

Overview

**Who:** This resource was developed for **local governments and nonprofit organizations**, to establish new transportation services, and for **transit operators**, to expand existing services to meet the needs of farming communities.

**What:** Provides an overview of **resources for improving transportation services** to support farmworker’s access to everyday destinations. Sections include [Resource Background](#), [Federal Funding Opportunities](#), [Case Studies](#), [Transportation Tools to Enable Access](#), and [Relevant Technical Assistance Centers & National Organizations](#).

**Why:** The [FY 2024 Appropriations House Report 118-154](#) required the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to coordinate [across Federal departments](#) to develop materials and best practices to **establish or expand affordable and reliable transit services** for farmworkers.

Resource Background

Public transportation, especially in rural areas, is crucial for connecting people to jobs, education, healthcare, and more. The availability of affordable and reliable transportation options can increase people’s quality of life. Federal coordination through initiatives like the [Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility \(CCAM\)](#) can make transportation more accessible, allowing various Federal agencies to better serve rural communities.

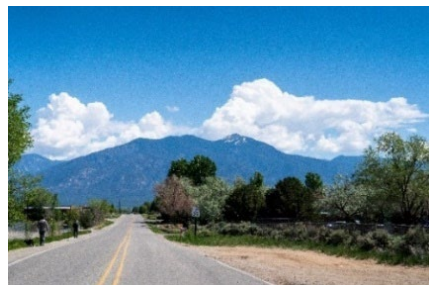


Figure 1 Rural Road (credit: FTA Technical Assistance Center)

Established in 2004 by [Executive Order 13330: Human Services Transportation Coordination](#), the CCAM is a Federal interagency council that works to coordinate funding and provide expertise on [human services transportation](#). The Secretary of Transportation chairs the council, and 10 additional departments and agency leaders form the rest of the [CCAM’s membership](#). The CCAM members collaborate to promote efficient transportation options to serve the needs of its three targeted populations: individuals of low income, people with disabilities, and older adults. Together, the CCAM’s members administer over [130 Federal programs](#) that may fund human services transportation for one or more of the CCAM’s targeted populations.

In 2024, FTA, CCAM, and the National Rural Transit Assistance Program (National RTAP), with support from the United States (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), hosted a hybrid listening session in Fresno, California. Attendees included grantees of FTA, DOL, USDA, and HHS, spanning local governments, non-profit organizations such as community action programs and housing advocacy organizations, transit agencies, housing authorities, and State programs that support

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organizations providing services to agricultural communities need to <b>collaborate at the agency level</b>, including sharing transportation costs.</li><li>• The <b>high cost of transportation</b> for agricultural workers can amount to 40 percent of their monthly wages.</li><li>• <b>Unbanked agricultural workers</b> may need to pay for transportation with cash.</li><li>• <b>Micromobility</b> may be helpful and easy to implement for improving transportation in agricultural communities.</li><li>• There may be potential <b>Federal funding opportunities</b> for various projects including repurposing buildings for transit use or purchasing vehicles to improve transportation in agricultural communities.</li><li>• Transit agencies are <b>accountable for different outcomes</b> compared to non-transit organizations; transit agencies need to be aware of non-transit program goals (such as health or safety).</li></ul>

Table 1 Session Takeaways from 2024 Listening Session

farm communities. As outlined in Table 1, the listening session provided a forum to learn about the challenges and barriers agricultural workers face and how these groups can coordinate to improve access to transit.

Federal Funding Opportunities

Program Inventory

Developed by the CCAM, the [Program Inventory](#) identifies **132 federal programs** that may provide funding for human services transportation for people with disabilities, older adults, and/or individuals of low income. Included in the updated inventory is information on each program’s local match requirement as well as the ability to use the program funding to meet the match requirement of another Federal program for eligible transportation-related expenses. Additional information on Federal fund braiding can be found in the updated CCAM Fund Braiding Guide.

Figure 2 below highlights eligible coordination activities across DOT, DOL, and HHS programs that are both relevant to agricultural workers and included in the Program Inventory. The coordination activities may help to establish and expand transportation services for agricultural workers by funding transit fares/vouchers, vehicle operations, and vehicle purchase, as well as supporting the ability to Federal fund braid. [Federal fund braiding](#) for local match allows grant recipients to use funds from one Federal program to meet the match requirements of another, reducing this prominent barrier to local human services transportation coordination. See the following [section](#) to learn more about transportation coordination activities.

