



U.S. Department of  
Transportation

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SECRETARY PENA ANNOUNCES  
"JOBLINKS" INITIATIVE FOR  
LOW INCOME AND RURAL WORKERS

Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña today announced approval of a Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) award of \$1.5 million to the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) for a project to provide unemployed rural and inner city workers with expanded transportation to job training sites.

"Any meaningful economic recovery must provide access to the American dream for those of our citizens trying to reach the first rung on the ladder," Peña said. "This program will help by ensuring that job-seekers aren't kept from jobs simply because adequate transportation is unavailable."

Under a cooperative agreement with the FTA, the CTAA will carry out the project in three parts. First, CTAA will develop innovative ways to improve transportation services related to job training and employment for unemployed and underemployed workers in rural areas and inner cities. Second, it will establish up to three demonstration projects in each of six states: Kentucky, California, North Carolina, Michigan, Arkansas, and Oregon. Finally, CTAA will award a competitive contract for an independent evaluation of the project.

CTAA must solicit proposals for the demonstration projects within 90 days and, with the concurrence of FTA's project manager, must enter into contracts for the demonstrations within 180 days. The solicitation will be designed to effectively reach all sectors of the public transit industry, including rural and community transit operators and appropriate state agencies. The sub-awards of funding for the demonstration projects will be made on a competitive basis to state and local groups.

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"A University of North Carolina study of seven counties in that state found that transportation is a much greater problem for low income workers than even child care," Peña said. "A citizen task force in Collin County, Texas found that the lack of transportation is the most significant barrier to employment of the developmentally disabled.

"We expect this effort to teach us a great deal about how to provide better access to the workplace -- and to critically needed training -- for disadvantaged workers," Peña said.

The Federal Transit Administration is an agency of the Department of Transportation.

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