



Kansas RTAP Fact Sheet

A Service of The University of Kansas Transportation Center for Rural Transit Providers

Building Relationships Between Aging Services and Transit for Access

By Pat Weaver



Services like health care, meals, mental health services, or benefits assistance are only valuable when consumers are able to get to them. Without access, the services might as well not exist. The question is, how can we best help people in rural and urban communities connect with those services?

At a recent presentation at the National RTAP Technical Assistance Conference in Denver, Michelle Rogers and Courtney Hoskins from the Denver Regional Office of the U.S. Administration on Community Living (ACL) presented some good examples of coordination and collaboration that help keep seniors moving in their communities. They also shared information on some of the resources of their programs (Rogers & Hoskins, 2015). This article will provide an overview of Rogers and Hoskins's perspective on building successful relationships between aging services and transportation, highlight some of the initiatives sponsored by ACL to provide better access to services, and share a few of the resources available to help support those efforts in Kansas.

What is ACL?

First, let's identify ACL—the Administration on Community Living. You might be familiar with the Administration on Aging (AoA) or the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD). In 2012, then-US Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius established a new HHS operating division, ACL, as an umbrella to AoA, ADD, and the Office on Disability (OD). The single agency is charged with developing policies and improving support for seniors and people with disabilities.

ACL serves the state programs through 10 regional support centers. Kansas is in Region 7, which shares an office with Region 5 in Chicago. The role of the regional support centers is to serve as the direct representative to the aging services network in each region, working with the State Unit on Aging and providing information, grants, program management and technical support, including administration of the Older Americans Act.

Transportation and the Older American's Act

Across the nation, the Administration on Aging and the Aging Services Network provides comprehensive services to older adults or links them to services such as health care and other social services in the community, including transportation. The Older Americans Act is targeted for services to persons 60 and over, to individuals in greatest economic and social need, particularly low-income minorities and individuals in rural communities. Under the Older Americans Act, there are two titles that include transportation as an eligible service: Title III(b) Community Support Services, and Title VI Grants for Native Americans. According to Rogers and Hoskins, 28 million rides are provided throughout the country with Older Americans Act funding.

ACL and “No Wrong Door”

In October 2015, ACL announced another round of “No Wrong Door” System Grants, intended to streamline access to services and support. More than \$15 million was awarded to 13 states to initiate or continue existing efforts. The goal is to help people make informed decisions about all the available services, with multiple state and community agencies coordinating to ensure that regardless of which agency an individual contacts, they can access information about the available services.

Kansas State Plan on Aging

While Kansas is not one of the states awarded one of the No Wrong Door grants, there are efforts identified within the 2014-2017 Kansas State Plan on

Aging, developed by the Kansas Department on Aging and Disability Services (KDADS), that recognize the transportation needs of older Kansans, and encourage coordination (State of Kansas, 2013, p. 12).

The plan commits the agency to coordinate public services funded under the Title III(b) (community support services) and VI program (tribal services) to assist older individuals in obtaining transportation services to access those services. The State Plan also requires area plans developed by the Area Agencies on Aging to provide assurance that an adequate proportion of the amount of funds allotted to the planning and service area is expended for the delivery of several categories of services, including transportation.

Technical Assistance Resources for Aging and Transportation Services

There are several resources out there to assist local agencies and communities. Here are some examples:

Community Innovations for Aging in Place (CIAIP) Technical Assistance Center. The CIAIP initiative is intended to assist communities in their efforts to enable older adults to age in place in their homes and communities. Innovative approaches developed under CIAIP are based on needs assessments that identify community strengths and gaps in supporting aging in place and should represent a collaboration of all interested community stakeholders. The TA Center supports CIAIP grantees in their efforts, and the grantees are the primary audience; however, the public is invited to use the website and contact CIAIP for more information. Contact: info@ciaip.org. Website: www.ciaip.org