	Program Name	Coordination Activities				
		Expand Services		Establish Services	Expand and/or Establish Services	
		Transit Fares/ Vouchers	Operating Vehicles	Vehicle Purchase	Fund Braiding (Incoming)	Fund Braiding (Outgoing)
DOT	Section 5311 – Grants for Rural Areas (Formula)	✓	✓	✓	✓	Statute is silent
	Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility (ICAM)	✗	✗	✓	Statute is silent	Statute is silent
DOL	National Farmworkers Job Program (NFJP)	✓	✓	✓	N/A (no match requirement)	Statute is silent
HHS	Community Services Block Grant (Competitive)	✗	✗	✗	N/A (no match requirement)	Statute is silent
	Community Services Block Grant (Formula)	✓	✓	✓	N/A (no match requirement)	Statute is silent
	Head Start	✗	✓	✓	Information not currently available	Statute is silent
	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	✓	✓	✓	N/A (no match requirement)	Statute is silent
Key						
		✓ Eligible coordination activity				
		✗ Ineligible coordination activity				

Figure 2 Program Inventory Coordination Activities

## Program Inventory Opportunities Relevant to Farm Communities

The following section provides more details about the programs that are described at a high-level in Figure 2 due to their ability to potentially provide funding for human services transportation and relevancy to farm communities.

### DOT

- [Section 5311 - Grants for Rural Areas \(Formula\)](#)

**Purpose:** Provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to support public transportation in rural areas with populations of less than 50,000, where many residents often rely on public transit to reach their destinations.

**Eligible recipients:** States and Federally recognized Indian tribes.

**Eligible Subrecipients:** States or local government authorities, nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transportation or intercity bus service.

**Additional information:** Vanpools are included as an eligible expense.

- [Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility \(ICAM\)](#)

**Purpose:** Improves access to public transportation by building partnerships among health, transportation and other service providers. The program provides competitive funding to support innovative projects for the transportation disadvantaged that will improve the coordination of transportation services and non-emergency medical transportation services.

**Eligible recipients:** Organizations that are eligible to be recipients and subrecipients of the Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program, (defined under 49 U.S.C. 5310) including States and local governmental authorities, private nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transportation.

**Additional information:** Funds are awarded competitively to finance innovative capital projects for the transportation disadvantaged. Examples include - employing mobility management strategies, vehicle purchase, IT purchase, leasing equipment or a facility for use in public transportation.

### DOL

- [National Farmworker Jobs Program \(NFJP\)](#)

**Purpose:** Strengthens the ability of migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents to acquire necessary skills to either stabilize or advance in their agricultural jobs or obtain employment in new industries. To support better economic outcomes for farmworkers, NFJP also works to meet a critical need for safe and sanitary permanent and temporary housing.

**Eligible recipients:** Local entities.

**Eligible subrecipients:** Non-Federal entities.

**Additional information:** Assistance with transportation is listed as an allowable supportive service for a participant who is receiving NFJP services as described at 20 CFR 685.330. For NFJP, approximately \$90 million funds career services and training grants.

### HHS

- [Community Services Block Grant \(CSBG\) \(Competitive\)](#)

**Purpose:** A small portion of funds are reserved to support technical assistance and monitoring efforts of CSBG.

**Eligible recipients:** National organizations, State associations, regional consortia.

- [Community Services Block Grant \(CSBG\) \(Formula\)](#)

**Purpose:** Provides funds to States, territories, and tribes to support services that alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty in under resourced communities.

**Eligible recipients:** States, tribes, and territories.

**Eligible subrecipients:** Local entities (including, but not limited to, local governments, migrant and seasonal farmworker organizations, tribes and tribal organizations, and Community Action Agencies).

**Additional Information:** Local entities provide services and activities addressing employment, education, income and asset building services, housing, nutrition, emergency services, and/or healthcare based on community needs assessments conducted by the local entities. Examples of services provided include child/young adult education programs (such as Summer Education Programs and College-Readiness Preparation/Support), adult education programs (such as adult literacy classes and financial literacy education), transportation services, utility payments, and emergency hygiene assistance (such as kits and boxes).

