



# **VTCLI Grantee Online Dialogue**

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**November 18 – December 20, 2013**  
**Participation Metrics**

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## **Introduction:**

The following report outlines the results of the Veterans Transportation & Community Living Initiative (VTCLI) Grantee Online Dialogue. Coordinated by the [U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy \(ODEP\)](#) and the [Federal Transit Administration \(FTA\)](#), this online event was held from November 18 through December 20, 2013. The dialogue invited VTCLI grantees to share their ideas regarding activities they find beneficial in helping Veterans and Military families access transportation resources in their communities including ways to promote better, more long-lasting partnerships and use online and social media tools and improve one-call centers.

Discussions that developed online were organized into the following topics; Partnerships, Social Networks & Peer-to-Peer Exchange, One-Call & Intelligent Transportation Technology. By participating in this online dialogue, grantees were given an opportunity to “vote” for ideas and comments that were submitted by rating them through the use of up or down arrows. A positive rating of a post increased the score and a negative one decreased the score.

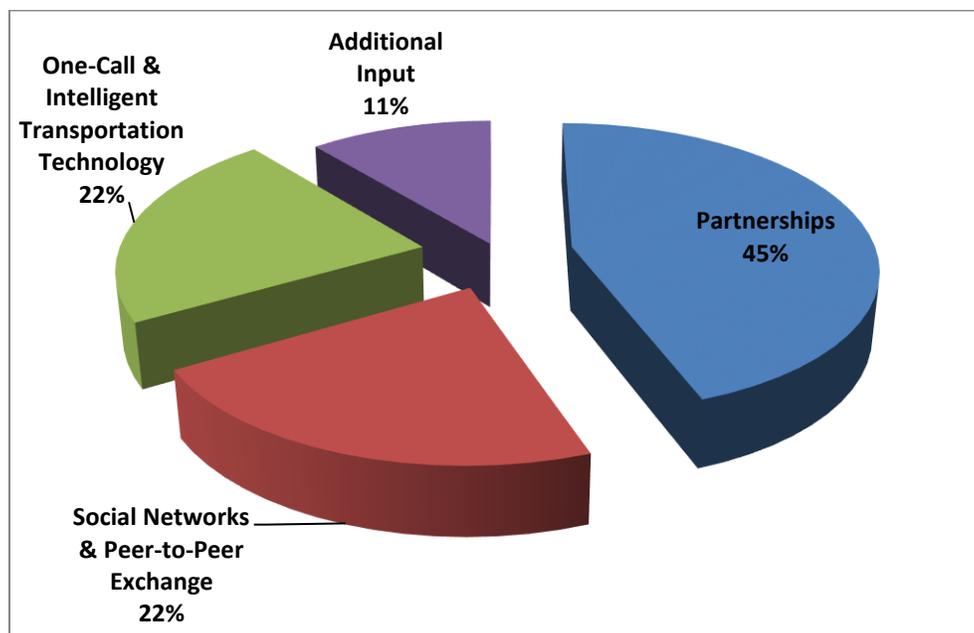
Included in this report are all the posts contributed by grantees, ranked by popularity. The ideas and comments received during this online dialogue were greatly appreciated and will help FTA and its partners set goals and shape the direction of efforts moving forward.

### **Participation Summary:**

- Dialogue opened on November 18, 2013
- 9 total ideas
- 35 comments
- 52 votes
- 111 registrations

### **Campaign Summary:**

- Total number of ideas: 9
- Partnerships: 4
- Social Networks & Peer-to-Peer Exchange: 2
- One-Call & Intelligent Transportation Technology: 2
- Additional Input: 1



### **Registration Metrics:**

*Total registrants: 111*

*Total number of registrants uploaded from VTCLI grantee list: 77*

*Total number of registrants that completed the registration process: 69*

*48 individuals provided registration information including name, position and agency*

### **Visits during the Dialogue (11/18/2013-12/20/13):**

- Total visits: 493
- Unique visitors: 188
- Total page views: 2,307
- Average pages per visit: 4.68
- Average visit duration: 6:22
- Returning visitors: 65.31%

**Demographics of Visitors:**

State	Visits
Virginia	80
Maryland	64
California	48
District of Columbia	48
Washington	48
Florida	27
Nebraska	20
Texas	18
Iowa	11
Massachusetts	11
Michigan	9
Oregon	8
Hawaii	7
Kentucky	6
Montana	6
Oklahoma	5
South Dakota	5
New York	4
Ohio	4
Georgia	3
Illinois	3
Minnesota	3
Nevada	3
Alaska	2
Missouri	2
North Carolina	2
New Hampshire	2
Pennsylvania	2
Vermont	2
Arizona	1
Colorado	1
North Dakota	1
New Mexico	1

*Note: The ideas listed in the following sections include minor typographical corrections, which have in no way impacted the substance or the intention of the revised posts.*

### **Ideas in order of popularity:**

#### **Idea #1: Determining Call Center Functions**

Topic: One-Call & Intelligent Transportation Technology

Comments: 5

6 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 6 Net Votes

One-click, one-call centers can contain a variety of functions ranging from trip reservations and scheduling to mobility management and coordination with multiple providers. What strategies did you use to determine the range of functions to be provided for the call center? Did the initial plan of services evolve or change during project development? Does your project allow for future expansion of functions?