National Resource Center for American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Elders. The goals of this project are to assess the current status of Native Elders in Alaska; develop an understanding of the cultural values that drive expectations and perceived needs for care; document “best, promising and emerging practices” that are in current use; solicit recommendations for community responses to elder abuse, exploitation and violence that are appropriate to Alaska Native cultures; and provide education to medical providers. Primary audiences include Alaska Native Elders organizations working with this population, Tribal Councils, and Title VI programs in the State of Alaska. Contact: afgpc1@uaa.alaska.edu, (907) 786-4329, fax (907) 786-4440. Website: <https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/elders/>

National Aging and Disability Transportation Center. Recently funded, NADTC promotes the availability and accessibility of transportation options that serve the needs of people with disabilities, seniors and caregivers with a focus on effectively leveraging MAP-21 Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities formula grants and other transit investments. The NADTC builds upon 25 years of investment in accessible transportation training and technical assistance that improves mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities throughout the country by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding community transportation mobility options. The Center website and other services are currently under development and are expected to launch at the beginning of 2016. For more information, contact Carol Wright, cwright@easterseals.com.

Kansas Aging and Disability Resource Center. The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) is a source of information and assistance in planning for future long-term service and support needs. The ADRC is targeted directly to consumers, providing older adults and persons with disabilities with information to identify services and supports. Staff at the ADRC provide information and assistance to help people access private or publicly-funded service programs. The ADRC has a statewide call center operated by staff trained in community resource information. The call center provides resource information for community services (in-home services, transportation, home delivered meals, etc.). Call center staff can link individuals to a local options counselor or to appropriate services and supports (examples: PACE or KanCare providers, home health agencies, etc.). The call center number is (855) 200-2372.

For more information about transportation provisions of the Older Americans Act, contact the Kansas Department of Disability and Aging Services, or Amy Wiatr-Rodriguez, the Kansas representative for the ACL Regional Support Center (email amy.wiatr-rodriguez@acl.hhs.gov or call (312) 938-9858).

Opportunities for public transportation-human service coordination in Kansas

As Kansas implements the regional coordination plan with the formation of new regions or realignment of old regions initiated by the Kansas Department of Transportation, the time is right to re-examine how human service transportation and public transportation services can work together. The regional organizations include both Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 and 5310-funded agencies, which encompass both program-based and public transportation. However, there are even more potential stakeholders in your region, whether they are providers of transportation or serve clientele who need transportation, and may be encouraged to work in partnership with your region.

Both the Aging State Plan and the Area Agency on Aging area plans recognize the need for transportation and, in some cases, provide funding for transportation services in their respective areas. Encourage those agencies, and others, to attend work groups to identify strategies in your community to create more comprehensive, affordable transportation services in your communities. Rogers and Hoskins also recommend that transit agencies work to be at the table as Area Plans on Aging are developed and, where applicable, meet with tribal elder program leaders as part of Title VI planning.

Mobility managers and coordination

KDOT has stated that the new regional mobility managers being hired in each region will have the responsibility “for working within the service area to identify gaps and help to close those gaps by facilitating inter-organizational agreements and relationships, such as between transportation providers, major employment and medical providers, and cities or counties; identifying additional resources; or bringing additional transportation partners together. Mobility managers might work at a community, county, or regional level to help improve transportation services.” (KDOT Office of Public

Transportation, 2014, pg. I-19). Mobility managers, working along with your Regional Coordination Board and Advisory Committee have a great opportunity to develop strategies to expand cooperation between public transportation and other partners in your communities.

For more information in Kansas

If you are unsure about whom to contact for more information about the Regional Transit Districts, you can find the updated Coordinated Transit District (Regional Transit) contact list on the KDOT website at <http://www.ksdot.org/Assets/wwwksdotorg/bureaus/burTransPlan/pubtrans/word/CTD%20Contact%20List%202015%20region.doc>. If you would like more information from Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services, particularly for area contact information, the *KDADS Aging & Disability Resource Guide* is very helpful.

In summary

Rogers and Hoskins said it best in their presentation: partner, partner, partner. Be aware of the aging services network and make sure they are aware of you. Look for opportunities to streamline referral processes, populate information and referral databases, and do cross training. They recommend being at the table as Area Plans on Aging are developed, and arranging face-to-face meetings with tribal elder program leaders, where applicable. Finally, include the ACL Regional Liaison in the discussions. They are there to assist.

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