- [Head Start](#)

**Purpose:** Supports children's growth in a positive learning environment through a variety of services including early learning and development, health, and family well-being. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) administers grant funding and oversight to about 1,700 public and private nonprofit and for-profit agencies that offer Head Start services in local communities.

**Eligible recipients and subrecipients:** Local entities.

**Additional information:** Head Start and Early Head Start grant recipients provide services in every U.S. State and territory, farmworker camps, and more than 155 tribal communities. Historically, ACF is appropriated more than \$12 billion per fiscal year for programs under the Head Start Act.

- [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families \(TANF\)](#)

**Purpose:** Supports families with children experiencing low-income achieve economic security and stability. States receive block grants to design and operate programs that accomplish one of the purposes of the TANF program.

**Eligible recipients:** States and territories.

**Additional information:** While TANF jurisdictions must meet certain work participation and cost sharing requirements, they have considerable flexibility with TANF funds to implement programs that best serve their distinct communities.

## Charter Service Exception

FTA's [Charter Service Regulations](#) (49 CFR Part 604), which implement 49 U.S.C. 5323(d), protect private charter operators from unauthorized competition from FTA grant recipients. The charter regulations were implemented to ensure that transit agencies, subsidized with Federal money, do not unfairly compete with privately owned bus companies. Under the charter rules, local transit agencies are restricted from operating charter services.\*

However, there are limited exceptions when a grantee may provide charter service, including for Qualified Human Service Organizations (QHSOs).\*\* QHSOs receiving funding under one or more of the programs included in the CCAM Program Inventory are exempt from charter registration requirements. To learn more about leveraging the charter service exception for transportation coordination, reference the Transportation Tools to Enable Access section below or view FTA's [video series](#) which includes information on navigating charter requirements.

## Additional Relevant Federal Programs

Due to the inability to fund human services transportation, the following programs are not included in the Program Inventory. However, the Federal programs below span a variety of purposes including supporting technical assistance, housing, employment services, etc., for agricultural workers and their families.

### USDA

- [Rural Business Development Grants](#)

**Purpose:** Supports targeted technical assistance, training, and other activities that promote the development and expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas.

**Eligible recipients:** Public body/government entity, an Indian tribe, or a nonprofit entity primarily serving rural areas.

**Additional information:** Funds may be used for various activities including rural transportation improvement, technology-based economic development, and rural business incubators.

- [Multifamily Preservation and Revitalization](#)

**Purpose:** Restructures loans for existing Rural Rental Housing and Off-Farm Labor Housing projects to help improve and preserve the availability of safe affordable rental housing for low-income residents.

**Eligible recipients:** Current owners of Multifamily Housing Direct or Farm Labor Housing properties and prospective buyers who want to assume ownership of a currently eligible property in accordance with 7 CFR 3560.55.

**Additional information:** Available restructuring tools include the deferral of current debt, soft second mortgages, zero-interest loans, and grants.

- [Farm Labor Housing Technical Assistance Grants](#)

**Purpose:** Awards grants to nonprofit organizations to provide technical assistance to applicants for Farm Labor Housing (FLH) loans and grants. FLH loans and grants are used to increase the availability of affordable, decent housing for farm laborers.

\* Note: charter service is the exclusive transportation of groups of people for a negotiated price and does not include demand response service to individuals.

\*\* As defined in the Award Management Requirements Circular (FTA Circular 5010.1F), a QHSO is an organization that serves persons who qualify for human service or transportation-related programs or services due to disability, income, or advanced age.

**Eligible recipients:** Public and private nonprofit organizations.

- [Off-Farm Labor Housing Direct Loans & Grants](#)

**Purpose:** Provides affordable financing to develop housing for year-round and migrant or seasonal domestic farm laborers.

**Eligible recipients:** Broad-based nonprofit organizations, Nonprofit organization of farmworkers, Federally recognized Indian tribes, Community organizations, States or local governments.

**Eligible subrecipients:** Limited partnerships are permitted with a nonprofit general partner.

- [Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program](#)

**Purpose:** Improves the economic condition of rural areas by helping individuals and businesses start, expand, or improve rural cooperatives and other mutually owned businesses through Cooperative Development Centers.

**Eligible recipients:** Nonprofit corporations and institutions of higher education.

**Additional information:** Grant funds can be used to operate a Rural Cooperative Development Center that serves eligible rural areas. Examples of fund usage include conducting feasibility studies, developing business plans, providing leadership and operational improvement training, and facilitating strategic planning.