#### **Idea #2: Funding through Partnerships**

Topic: Partnerships

Comments: 2

5 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 0 Net Votes

One of the biggest challenges we have recognized result from lack of adequate funding especially for before and after hours or out of county trips (beyond medical appointment to VA hospital). It has become quite challenging to support the needs of the veterans population when the transit service does not accommodate those needs. Therefore, it is imperative to create partnerships with other local agencies to support these efforts especially when they pursue grants.

#### **Idea #3: Rural veterans- Who do we partner with?**

Topic: Partnerships

Comments: 6

3 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 3 Net Votes

I'm at a conference, discussing the fact that more than 40% of veterans live in rural areas with less access to transportation.

What partners do we need to bring to the table to start to more closely examine rural needs?

#### **Idea #4: Public Transportation and Serving Veterans and Military Families**

Topic: Partnerships

Comments: 3

3 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 3 Net Votes

In our work with local communities, many public transportation organizations have effectively reached out and included Veterans Services Organizations in their coordinated planning process. This enables a broad coalition expansion that helps to leverage the public transportation assets in a community with the needs of Veterans and Military families. Are there further thoughts on how this coordinated planning process has worked well?

#### **Idea #5: Volunteers in Rural Areas**

Topic: Partnerships

Comments: 5

2 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 2 Net Votes

With a large number of veterans living in rural areas perhaps there is a role for volunteers to participate?

#### **Idea #6: An Expansion on the Idea of the 1-Call/1-Click**

Topic: One-Call & Intelligent Transportation Technology

Comments: 6

2 Up Votes | 1 Down Votes | 1 Net Votes

I'm Nick Ford, working with Human Services Council in Vancouver, WA. One area which I am working to help improve is the perception of available transportation resources.

We are currently in our needs assessment for our VTCLI 1-Call/1-Click. I am working on getting surveys out to the community and gathering facts on what needs veterans and their families have within their communities. One fact we have found in our preliminary surveys is that one of the most prevalent difficulties to veterans accessing available mobility resources is that they find the largest resources available (public transportation) are not comfortable to ride and difficult to use.

Time and lengthy bus rides also take up much of the difficulties with accessing mobility resources, and this is one fact that I think will be very difficult given some of the distances veterans and their families live in comparison to major services.

On top of the original goal of creating an easy and simple way to access information, I have incorporated rider education into my program, especially given the confusion and complexity of the systems that veterans use to travel. This way, our program adds personal interaction to that hard first step of actually

using the systems that we will hopefully educate and create through our 1-Call/1-Click Centers in our areas.

If you have any input, feel free to comment! Also, I didn't really know which category to put this under, so I just filed it under the "One-Call" part of the third category.

-Nick

**Idea #7: Grant title & confusion among some veterans**

Topic: Social Networks & Peer-to-Peer Exchange

Comments: 5

2 Up Votes | 1 Down Votes | 1 Net Votes

Have other VTCLI grantees run into issues where a small group of vocal Vietnam era veterans demand that the VTCLI project be available only to veterans and that the project should provide free transportation for veterans? If so, how have you overcome this challenge?

**Idea #8: Social Networking & Media**

Topic: Social Networks & Peer-to-Peer Exchange

Comments: 1

0 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 0 Net Votes

With a large number of veterans living in rural areas perhaps there is a role for volunteers to participate?

**Additional Input Idea: Coordination with VA Hospitals**

Topic: Additional Input

Comments: 0

2 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 2 Net Votes

Through networking with the Department of Veterans Affairs and the VA Hospitals, we have learned that the VA Hospitals are being required to set up a transportation network and provide transportation services to Veterans for their appointments. From our understanding, federal dollars would be used to purchase vehicles and start these services, and then, the federal dollars would fade out leaving the cost on the VA Hospitals. Our suggestion would be to take the funds that would be used to set up that transportation network and make them available to the transportation network already in place in each state (who currently provide transportation for non-emergency medical appointments, general public, Department of the Blind, etc.). These transit agencies are already providing transportation in the same areas that the Veterans would need service in. It seems reasonable to believe that this coordination would save money so that a greater number of Veterans could benefit from free or discounted rates.

## **Conclusion**

Through the “*Veterans Transportation & Community Living Initiative (VTCLI) Grantee Online Dialogue*,” the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy successfully leveraged leading-edge crowdsourcing tools to engage local grantees.

This new approach can help federal agencies and grantees better understand what activities are most beneficial in helping Veterans and Military families access transportation resources. Through online voting, idea submission and commenting, this event allowed grantees to contribute their ideas and comments to the federal government while sharing information with their peers.

This metrics report simply summarizes the dialogue’s results; the input and responses of the participants are now being analyzed by the FTA team and will help set goals and shape the direction of efforts moving forward. In summary, this dialogue encouraged creative thinking and improved communication around local transportation efforts for Veterans and Military families.