene Reza Rossi then announced the AARP Community Challenge grant opportunity for quick action projects that can be completed by the end of the year. Government entities and nonprofits may apply for up to \$25,000 in funding for physical community improvements, temporary demonstrations, and innovative new services that benefit people ages 50 and older.

The meeting adjourned at 2:56 PM.



**Rhode Island Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council
January 13, 2025 Attendance List (in person and Teams)**

Name	Organization
Benny Bergantino	RI Division of Statewide Planning
Steven Boudreau	RI Office of Healthy Aging
Benny Bergantino	RI Division of Statewide Planning
Jean Bousquet	RI Office of Rehabilitation Services
Melissa Cocroft	RI Primary Care Physicians Corporation
Jacques Dextrateur	RI Office of Veterans Services
Kristen Frady	Washington County Health Equity Zone
Ishaa Gatkari	RI Department of Health
Barbara Henry	Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee
Mary Inglis	RI Department of Human Services
Pam Jennings	Mathewson Street Church
Peter Joly	RI Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals
Joelle Kanter	Rhode Island Public Transit Authority
Maureen Maigret	RI Long Term Care Coordinating Council
Estephany Matrille	RI Association of Community Action Agencies
Amethys Nieves	RI Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals
Lorna Oinonen	AARP RI
Mario Olivieri	RI Executive Office of Health & Human Services
Darlene Reza Rossi	AARP RI
David Schultz	Senate Fiscal Office
Holly Snyder	AARP RI
Katie Tennett	East Bay Community Action Program