## DOL

- [Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service](#)

**Purpose:** Establishes a nationwide system of public employment offices, known as Employment Service (ES). ES offices are collocated with the approximately 2,400 [American Job Centers](#) (AJC) nationwide, which provide universal access to labor exchange services, including job search and placement assistance for job seekers, and help for businesses to meet their hiring needs.

**Eligible recipients:** States.

**Additional information:** ES staff conduct outreach to migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs) to educate them about available services, farmworker rights, and to provide certain services outside of AJCs. As needed, ES outreach staff help MSFWs and members of their family to make appointments and arrange transportation to and from local AJCs or other appropriate agencies. The Wagner-Peyser Act funds the [Monitor Advocate System](#), whose primary responsibility is to ensure MSFW access to services.

## Case Studies: Supporting Transportation for Farm Communities

### Huron, CA



Transportation in rural communities is not one size fits all. Many communities develop low-cost high impact approaches to getting people where they need to go. To give Huron residents better access to essential services, the Mayor of Huron, Rey Leon, created a free rural [rideshare program](#).

### Urbandale, IA



Inclusive planning and service development are key to meeting the range of needs found in every community. Smaller communities and smaller systems find creative ways to listen to and serve isolated populations. The [Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency \(HIRT\)](#) is a regional rural transit system operating in seven counties in central Iowa. HIRT leads an awareness campaign, “Do You Have Transportation?” geared towards helping connect people with rides. The campaign is focused on collaborating with healthcare facilities in their community to connect patients with their transportation services.

### Yamhill County, OR



Located in the middle of Oregon wine country, Yamhill County has vineyard workers serving vineyards from Portland to Eugene. Despite providing comprehensive transit service, farmworker access to employment in the vineyards was inadequate. Through a focus group of farmworkers, [vanpools were identified](#) as a way to meet this need, as well as offering seasonal operating hours to accommodate agricultural work.

## Transportation Tools to Enable Access

### Transportation Coordination

[Transportation Coordination](#) involves multiple entities working together to deliver one or more components of a transportation service to increase capacity.

Coordinated transportation includes the shared use, incidental use, or charter of project property. Coordination activities may include *sharing passenger trips and vehicles; co-location of facilities, programs or services; collaborating on grant applications, State/local plans, training, vehicle purchasing or maintenance; joint hiring of mobility manager(s); Federal fund braiding; and more.*

- [Shared use](#) allows an entity, separate from the recipient, to formally share the use of project property.
- [Charter service](#) is the exclusive use of a bus or van for transporting groups of people.
- [Incidental use](#) allows FTA grant recipients to permit the use of their Federally funded assets (like a van, bus, transit hub, etc.) by another entity for non-transit purposes. The non-transit activity may not reduce or limit transit service by the grant recipient.

***Note: Incidental and shared use of Federally funded assets is permitted for recipients of funding under all FTA grant programs.***

Examples of the coordinated use of Federally funded assets (real property and equipment) are included below.

## Incidental Use



### Examples of *Incidental Use* of Real Property (Co-Location)

- Pop-up produce stand may be set up at a rural transit facility hub.
- Farmer's market, mobile clinic, food pantry, etc. may be set up at a commuter parking lot on the weekends or during other low utilization times (e.g., holidays).



### Example of *Incidental Use* of Equipment (Vehicle Sharing)

- A local CCAM grantee (e.g., National Farmworker Jobs Program) may use a van, purchased with FTA funding (e.g., FTA's Section 5311) that is used for transit service Monday – Friday on the weekends to take participants to everyday destinations, such as access to shopping, training, or recreation opportunities. The vehicle sharing arrangement may vary from free to reimbursement to the transit agency for the fully allocated cost of using the vehicle.

## Shared Use



### Example of *Shared Use* of Real Property (Co-Location)

- A local CCAM grantee (e.g., Head Start) partners with an FTA recipient, such as a rural transit agency, and submits a joint application for the shared use of a rural facility. The shared use application would outline what part of the facility each partner would occupy and the rate each will pay for the operation costs for their distinct needs and populations.



### Example of *Shared Use* of Equipment (Vehicle Sharing)

- A local CCAM grantee (e.g., USDA Summer Meals Program) partners with an FTA recipient, such as a rural transit agency, and submits a joint application for the shared use of a vehicle. The shared use application would outline when the rural transit agency would use the vehicle to transport people, and when the Summer Meals Program would use the vehicle to transport meals.

## Charter Service



### Example of *Charter Service*

- A local FTA grantee receives a request from a QHSO (the third party) for the use of their vehicle and driver to exclusively transport low-income individuals to and from essential services that are outside of the service area (e.g., medical appointments, work, childcare facilities, grocery stores). If the FTA grantee accepts the charter service request, their vehicle and driver may be used and a fee for the service may be collected.

## Community Transportation Database

The [Community Transportation Database](#), available on the [Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility Technical Assistance Center's \(CCAM-TAC's\) website](#), shows the approximate location of public transit agencies and organizations such as community action agencies, senior centers, and others that provide community transportation.

Use the map to **explore local transportation providers** and their related information. Zoom in and click on specific transportation agencies to **learn more about their available services** and contact information to find current service information.

Working with your local transit is a way to take advantage of their expertise and build more robust transportation resources in your community. Rides managed and or funded through a transit agency help increase the allocation of funding to the transit program.

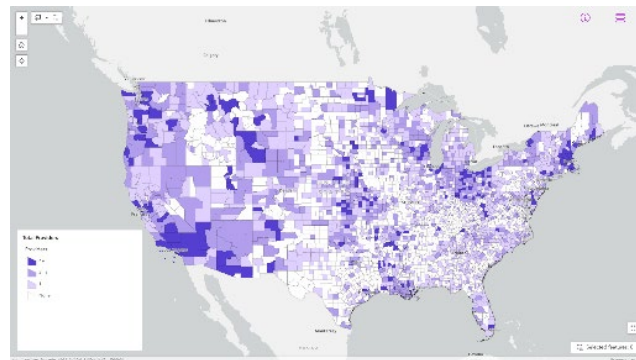


Figure 3 CCAM-TAC Community Transportation Database

## Relevant Technical Assistance Centers & National Organizations

### Technical Assistance



[The National Rural Transit Assistance Program \(National RTAP\)](#) is a national technical assistance center funded through a cooperative agreement with FTA. National RTAP creates rural and tribal transit solutions through technical assistance, collaboration and free training and transit industry materials.



The [CCAM-TAC](#) is a national technical assistance center funded through a cooperative agreement with FTA. The CCAM-TAC is supported by 7 Federal Guidance Partners. The strategic goal of the Center is to support CCAM members, Federal agencies, their grantees, partners, and stakeholders in improving transportation access for people with disabilities, older adults, and individuals of low income.



[Farmworker Justice](#) is a national, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded to stabilize the farm workforce by seeking an end to discrimination against farmworkers in labor laws; by promoting higher wages and better working conditions for farmworkers; by supporting smart immigration policy that reflects the hard work and contributions of farmworkers; and to make sure farmworkers have access to healthcare and safety information.

Farmworker Justice works with national, regional, and community partners to stabilize our nation's farm workforce by improving economic opportunities, healthcare access, and working conditions for farmworkers. Farmworker Justice is a member of the [Farmworker Health Network](#), providing coordinated training and technical assistance to health centers that serve agricultural workers.



[Health Outreach Partners \(HOP\)](#) is a national non-profit health organization providing training, consultation, and information services to community-based organizations striving to improve the quality of life of hard-to-reach populations, including farmworkers. HOP is also a member of the [Farmworker Health Network](#) and recently developed a resource providing [Transportation Strategies for Improving Health Outcomes](#), including for agricultural workers.



[The National Community Action Partnership \(NCAP\)](#) is a national, 501(c)3 nonprofit membership organization that provides technical assistance, training, and other resources to Community Action Agencies, nonprofit and public groups funded by CSBG, a Federal program that allocates funding to States. NCAP supports local efforts such as the [Community Action Partnership of Madera County Farmworker Appreciation Event](#).



[The National Rural Health Association \(NRHA\)](#) is a national nonprofit membership organization that brings together thousands of members across the U.S. The association's mission is to provide leadership on rural health issues through advocacy, communications, education and research.

Visit the [CCAM Multisector Partner Directory](#) to find additional relevant national organizations.

### National Organizations